

Bloxham Parish Council wish to register its objection to the following Planning application.

24/02541/OUT- Land South of 3 - 5 Hartshill Close, Bloxham

Outline planning application for the erection of up to 150 dwellings on the land south of 3-5 Hartshill Close, Bloxham with vehicular access from the A361

Overview:

Cherwell District Council is able to demonstrate 5.4 years housing land supply and therefore the housing strategy Policies in the Local Plan are up-to-date, as is the Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan.

Tilted balance in favour of a Developer does not apply in this instance. For category A villages there is a target of 750 homes; currently 703 are complete with a further 101 under construction. Although not a ceiling, it should be seen as such where category A villages are under considerable strain, and only be exceeded should there be a genuine need for additional housing, not purely because a developer puts forward a plan to build sustainable housing. If this development is permitted, it will be in conflict the Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan and the wishes of its residents, with in excess of 220 having objected on the Planning Portal prior to being closed for comments.

This proposed development is beyond the current built up limit to the village and detrimental to the character of the village. There are currently no defined housing needs for Bloxham village.

This development cannot be classed as 'infill' and as such is contrary to BL2 and BL11 from Bloxham Neighbourhood Development Plan – 150 houses equates to roughly a 10% increase in residential housing stock in Bloxham and will cause harm to the rural character of the village which is contrary to BL12

This development is not identified as a strategic site in the Cherwell District Local Plan 2011 – 2031 and has not previously been highlighted as a potential development site in the 2018 HELAA register.

Infrastructure:

Although recognised as a Category A village, there is only so much development that the current infrastructure can sustain – Bloxham may offer a range of facilities for the community, but these are largely at capacity.

Doctors surgery:

Berks Oxon and Bucks Clinical Commissioning Group has stated that Bloxham Surgery (which also serves the village of Hook Norton and the area linking Bloxham and Hook Norton and several other villages) has 'significant capacity issues and insufficient consulting rooms to cope with increased population growth as a direct result of the increase in dwellings'.

The surgery has no physical space to extend. There are several proposed additional developments in its catchment area, and the surgery will not be able to continue to provide the level of service it currently does with the consequential increase in population. This is an important factor when considering the demographics for the area, as Bloxham has an aging population with the inevitable associated complex medical needs and Dr: Patient time (reference Adopted Local Plan (2015) Policy BSC4 (B126)).

S106 monies to mitigate the impact of this development would not be beneficial in resolving the increased demand for this service. The surgery has no physical space to expand and consultation areas have already been added to the site.

Dental Practice:

Closed list for new NHS patients.

Primary school:

Additional 56 nursery & primary school children as a result of the development

On paper, Bloxham Primary School it is at, or close to capacity. The school is currently extending – not to accommodate new pupils, simply to meet its existing needs and to ease overcrowding at the school. Certain year groups are already full meaning that places available for children resident in the proposed development would be offered on an AGE DEPENDENT basis.

For children in year groups which are full, places would need to be sought elsewhere. This development would equate to an additional 56 pupils of nursery (preschool) and primary age which, in itself, would bring additional strain to the road infrastructure at school drop off and pick up. OCC recognises that parents would have to commit to a 50 minute round trip twice a day to walk their children to and from school and that this is 'unlikely' especially for working parents.

S106 monies to mitigate these issue are only acceptable should they be sufficient to result in further school expansion **prior** to development occupancy and infrastructure changes to roads and parking to accommodate.

Secondary school:

Additional 36 secondary/sixth form pupils as a result of the development

Local Shops and amenities:

The majority of the main village shopping facilities are a minimum of a 20 minute walk from the development, and as such, will encourage the use of motor vehicle to access shops, pharmacy, surgeries and Jubilee Park.

Traffic and roads:

Access to this development is proposed from the main South Newington Road, the A361 and this poses some serious safety concerns. The A361 is an extremely busy road and the particular section between Banbury and Chipping Norton has been identified in the top 10 most dangerous sections of road in the country. Within the past 3 years, two people have lost their lives as a result of RTAs within a few meters of the proposed entrance into the site and this is a huge concern to the Parish Council.

The mini roundabout at the junction of the South Newington Road – Church Street – Barford Road is already at capacity and there is no scope to improve the situation at this junction. A recent report from OCC recognised that the mini roundabout could not be extended due to its proximity to several properties and that traffic flow through the village is exerting strain at this particular point. Adding 150 homes at the proposed development site will inevitably add to the problems at the mini roundabout especially at peak traffic flow times.

At school drop off and pick up times, the entire village experiences significant congestion but in particular, around the junction of Tadmarton Road / Courtington Lane. This has been highlighted as a major safety concern. Vehicles park all along the Tadmarton Road and Courtington Lane as far down as Painters Close. The proposed development for 150 houses will inevitably exacerbate the traffic problems we currently have in Bloxham generally and around this junction in particular as it is estimated there will be an additional 56 preschool and primary school aged children travelling to and from school and that it is 'unlikely' that their parents will walk to school due to the distance from the development site.

OCC has objected to this application citing safety concerns at the access point to the development, and concluded that it is not in accordance with the NPPF. It also noted that due to the position of the site, the most likely mode of transport for its residents would be the car. OCC recognised that to walk their children to and from school, parents would have to commit to a 50 minute round-trip twice a day which is 'unlikely' especially for working parents.

Cherwell District Adopted Local Plan, Neighbourhood Plan and NPPF.

Adopted Local Plan (2015) and the BNP.

This plan aimed to manage the growth of Cherwell up to 2031

- To focus most of the proposed growth in and around Bicester and Banbury

- To limit growth in our rural areas and directing it towards larger and more sustainable villages
- Aims to strictly control development in open countryside
- Development in the open countryside will not be permitted

BL2 In addition to the major development set out in Policy BL1 the following sustainable development will also be permitted:

Minor development of less than 10 dwellings

Infill gaps in an otherwise continuous built-up frontage

Category A village suitable for minor development within the built up limits

This development is beyond the existing built up limits of the village, with a proposal for more than 10 dwellings and shows little regard to character of Bloxham or the property needs of the community.

Policy Villages 2:

States that in villages a total of 750 dwellings will be provided to support the need for new dwellings in the Cherwell District. Although not a ceiling figure, as mentioned by the Inspectors at Tappers Farm and Sibford Ferris there would be demonstrable harm from exceeding delivery of 750 dwellings at Category A villages within the plan period.

Current figures are 703 completed, with a further 101 under construction.

This proposed development does not comply with BL4

BL7: Development should not increase flood risk.

The Recreation ground which sits opposite the proposed site entrance is frequently waterlogged and flooded and surface water often accumulates on the road just beyond the proposed access point to this development. Tadmarton Road and Cumberford frequently suffer from surface water flooding.

At a recent Public Inquiry, the importance of considering flood risk when identifying new development sites was highlighted and Policy PV2 of the CLP states that particular regard should be given to flood risk assessment.

The Lead Local Flood Authority at OCC has objected to this application and requested at pre-application stage that the applicant undertake infiltration testing. Currently, we have no results from this testing.

Bloxham Parish Council is undertaking a review of the BNP and is assessing a number of sites which have been earmarked for development by local land owners. Flood risk is one of the criteria for review of potential sites in line with the Nation Framework which

recognises new development sites should be prioritised in areas with the lowest risk of flooding.

BL8: Where practicable all new housing developments should include at least 20% open-market homes that:

Are clearly designed for the needs of residents at or beyond the state pension age.

Adopted Local Plan (2015) Policy BSC4 (B126)

Recognise an ageing population and higher levels of disability and complex health problems.

This development is at least a 20 minute walk to the major facilities in the village and even longer for disabled and those with health issues.

SHMA 2014 Para 8.33 references merit of bungalows for a growing older population with specialist housing needs or wishing to downsize

This proposed development does not meet these requirements

BL9: All developments shall where appropriate:

Ensure that there is adequate waste water and water supply capacity to serve the new development and to avoid the exacerbation of any existing problems.

Thames Water have not commented on this application to date, however made the following comments in response to a previous application for 60 houses at another site in Bloxham: Following initial investigations, Thames Water has identified an inability of the existing water network infrastructure to accommodate the needs of this development proposal.

Ensure that the impact of any additional traffic likely to be generated by the development has been satisfactorily mitigated and will not adversely affect the highway network.

Additional traffic will be generated as part of this application and have a detrimental effect on congestion and traffic problems through the village – especially at peak times

For new housing developments, ensure that a sufficient supply of local primary school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new residents.

The existing infrastructure of Bloxham cannot sustain this level of development, as detailed in the “overview” and BL9.

BL11: All development shall be encouraged to respect the local character and the historic and natural assets of the area.

This development would extend the built up line of the village on land adjacent to the South Newington Road, extending the curtilage of the village and will have a negative impact on the character of Bloxham and its rural heritage.

The site extends into the open countryside on the land behind Hartshill Close.

At a recent Public Inquiry, the Inspector recognised the importance of maintaining the rural integrity of Bloxham and this proposal would conflict with policies ESD 13 and ESD 15 of the Cherwell Local Plan. ESD 13 states that applications will not be granted if the development would cause visual intrusion into the open countryside, be inconsistent with local character or harm the setting of existing settlements. Part of the historic heart of Bloxham is a matter of meters away from this site with several Grade II listed buildings being located along Cumberford and the South Newington Road and so inevitable harm would be caused to these historic buildings.

NPPF - 79

To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services.

This site is not identified as any of the above, it will not support local services rather it will place a further strain on them.

174 and Cherwell Local Plan, Policy ESD 10

Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland

Minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures

The importance of a net gain in biodiversity being in perpetuity. The management of hedgerows in order to achieve biodiversity net gain” as reference by BBOWT

Preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local

environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans

This development does not comply with aspects of the current NPPF.

Section 106 Agreement

If the local planning authority is minded to approve application 24/02541/OUT, the Parish Council would make the following requests for Section 106 funds to mitigate the impact of the development on the community of Bloxham:

1. Financial support for the purchase of land, or provide land, for a new burial ground in Bloxham.
2. Five-year funding for the Cherry Tree Centre.
3. A Funds for play equipment be allocated to Bloxham Recreation Ground and Jubilee Park to upgrade their play facilities, including the addition of inclusive and accessible play equipment and wheelchair access to Bloxham Recreation Ground, not to install a play area in the development itself
4. Outdoor gym equipment for Bloxham Recreation Ground/Jubilee Park/other suitable site in Bloxham.
5. Provision of land for allotments.
6. Zebra crossing on Courtington Lane by Primary school, to replace Lollipop Lady.
7. Appropriate resurfacing of carpark opposite the Primary to encourage use by parents for drop off/pick up.
8. VAS signage to support Traffic calming within the village curtilage
9. Pedestrian crossing or traffic lights across the South Newington Road to mitigate safety concerns around the access to the development.

Additional Conditions:

Any infrastructure improvements applied as conditions for development by OCC should be completed as part of the Development, and in place prior to any occupancy of the site. This would include any proposed Primary school expansion.