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Herefordshire
HR9 7LA

Herefordshire Council
Planning Services
PO Box 230
Blueschool House
Blueschool Street
Hereford
HR1 2ZB
Attention Andrew Banks - case officer

Your ref – P153511/O

11 January 2016

Dear Mr Banks

Our attention has been drawn to yet another application for outline planning permission to construct up to 38 dwellings on land adjacent to the B4222 in Lea. The Lea Action Group wishes to express its opposition to this proposal.

It seems to us that this new application is to all intents and purposes identical to two previous applications - your references P142410/O and P151251/O - submitted by the same developer to develop the same piece of land; schemes that we also objected to.

Both these applications were refused by the county council's planning committee.

We object to this further application for the same reasons we objected to its predecessors.

Adding a further 38 houses would constitute severe over development of a village which has seen planning applications approved for some 50 dwellings over the past 18 months and which has no more than 218 dwellings to begin with.

Vehicular access to the proposed estate will be from the narrow, potholed, twisting and flood-prone B4222 which cannot realistically be expected to support any additional traffic without a significant upgrade.

On the far edge of the village and impinging into open countryside, the site is prone to flash flooding and is much further by foot from the village hall, church and primary school than the applicant seeks to imply.

We have been advised however that planning legislation is such that Herefordshire Council will find it difficult if not impossible to defend a third refusal should the matter go to appeal. The applicant is already proposing to appeal against the refusal of

P142410/O and has indicated that this appeal will be withdrawn should the council give approval to P153511/O.

If as a consequence the council is minded to approve this third application we would strongly recommend that the following conditions be attached:

I) Prior to the submission of a reserved matters application, the developer should be obliged to consult with Lea Parish Council and any other interested local stakeholders to ensure that the proposed development meets local needs regarding design, layout, and density of dwellings. Guidance may be obtained from the comprehensive responses of parishioners to the questionnaire issued to them as part of the emerging Lea Neighbourhood Development Plan.

(II) Without wishing to pre-empt the outcome of this consultation, it is our view that even though the site has been identified as having the potential for having a higher housing density than that proposed as a maximum, a lower density would be appropriate. Given Lea's and indeed Herefordshire's demographic we would suggest that the following types of dwelling merit serious consideration:

- i) bungalows
- ii) homes for the elderly
- iii) homes designed for ease of access by people with disabilities
- iv) homes for life - by which we mean dwellings that will require little or no adaption as the residents grow older and their needs change.

By ensuring that at least some of the proposed homes are designed with older residents in mind rather than young families, pressure on local school facilities would be reduced. Furthermore, the volume of additional pedestrian traffic along the busy A40 between the site and the pre-school and primary school would be minimised.

Nor would additional play facilities be required on or close to the site.

We would also suggest that all dwellings should be designed to be as sustainable as possible in the event of flooding with thought given to, for example, the construction of flooring and the positioning of power sockets.

(III) Given that the site has experienced flash flooding in the past and no credible explanation has emerged as to why this should have occurred, an independent flood risk assessment should be commissioned by Herefordshire Council, paid for by the developer and submitted to the council in advance of a reserved matters application.

(IV) As part of its Section 106 commitment the developer should agree to contribute to the funding of flood relief works designed to mitigate the impact of repeated surface water flooding in the centre of the village. The size and timing of such a contribution, which must be ring-fenced, should be a matter of discussion with the county council at the reserved matters stage.

(V) The culvert that runs from the site beneath the B4222 is already inadequate and will require enlarging to twice its size should planning permission be granted. The developer should commit to funding the required works, to any resurfacing of the

B4222 the council may deem appropriate and to improvements to pavements leading to and from, and running adjacent to, the proposed estate.

It is to the developer's credit that a clear commitment has been made to the funding of improvements to the B4222/A40 junction. That commitment must of course be upheld.

(VI) The developer should make arrangements to ensure that maintenance of all the public areas within the proposed site and any safety measures that may be required are funded in perpetuity. None of the expenditure should be met by Lea Parish Council or Herefordshire Council.

While we continue to view this application as undesirable, if it is granted such conditions should go at least some way towards mitigating its impact on a vulnerable community.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Banner, chair, Lea Action Group