

BREINTON PARISH COUNCIL

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15 September 2022

Heather Carlisle
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By email only: heather.carlisle@herefordshire.gov.uk

Dear Ms Carlisle

P222138/O - Land at Three Elms, NE Quarter. To the north east of Huntington and bounded by Three Elms Road and Roman Road

Land at Three Elms *Application* - Outline Planning Application with all matters reserved, except access, for the first phase of an urban extension comprising up to 350 homes (Use Class C3); park & choose interchange; together with open and play space, landscaping, infrastructure and associated works

Breinton Parish Councillors considered this application at their meeting on 14th September and remain extremely concerned that, despite another two years for consideration, investigations and reflections, the applicants and their agents have given so little attention to the Parish Council's previous lengthy and detailed representations dated 3rd November 2016, 27th March 2017 and 26 October 2020.

Nevertheless, we welcome the opportunity to review, re-emphasise, supplement, and repeat where necessary our previous representations despite the need to read 71 supporting documents and 8 drawings. Even though this reduced scheme – phase 1 of an urban extension – is geographically as far away from Breinton Parish as is possible on this site; some of our key points remain valid. Given the climate emergency, the loss of bio-diversity and the years passing by, the concerns summarised below are even more important in our view. We urge you to read our previous submissions again in full. We will not repeat them here in the such detail.

1. General Comment

It would appear that despite all the expertise at their disposal the applicants still have not fully recognised that the policy context has fundamentally changed in the past two years at both the strategic and local levels. The proposal lacks ambition and could have been proposed anytime in the last 40 years or so. Herefordshire should learn and avoid repeating all the mistakes so evident in the Belmont developments or more recent developments along the Roman Road.

In particular, but not exclusively there have been the following changes to the policy context;

- The Church of England's General Synod of February 2020 committed the Church to becoming carbon net zero by 2030
- Herefordshire Council has declared its recognition of the climate emergency. It has identified positive actions to reduce carbon emissions that arise specifically from travel-to-work and

travel-to-school by private cars within and across the city and to implement schemes that make possible more green travel, public transport, cycling and walking.

- Department for Transport Local Transport Note 1/20 on cycle infrastructure design (dated July 2020)
- Herefordshire Council has abandoned both the Southern Link Road and the Hereford Relief Road.

2. Access

- a) The Parish Council fears that the implications of such poor highway choices may set adverse precedents for Kings Acre Road should there be any further phases of development in future closer to Breinton.
- b) The Parish Council considers that the unchanged proposals for Three Elms Road remain short sighted, are likely to increase accidents and will certainly hinder traffic flows. They simply add another junction to an already busy road and one that will be heavily used as the southern exit from the proposed development. Our view remains that a much better solution would be to build a single, higher capacity/full sized roundabout close to the Three Elms public house to access the development and for Sandown Drive, 3 Elms and the Tillington roads.
- c) To compound this error, the access parameter plan still has a cycleway and footpath exiting the site at its far NE corner close to the junction with Tillington Road where we would suggest a roundabout. In our opinion, an exit at this point will put cyclists and pedestrians at unnecessary risk particularly as we cannot see any mention of off-site calming measures on Sandown Drive / Grandstand Road or for ongoing cycle routes beyond the actual site. Visibility at this junction is poor for all concerned, surely it is substandard by modern criteria?

3. Flood risk (see also 3/11/2016)

- a) The Yazor Brook catchment to the north-west of Hereford city is currently being developed in a piecemeal fashion, sometimes via small sites and on occasions larger ones such as Three Elms. Each one is trying to solve their own potential flood risk without consideration for the area as a whole. What is needed is a holistic approach.
- b) As such the Parish Council remains concerned that the proposed development will have adverse knock-on flooding effects for other locations including properties along Kings Acre Road despite their distance from the phase 1 site. As the geological cross sections previously produced by the applicants clearly demonstrate; the fields south of KAR are also part of the Yazor Brook catchment as well as the Ground Water Source Protection Zones (1 and 2a). Changes to one part of the catchment may well have implications elsewhere
- b) We have long argued that a complete, independent hydrological survey is needed for the whole Yazor Brook catchment south of the Roman Road and east of Credenhill. This needs to be concluded prior to any more major housing developments to the north-west of Hereford city. The fact that eight retention ponds are felt to be needed for the for phase 1 of this proposed development alone indicates that there can be a considerable amount of surplus water to be dealt with on occasions. The Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is intended to show that *'the proposed development is safe from flood risk and that flood risk elsewhere in the Yazor Brook catchment*

does not increase as a result of the development.' We suggest that the FRA does not do this adequately.

Yours sincerely

Emily Godsall
Breinton Parish Council Clerk

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26th October 2020

Ms K Gibbons
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Sent via email to kelly.gibbons@herefordshire.gov.uk

Dear Ms Gibbons,

Planning application P162920/F - Land at Three Elms, Hereford - Outline Planning Application with all matters reserved, except access, for the demolition of existing agricultural buildings and an urban extension comprising up to 1,200 homes (Use Class C3); employment development (comprising Use Classes B1/B2/B8); a neighbourhood centre comprising a mix of retail (Use Classes A1/2/3/5), health provision (Use Class D1) and leisure uses (Use Class D2); a new one form entry primary school; park & choose interchanges; together with open and play space, landscaping, highways, infrastructure and associated works.

Breinton Parish Councillors considered this application at their meeting on 14th October and were extremely disappointed to find that, despite a further four years of intensive and no doubt expensive work, the applicants and their agents have given so little attention to the Parish Council's lengthy representations dated 3rd November 2016 and 27th March 2017.

Never the less we welcome the opportunity to make further representations despite the need to read 27 new documents (@2900 pages) and 23 new drawings, many of which are repetitious. Many of our previous points remain valid, some the more-so with the passage of time, and we urge you to re-read them again.

However; rather than repeat the full representations again we will simply summarise and update them in the pages that follow as well as provide cross references. Underlining adds our emphasis to any external sources we have used. Major quotations from background documents have been italicised

1. General Comments

Prior to our detailed comments, we wish to make two over-riding points.

a) The application still does not provide sufficient attention to the rural areas bordering the site to the north, west or south, including Breinton. This is wrong as the implications of this development will be felt by these areas and their residents just as much as in the suburbs of Hereford city to the

east. A particular concern being that regarding the Phase 2 traffic modelling now required by Highways England but at a later date. The development is still focussed on benefits for the developer and the eventual residents

b) The applicants do not appear to have fully recognised that the policy context has fundamentally changed in the last four years at both the strategic and local levels. The proposal as master planned and covered by the four parameter plans is unambitious especially where housing, development, design and transport are concerned. The whole application describes a development that could have been built at any time since the 1980's. It manifestly runs the risk of repeating all the mistakes so evident in the Belmont developments of previous decades south of the river and on more recent developments along the Roman Road.

In particular, but not exclusively there have been the following changes to the policy context;

- The Church of England's General Synod of February 2020 committed the Church to becoming carbon net zero by 2030
- Herefordshire Council has declared its recognition of the climate emergency. It has identified positive actions to reduce carbon emissions that arise specifically from travel-to-work and travel-to-school by private cars within and across the city and to implement schemes that make possible more green travel, public transport, cycling and walking.

In these connections and particularly as this is an application by the Church Commissioners, it is very disappointing to note that they have ignored the ambition of the Church of England expressed in General Synod February 2020 that the church is to become Carbon net Zero by 2030. The Church of England passed a resolution worded as follows:

"That this Synod, recognising that the global climate emergency is a crisis for God's creation, and a fundamental injustice, and following the call of the Anglican Communion in ACC Resolutions A17.05 and A17.06;

(a) call upon all parts of the Church of England, including parishes, BMOs [Bishop Mission Orders], education institutions, dioceses, cathedrals, and the NCIs [National Church Institutions], to work to achieve year-on-year reductions in emissions and urgently examine what would be required to reach net zero emissions by 2030 in order that a plan of action can be drawn up to achieve that target;"

Breinton Parish Council whole heartedly supports this resolution of the Synod and would welcome the Church Commissioners working to deliver this ambition of the Church of England.

While other policy changes include:-

- Department for Transport Local Transport Note 1/20 on cycle infrastructure design (dated July 2020) which does not appear to have informed this application – see our section 2 below
- Herefordshire Council is not actively progressing the Southern Link Road (although Highways England appear to think it is actually under construction) although the planning approval remains valid
- Herefordshire appear to be in the process of abandoning the Hereford Relief Road upon which Phase 2 (at least) of this development is contingent according to Core Strategy Appendix 5 - Necessary Infrastructure for Strategic Sites)

- Breinton's Neighbourhood Development Plan has been approved and along with those of other neighbouring parishes to the development like Credenhill, Burghill, Holmer and Stretton Sugwas, form part of the local development framework
- A tree preservation order now covers the historic avenue of lime trees along Kings Acre Road

2. Access (See also the Highways section 3/11/2016)

- a) We still maintain that approval of access to the development as far as Kings Acre Road (KAR) is concerned is premature and should not be determined until the future of the proposed Hereford Relief Road (HRR) is known and appropriate traffic modelling completed as required by Highways England. The KAR access is not need anyway until Phase 2 of the development. As the Report to Inform an Appropriate Assessment notes at the time of the original application (2016) the anticipated start date was 2019 with a 12 year completion period. Four years on and assuming outline permission is granted, using the same timing/phasing (as the Transport Assessment Addendum part 2 appears to do) gives a start in 2023 with a build out to 2035. Phase 2 will not commence until 2028 at the earliest. Why set in a tablet of stone something that events of the next decade may alter? There is no immediate need to decide this access now via a parameter plan, indeed there are reasons not to.
- b) Developments proposed locally still mean that there is potential for 4 access points onto Kings Acre Road in the short distance between the Bay Horse pub and Huntington Lane. We understand that there will shortly be an application to develop the large fields east of the Blue Diamond garden centre again that will require access onto KAR. This would be a fifth junction when it is in all of our interests to keep traffic flowing smoothly as far as is possible including, hopefully, more cyclists and pedestrians. So many junctions on such a very short stretch of road and is surely unacceptable in highways terms.
- c) Concerning the number and type of junctions; the Parish Council considers that even the revised proposals for Three Elms Road are short sighted, are likely to increase accidents and will certainly hinder traffic flows. Two mini-roundabouts are now proposed in the vicinity of Grandstand / Tillington roads but our view remains that a better solution would be to build a single, higher capacity/full sized roundabout at this point to access the development and for Sandown Drive, 3 Elms and the Tillington Roads. Strangely the access parameter plan also has a cycleway and footpath exiting the site at its far NE corner close to the junction with Tillington Road where visibility for motorists is really poor and must surely be substandard by modern criteria.
- d) We note that our previous concern about traffic using Sandown Drive / Grandstand Road as a short cut to the A49 have been recognised with traffic calming measures being proposed. However; vehicles wanting the A49 south will surely head for Whitecross and the Parish Council would support improving the roundabout here early in the development's life. We note that Table 6.5 of the Transport Assessment Addendum shows the junction close to capacity on the 2022 base assessment and certainly over capacity after Phase 1. In this context and in the likely absence of new roads, we believe that the proposal to reduce its capacity is misconceived and misguided and is not supported. If the junction is to be altered serious consideration should be given to re-locating the electricity substation between Wordsworth and Kings Acre Roads. The lack of sight lines here surely makes the junction sub-standard and as Section 7 explains,

historic trees are being removed nearer the proposed development purely to create adequate sight lines

- e) It is difficult to see how the Transport Assessment concludes that the development can be adequately accommodated within the existing transport infrastructure. This masks the severe impacts that will arise from the current proposals. In 2016 a start on site was anticipated in 2019 with 100 houses being built and a 12 year completion period to 2031. Despite four years of further work – mainly around flooding – and with major new roads not yet started and looking ever more unlikely how possibly can the highways assumptions and scenarios modelled in the Transport Assessment (and repeated in the Addendum) still be considered robust and valid overall?

In particular we note the Highways England response dated 7 October 2020 that includes the following statements

'.... Phase 2 (up to 620 residential units and employment development) would only be occupied once the Bypass was completed.It is set out within the Transport Assessment Addendum that the Hereford Bypass scheme has now been paused and is under review with no certainty as to whether it will continue and in what form.....'

....Our previous response was based on the provision of the Bypass; however it is now unclear when or if it will be provided.

Junction capacity assessments have so far only been completed for Phase 1 of the development. Those for Phase 2 will be undertaken as part of the reserved matters application. Due to the current uncertainty around Hereford Bypass being delivered as part of Phase 2, we will require re-assessment of capacities for all the impacted SRN junctions without the Hereford Bypass to ensure the traffic impacts of Phase 2 are robustly assessed and suitable mitigation measures provided where necessary'

Accordingly Highways England requires certain conditions be applied to any approval of this application. The Transport Assessment Addendum confirms the reliance of Phase 2 of the development on the Hereford Relief Road and that Phase 2 modelling will be a reserved matter which is why there is not data in the various appendices for this application.

- f) Notwithstanding Highways England misconceptions (i.e. that the Hereford Bypass is in the design and planning stages as well as the Southern Link Road being under construction) the Parish Council believes that this response alone means that all aspects of Phase 2 of the development are premature and should not be approved at this time. We do not believe that conditions to be resolved as reserved matters – potentially without Committee consideration – are sufficient to cover this major, legitimate concern. How can detailed site access arrangements or local housing numbers possibly be approved for instance until the impact on the junctions on the local strategic road (A49) have even been assessed?

We note that the same Transport Assessment Addendum says 'the scale and nature of the proposed off-site highways works, including the Whitecross Roundabout and the previous Three Elms mini-roundabout, has been determined by the long held expectation that the Southern Link Road will be completed in 2020 and the Hereford Bypass will be completed during the early to mid2020's in line with the HC Local Plan. On this basis, it has been accepted that HC Officers that the proposed traffic impact of the proposed development at local junctions would not need to

be directly mitigated through the delivery of localised junction improvements, as once the bypass had been delivered capacity at local junctions would become available through re-routing of strategic traffic onto the bypass. Instead HC officers requested off-site improvements with a focus towards walking and cycling infrastructure and road safety’.

The Parish Council is amazed at this statement coming as it does in a document dated some 18 months after political control of Herefordshire Council changed and disagrees with both the premise and conclusions of the statement. In practical terms the proposed new roads cannot possibly be built in the timeframe envisaged. In our view the statement shows a significant and ongoing dissonance between Officers of the Council and the aspirations for and emerging direction of the Council’s transport policy. As far as access is concerned there is a real danger of leaving NW Hereford significantly short-changed in the investment needed to mitigate the effects of increased traffic from this development.

It has been noted earlier in this submission that changes at the Whitecross roundabout should not go ahead as proposed and the entire package of proposals contained in the Access Parameter Plan rejected until they can be reviewed and replaced with more realistically based and practical changes.

- g) Kings Acre Road junction details. The Parish Council still feels that the design is inadequate for traffic exiting right (west) from the development onto KAR but as previously noted, we do not agree that there is any need for this junction to be approved either at this point either in principle or in the detail currently provided. Should it be approved however we would require a condition that the current network of air quality receptors is extended further west along the Kings Acre Road at the commencement of Phase 1 so that data is captured on the current position and can then be compared with the position should Phase 2 proceed. The design should also provide extra road width so that the filter lane can be accommodated and the lane itself should be of sufficient length to hold a number of vehicles. This will avoid repeating the problems at Kings Acre Halt further to the west where the lane is too short for more than one vehicle to fully enter (being constrained by a well meant but poorly sited pedestrian refuge) and thus westbound traffic is easily blocked as it would be if there was not a filter lane.
- h) We can only say that the results of the work done since 2016 by WYG in relation to transport matters and mentioned in Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners response dated 8 February 2017 disappoints us (see our response dated 27/3/2017 point 1)

3. Sustainable Transport - Cycleways (see also 3/11/2016) and Pedestrians

- a) In the Parish Councils view sustainable transport measures and the Framework Travel Plan still lack ambition despite the applicant’s apparent change of mind on the potential for local bus routes within the development and the adoption of a 400m maximum distance from a bus stop (previously 800m). We remain concerned that buses are not seen as viable initially since a lack of services will do nothing to break entrenched habits and encourage change. As far as the bus stop distances are concerned it is not about what is reasonable or even achievable but what encourages and changes habits.

The ambition is that new residents use of the car for single journeys will reduce from a predicted 67% to 52% with a 2% increase in car sharing (6% - 8%), with 8% by bike increasing to 13%, 16% walking increasing to 19% and public transport increasing from 2% to 7% (no doubt

because it will now be available through the site itself). Despite the whole of the City being within half an hour by bike from this site and much of the site just a 10 minute bike ride to the City centre. This remains a car dependent development and will stay so without further design changes that are so common in Europe and have been shown to work over decades. The reliance on a Travel Plan Co-ordinator to influence new residents and absolutely no indication that the design of the new development will learn from international best practices is incredibly short sighted. These are matters for inclusion now since they will have implications for the parameter plans especially land use and access.

As part of the Framework Travel Plan Report (para 2.30), Pell & Frischmann state *“It is therefore considered that the site is located within a sustainable location and has the potential for a number of trips generated by the site to be made by non-car modes. It is clear that cycling presents the best opportunity to encourage sustainable travel over short journeys (time and distance), which essentially covers all of Hereford as a catchment for this mode.”* Yet the Travel Assessment still predicts majority car use from this development and fails to take advantage of an opportunity to design a truly ambitious, sustainable development

- b)** The new application is dated September 2020 yet the Dept for Transport Local Transport Note 1/20 “Cycle Infrastructure Design” July 2020 does not appear to have informed any part of the design for active travel measures nor how the site and its residents will link with other cycle networks in the adjoining areas and form part of a Hereford City cycle network. In this respect many of the transport measures do not conform to the latest guidance. In particular the DfT LTN 1/20 in Chapter 14 reminds planners that: -
- i. **14.1.2** Appropriate cycle facilities should be provided within all new and improved highways in accordance with the guidance contained in this document, regardless of whether the scheme is on a designated cycle route, unless there are clearly-defined and suitable alternatives.
 - ii. **14.2.1** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 51 sets out the national policy context for land use planning and states that planning policies should: *‘provide for high quality walking and cycling networks and supporting facilities such as cycle parking (drawing on Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans)’* (Para 104d).
 - iii. **14.2.2** The NPPF also states that applications for development should: *‘give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas’* (Para 110a).
 - iv. **14.3.6** It is important that the TA does not overestimate motor traffic travel demands, which could make it difficult to provide well-designed cycle infrastructure, particularly at the site access points. Travel demand forecasts should take into account the potential for the increased levels of cycling that will be enabled by high-quality cycle facilities, both on- and off-site.
 - v. **14.3.7** New developments that have important destinations within them, such as schools

and retail centres, should be provided with cycle and pedestrian links to adjacent residential areas and local cycle routes so that residents can cycle to the new facilities. Similarly, large new residential developments should offer external links to adjacent employment, education, administrative, transport interchange and retail destinations.

- vi. **14.3.12** Cycling facilities should be regarded as an essential component of the site access and any off-site highway improvements that may be necessary. Developments that do not adequately make provision for cycling in their transport proposals should not be approved. This may include some off-site improvements along existing highways that serve the development.
- vii. **14.3.14** Cycle networks within new developments should generally be made up of the elements listed in Chapter 3, Section 3.4, i.e.:
 - Dedicated space for cycling within highways (Chapter 6)
 - Quiet mixed traffic streets (Chapter 7)
 - Motor traffic free routes (Chapter 8)
 - Junction treatments and crossings (Chapter 10)
 - Cycle parking at origins, destinations and interchanges with other modes (Chapter 11).

The spine road through the site fails to be suitable for all members of the community to cycle along and across as it only seeks to provide shared walking/cycleways which is contrary to LTN 1/20 para 14.3.22 *"The speed and volume of motor traffic on these routes will often mean that protected space for cycling is required"*. It is unclear what speed limit will apply to the spine road since the site exits onto 30mph, 40mph and 60mph roads currently. However it is unlikely to be less than 30mph unless the proposed design of the development is shifted radically now through the master planning exercise and the parameter plans. This should not be left to the approved matters stage. Indeed, the Parish Council would argue that it would be too late at that stage.

- c) We have failed to identify the National Trail through the site that appears in some documents and the Amended Environmental Statement Further Information Report is also incorrect that the 'site is located adjacent to a comprehensive existing pedestrian and cycling network. The Amended Green Infrastructure Strategy repeats this mistake by showing an existing shared cycleway/footway along its southern frontage (Kings Acre Road). This is actually along its northern frontages – the Roman Road – but this is missed out. Certainly as far as Kings Acre Road is concerned there is no provision for cyclists and the pedestrian path is across the road from the development (south side) meaning new residents would have to cross a busy main road. As such we welcome the intention to provide such an extra facility on the north side. This should be a primary cycle route and not just a secondary one which we understand would simply have space 'reserved' on the existing carriageway and enhanced signage/markings.

As we have noted in the section immediately above, the detailed design of movement and access around the development site is not currently available, due to this being an outline application. It should be part of this consideration. Designing out wide scale provision for cars across the site, and limiting car access to the perimeters of the site, would enable a higher ambition of final car use below a base of 67% and a final forecast level of 52%. This would also avoid site visitors (e.g. parents dropping off children at the primary school) from using a car to make these journeys. This would build in active travel from a young age, led by example by staff walking/cycling the last part of their journey. By excluding car movements from much of the site it would improve air quality from this development, enable children to have more space to play

and be active in a safe environment, creating a more cohesive community, which is shown to reduce crime and improve health outcomes for all ages.

4. Flood risk (see also 3/11/2016)

- a) The Parish Council remains concerned that the proposed development will adversely affect the properties along Kings Acre Road and our previous representations remain valid.. We respectfully point out that the approach to assessing flood risk is incomplete in our view. There is direct hydrological connectivity between this area (which are in SPZ1 and, 2a until the Bay Horse Public House) and the site. Any change in the relationship between soil and water in the rest of the catchment could adversely affect these properties and there are certainly major earth movements being proposed at 3 Elms as part of the development
- i. As previously stated, the area immediately south of KAR is actually lower than the proposed development site north of the road and this was confirmed when Balfour Beatty surveyed the area in 2020 after flooding during the winter of 2019/20.
 - ii. Since 2016 the Environment Agency overland flow flood risk maps have been updated to show increased levels of risk in this area.
 - iii. As the geological cross sections across both the site and the aquifer produced by the applicants at various points in their supporting documents clearly demonstrate; the fields south of KAR are also part of the Yazor Brook catchment as well as the Ground Water Source Protection Zones (1 and 2a). The hills of Breinton Ridge actually form the southern boundary of the catchment. Water from here eventually percolates underground south east through the catchment including under the proposed development site.
 - iv. This flood risk was an issue in the granting of permission for development at Breinton Lee (application 123592). Since 2016 a flood attenuation pond has been built providing a measure of protection for Huntsman Drive and the Fayre Oaks caravan park involving Herefordshire Council, Welsh Water, the Environment Agency and the Church Commissioners. In the early part of 2020 homes at Kings Court experienced flooding from the fields to the south after the prolonged, high intensity rainfall from Storms Ciara and Dennis from water ponded up in the fields These examples demonstrate a wider and continuing problem and the impact of climate change and pictures taken at the time(s) can be provided if this will aid an appropriate decision.
- b) The Parish Council fears that the development will exacerbate the drainage issues along KAR and that any changes in the water- table will be detrimental to the surrounding area if not the development itself. In response to the question on the application form "Will the proposal increase the flood risk elsewhere?" the applicants have stated that it will not. Breinton Parish Councillors dispute this assertion. We note from various supporting documents that:
- i. the properties at Huntington and along the Roman Road are identified as being particularly sensitive to flooding but there is silence about properties bordering KAR
 - ii. the development is not supposed to adversely impact on the flood risk to third party land. The Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is intended to show that *'the proposed development is safe from flood risk and that flood risk elsewhere in the Yazor Brook catchment does not increase as a result of the development.'* We suggest that the FRA does not do this fully since it is incomplete.
 - iii. the impact upon water quality of five new properties at 137 KAR (and other developments locally) has been studied but not flood impacts.

- iv. The Herefordshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment indicates '*no incidence of surface water flooding (during high intensity rainfall events such as sheet run off from fields or large hard-paved areas) have been recorded at the site*'. However as shown in paragraph 3a above surface water flooding does occur along the sites southern boundary while the applicant has acknowledged that the appropriate flood risk maps actually do show small, specific areas on the south of the site itself to be prone to surface water
- c) After four more years of intensive study this proposal still ignores the impact on the area to the south and its existing residents. The work to date focusses on the site being flood proof, downstream impacts and satisfying major businesses that their water supplies remain safe. Approval of the parameter plans as currently proposed ignores an opportunity to address overland flooding (some of which is from and affects other Church Commissioners land) in NW Hereford in a coherent rather than piecemeal way as developments come forward one by one in future years.
- d) We can only say that the results of the work done since 2016 by WYG in relation to flood risk drainage and mentioned in Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners response dated 8 February 2017 disappoints us (see our response dated 27/3/2017 point 1)

5. Park and choose (see also 3/11/2016)

The Travel Plan mentions Park and Choose sites, commenting that 2 would be provided and both facilities are within walking distance of the residential areas. We remain of the view that the provision of 75 parking spaces for each phase of development (75 on Kings Acre Road and another 75 on the Roman Road) giving a total of 150 parking places for 1,200 homes is totally inadequate considering the high number of car journeys the Travel Plan forecasts will be made by car. This token provision cannot possibly accommodate sufficient residents, visitors and commuters nor can it make any meaningful reduction in car based journeys into central Hereford or the site

There appears to be no mention of car clubs, which would further help reduce individual car ownership and reduce the space needed for on-site car parking and would make the Park and Choose sites more compatible with the number of housing units proposed. This is important as this site needs to minimise the quantity of hard surfaces due to increasing the risk of flooding both on site, surrounding areas and downstream of the Yazor Brook into the city.

6. Density (see also 3/11/2016 and 27/3/17 point 8)

We previously said that densities at the margins of the site should reflect what is already there. Nothing has changed with the housing numbers being proposed for phases 1 and 2 remaining the same and no big changes to the land areas included. The average for Phase 1 is calculated at 28 per hectare with Phase 2 – including the area adjacent to KAR – being 35p/h. This completely ignores the low density along the road even the almost continuous ribbon development immediately to the south of the site. The masterplan and appropriate parameter plans should not be approved until this is changed. Our objection remains.

7. Design sensitivity (see also 3/11/2016 and 27/3/2017 points 3-7 inclusive)

We remain of the view that this development is not 'sensitively designed to integrate the site with

Kings Acre Road (KAR)' nor does it 'respond to local character' or respond to the site context. Even though local building heights have been reduced to 12.5m this is insufficient certainly still out of keeping with the existing two storey ribbon development housing south of KAR and tree heights as the illustrative sections attached for information to the Submission of Further Information clearly demonstrate.

Even though the three storey blocks appear to have been moved north, slightly further into the development, there is no such density, mass or type of property in existence on the opposite (southern) side of KAR and the clash in character are obvious. The previous Design and Access (D&A) statement included what was supposed to be a local character study but none of the five areas chosen resemble the existing KAR frontage; in the slightest. (Please see also our response dated 27/3/2017 points 9-11 inclusive and the photographs attached at that time)

The Amended Environmental Statement says that there is potential for three storey buildings to be located adjacent to the primary route corridor towards the centre of the site. However this is not what the Amended Masterplan shows – larger blocks immediately north of the Kings Acre Park and Choose site on both sides of the primary route corridor nor, importantly does the amended building height parameter plan which we understand is to be approved as part of the outline planning permission. This shows that the 12.5m zone extending to the southern boundary of the site, east of the route corridor along Kings Acre Road

The relevant parameter plans should be further amended to reflect these points

8. Land use - Loss of trees on KAR (see also 3/11/2016) and Playing Fields

- a) As we said previously, the avenue of lime trees on both sides of KAR gives one of the most visually attractive entrances to Hereford city and therefore to this site. They provide a link to the horticultural heritage of Kings Acre and is one of the important public views covered by policy B16 of the Breinton Neighbourhood Plan which was approved in 2016 and is thus a material consideration in this decision. As the applicants have noted this avenue is now covered by a Tree Preservation Order.

As we feared in 2016 the number of trees to be removed to provide the spine access road to development has increased (from 1 to 4. These are all Category A trees and the only *ones to be removed to make way for this development. Even more are at risk given the various junctions proposed for this stretch of road – see section 1b) earlier. One of those to be removed (T5) is recorded as having high visual amenity in the Updated Arboricultural Impact Assessment. This describes the avenue as being 'a line of good quality mature lime trees which provide an important visual amenity' but ignores their heritage. The Assessment also identifies trees 13 and 14 as being at risk from any Hereford Relief Road. The Parish Council objects to this wholesale removal of local landmarks which risks the integrity of the overall landscape feature.*

Hedge 8 facing the main (Kings Acre) road is described as 'a mature, mainly hawthorn hedge, a locally prominent feature that provides valuable screening and habitats'. While the Open Space Parameter Plan (which we understand will be approved as part of this particular application) says that structural planting will be provided as mitigation for the loss of trees and the Land Use Parameter Plan says that existing trees and hedgerows will be substantially retained; we do not consider the current offer of buffers and enhanced planting is sufficient. The aim should be to significantly improve and extend what exists currently and the appropriate parameter plans should be revised before any approval is given. (Please see also the section on ecology/bio-

diversity in our response dated 27/3/2017)

- b) Sport England in their latest response have highlighted that there is no longer a need for a 3G sports pitch and instead playing fields with an alternative surface or grass, could be provided instead. In view of the risk of flooding and the high quality soils on this site, Breinton Parish Council would prefer the provision of grass playing fields improving the absorption of rain and fitting better with the current rural feel of the site and the Historic Huntington settlement, despite the development proposals for this site.

9. In conclusion

The adopted Herefordshire Core Strategy clearly states that *'Three Elms will be planned on a comprehensive basis informed by a development brief and master plan prepared through the Hereford Area Plan'*. This Plan does not exist which may be one reason why the integration of this development with the surrounding areas and the wider city is so poor. Breinton Parish Council remains of the view that this application is premature certainly in relation to those matters affecting Phase 2 of the development.

Breinton Parish Council does not believe that so many of the crucial elements of this development should be left to reserved matters. They should be addressed now. Three Elms is simply of too much significance, on the fringe of the City and bordering one of the main approaches to Hereford, for this to be allowed.

Breinton Parish Council believes that in view of the above comments this application should be refused as failing to comply with the various government policies listed and being contrary to the applicants own Church of England policy on reducing year-on-year emissions.

Yours sincerely,

Emily Godsall
Clerk, Breinton Parish Council

Breinton Parish Council



27th March 2017

Mr Ed Thomas
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Sent by email to ethomas@herefordshire.gov.uk

Dear Ed,

- **Planning application – P162920/F**
- **Land at Three Elms, Hereford**
- **Land at Three Elms *Application* - Outline Planning Application with all matters reserved, except access, for the demolition of existing agricultural buildings and an urban extension comprising up to 1,200 homes (Use Class C3); employment development (comprising Use Classes B1/B2/B8); a neighbourhood centre comprising a mix of retail (Use Classes A1/2/3/5), health provision (Use Class D1) and leisure uses (Use Class D2); a new one form entry primary school; park & choose interchanges; together with open and play space, landscaping, highways, infrastructure and associated works.**

Breinton Parish Councillors are making further comments on this application in light of the Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners (NLP) response dated February 8th 2017

Before addressing specific points in the NLP response it is important to note that Breinton Parish Council (BPC) remains very strongly of the view that this application does not provide sufficient attention to the areas bordering the site to the north, west or south, including rural Breinton. Insufficient attention is being given to integrating the site into the surrounding built areas or the wider city of Hereford and instead the focus appears to be:-

- i) securing approval that maximises the benefit for the eventual developers and
- ii) distinguishing the site boundaries with taller, high density, flats, marker or gateway buildings that separate / isolate rather than providing a sensitive transition from what currently exists to what is being inserted

In addition the Parish Council is fundamentally not convinced that parameter plans for the southern part of the site need to be approved so early when the later stages of the development here are potentially a decade away. During this decade critical decisions such as the precise route of any Hereford Relief Road will be made.

Our further comments are set out below linked to specific (underlined) text from NLP in the order in which it appears in their response.

1) Matters relating to transport and flood risk drainage are being addressed by WYG and a response will be provided under separate cover in due course

BPC awaits this with interest and sincerely hopes that it will address the concerns we have previously raised particularly about inappropriate road junctions located to suit the development rather than the movement through the surrounding areas or the wider flows of traffic into and out of central Hereford.

2)the illustrative master plan is not an application drawing submitted for approval,.....whilst the illustrative master plan has been designed in accordance with the scope of the parameter plans the content is for illustrative purposes only and it will not become an approved planning drawing.

We fully appreciate that the master plan and the vast majority of the 118 documents provided in support of this application are not being submitted for approval. However we question why they are being provided if not to inform the eventual decision. These documents are in fact the evidence base upon which the application relies and upon which the application will be judged. BPC therefore feels that it is correct to point to inaccuracies in these documents and inconsistencies between the few documents that will be approved and this base – particularly where there are no reasons given for the evidence base to have been ignored. Furthermore these documents are what the local communities are reading. We note that NLP's response also seeks to support its position by references to other documents that will not be approved.

It seems to the Parish Council that the much vaunted master planning approach to this strategic urban extension is of very little value beyond the sites' boundaries whatever benefits it may eventually prove to bring within them. It is therefore up to local people, councils and in particular Herefordshire's Planning Department and Committee to ensure that this development truly integrates into the pre-existing and surrounding communities.

DESIGN

3. Outline planning permission onlythe parameter plans provide information on access, building height, land use and open spaces that set the maximum parameters within which future development must be designed.

Again BPC fully appreciates the nature of the permission being sought and re-emphasises that it wishes to be consulted on further details of the proposals in future applications and with the opportunity to speak at the planning committee eventually. However the value of any future consultations would be severely reduced if they were limited to relatively minor matters like the appearance, orientation etc. of badly sited buildings of demonstrably inappropriate masses and that bore no relationship whatsoever to the surrounding built environment but for which permission had already been agreed in principle and whose existence was no longer up for discussion. This is why the parameter plans are so important.

4. Concern has been raised regarding the maximum height of some residential dwellings at 14m as shown on the parameter plan.....the parameter plan identifies maximum heights for the development in order to provide flexibility for a range of building heights across the site as it is not intended that all buildings will reach the maximum height. This approach allows for variable building designs to come forward at reserved matters stage whilst a more restrictive building height could result in a more monotonous building typology

BPC believes that, as far as height at least is concerned, the parameter plan is setting the

maximum which likely to be reached in all possible occasions – it will never be under-delivered nor is it likely to be. Phrases like 'it is not intended' simply do not appear in the parameter plans. Unless the eventual permission is strictly conditioned so that not all buildings reach this maximum height and the conditions are permanently upheld then their intention is not binding on any eventual developer. However, should the Planning committee be minded to approve such conditions, they could be discharged on a phased basis as NLP themselves suggest on page 8 of their response.

High quality, variable building designs would be a significant step forward but the Parish Council does not believe that a more restrictive height will result in a monotonous building typology. Indeed, the existing homes to the south of Kings Acre Road might be called monotonous but that built form is exactly what the new development needs to respect and compliment. An inappropriate range of building heights and masses particularly at sensitive boundary areas that ignore what is already present (photographs attached show older and the frontage of the largest, relatively modern development close to 3 Elms) is however of great concern locally and will simply repeat the mistakes at recent developments such as at the entrance to the Furlongs on Roman Road (photographs attached)

5. Overall the proposed height parameters have been set sensitively having been informed by the character and scale of the development in the surrounding area. It is intended that lower density development will be located in the more sensitive environments such asor low level development to the south.

The avenue of 64 mature lime trees along Kings Acre Road is one such sensitive environment and the low level development to the south can only refer to Breinton. However we see absolutely no evidence whatsoever that the height parameters have been set sensitively as far as this area is concerned or that they have been informed by the character, design, density and scale of the built forms in the surrounding area.

6. Taller three storey buildings are proposed along the Primary Road Corridor (PRC).....the southern part of the site is considered to be more appropriate for higher density development for the following reasons (i – v below)

This reference to the southern part of the site being more appropriate for higher density development appears to us to contradict the NLP comment in 5) above in relation to more sensitive environments

i) in terms of visual impact this location (the southern part) is on a relatively low, less prominent part of the application site.....

Most of the site is low but that does not mean that higher densities and prominent buildings should line the roads at the margin, clash both visually and in mass with what is there already and potentially create an unwelcoming wall, separating the new development its facilities and residents from those in the existing communities.

ii) the access point onto Kings Acre Road provides the opportunity to introduce 'gateway' buildings to demarcate the entrance to the site and could potentially be a good location for a marker building.

BPC disagrees with this fundamentally. This development should conserve what is best of the existing green infrastructure and compliment the current built environment not overwhelm it. Distinction is unnecessary and integration should be the aim.

iii) comments are not applicable on this point

iv) the proposed density will allow the provision of a wider housing mix including flats

The only flats along Kings Acre Road in Breinton are a conversion of an existing, substantial house far to the west of the site. BPC does question the provision of a wider housing mix along a boundary road facing what is a relatively consistent existing form of ribbon of development and certainly does not believe that locating new build, three storey flats along Kings Acre Road is a justifiable planning decision.

More generally in relation to a wider housing mix; the Parish Council notes that the Core Strategy level of affordable housing is apparently not achievable on this site. It would appear that the applicants are deciding which parts of the Core Strategy can be ignored and which are mandatory. It seems to the Parish Council that any judgement that is required when balancing potentially competing elements of the Local Plan are for the Planning Authority to make.

The only flats/townhouses at all comparable to the design heights and masses being proposed are at Bobblestock (on the eastern margins of the site), on Sheridan Road (Moor Farm), at the Furlongs development on the Roman Road or the former cider mill site by Sainsbury's. There is relatively little development of this kind of design outside central Hereford. It is an urban feature at best, possibly suitable for specific suburban sites but is certainly not suitable for the rural fringe of an historic city. The development should not be allowed to casually degrade the appearance of what is judged by many to be one of the best entrances/approaches to the city in such a significant fashion,

v) the southern part of the site is closer to existing transport links to the city and the proposed location for a Park and Choose facility will enhance these links. It is therefore considered appropriate to provide a higher density of development in these locations.

This is a strange reliance on transportation links for an application that so thoroughly rejects public transport routes through the development or sensible cycle route connections from it to the wider city. It is unclear precisely how the southern part of the site is being defined but there are transport links along the northern site boundary (including a cycle way) and particularly the eastern boundary where there are also shops and a doctors. Please see our previous comments about the inadequacy of the proposed Park and Choose provision (November 2016) and its inability to attract local residents in addition to visitors, commuters etc. We will reserve our detailed comments on transportation matters until we have received and considered the response from WYG.

In short the Parish Council does not believe that any of the reasons given by NLP make a strong case for the southern part of the site, particularly Kings Acre Road, more appropriate for high density development.

7. JTP has considered alternative height options for the three storey buildings.....The sections therefore illustrate the relationship between the existing and proposed building heights at the Kings Acre Road boundary.....and how this would be altered by reducing the maximum height to 12.5 m

The new work from NLP recognises but does relatively little to allay the Parish Councils legitimate concerns about the [REDACTED] treatment being proposed for the north side of Kings Acre Road. However the revised proposals are a small move in the right direction.

8. Concerns have also been raised in relation to the density of development particularly in relation to existing buildings on KAR. As set out in the planning statement the residential density will primarily be determined at reserved matters stage.....

Please see our comments under point 3 above about the need to improve the parameter plans so that they more adequately reflect the surrounding areas. It is [REDACTED] to believe that once a parameter plan sets a density that there will be much, if any, move to a lower one. Please also see our previous objection to the proposed density locally (3rd November 2016). In our view, densities at the margins of the site should reflect what is already there as far as is possible. It is surely not good planning practice to accept a 'harder than necessary' boundary that separates the new development from the current built form. The proposed Hereford Relief Road will provide a hard western edge to the development and there is absolutely no reason to replicate this to the south. The site is certainly large enough to have the highest densities further away from its margins within the natural bowl of the Yazor Brook catchment while also preserving as much as is possible of the setting of the Huntingdon Conservation Area.

Relationship to the north and south of Huntingdon

9. We note that the Design and Access Statement provides a local character study which assesses a number of development areas in Hereford City comparable to the scale of the proposed development. These assessments have informed the proposed parameter plans.....

Our previous letter on 3rd of November commented at length at what we see as the inadequacies of the local character study so is perhaps not surprising that the parameter plans are so ill informed in relation to Breinton. Quite simply none of the five areas are close to the development site and certainly none of them resemble the existing southern frontage. It is completely understandable therefore why these proposals clash with what currently exists. There may well be a wall of development that divides the new housing from existing residential areas rather than welcoming people in. This is a mega-development only comparable in living memory to Belmont south of the river. The lessons there about inadequate connectivity and integration with the rest of the city should be learnt and greater care taken at the site margins of 3 Elms to ensure that history does not repeat itself, especially along Kings Acre Road.

10. We note that concerns were raised by Breinton Parish Council regarding the design relationship between the proposed development and the existing properties on Kings Acre Road. This site boundary was assessed and considered as part of the above assessments. Importantly it is considered that whilst the properties to the south of Kings Acre Road comprises two storey ribbon development, the design approach at this stage must allow for the future development of the HRR and potential development potential on third party land(?) which will change the nature of the north side of King's Acre Road. Given the timescales involved for the development it is essential that flexibility is provided in the parameter plans so that the detailed development on the site can reflect these potential changes to the development context over time. For example the provision of these transport improvements could render this part of the site more appropriate for flats as opposed to large houses.

Our point is that the parameter plan does not provide flexibility for access, rather if it is approved so far in advance of actual need, it increases the possibility of their being four junctions on the Kings Acre Road in a half mile stretch. If / when the route of the HRR is finally decided the possibility of bringing all these proposed junctions together should be

explored to minimise the removal of individual trees and the undoubted threat to the integrity of what is a sizeable landscape feature in its own right. We remain strongly of the view that approving the parameter plan in relation to Kings Acre Road is premature and refer back to our comments of November 3rd 2016. We will not comment any more here on why this part of the site is absolutely not more appropriate for flats save to point out

i) the recent scientific evidence of the damage vehicle pollution causes to residents of local roads and

ii) that the majority of the houses along Kings Acre Road facing the development site are not large nor is there space remaining on the frontage here after the Park and Choose site has been provided to build (m)any large houses which are not what the area needs according to the most recent Housing Needs surveys. Indeed we can evidence the care which developers of the past took in siting, designing these properties

11. The parameter plans would allow the residential development to the east of the PRC to be up to three storeys which as mentioned is intended to allow the provision of a gateway or marker building to the site.the development will be subject to further design scrutiny in terms of character and appearance at the detailed design stage thus providing the opportunity to ensure that the final design of the development to be delivered will be appropriate in the context of the properties to the south of Kings Acre Road

Please refer back to our comments in this response at 3), 4), 6(i), 6(ii) and 9 which we believe to be relevant but will not repeat here

Ecology / Biodiversity

Whilst the access (to Kings Acre Road) has been strategically positioned to limit the loss of lime trees on this road, however we note that the supporting text to Policy HD5 (para 4.2.67) identifies that vehicle access options exist to connect to Kings Acre Road, thereby anticipating the loss of trees on Kings Acre Road to allow this to happen We understand that an application has been submitted for a Tree Protection Order for lime trees on the Kings Acre Road, although we note that some trees will be necessarily be impacted by the implementation of the HRR and the proposed access to the strategic urban extension and consequently the avenue of trees is unlikely to remain undisturbed in the long term. This would be a key access point for the strategic urban extension and in line with para NPPF 118 it is considered that the benefits of the scheme would outweigh the loss of the Lime Tree

The Parish Council does not pay large amounts of attention to the text of the Core Strategy unless it is actually carried forward into planning policies. Nor do we quote selectively from the NPPF and its associated guidance preferring instead to balance the various competing requirements. However; the Parish Council places considerable weight upon the arboricultural comments on this application. We agree with him that more than one tree will need to be destroyed if adequate sight lines are to be created for motorists. We note that NLP's comments above do not distinguish between a single tree and the more substantial damage that will be done to the integrity of the entire avenue of 64 trees if many trees are removed. We also refer you back to the points we make under 10 (above) and would suggest that such wholesale damage can be easily avoided if decisions on access to Kings Acre Road were not within the parameter plan at the present time. As we understand it, delaying this decision until more facts are known, particularly in relation to the precise route of the HRR will not affect the phasing of the development. In this connection we would be particularly interested in seeing the details of the Indicative Construction Environmental Management Plan referred to in Appendix 4 of the NLP response.

Again we regard it as [REDACTED] to suggest that the benefits of a single lime tree benefits would outweigh those of a major housing scheme but there is a growing amount of evidence about the environmental cost of this proposal. If these are taken together with the potential social and economic costs highlighted by Heineken and Cargill in their objections we would suggest that this development may not be as beneficial as first appeared.

We look forward to hearing from your colleagues about progress on the TPO application for the avenue of lime trees

We also look forward to hearing from you about the revised timetable for this application that apparently has been agreed.

In conclusion the Parish Council believes that since the Core Strategy leaves the detail of the masterplan for Hereford City to an Hereford Area Plan (and that this document is still apparently at least a year away) as well as the feeling that the current site specific master planning for 3 Elms so clearly fails the surrounding areas that it should be the role of the Planning Department and Committee to ensure that this strategic development does truly integrate with and serve the rest of the city as was originally intended.

Yours sincerely,

Graeme Adkin
Clerk, Breinton Parish Council

Breinton Parish Council



3rd November 2016

Mr Ed Thomas
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Sent by email to ethomas@herefordshire.gov.uk

Dear Mr Thomas,

- **Planning application – P162920/F**
- **Land at Three Elms, Hereford**
- **Land at Three Elms *Application* - Outline Planning Application with all matters reserved, except access, for the demolition of existing agricultural buildings and an urban extension comprising up to 1,200 homes (Use Class C3); employment development (comprising Use Classes B1/B2/B8); a neighbourhood centre comprising a mix of retail (Use Classes A1/2/3/5), health provision (Use Class D1) and leisure uses (Use Class D2); a new one form entry primary school; park & choose interchanges; together with open and play space, landscaping, highways, infrastructure and associated works.**

Breinton Parish Councillors considered this application at their meeting on 25th October. Prior to our detailed comments Councillors wish to make two general points: First the application does not provide sufficient attention to the rural areas bordering the site to the north, west or south, including Breinton. [REDACTED] the implications of this development will be felt by these areas and their residents just as much as in the suburbs of Hereford city to the east. In this connection, the parish council does not believe that any traditional 'affordable' housing that may be achieved on this site will adequately address the housing needs identified in our most recent survey. We consider that more flexible options are necessary for local residents such as are available through the growing number of community land trusts (CLTs) across the country particularly if these involve highly efficient properties that are cheap to run that our Neighbourhood Plan sought to promote. The Hereford CLT has been discussed with the Church Commissioners, housing and planning officers from Herefordshire Council and there could surely be a small amount of the land available at Three Elms gifted for such a body to develop.

Second the paperwork provided contains a number of mistakes and is contradictory. This is surprising given the number, time and cost of consultants putting this application together. The lack of attention to detail calls into question the accuracy of other assertions and conclusions and makes it difficult for local communities to know what is being proposed. We will note these points as they occur in our comments which now follow in more detail.

1. Highways

- a) It appears the proposed access to the development – certainly as far as Kings Acre Road (KAR) is concerned - is premature and should not be determined until the final route of the proposed Hereford Relief Road (HRR) is known. The KAR access is not needed until Phase two of the development when all issues concerning the route of the proposed Hereford Relief Road are resolved. The KAR boundary is all within the proposed notification zone. Other statutory bodies – Welsh Water, Environment Agency and Western Power – require further work and/or have indicated that early occupancy of any parts of the site is unlikely to be acceptable until this work is done. Thus, there is no immediate need to decide this access now, indeed there are reasons not to.
- b) The proposed developments will mean that there are 4 access points onto Kings Acre Road in the short distance between the Bay Horse pub and Huntington Lane. These being the proposed HRR, the southern boulevard/spine road for this development, access to the proposed Taylor Wimpey development (application 163345) and also Huntington Lane. Whether this last one eventually provides access to Huntington, is a cycle/pedestrian way or remains an exit for the two homes that face KAR is immaterial. It is simply inconceivable to accept so many junctions on such a very short stretch of road and is surely unacceptable in highways terms. So many junctions will inevitably lead to traffic congestion and a danger to all road users, cyclists and pedestrians. The illustrative master plan document says that the KAR junction has been relocated west to accommodate the proposed HRR roundabout when presumably it should say, relocated east?
- c) The Parish Council notes that there are issues with the location of the access points from other roads as well. On the Roman Road, what is being proposed is close to the approved development at the Paddocks (Mr Spreckley's representation) and on the Three Elms Road, the proposed junction is opposite residential properties (Mr Wathen's objection).

In our view the proposed mini-roundabout on Grandstand Road is in the wrong place and will do nothing but exacerbate existing delays while increasing danger of collisions. Strangely the access parameter plan also has a cycleway and footpath exiting the site at its far NE corner close to the junction with Tillington Road where visibility for motorists is really poor. Section 8 of the Transport Assessment gives the accident statistics but understates the problems experienced daily by local people already. In our view a better solution would be to build a single, higher capacity/full sized roundabout at this point to access the development and for Sandown Drive, Three Elms and the Tillington Roads thus minimising the number of small junctions, danger to all users and the frustration of interrupted traffic flows caused by too many junctions in a short stretch of roadway.

The concern about traffic using Sandown Drive / Grandstand Road as a short cut to the A49 can be addressed by appropriate traffic calming measures on this route however it is also fundamentally misconceived. Traffic exiting the development heading for the A49 north will primarily head north along Three Elms Road, along the Roman road to the Holmer West spine road (as noted by Highways England in their representation) while vehicles wanting the A49 south will head for Whitecross. Contrary to the Transport Assessment (TA 7.6.2) there is an argument for improving the roundabout here early in the development's life (which Breinton Parish Council would strongly support) and there is nothing

imperative about putting the Three Elms exit precisely at the point proposed. Councillors disagree with the assertions at para 7.6.6 of the TA on this matter.

It is hard to escape the view that the developers wish to create new junctions at locations that suit their own purposes and with very little consideration of local residents, adjacent developments and other road users by whatever mode they are travelling. Indeed, it might be considered strange that only 3 junctions are proposed in total since the figures in the TA (section 9) imply that two will be needed for Phase 1 alone and that consideration will be given to using Huntington Lane prior to the second junction's completion if its absence constrains housing numbers. This leaves only the Kings Acre exit to cater for the larger Phase two of the development.

These 'boundary' issues have been raised repeatedly at the various consultations but have simply not been dealt with adequately. The Planning Statement dismisses local Neighbourhood Development Plans as having no relevance to the proposals; however, the proposals do have a direct relevance the adjoining NDP areas but the impact on these areas are largely ignored.

- d) Unfortunately, the papers regularly show an incorrect speed limit along Kings Acre Road which is 40mph where it borders the proposed development site. Examples are Design and Access 7.1 and TA9.1. Again, this was pointed out at consultation meetings. How does this impact on the design of the junctions even if they were to go ahead in their proposed forms and locations which they should not be permitted to do?
- e) With the proposal to develop some 1,200 houses, it is difficult to see how the Transport Assessment concludes that the development can be adequately accommodated within the existing transport infrastructure and this conclusion masks the severe impacts that will arise from the current proposals.

By the Council failing to tackle the dominance of the car for short journeys within Hereford the proposed "relief road" running through or alongside this development, will divert further traffic from over capacity junctions in the North and South of Hereford to the junctions on Kings Acre and Roman Road, undoubtedly causing traffic to back up onto the HRR, which is designed to be a 60mph road.

- f) Junction details - this proposal is for right filter lanes and ghost islands at the entrance to the site from KAR. But what measures are proposed for traffic exiting right (west) from the development onto KAR? The road will be even busier than at present should the HRR proceed and the junction as designed will quickly prove inadequate. This should be designed for future use but, as previously noted, the Parish council does not agree that this should be done now.
- g) Sustainable transport measures lack ambition. This is a car based development and for that reason cannot be considered sustainable. Circulation within the site may be adequate and could possibly favour walkers and cyclists but the proposal simply does not provide adequately for these uses to continue beyond the site boundaries and in the absence of public transport provision the car will continue to be the mode of choice. The TA estimates less than 10 bus journeys an hour (despite the travel plan apparently promoting / raising awareness of alternatives to the car) while only looking to reduce car usage for the journey to work to 60%.

The public transport maps (TA Section 5) again ignore surrounding rural areas like Credenhill and Breinton for which bus usage by new Three Elms residents could provide necessary additional revenue to keep, or even increase, bus service frequency and evening / weekend services. These have been dramatically reduced in recent years. This development makes no attempt to reverse that decline.

2. Cycleways

- a) Once again the analyses ignore many of the cycleways in the rural areas surrounding the site (TA Figure 4.1). For example, the Stretton Sugwas – Kings Acre route, and the western two thirds of the cycle-path along the Roman Road and connecting into the cycle path through Moor Farm from Three Elms across to Yazor Road. Furthermore, the proposals do little to increase the integration of these existing stretches into the wider network. The TA does not consider the connectivity of this development into the City centre, where the majority of leisure facilities and services or connectivity with the various employment sites across Hereford. It makes no mention of the opportunity that exists for the old railway line to provide a cycleway through the site which could link out to Credenhill and for miles beyond, as a safe, direct off road walking and cycling route for both commuters and tourists
- b) The proposals for a cycleway along KAR are not shown on the master plan and are therefore not guaranteed to be delivered, but even if they were, it is not appropriate to have the cycleway along Kings Acre Road, separated from motorised traffic by white lines only as proposed, (TA section 4). The reason that cyclists move into the road is because the gutters, drains and holes in the road (most often close to the kerb) means it is not a safe part of the road for cyclists to ride. A cycleway separate to the highway itself is required and has been promised for a considerable number of years. This would also remove users from the close proximity to vehicle exhaust gases and particulates. The parish council disagrees fundamentally with the conclusion in table 4.1 of the TA that 'the vehicle carriageway is considered sufficiently wide for safe on road cycling'. Casual observations would show that it is not as vehicles either queue to pass cyclists leaving adequate space only when they can cross into the opposing (outbound) carriageway or pass too close to the cyclist without slowing down. While the first section of the TA says 'cycling offers most opportunities' its proposals offer no encouragement to increasing the number of users. Kings Acre Road is not considered safe now by too many potential cyclists and it will become much busier should the HRR ever be built. What is proposed does nothing to improve the situation currently let alone address future possibilities.

3. Flood risk

- a) The parish council completely agrees with the Environment Agency's (EA's) representation that 'this development should not just provide additional flood benefits downstream in the City' and that it should achieve actual 'betterment post development'. The area immediately south of KAR is actually lower than the proposed development site north of the road and the EA flood risk maps show the problem with overland flows. This area is also part of the Yazor Brook catchment and the ponding up of water in winter is a particular problem. Water eventually percolates underground across the proposed development site.

This flood risk was an issue in the granting of permission for development at Breinton Lee (application 123592) and because of the gradients there are no adequate channels south under KAR towards the Yazor Brook. Welsh Water refuse to allow surplus water into their drains along KAR. Residents of the Fayre Oaks caravan park and Huntsman's Drive have finally agreed an attenuation scheme with Herefordshire Council, Welsh Water and the Church Commissioners further into Hereford city. These examples demonstrate the wider problem.

The parish council fears that the development as currently planned will exacerbate the drainage issues along KAR with the increased amount of hard surface area and impermeable liners in swales, none of which are anywhere near KAR anyway. The fear is that the water-table will rise to the detriment of the surrounding area if not the development itself – which may have raised floor levels. However it would appear that even these might now be based on inadequate assumptions about climate change according to the EA's representations. Should either of the two large groundwater abstractors for local food/manufacturing industry reduce their pumping (the area immediately adjacent to KAR is a groundwater protection zone (SP21) which the EA does not think has been adequately addressed so far according to its representations) the situation is, potentially, even worse.

- b) In response to the question on the application form "Will the proposal increase the flood risk elsewhere?" the applicants have stated that it will not. Breinton Parish Councillors dispute this assertion. Once again the proposal ignores the impact on surrounding areas and existing residents. No flood attenuation measures are proposed any-where near the Kings Acre Road boundary nor is the problem even recognised. This development ignores an opportunity to finally resolve overland flooding north-west of Hereford in a coherent way rather than piecemeal fashion as developments come forward one by one in future years.

4. Park and choose

- a) The provision for park and choose is totally inadequate, being 75 places on Kings Acre Road, and another 75 on Roman Road. These are for commuters and visitors (Planning statement 4.20) and, at this scale will have a negligible effect on cars moving into Hereford. Any users will further exacerbate the junction problems referred to earlier and the public transport/cycling/walking 'offer' from the site boundaries is so poor – as previously noted – that these proposals are unlikely to be attractive anyway and will certainly not attract many residents.
- b) Please note that some plans show the site to be north of the Bay Horse pub, which is wrong according to the master plan, and not even within the site boundary. Such a location would put it outside any HRR which is clearly undesirable

5. Density

Core Strategy policy HD5 details a strategic urban extension of a minimum of 1000 houses and what is proposed is clearly substantially larger. This means the housing density on the available land – even if the EA does accept Flood zone 2 being used – increases. The average for Phase 1 is calculated at 28 per hectare

with Phase 2 – including the area adjacent to KAR – being 35p/h. This completely ignores the low density along the road even the almost continuous ribbon development immediately to the south. Densities at the margins of the site should reflect what is already there and this relates, in part, to the design sensitivity.

6. Design sensitivity

The Planning statement (1.6) states that the master plan has been ‘sensitively designed to integrate the site with Kings Acre Road (KAR)’. At 6.20 the same statement says that the proposals ‘respond to local character’ and that the Design and Access statement shows how the proposals respond to the site context. At 6.23 the proposals are supposed to offer a ‘seamless transition between Hereford (to the west?) and the countryside to the east’. [REDACTED]

- i. Building heights are at 14 metres on the KAR boundary in the relevant Parameter plan at the southern end of the proposed boulevard east into Hereford. This is the boundary left after the park and choose site. This is certainly out of keeping with the existing two storey ribbon development housing on the south side of KAR which is 10 metres maximum.
- ii. It will not be a “seamless transition” if there are three storey blocks (townhouses or flats?) on the KAR frontage which only actually exist currently on the Three Elms / Bobblestock boundary of the site. There is no such density, mass or type of property in existence on the opposite (southern) side of KAR and the clash in character are obvious.
- iii Part 9 of the Design and Access (D&A) statement is supposed to be a local character study. Five areas in Hereford have been selected with the aim of understanding the existing local character and thus positively influence the design at Three Elms. Since none of the five areas border the development site and certainly none of them resemble the existing KAR frontage; it is not surprising that these proposals clash with what currently exists. There may well be a wall of development that divides the new housing from existing residential areas rather than welcoming people in.

Quite simply the parameter plan on building heights and the D&A conflict since at 5.3.4 the D&A talks about two-storey lower density development facing KAR reflecting its existing scale. Further into the site there could be 2/3 storey ‘marker’ buildings formally suggesting a gateway into the site. Since the parish council believes that it is the parameter plans (not the D&A) that will be approved to carry forward key elements of the master plan we expect the parameter plan to be amended before approval or for reasons to be given why the D&A is not being followed.

7. Loss of trees on KAR

Finally, the avenue of Trees on both sides of KAR gives one of the most visually attractive entrances to Hereford city, provides a link to the horticultural heritage of Kings Acre and is one of the important public views covered by policy B16 of the Breinton Neighbourhood Plan. We believe that some weight should be attached to this plan's policies as the Referendum result is due on November 3rd well before the Three Elms application is due to be determined. The D&A promises a linear buffer along KAR to preserve the rural character of the area. At least one tree will have to be removed just for the proposed southern boulevard (and possible more given the required sightlines) with more at risk given the various junctions proposed for this stretch of road. The parish council objects to this wholesale removal of local landmarks and does not consider the applicants offer of buffers or other green infrastructure on/at the margins of the site in anyway mitigates for the loss of existing green infrastructure. These trees should be protected.

In conclusion

The adopted Herefordshire Core Strategy clearly stated that "Three Elms will be planned on a comprehensive basis, informed by a development brief and masterplan prepared through the Hereford Area Plan." In the absence of such a planning document, Breinton Parish Council feels that the outline application is premature and will not ensure that this development will integrate into the rural setting and the wider City scape. In the absence of such an important planning design document further details of this planning application SHOULD NOT be decided under delegated powers, but brought forward for consideration by democratically elected members with the opportunity for residents and adjoining parishes to inform the debate and comment on future proposals.

Breinton Parish Council want to be consulted on the further details of the proposals in future applications (even if they are to be decided under delegated powers) and with the opportunity to speak at the planning committee.

Yours sincerely,

Graeme Adkin
Clerk, Breinton Parish Council