

Objection Part 4

Summary of the objections lodged with NSC

The Applicant refers, in the Statement of Community Involvement, to the fact that the “Village and community within Bleadon are vocal and engaged with planning.” It is a pity, having established the veracity of this, that so little attention is paid to, and respect accorded to, the wishes of these people for the development proposed for their community.

There have been well in excess of 300 objections to the proposed development lodged with North Somerset Council; a remarkable number given the small size of the village. The overwhelming majority of these have come from village residents but it is pleasing to note that a few people from further afield, who know and love Bleadon, have been moved to respond in support of the village and in condemnation of the proposals.

Bleadon Parish Council takes note of the responses of its Parishioners and requests North Somerset Council to take heed of their requests to refuse planning permission for this proposed development.

The objections to the proposed development can be broadly summarised under concerns of:

- North Somerset Council’s Sites Allocation plan has been agreed with the Government inspector.
- The planned proposal lies outside the boundary of a designated “infill” village.
- The proposal is at far too great a scale for the size of the village.
- The proposal runs contrary to the principle of “Brownfield” sites being developed in preference to “Greenfield” sites.
- Detriment to the “Rural Character” of the village.
- Detriment to the “Rural Character” of the surrounding area, inclusive of the Mendip Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, designated “Heritage Landscapes” and the West Mendip Way footpath.
- Detriment to the ecological well-being of the area, including diverse species of bird, mammal, and insect; and including species protected by law.
- There is concern for the loss of agricultural land.

- Flood risk. The land concerned is notoriously ill-drained. The hard-landscaping of a housing-estate development will exacerbate the problem by accelerating surface run-off of precipitation. This in turn will affect other areas. The rhynes, at present, struggle to cope.
- There have been instances in the recent past of existing properties being flooded.
- Wessex Water Authority has recently paid compensation to residents who have had property flooded by raw sewage due to the failure of the existing sewer network to cope with demands put upon it.
- There are justifiable concerns over the potentially large increase in cars in the village as a result of the development. The A370 has been the scene of frequent accidents, including fatalities. Drivers increasingly use the narrow rural lanes accessing the village as “rat-runs” to avoid the A370 and reach the Bleadon Hill/Oldmixon area of Weston-super-Mare or to access the A38 via Loxton and Cross.
- Vulnerable rural road users such as horse riders and cyclists may be at increased risk of accident from higher volumes of traffic. Cars frequently exceed the 30mph speed limit and HGV’s ignore the weight restrictions on village roads.
- The fields have an amenity function for Bleadon next to level walks with open, rural, views adjacent to the village.
- The fields form a buffer zone between the village and the busy A370 road.
- Bleadon has an amenity function for Weston-super-Mare and the wider area. There is a fear that visitors, cyclists, and walkers/ramblers will be discouraged by the over-scale and out of character development and may no longer choose to visit the village.
- Concern has been expressed that the village shop/Post Office may close in face of competition from the more conspicuous (in terms of location on the A370) shop in the new development, with the resultant loss of the village Post Office. The nearest Post Office would then be 2.2 miles away. The Esso service station (with associated shop and workshops) has also expressed fear of closure with resultant job-loss.
- There is a concern that the “Dark Skies” currently enjoyed by the village will be lost as a result of illumination of the new housing estate (which impacts upon those residents enjoying astronomy and may adversely affect protected species of bat).

- Villagers have also expressed a valid concern that the proposal runs contrary to the policies of North Somerset Council, whose councillors have been democratically elected and entrusted to develop and uphold sustainable planning policies for the county.

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