

REPORT: 23.138 (2)

LAVERSTOCK AND FORD PARISH COUNCIL

SUBJECT: Additional Response to PA 20/11598/OUT (135 Houses at Church Road)

Report Author: Cllr. Ian McDonald

DATE: 20th November 2023

1. Report Summary

A report to councillors to approve an additional Parish Council response to the above Outline Planning Application.

2. Background

An Outline Planning Application was submitted in December 2020 to build 135 houses on a site at Church Road Laverstock, adjacent to Laverstock Down and Cocky Down. The Parish Council strongly opposed the application and submitted its response with reasons on 16th February 2021. A revised application for the same number of houses at the same location was submitted in April 2023. The Parish Council reiterated its opposition and its original arguments, together with additional arguments supported by evidence in the newly 'made' Neighbourhood Plan.

Wiltshire Council has produced a draft Local Plan and undertaken a public consultation exercise under Regulation 19 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Policy 30 in the draft Local Plan proposed an allocation of 50 houses on the Church Road site. In preparing our Parish Council response to Policy 30, it has become clear some of the arguments apply to the Outline PA and have not yet been submitted.

3. Summary

The revised submission of the Outline PA removed the provision of a car park and proposed other mitigating measures which persuaded Mark Wiltshire (Sustainable Transport) to withdraw the objection "that the development would encourage significantly increased private car use." The additional submission from the Parish Council seeks to show that the Traffic Assessment submitted by the Applicants is substantially flawed and therefore unreliable as evidence in support of the development not significantly increasing private car use, and misleading in its assessment of impact on local traffic.

4. Recommendation

- a) That the Parish Council approves the submission of an additional response to PA 20/11598/OUT
- b) That the Parish Council approves the text of the response as set out below.

Laverstock and Ford Parish Council Additional Response to PA 20/11598/OUT

Transport Assessment

The Parish Council considers the Transport Assessment to be substantially flawed and should be considered unreliable as supporting evidence that the development will not encourage significantly increased private car use. Furthermore, the Parish Council considers the Transport Assessment to be misleading in its assessment of the impact of the development on local traffic.

The Manual Traffic Surveys (Traffic Assessment Part 3), include the period of school drop-off by covering the period 0730 to 0930 but exclude the school pick-up time, covering only 1630 to 1830. The omission results in conclusions skewed in favour of sustainability and is far from accurate.

The Highway Network considered in Traffic Assessment Part 2 (Fig 4.8) includes the junction of Church Road with the A30 to the north and with the A36 to the south but excludes the junction with the A36 Southampton Road at Petersfinger, accessed via Manor Farm Road and Milford Mill Road.

Milford Mill Road provides the shortest distance and the fastest travel time between Laverstock and the A36 Southampton Road and gives access to a substantial range of employment and retail opportunities as well as a faster route to the New Forest and Southampton. Because of traffic congestion in Salisbury, the road is a major 'rat-run' for Salisbury traffic in both directions. It is narrow; contains two 'pinch points' (the medieval bridge, and the railway arch at Petersfinger); suffers from irregular, potholed edges; is prone to regular flooding from run-off throughout the year; and is subject to a 20mph speed limit. Use of the road as an access route to and from the Church Road site receives no mention, and certainly no impact assessment. The Parish Council consider this to be a substantial and major omission from the TA for the site and considers the road is most unsuitable for the additional weight of traffic generated by 135 additional houses on Church Road.

The Traffic Assessment Part 1 Figure 4.2 illustrates walking isochrones for 800m and 2k, measured from the centre of the site. This methodology fails to demonstrate whether or not all those residents situated to the east of the central point are also within "reasonable walking distance" of the facilities listed. As there is but one entrance and exit for the site, all residents will need to reach Church Road before walking further, therefore some will inevitably have further to walk than others.

The Parish Council acknowledges that Traffic Assessments tend to follow generic models, accepted by planning officers. Nonetheless in small villages, the impact from and on unique local conditions can have a critical effect on individual behaviours which is not reflected in the model.

Even at a generic level of modelling, the impacts could be more accurately estimated. The Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation has published guidance (*Planning for Walking 2015*) which states that about 80 per cent of journeys shorter than 1 mile are made wholly on foot. For journeys that are 1 to 2 miles long, 26 per cent are made on foot. Applying such multipliers to the 800m (0.5mile) and 2k (1.24 miles) isochrones offers a more accurate model of the number of potential journeys on foot, which would correspondingly increase the potential vehicular traffic impact.

The Site Accessibility Audit references in support of its modelling the IHT document (*'Guidelines for Providing for Journeys on Foot 2000'*) but omits the factors impacting acceptable walking distances contained in the Guidelines. The IHT Guidelines note that walking distances are impacted by factors such as age, ability, encumbrances (shopping, pushchairs), journey purpose, time savings, convenience, personal motivation. The Traffic Assessment omits any demographic modelling / assumptions of potential residents and potential impact on walking journeys.

The village of Laverstock is unique for its size in having four schools (Primary and Secondary) all situated on the same short stretch of Church Road. The TA paragraph 4.3.7 states that the 800m and 2km walking isochrones from the site, "roughly equate to a 10-minute and 25-minute walk respectively." However, the presence of the schools and the impact of pedestrian numbers and vehicles at school drop-off and pick-up times present a significant hindrance and disincentive to walking (see Appendix 1 below): lengthening walking times and increasing the hazards to pedestrian safety, especially for those with pushchairs and those with mobility or sight/hearing

restrictions. The Audit fails to model or acknowledge the impact of school drop-off and pick-up times on the walking speed and/or motivation of site residents to walk and thus on the level of car use at such times.

There is a lack of appraisal on the expected number of school pupils the development will generate and the capacity of the schools on Church Road to cater for them. The recently published draft Wiltshire Local Plan indicates that the schools currently have constrained capacity and pupils from the proposed site may need to travel to Salisbury schools, thus adding to potential car journeys.

The draft Wiltshire Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal (SA Objective 10) states: “The site is situated approx. 1.1km from Bishopdown Surgery. GP provision in Salisbury was forecast as being subject to a positive capacity gap by 2026, however the closure of one branch surgery in 2020 to relocate services has led to issues. Negative premises capacity gaps are therefore apparent within the primary care network. There is a planned extension to the hospital. Expanded services are to be offered by Porton and Winterslow branch surgeries following this the closure of the Wilton branch. As a result, . . . there may be some negative effects on the capacity of individual surgeries” The location and constrained capacity of local surgeries inevitably requires journeys by car or by long and unreliable public transport.” This site does not in reality offer access to primary health care within a reasonable walking distance, whatever the modelling may suggest.

APPENDIX 1





