

Lioncourt Planning Application

Stuart Cumella

11th December 2021

What is being proposed?

- 85 new houses on the large field South of the playing field (51 open market and 34 'affordable').
- Main access on Berrow Green Road, with footpath links to Hollins Lane and the NE corner of the playing field.
- Large SUDS drainage pool on NE corner, with pumping system.
- Development will be in keeping with local styles (ie red brick) and is away from the village's 'historic core'.
- Houses will feature high level of insulation, but not solar panels or ground-sourced heating.

Reasons for rejection

The Parish Council agreed on Monday that we recommend Malvern Hills District Council reject the application because:

1. It would be unsustainable.
2. It would make traffic worse.
3. It would spoil views.
4. It would make flooding worse.
5. There are problems with the design.

1. It would be unsustainable

- Development would build over 3.9ha of best and most valued agricultural land.
- Development is at far end of village >1km from schools. Narrow footpath along Berrow Green Road and none along Hollins Lane. There are few local employment opportunities and an inadequate bus service, which means more commuting. Travel plan estimates additional car journeys of c150,000/year.

2. It would make traffic worse

- There is very limited parking space in the centre of the village. Both the T-junction and the road between the schools are congested when schools open and close. Most traffic from the proposed estate would travel to Worcester, worsening this problem.

3. It would spoil views

- Rising site (5m) would blight views from nearby houses, the playing field and the Hopyards. Would impede protected views in the Neighbourhood Plan
- When playing football or cricket, people would no longer see fields and hills, but instead look up access roads with the brick sides of houses and rows of parked cars.
- LVIA for the application claims this would be 'mitigated' after 15 years because of tree-planting. But the plan shows planting planned only for the SW and NE corner of the site.

4. It would worsen flooding

- The NE corner of the site floods extensively once or more each year, spilling over into nearby houses.
- Building over a field increases run-off.
- The plan proposes a pump be installed, but storms can result in power cuts.
- Need also to consider whether the water and sewage facilities in the village would be adequate. Important because problems usually resolved years after they become evident.

5. There are problems with the design.

- Not a 'garden village' approach of tree-lined streets proposed by NPPF. Instead a dense urban-style development similar to those in Oldbury and Telford.
- Design is for an estate that looks away from the village. People in Hastings Close and the Sandpits would face a two-metre back fence.
- No easy route on foot to the main bus stop and GP outstation at St Peters Drive (*nb* the application assumes main bus stop for Worcester is near the Crown).

A campaign is needed because:

- Planning inspectors have allowed appeals against refusals by Malvern Hills District Council because of the lack of a five-year land-supply. This enables developers to claim applications should be approved as 'sustainable development' under the NPPF.
- But development of the kind planned here is not sustainable. Last summer, we saw thousands of square miles around the world in flames, droughts and food-shortages. Building over good agricultural land and increasing commuting is an act of insanity.
- Boris Johnson has argued that there is no reason that the countryside should be lost to new unaffordable homes, when he said 'You can... see how much room there is to build the homes that young families need... beautiful homes, on brownfield sites in places where homes make sense.'

What can we do?

- The Parish Council will formally respond to the planning application in the next few days.
- But also need a public campaign involving letters to the press, councillors and MPs. This should aim to keep the issue in front of public attention. Could have websites, posters and leaflets opposing the plan.
- Need to set up a campaign group, including people with skills in planning, public relations, and web-design.