

BLEADON PARISH COUNCIL

Notes from the Public meeting on 6th June 2019, 7pm to 8.10pm

42 people attended. Kirsten Hemingway convened the meeting.

The purpose of the meeting was to hear the points that residents of Bleadon would like Bleadon Parish Council (BPC) to take to the Planning Appeal Inquiry regarding the application for 200 homes.

Kirsten explained that the meeting was not a Parish Council meeting but that the outcome would be reported to BPC on Monday for decision. A statement will be prepared and one councillor will agree to present it at the Inquiry.

The Inquiry is scheduled to start on 23rd July in the Town Hall, Weston-super-Mare, lasting for five days (10am to 4pm each day). Any member of the public can attend and ask to speak; the Inspector decides.

Points made:

200 homes is an increase of 40% and would feel like an invasion. It would alter the character of the village completely.

Any number of houses on those fields is too many.

It is not up to us to offer alternative sites at the Inquiry.

We are not NIMBYs – we just don't want a massive new estate next to the village.

Where will the children go to school, and how will they get there (no buses!). And there is no paediatric service at Weston Hospital so children have to go to Bristol.

NHS already under stress; not enough surgeries, A&E closed overnight.

Over 90% of people said 'no housing outside the settlement boundary' in the Neighbourhood Plan survey. Therefore only small developments are possible on sites within the boundary.

Preserving the current character of the village is critical in terms of building style, history, people and environment. A 200-home estate would not do this.

Bleadon is not a geriatric ghetto – it is a thriving, well-integrated and mixed-age community with facilities catering for the current population.

New build has to be 70-100cm above flood level but the development here would cause flooding to existing properties.

Recreational use of part of one field would be preferable; many people commented in the survey that they would like to see more sports and recreation provision for older children and adults.

Wildlife impacts not fully assessed; need to protect our biodiversity.

Agricultural land is likely to be needed far more than housing if Brexit reduces our access to imported farmed products at a reasonable price.

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Purn Farm area is a brownfield site and more appropriate for housing than the fields (although it is outside the settlement boundary).

Growth has been gradual and proportionate from 33 houses in 1680 to 498 in 2019. The largest single development was 31 homes at Bleadon Mill, a brownfield site, in the 1990's. It is an 'infill village' (growth only within the settlement boundary) and a 'tucked in village' (most of the built village is not visible from the Mendip Hills AONB).

200 homes = 400 people AND as many cars.

Light, air and noise pollution will increase.

Traffic and congestion are already a big problem. Traffic to Weston will 'rat-run' on Celtic Way and Totterdown Lane.

Q) Affordable housing for young people is desirable but how can it be delivered without large developments? A) Negotiation with landowners can result in more appropriate scale of development and tenure.

A problem is that 'affordable units' are often bought up by landlords rather than going to individual families.

Residents of a large new estate will not feel part of the village.

Need to respond to points that the Appellant will bring up regarding previous loss of agricultural land to build housing; response is that we would not like to see the same mistake repeated.

Note that, in assessing housing applications, NSC considers that Weston-super-Mare provides sufficient 'facilities' for increased populations in Sandford, Banwell, Winscombe (and therefore Hutton, Locking and Bleadon), reducing the need for a development to provide them on site.

Refer to BPC's extensive comments on the original application.

At the close of the meeting Kirsten asked for any further comments to be written or emailed to parishclerk@bleadonparishcouncil.co.uk.