



Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Parish Council

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MC/16/3742 LAND SOUTH OF VIEW ROAD, CLIFFE WOODS

Outline planning application with some matters reserved for the erection of 50 retirement homes comprising a mix of 2/3 storey apartments and single storey bungalows, with ancillary meeting room, gymnasium, office, parking and garaging, to meet a need within the communities of Cliffe, Cliffe Woods, Cooling and Frindsbury. New access to View Road.

Attached are the comments of the Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Parish Council regarding the Outline planning application submitted to Medway Council.

We would like it noted that comments in the planning submission by the applicant's agent regarding support from C&CWPC are incorrect. The parish council's Planning Committee met with the Applicant and his agent (26/2/16), but no decision of support or objection was made.

Although the agent discussed his claimed benefits, councillors also mentioned a number of issues with the proposal and indicated that a decision would be made after the submission of a planning application. In fact, there appears to have been no attempt to address the issues raised at that meeting and indicative details have raised further issues.

We have met with the Applicant's agent again as part of the planning process (29/9/16) and again gave no indication of support or otherwise.

The Parish Council OBJECTS to the planning application as submitted by the applicant as it fails to demonstrate that the development is sustainable:

- 1) The development is outside the village boundary as defined in the Medway Local Plan 2003 and is premature in advance of further consultation and clarification of local needs and issues in the new Medway Local Plan and the emerging Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Neighbourhood Plan. Development on this site may set a precedent for development on that side of View Road, before consultation on Local Plan proposals.
- 2) Landscape – Application is in conflict with the Medway Landscape Character Assessment 2011 (13 Cliffe Woods Farmland) which recognises the value of the site. That document suggests the need to conserve and create.
- 3) Use of Agricultural Grade 2 land. The applicant is dismissive about the agricultural value of the land due to its size but does not challenge the designation. It is part of a larger field complex and is in active agricultural usage.
- 4) Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The application shares a 30m boundary with the Chattenden Woods & Lodge Hill SSSI. Natural England are waiting for further details from the applicant about impacts.

- 5) Dangerous access from View Road. Access is proposed on a 90-degree bend that is often subject to parking issues due to the proximity of a private nursery, where visibility around the bend is poor and accidents and near misses are common (one involved a head on collision with a local bus!). The applicant shows sufficient sight lines **from** the proposed site, but stationary vehicles waiting to enter the site from the west will not be visible to other traffic from the Town Road junction.
- 6) Indicative plans show insufficient car parking, at less than one per dwelling, and not accounting for visitors to the dwellings, workers and visitors to the office, gym and community facilities. Due to the rural location, car ownership is very high in comparison with urban areas as public transport is relatively poor.

Lack of sufficient car parking spaces will cause more vehicles to be parked on View Road, increasing congestion and danger to road users, especially at peak times.

Due to the location and relatively poor bus service, it is incorrect to assume that residents would favour travel by bus. Residents below state pensionable age are not entitled to concessionary bus passes (we are given to believe eligible age for residents to be housed in this proposal is 55+).

Service interval for buses is generally one per hour to Chatham on weekdays and Saturdays but this does stretch to longer at certain times, about one and a half hours. Only three buses a day to Gravesend.

- 7) Pressure on local services. There are pressures on existing services within Cliffe Woods. The Parkside Car Park (owned by the Parish Council) is often full, leading to parking on local streets. There are often queues of customers at the Post Office/Cooperative Store, leading to customers traveling elsewhere – into town.

The Cliffe Woods Community Centre has capacity issues and is unable to provide bookings for local groups (including the Parish Council).

- 8) Pressure on local Doctor's Surgery, we would expect the residents of the proposed site to be in need of more medical support due to their age. The current surgery does have difficulties in supporting current needs (catchment area also includes Frindsbury and Wainscott), with extended waiting time for appointments reported by local residents. The surgery also continues to have difficulty in recruiting doctors and locums.
- 9) 3 storey dwellings not appropriate for the usage suggested and out of keeping with the local area where there are no other three storey dwellings.
- 10) Southern Water have responded "...That Southern Water cannot accommodate the needs of this application without the development providing additional local infrastructure. The proposed development would increase flows into the wastewater sewerage system and as a result increase the risk of flooding in and around the existing area, contrary to paragraph 109 of the NPPF". The main sewer in Cliffe Woods often backs-up, especially at the junction with View Road/Town Road.
- 11) As an indirect impact, the movement of local residents into this development will free up homes for younger families that will increase the demand for schooling (including pre-school).
- 12) Identified need is questioned. The applicant indicated a 'blind' questionnaire was sent to just 2,455 properties in Cooling, Cliffe, Cliffe Woods and Frindsbury Extra on a sample basis. The response rate does not appear to be indicated in the application, although it is used to support a need. We understand the response rate was < 5%.

We note response letters from two other parish councils, neither of these has been in contact with our parish council about this proposal.

Chris Fribbins
Clerk