



Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Parish Council

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MC/16/3669 LAND OFF TOWN ROAD, CLIFFE WOODS

Outline planning application with some matters reserved (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) for up to 225 residential dwellings (including up to 25% affordable housing), introduction of structural planting and landscaping, informal public open space and children's play area, surface water flood mitigation and attenuation, vehicular access point from Town Road and associated ancillary works

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

The parish council's Planning Committee met with Gladmans Development (27/7/16), but no decision of support or objection was made. The committee did request an extension of the pre-planning consultation to include Cliffe and Cooling Street as well as Cliffe Woods. Gladmans agreed and also sent a consultation leaflet to Cooling. There was a request to extend the consultation period as it took place during the summer holidays, although an extra week was granted this did limit the ability of some residents to respond. The parish council is concerned that the outline consultation appears to have been submitted without due consideration of the comments from the parish council and local residents and appears to have been written before the Pre-Planning Consultation took place.

Although Gladman's discussed their design principles, parish councillors also mentioned a number of issues with the proposal and indicated that their decision would be made after the submission of a planning application. In fact, there appears to have been little attempt to address the issues raised at that meeting and indicative details have raised further issues. We have met with the Applicant 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 further developments in that side of Town Road.
- 2) The proposed development is not adequately sustainable leading to a significant level of dependency on car travel.
 - a. Traffic volumes on the B2000 - last survey carried out May/June 2009.... Between Mortimers and Ladyclose over an 8-day period Sunday to following Monday both way vehicle count was 58,400. Traffic volumes have increased significantly since that date due to an increase in car ownership in Cliffe as younger families move in.
 - b. Due to the rural location, car ownership is likely to be high in comparison with urban areas as public transport is relatively poor with service interval for buses generally one

per hour to Chatham on weekdays and Saturdays but this does stretch to longer at certain times, one and a half to two hours and no local services for workers returning from London. Only three buses a day to Gravesend.

- c. The indicative provision of footpaths and cycle lanes within the proposed site are welcome, but have limited connection to external routes. There is a gap in footpath provision/cycleway between Cliffe Woods and the pavement at Mockbeggar Farm. Cyclists and occasional pedestrians do use the B2000 on occasions, but the width is limited and the mix of traffic includes many large lorries. Access to Cliffe is also very poor with limited highway width.
 - d. Dangerous access from Town Road. The proposed access is between the junctions of View Road and Tennyson Avenue, where visibility is poor and the type and volume of traffic remains the highest concern of local residents (resident's surveys 2005 & 2015). This development would further complicate traffic movements in that area and create distraction for drivers leading to further accidents. Improvements are required at existing junctions.
 - e. Pedestrian Access across Town Road (B2000) is particularly poor. There is no footpath on either side of the road on most of its length and it has not been possible to provide drop-kerbs for wheelchair residents to the west of Town Road as there is no safe place to cross from, or to, on that side of the road, even where there are limited pavements.
 - i. The applicant proposes a footpath between View Road and Tennyson Avenue, (two informal crossing places are mentioned). If the road is moved to the west to compensate, the hedgerows (which the applicant indicates will be retained) would have to be removed (sightlines from the proposed access would be impacted in any case) and sightlines for traffic may be impacted further.
 - ii. The applicant points out the use of the Public Right of Way to the north of the site. This joins Town Road adjacent to the junction with Merryboys Road and is likely to be the path of choice for residents accessing the Recreation Ground and the School/Pre-School which are located on the North/North East boundary of the site. It could also be the preferred route for access to the Doctors/Shops/Community Centre in Parkside to avoid a detour to the south. There are no pavements on the west side of Town Road at that location and do not extend to the road junction on the eastern side.
 - iii. The proposed play area, walking and cycle routes around and through the site would also be an increased draw to residents of all ages in the existing Cliffe Woods village – crossing Town Road.
- 3) Landscape – Application is in conflict with the Medway Landscape Character Assessment 2011 (13 Cliffe Woods Farmland) LCA which recognises the value of the site. The assessment suggests the need to conserve and create.
 - 4) Use of Agricultural Grade 2 land (Regional Land Classification national designation 24/8/2010). The policy suggests the protection of the best and most versatile agricultural land. The applicant has provided their own assessment and suggest primarily Grade 3b, it has been in active, very productive, agricultural usage for many years.
 - 5) 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).

- 6) Pressure on local Doctor's Surgery, we would expect considerable pressure from the development. 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.
- 7) Although Southern Water have responded that they are able to supply water and provide foul sewage arising from the site, the main sewer in Cliffe Woods often backs-up, especially at the junction with View Road/Town Road.
- 8) Education.
 - a. The existing Cliffe Woods Pre-School has capacity issues in satisfying the current demand. Pressure on the school will require them to move out of their current school premises and provide new buildings, at their cost (just to satisfy current demand).
 - b. The Cliffe Woods Primary School is already over-subscribed and there are plans for an expansion of 0.5 Full Terms of Entry (FTE) in 2017 to satisfy current demand. Further pressure could see the school expand to over 1,000 pupils – with problems generated by that size and further issues of access at school drop-off and pick-up. As the school is an Academy, it is possible that this may be rejected. There are already issues of capacity at the other, nearest, school St. Helens CoE. The primary access on the B2000 is particularly dangerous with limited width and problems of larger vehicles passing each other therefore, traffic movements would be expected to grow along the B2000 into the urban area for primary schooling.
 - c. Access to secondary and further college education is already a significant flow on the B2000 and would be expected to increase further as there is no provision in either village.
- 9) Heritage – If the proposal is granted there should be an archaeological condition to allow inspection of any finds during construction. The site (pillboxes) are part of a World War 2 Stop Line across the peninsula and a designation has been suggested.
- 10) The longer term management of the site (Play area, walks and cycleways is not defined in the outline permission and would have to be determined in advance of any provision).

Chris Fribbins
Clerk