

Potton Town Council Comments on Planning application CB/19/04009/FULL

Land to South of The Ridgeway, Potton

As a result of analysis of this proposed development using the Neighbourhood Plan checklist, the following are the reasons why Potton Town Council should object to the development.

Objections

1. The Potton Neighbourhood Plan (NP) supports Medium Scale development (from 50 to 500 dwellings) over the lifetime of the plan (2016-2035). Approval of this application would result in a total increase in dwellings of 555 therefore exceeding the NP supported growth.
2. Although this site was awarded PPA in the CBC Local Plan, this was before planning consent was awarded to 85 dwellings in Biggleswade Road West (the adjacent area) and so we believe that there is no justification for a further 100 dwellings.
3. The Neighbourhood Plan Vision B states: 'There will be controlled, proportionate and uniform growth over the period of the Plan with sustainable developments that meet the needs of the Town and its residents'. Following the substantial growth over the past 3 years, in order to comply with this vision statement, even if the PPA is retained, any development should not be considered until at least 2030 in the last five years of the Plan.
4. Access from The Ridgeway is considered inadequate. We believe that the Transport Assessment is out of date. For instance, it states that there is open land to the south. This land is currently under development of 85 houses.
5. We also question some of the assumptions made regarding the Parking Assessment. It is not valid to assume that existing residents of The Ridgeway will now park their cars in garages or on driveways thus relieving congestion on the road. The Transport Assessment also fails to identify the fact that many vehicles of non-residents are parked in The Ridgeway. These are residents from nearby streets who do not have the benefit of dedicated parking spaces or on-street parking opportunities directly adjacent to their properties. This is an issue which has been exacerbated as a result of a loss of on-street parking due to the Tall Trees development.
6. No consideration has been taken into the increased vehicular activity at the junction of The Ridgeway and Biggleswade Road. Biggleswade Road is already very busy and an additional potential 200 cars using this junction is considered excessive and potentially dangerous. This junction is also close to the junction of Biggleswade Road and Station Road which incorporates a pedestrian crossing. It is not uncommon for traffic to be queueing past The Ridgeway junction at busy times.
7. The transport Assessment makes judgements on the Central Bedfordshire 2011 Census, which are not applicable to a small (growing) market town. There is limited local employment and buses beyond Biggleswade or Sandy are extremely limited (weekly in some cases).
8. It is not possible to use buses for commuter connections at the railway stations of Biggleswade and Sandy. Therefore commuters, and those working in surrounding towns, will need to travel by car. This is underplayed considerably in the Transport Assessment.
9. It is already a fact that the Healthcare provision in Potton is severely overstretched. Recently, a wait of up to 6 weeks has been experienced to achieve a doctor's appointment. The population increase resulting from this development would exacerbate this problem.
10. The Green Travel Plan contains several mistakes and should therefore be ignored. For instance:-
 - a. Paragraph 1.2 states 96 dwellings whereas the proposal is for 100 dwellings
 - b. Paragraph 5,26 states that 6% is less than the national average of 5.7%
 - c. Paragraph 5,34 refers to 'the presence of Houghton Regis High Street'. This implies that the report is a simple cut and paste of an existing report rather than a fully researched new report.
 - d. The bus service considered is inappropriate for train commuters. The first bus is 09.45 and the last bus 17.45.
 - e. Paragraph 1.1 states that the report has been prepared 'in support of a planning application' which suggests that the result of the report is a foregone conclusion.