

North Cadbury & Yarlington Parish Council

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**Minutes of the Parish Council (PC) on site Planning Meeting
held in North Cadbury Allotments Car Park on Tuesday 11th January 2022
at 2.00pm to consider PA 21/01455/OUT – Amended outline application with all
matters reserved except access for up to 81 dwellings, a new access road, a new
junction on to the A359, open space, school parking and drop off, landscaping and
associated works on land at Ridgeway Lane, North Cadbury**

Councillors Present:

Malcolm Hunt (Chairman)
Karen Harris,
Diane Rickers,
John Rundle

Sue Gilbert,
Andy Keys-Toyer,
Alan Rickers
Maria Viney

In Attendance: The Applicants (Mr and Mrs Longman), Mr Andrew Tregay, Boon Brown (Agent) and nineteen members of the public.

22/07. Declarations of interest: Cllr Gilbert declared a personal interest as her property, Ridgeway Farm, adjoins the application site; she would participate in the discussion as a member of the public but not vote.

22/08. South Somerset District Council (SSDC) have allowed the applicant considerable additional time to respond to the original objections and consultees' responses since 31st October 2021. The revised road access and other amendments which are purely illustrative still do not make this application fit for approval. Therefore, following a full and thorough consultation with residents and councilors, the PC would like to register its strong **objection** to the amended outline application as follows:

Latest Amendments

- Realignment of the access road still allows motorised access to Ridgeway Lane
- Removal of Trees, Shrubs and Hedgerows (under TPO) are damaging to River Cam corridor
- No phosphate mitigation
- Footpaths and new Nature Trail provision are compromised by access and flooding

Original Objections remain

Fundamentally the proposed development creates great harm and is completely at odds with the scale and character of North Cadbury (NC) which is a Rural Settlement. It delivers no significant benefits to the settlement, creates a substantial isolated development separate from the village and is not sustainable.

Key Points are:

- The harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area

- The harm to the setting of Ridgeway Farmhouse a Grade II listed building
- The proposal conflicts with NPPF and local planning policies SD1, SS2, EQ2 and EQ3
- The proposal is NOT a sustainable development
- The North Cadbury and Yarlington Neighbourhood Plan (NC&Y NP) now at Regulation 16 is a viable alternative approach and is supported by SSSC, the Parish Council and the wider community

1. SETTING – HARM TO CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE AREA

The proposed site and 1km estate road are visually prominent particularly in the north from the Cary Road, the south from the Iron Age Fort of Cadbury Castle and from the east the conservation area of the village. The site will impact North Cadbury Conservation Area as a result of the change to its setting as the eastern boundary of the site abuts the western boundary of the conservation area. The development proposed would alter the nature of this location with intrusion into the countryside creating a far harder, denser, edge and be at odds with the landscape character of NC. Even with the proposed landscaping, it will be impossible to disguise the urbanisation effect resulting in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area.

The setting in this location would change from the current agricultural context to an urban extension of the village. The proposed link road from the A359 would increase these impacts on the historic landscape character further contributing to an urbanising effect to the north of the site beyond the River Cam.

The proposal does not respect or enhance local landscape characteristics of general tranquillity, dark night skies, hedgerows demarcating field boundaries and mature and ancient trees along the River Cam corridor with its associated protected riverside vegetation.

The proposal will appear prominent in the landscape, have visual and community impacts on the western side of North Cadbury. With the lack of safe and accessible pedestrian footpath linkages to the village centre, it will contribute to traffic and road safety issues and local environmental sensitivities.

The proposal represents massive overdevelopment and by reason of siting, scale and protrusion into open countryside, will result in an inconsistent massing of the built form that fails to relate to the linear pattern and rural character of the settlement. The scheme is not commensurate with the scale and character of the settlement and is not outweighed by the “proposed” benefits, as such it is contrary to the aims and objectives of LP policies SD1 and EQ2.

2. HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT - HARM AND SETTING TO RIDGEWAY FARMHOUSE A GRADE II LISTED BUILDING

The site is an important part of the setting of the Grade II listed Ridgeway Farmhouse. Development would permanently separate the farmhouse from its agricultural setting, its open countryside placement of pastureland and historic orchards to the north and west.

Ridgeway Farmhouse has been historically sited in a rural farming landscape since the 17C. The proposed site has remained in farming use, and the wider rural farming landscape to which it belongs is the last link between the Ridgeway Farmhouse and its historic setting. What remains therefore contributes to this significance, informs our understanding and appreciation of the heritage asset.

Wider views from a nearby public rights of way (PROW) (which cross the site) allow the significance of the listed building to be appreciated both visually and from the quiet and tranquillity afforded in a farming context.

Historic England (HE) guidance states that “*Setting enhances the contribution to the significance of a heritage asset.*” This farmland setting is significant for Ridgeway Farmhouse despite the application’s mitigation.

Harm to the setting of Ridgeway Farmhouse and Scrumpy Cottage which is within the curtilage of Ridgeway Farmhouse [*Historic England Advice Note 10: Listed Buildings and Curtilage*] by unsympathetic development does not accord with National Planning Policy Framework and it will further detract from the significance of the asset. Whilst the harm may be ‘less than substantial,’ within the spectrum, the assessment is towards the higher end of ‘less than substantial harm’ given the heritage asset’s last link between Ridgeway Farmhouse and its rural setting.

The revised Masterplan with a two lane 1km estate road, 81 dwellings, MPOS for informal recreation, 2M wide modern grade footpaths, with probable low-level lighting, urbanises the setting and removes the current tranquil character of this area, completely altering the setting to the Grade II listed building. The setting of the Ridgeway Farmhouse and its connection its historic farmland setting would be irretrievably lost.

The proposal conflicts with Policy EQ3 of the South Somerset Local Plan “*All new development proposals relating to the historic environment will be expected to safeguard or where appropriate enhance the significance, character, setting and local distinctiveness of heritage assets*” whilst in the NPPF considerable importance and weight are given to the desirability of preserving the setting generally and of listed buildings, weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets.

3. PROPOSAL CONFLICTS WITH NPPF AND LOCAL PLANNING POLICIES

The revised indicative plans do not allay concerns. The proposal conflicts with SSDC Local Plan Policies SD1, SS2 and EQ2 which require that new development in rural settlements such as North Cadbury be commensurate with the scale and character of the settlement, conserve and enhance the landscape character of the area and reinforce local distinctiveness and respect local context.

“Policy SS2 seeks to ensure the development needs of Rural Settlements can be met, whilst restricting the scale of such growth. Proposals should be based upon meeting the needs of the Rural Settlement, demonstrate support from the community, which is best placed to determine local need. Development proposals should have come from the local community or been tested and checked through local consultation and engagement.”

The applicant has not meaningfully consulted with, nor does the proposal represent, the wishes of the community, with 260 objections to date.

4. THE PROPOSAL IS NOT A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

“Development will be permitted where it is commensurate with the scale and character of the settlement, where exceptions identified below have been met.”

- a) **Provides employment opportunities appropriate to the scale of the settlement.**

This is purely a residential development.

b) Creates or enhances community facilities and services to serve the settlement.

The applicant proposes:

“large nature reserve, green corridors and considerable tree planting”

The indicative planting, nature reserve, Managed Open Spaces (MPOS) are there to reduce the impact of the development on the setting. They serve purely the development and do not serve the wider settlement which already benefits from PROWS across this site, indeed much of the existing well used trails and walks will be lost. Two and a half years of Neighbourhood Planning evidence shows Ridgeway Lane is amongst the top recreational choices in the Parish with nearly 70% of respondents rating the space as very important and highly valued as a Local Green Space.

“children’s play space (both formal and informal)”

The play spaces are distant from the settlement and would only serve residents of the site particularly given the recently improved children’s playground and recreational facilities to be found in the centre of the village.

“Parking and drop off area for the school”

Parents at the school indicate that the drop off parking would be completely unrealistic, the proposed location at 300m is too distant, routes are unlit and access with young children is impractical.

“Safe pedestrian access via off-road footpath access to the village’s facilities”

There is NO EASY ACCESS using the proposed footpath from the development to the village or the school. Elderly and parents with children will be confronted with access furniture to navigate, comprising a Stile and further along a 5-bar gate, emerging into an unsafe part of Cary Road.

Ridgeway Lane is suggested but it is a sunken hollow used by local traffic with no pedestrian facilities, no car passing places and impassable in severe weather. In both cases above we would recommend the planning officers, if they have not done so, walk the routes to see for themselves.

Poor foot access and the realignment of the estate road, means residents of the development (larger than South Cadbury) are isolated and separated from the rest of North Cadbury. The proposal reduces existing community facilities and is NOT a sustainable development.

c) Meets identified local housing need, particularly for affordable housing

The Rural Settlement of NC *“to which national countryside protection policies apply”* has been designated a “Village” under the Settlement Hierarchy within the Emerging Local Plan. NC is expected to provide minimum 60 dwellings INCLUDING EXTANTS over a 20yr period i.e. 3 dwellings p.a.

The applicant bases its argument on district wide housing need and proposes 81 homes EXCLUDING EXTANTS which would mean a minimum of 108 dwellings, nearly double the requirement of the Emerging Local Plan. The proposal also advocates building 28 affordable homes (in contrast to actual local need – see

next para) at a time when there are a substantial number of unsold affordable homes in Castle Cary with the prospect of more being built.

In contrast the 15yr NC&Y NP (now at Regulation 16) has obtained sufficient land for 34 new dwellings plus 27 extants giving a total of 61 dwellings over the 15yr plan period, a run rate of 4 p.a. delivering 12 affordable houses for local people as identified in the Local Housing Needs Assessment at the beginning of the plan period. This is supported by SSDC Strategic Planning, local landowners, NC&Y Parish Council, and the Community as a whole.

Please Note:

Whilst not a planning issue, SSDC should concern themselves over the proposal's **viability** given the cost of the new 1km estate road, a new bridge, general infrastructure, phosphate mitigation and affordable housing etc. It is apparent to all residents that once the access road is approved the applicant will eventually attempt to develop his significantly larger tracts of adjacent land up to the A359.

d) Proposals should be consistent with relevant community led plans and have support of the community.

AECOM's assessment and SSDC's revised 2020 HELAA concluded the site is not suitable for development. The applicant has purely pursued their own scheme, challenged the findings of the NP, and failed to engage the community, with the proposal being overwhelmingly rejected by the community.

It is clear the proposal does not meet permitted development exception criteria and therefore Policy SS2 "Development in Rural Settlements will be strictly controlled and limited" applies.

IN CONCLUSION

The Council's five-year land supply (estimated at 4.7yrs) is marginally in deficit and the applicant will maintain that the presumption of sustainable development takes precedent.

The scale and nature of the proposal results in irreversible harm to the character and appearance of the area, and harm to the setting of the Grade II listed building Ridgeway Farmhouse, which are not outweighed by "proposed" benefits of the development.

In accordance with para 11d i) and footnote 6 of the NPPF it is then clear that permission should not be granted as the application of policies that protect, are clear reasons for refusing the development proposed.

22/09. RESOLUTION: A range of questions were asked at the onsite meeting and the responses given by the Agent, Andrew Tregay, failed to impress those present. Generally speaking these failed to build on the knowledge and understanding of the residents. The limit of the changes made to take account of the concerns expressed at the planning meeting, held on 13th July 2021 to consider the initial application, were unimpressive. The PC has to observe that throughout this process, there has been a marked unwillingness on the part of the Applicants to engage actively and openly on their plans with the community. Consequently the proposals have been very unpopular.

The PC strongly objects and agreed unanimously to recommend **REFUSAL** of the application.

The meeting closed at 2.45pm

Signed.....

Dated.....