

Response to public consultation from Chedworth Parish Council

Dear Mr Wooddisse

Housing adjacent to Chedworth Village Hall

The parish council considered your draft proposals at its meeting on Monday and respond as follows:

1 Overdevelopment of Site

It is made clear in the approval notice that the approval of the PiP application established that between 1 and 3 houses would be acceptable in principle. It also states that the constraints of the site may limit the development to a single house and the parish council would argue that this is the case.

In an urban area, three properties may be acceptable on a plot of this size, but in this village setting, in a location surrounded by open space and the grounds of the village hall, a single property set in a more spacious garden would be more appropriate and would echo the layout of houses further along the road.

The current layout means that the rear of the houses and the gardens are facing North West and will not benefit from the sun until late in the day. If a single property was located towards the north of the site with the garden in front, then the garden would be a much more pleasant place as it would benefit from the sunshine – anyone who has spent time in the children's play area at the hall knows what a cold, windy spot that is, shaded as it is by the hall in the same way as the gardens will be shaded by the new houses until evening.

2 Dangerous Accesses onto highway

Restricting the development to one house would also reduce the number of accesses required – and would mean it would be possible to provide a sufficiently large area to allow for vehicles to easily turn on site and enter and exit in a forward gear.

Cotswold District Council Local Plan states, in policy INF4 under Highway Safety, that:
'Development will be permitted that:

- a. is well integrated with the existing transport network within and beyond the development itself, avoiding severance of communities as a result of measures to accommodate increased levels of traffic on the highway network;
- b. creates safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians, avoids street clutter and where appropriate establishes home zones;**
- c. provides safe and suitable access and includes designs, where appropriate, that incorporate low speeds**
- d. avoids locations where the cumulative impact of congestion or other undesirable impact on the transport network is likely to remain severe following mitigation; and**
- e. has regard, where appropriate, to the Manual for Gloucestershire Streets or any guidance produced by the Local Highway Authority that may supersede it.'

It is clear that conditions b, c and d, highlighted in bold above, are not met by the current proposal. The development will create conflict between traffic and pedestrians, does not provide safe and suitable access for the houses and given that this road, with a 60mph limit, is one of the busiest into the village does not satisfy condition d either.

The road is used by vehicles going to and from both Upper Chedworth and Middle Chedworth and already has cars permanently parked opposite the site at the houses at Valley View.

In common with the rest of the village there are no pavements.

Because the houses are so densely packed on the site only one of them has a layout which allows cars to turn on site. Two of the properties require cars to either reverse onto the site or out onto the highway. This would be dangerous in any location but is particularly concerning on this stretch of road which is the main route for all children attending the village primary school. (With no parking available at the school itself parents are urged to park at the village hall and walk past the site to the school.)

It is completely unacceptable to have cars reversing on a road in this location where children are walking on a regular basis. It is essential that the scheme is designed in such a way that cars can drive onto the site, turn and drive out again – both in a forward gear.

3 Noise Pollution

Reducing the development to one house would also give the opportunity to keep the house as far away from the village hall as possible to limit noise disturbance from the village hall and allow an effective buffer between the house and the hall.

In considering the PiP environmental officers stated that ‘some form of residential may work with sophisticated schemes of mitigation in the built design, form and layout.’ They also added: ‘It’s not an ideal site’.

In his report the planning officer suggests that the constraints of the site may limit the number of dwellings to a single dwelling which would allow for the creation of a buffer zone to be created between the proposed dwelling(s) and the village hall and tennis courts. It would also reduce the potential impact of the proposal on the activities undertaken at the community facilities.

The parish council would urge the developers to follow this advice and consider designing a scheme with a single house on the site with the required ‘sophisticated’ schemes of mitigation. There is certainly no evidence that any thought has been given to this important issue in the draft scheme.

Comments are made in the officer’s report that the hall co-exists with the neighbouring houses, but the existing houses are considerably further away – particularly from house 1 – and over the years there have been complaints from properties on the opposite side of the road to the hall about late night events.

It is essential that steps are taken to mitigate against noise pollution from the village hall. The village hall management committee is constantly trying to increase use of the hall in order to ensure its viability and it could have serious implications for the hall if late night events are curtailed due to noise complaints.

Because three houses are packed onto the site it will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to provide a buffer – in fact the boundary closest to the village hall adjacent to property 1 shows no planting at all.

Light pollution from HVLTC

The tennis club is an invaluable asset in the village providing sporting opportunities in a country area where organised sport is limited. The club has serious concerns that the regular

use of floodlights will become an area of conflict between the new householders and the club.

It is essential that any development is designed in such a way that there will be no future demands for a time limit on the use of the lights. If it is not possible to guarantee this then no development should be allowed on the site.

4 Site constraints

The scheme fails to show the tall hedge on parish council land between the courts and the site, which was planted to act as a buffer between the courts and the road and houses at Valley View, it is important that this hedge, which is planted on the parish council land adjoining the boundary fence, remains. However, this will shade the site – especially the small garden of plot 3 and prevent the planting of the individual trees shown on the proposed scheme.

5 Environmental Standards

“The UK government has committed that the UK will be net zero carbon by 2050 and the Cotswold District Council declared a climate emergency in 2019, this development will have a life beyond 2050 and therefore anything constructed now will have a direct impact on the UKs carbon emissions post 2050. It is therefore essential that any proposed developed goes beyond the ‘backstop’ minimum Part L regulations and provides a development which is Net Zero now. It is also critical that any development does not contribute to air pollution in the construction or operation in line with National Planning Policy Framework para 124. To this end we would request conditions that require the developer to:

- demonstrate that all development including the construction activities and the occupation of the homes will be net zero carbon in line with the CDC’s climate emergency declaration. The development should therefore be developed in line with PassiHaus standards or similar.
- maximise all renewable energy generation on site, not limited to providing heat and hot water from decarbonised solution (heat pumps) and maximising the solar potential of the roofs through good orientation of roof lines
- provide electric vehicle charging points for all cars that can be parked on site in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework para 35
- not include flues or chimneys which would allow the burning of fossil fuels or wood in stoves or open fires

6 Biodiversity

This piece of scrubby land is an invaluable area for a multitude of wildlife. The area has remained uncultivated and untouched for many, many years resulting in a perfect home for many plants, mammals, reptiles, birds and invertebrates and it is therefore essential that a detailed survey is carried out to find out what is present and then a plan prepared outlining exactly how the development is going to ensure that habitats are not damaged or if this is not possible then alternative sites created.

7 Water run off

There are already problems in the valley , particularly but not exclusively in Hawkes Lane, caused by water run-off from as far as Fields Road. It is essential that this is not exacerbated by the development. The more houses, the more hard surfaces and potential run-off.

All hard surfaces must be permeable and provision must be made for water to be retained on site.

Conclusion

The granting of the PiP for up to three houses does not mean that three houses should get permission once a detailed application is submitted. The development should not lead to conflict with the village hall or tennis club and should not create a hazard for highway users. The parish council urges the developers to take note of the comments in the planning officer's report which make repeated reference to the fact that only one house may be achievable on this site and design a new scheme based on one house and incorporating all the points regarding sustainability and biodiversity

