

Planning Application [25/02017/FUL](#)

Land to the South of Chester Road Cuddington (opposite The Blue Cap) Erection of 112 dwellings associated access and infrastructure works including roads, drainage infrastructure, car parking, public open space and landscaping.

Cuddington Parish Council (CPC) objects to this application and recommends that it be refused. Until we know what the spatial strategy for the new Local Plan is, no decisions can be made for the location and scale of new developments that might be necessary to fulfil any housing targets. Although significantly increased housing targets are being set for Local Authorities, additional technical work will need to be carried out to look in more detail at the constraints, infrastructure capacity and deliverability of all the potential growth areas. Additionally, any planning process has always been, and must continue to be, community led, which means that residents' needs must be taken into account. CWaC have begun their processes, and these are being accelerated to respond to national needs, but a proper, thorough, listening consultation is needed for this process, as before.

Cheshire West and Chester are working at pace to review and reset the Local Plan but in the meantime the relevant local planning framework must be CWaC Local Plan parts 1 and 2 and the Cuddington Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

This planning application does not comply with Cuddington's Neighbourhood Plan (CPNP) and is contrary to the Cheshire West and Chester's local Plan Parts 1 and 2. (LP1&2)

CPNP Policy 1 Landscape Setting: to preserve the landscape setting of Cuddington, CPNP Policy 1 directs new development onto brownfield sites within the current Key Service Centre. This current proposal seeks to turn agricultural land, which is under cultivation at present, in open countryside, into a residential development.

CPNP Policy 5 Open Countryside, CPNP Policy 6 Vistas and Views: the proposed location of the development is outside the Key Service Centre and is of a size that would have an adverse impact on local residential amenity. Our residents endorse CPC's concerns relating to the impact of the scheme on the landscape and the character of this settlement. They see this agricultural field as an important window on to open countryside beyond the clear physical boundary of the A556. Such a development as this, would totally decimate our rural landscape setting.

CPNP Policy 12 Housing Mix and Type: this policy is directed to support small scale residential developments with a range of housing types to meet identified local needs, namely first-time buyers seeking to enter the housing market and older people looking for smaller properties and bungalows. The residents, in a Housing Needs Survey were supportive of housing development that enables young local residents and first-time buyers the opportunity to stay in the village and raise families here. For older residents seeking to downsize and release larger properties,

residents felt that bungalows would provide an ideal part of any housing mix. This proposal clearly does not meet local housing needs.

CPNP Policy 19 Traffic Impact of New Development: this policy aims, among other things, to ensure that schemes do not adversely impact local roads, in particular key road junctions as specified in the CPNP and should provide safe and suitable access for residents from any development. Whilst the growth in the Parish, referred to below, has been taking place there has not been any growth in the social and welfare provision for residents, in fact, this has reduced with the closure of our local GP surgery. This proposal, in the developers' own words, is purely to build houses with no improvement in local provision for residents, meaning that private transport is the only practical way of accessing necessary medical, social services and retail, with the associated impact on traffic congestion and on the climate.

The population of Cuddington Parish has grown significantly over recent years without adversely impacting rural amenity for the residents, and this controlled development has enabled housing stock to grow (19% between 2011 and 2021) ahead of population increase (16% between 2011 and 2021). If this development were to be approved, it would increase the housing stock of Cuddington Parish by about 4%. This application along with the other application for an adjacent site, (25/02111/FUL) also being submitted by the Barratt Group, would increase our housing stock by over 10%. when there are currently 22, 4+ bedroom homes for sale in the Parish. The targeted housing stock growth in any new Local Plan is likely to be of the order of less than 1% per annum over the next planning cycle. There is no urgent need for any new housing, certainly not ahead of any strategic review by Cheshire West and Chester Planning.

CPC recently held a public meeting to assess the will of residents. Despite this meeting, having to be called at short notice, in a peak holiday season the village hall was filled to capacity with people having to stand outside, and to date CPC has received over 880 emails from residents protesting against this proposal, many of them citing our Neighbourhood Plan and its policies. The level of public objections posted on the Planning Portal currently stands at 304.

A number of applications have come forward over the recent years for housing developments on the south side of the A556 outside the Key Service Centre. These have all been resisted by Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council, who have had the support of the Planning inspectorate at appeal. This situation has not changed materially and the need for development outside the Key Service Centre boundary has not been demonstrated.

In 2018 the Examiner for the CPNP said:

"I am satisfied that the Cuddington Parish Character Assessment (CPCA) gives a full description of the landscape setting of the village and demonstrates that, in accordance with Policy STRAT 9 of the Local Plan and paragraph 17 of the Framework, the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside should be protected and recognised"

and in reference to a proposal being suggested at that time for further development sites:

“I note that the land proposed for housing is in the rural area beyond the busy A556 road, which forms the southern boundary of the KSC. To my mind, this road forms a logical boundary separating the built-up area of the settlement of Cuddington and Sandiway from the largely open countryside. If the Plan were to propose to develop housing in this area, it would conflict with the aims of Local Plan Policy STRAT 9, which seeks to protect the intrinsic beauty of the Cheshire countryside by restricting development there to that which requires a countryside location and cannot be located within identified settlements.”

In summary, there is no identified need or justification for more housing in open countryside outside Cuddington and Sandiway Key Service Centre, and importantly, the blueprint for future development has not yet been completed.