

Wiltshire Council

Strategic Planning Committee

27 May 2020

Item 7b – 20/02387/OUT – Land at Pound Farm, South View, Lyneham, Wiltshire

Outline planning application (all matters reserved except means of access only in relation to a new point of access into the site) for residential development of up to 50 dwellings and provision of land for D2 use; including the creation of new vehicular access, public open space, landscape planting, pumping station, surface water attenuation and associated infrastructure

Public Statement 1 – OBJECTION – Stephanie Palmer

I understand this planning application has been recommended for approval, due to shortage of housing allocation in the county.

My understanding is that north Wiltshire has exceeded its housing allocation and that the current shortage is in the south of the county. If this is the case why are there to be houses built in Lyneham, in the north, to satisfy the county needs?

Does this mean people currently working in the south will be buying homes in the north?

Where does sustainability fit in to this equation? There is little employment in this area to attract potential residents.

There is currently no evidence of housing need in this community. Indeed, there is a small development on Chippenham Road, Lyneham, of eight dwellings, that has more than one house unoccupied, completed approximately two years ago.

A similar planning application was submitted for Pound Farm:
Planning Application No: 16/05959/OUT
Registered 17th June 2016
Refused 27th October 2016
Appeal lodged: 16th January 2017
Appeal dismissed: 17th August 2017

Since then, what has changed?

The Core Strategy Section 4.15 states developments of ten homes or less for large villages, for which Lyneham is designated.

There is also no increase in utilities and infrastructure contained in the plan.

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Public Statement 2 – OBJECTION – Michael and Susan Hunt

We wish to object to the application.

Firstly, in common with many villagers, we should like to express our disgust at this application having been made during a global pandemic; Gleeson knowing full well that it would likely result in many villagers being unaware of it taking place as they are not online. They have chosen not to do another public consultation and, we believe, for this very reason.

Secondly, we have no need for more housing in this Parish other than those that are already underway. There are many unsold houses that have been on the market for a considerable time. We do not have the infrastructure to cope with more houses, as it is already stretched almost to breaking point, nor the capacity for more traffic. Villages should not have to accept more housing unless they want it, and by far the majority of our community are utterly opposed. We are well aware that Gleeson will sell on to the highest bidder and the “proposal” may be nothing like the finished development. It is also the thin end of the wedge and more unnecessary housing would follow.

Thirdly, we understand that this application is being recommended for acceptance because there is a shortfall in new housing in other parts of the county. It cannot be overstated that there are virtually no employment opportunities in Lyneham, and that therefore most, if not all, people who might occupy these houses would of necessity have to commute. We wonder how this accords with Central Government’s policy of reducing car use and carbon emissions.

The current catastrophe has demonstrated just how valuable our green fields are. The footpaths, fields, open spaces, and the chance to experience our wonderful wildlife, has been invaluable for so many villagers over the past weeks and months. There are public footpaths on the site that, if developed, would be passing a housing estate. Hardly the best for mental and physical health that is so important to all of us now.

Please do not allow this to happen to our lovely village. Save our green fields for ALL our futures.

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Public Statement 3 – OBJECTION – Richard Marshall

I am a Lyneham resident and I object to this application for the following reasons.

The 2013 and 2019 Housing Needs Surveys and the 2018 Neighbourhood Plan Community Survey all show there is no internal Village demand for 50 new houses. Units at Meadow View have still not sold in 2 years, and the MOD has surplus housing. Even before the pandemic started, there were over 30 properties for sale in Lyneham. Local employment opportunities are few, and this application would turn our Village into a Dormitory Town.

Wiltshire Council's Planning Department's gave a robust refusal to Gleeson's nearly identical application 19/08298///OUT in November 2019. In January 2020, the housing requirement methodology changed from Community Areas to County-wide. If there is a shortage in housing supply across the entire County, surely any additional units should be put into Towns with sufficient demand and infrastructure, and not into a Village that has neither. Applications like Gleeson's described as "deliverable" may be convenient for meeting housing targets, but they are imposing unsustainable developments upon Wiltshire's rural areas.

Gleeson have not engaged the local community since the adverse reaction to their origin plan in 2015. This was to build "approximately 200 houses" on 20 Hectares at Pound Farm, and not just the 3.9 Hectares identified in the current application. Residents have consistently opposed ALL of Gleeson's FOUR applications. The Case Officer says there have been 100 letters of objection to 20/02387/OUT, and 10 in support. The letters in support are mostly simplistic one-liners, and 8 of them were written by members and associates of the previous Parish Council, who did everything they could to support Gleeson, without consulting the local community. The Landowner selling this land to Gleeson was their Vice Chairman and subsequently their Chairman.

The current Parish Council objects to 20/02387OUT. We ask the elected Wiltshire Councillors on the SPC to help restore our faith in Local Government and the Planning Process by adhering to their excellent Core Strategy for Large Villages and to refuse this application.

To quote one of Lyneham's oldest residents, "A Village needs its Green Fields, otherwise it is no longer a Village".

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Public Statement 4 – SUPPORT – Tina Goodhart

I understand you have a planning meeting with regards to the above site.

I am full supportive of this much needed development in Lyneham. We have many connections to the forces in Lyneham and many of those wish to come back and settle in this area which in many cases has been a big part of their lives, there is much need for new properties of varying properties at prices to suit all.

Lyneham is a thriving location with many clubs for youths, a primary school and close links for many excellent secondary schools making it a very appealing place to live, but with a lack of properties to purchase.

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Public Statement 5 – OBJECTION – Lyneham and Bradenstoke Parish Council

Lyneham and Bradenstoke Parish Council wish to reaffirm our objection to the above application.

As such we wish to bring to the Committees attention the following factual points.

Development Creep

We know that when the applicants first mooted the original development in 2015 (15/12487/OUT) they proposed a development of 110 dwellings, which quite rightly was rejected.

Since then, through a further 4 rejected applications, they have reduced the size of the development in an attempt to obtain a small development permission, this is now down to 50 dwellings over 3.9 hectares.

We would draw to the Committees attention that if they obtain the precedent, then Gleeson, by holding adjacent land charges of approximately 20 hectares, would be in the position to apply for development of the remaining 16.1 hectares with the potential for a further 270 dwellings in the knowledge that this would probably be approved.

We would suggest to the Committee that just as concerning is that if permission was granted for the green fields, they would be setting a highly significant precedent, which Gleeson's and other developers would jump on to argue for developing other insignificant green spaces in Wiltshire.

We would recommend that this Committee rejects the application, as by granting it they could easily turn a rural village into a small town by increasing the size of the civilian village by just under 25%.

Gleeson's Hidden Appeal

We bring to the Committee's attention that Gleeson's have already lodged an appeal with the Planning Inspectorate (APP/Y3940/W/20/3248635 – 10th March 2020), which they are even now progressing for this site.

To members of the public, and obviously yourselves, it will be seen as a deliberate and a direct attempt to bulldoze though the planning system, with zero respect to the affected communities or yourselves!

National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 11d

We are commenting here as *Hallam Land Management v SoS DCLG [2018] EWCA Civ 1808* made this a material consideration which can be considered, but not necessarily accepted as the most important factor. This has also been reinforced in *Suffolk Coastal District Council v Hopkins Homes Ltd. [2017] UKSC 37*.

We know that Wiltshire Council has conceded that Wiltshire appears not to be able demonstrate a 5-year land supply. This, we contend, should not be the overarching factor in this application, as all other relevant development plan policies are current, and carry at least equal or even more weight. Further, we contend that the adverse impact of granting this would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

We are aware that in a recent Planning Inspectors determination (*APP 3940/W/18/3202551 (Purton Road, Wiltshire)*), where this was offered as a 'right to build'. The Inspector rejected this, making it clear that this short supply (of less than 0.38) was only one factor, and as all other policies, plans and schemes were current, then this could be not the prima facie decider. As a result, the application was correctly dismissed by the Inspector.

We would recommend that this Committee also takes a similar stance and reject the application.

Conclusion

We would strongly recommend that the Committee members reject this application, as there is evidence that the applicant is attempting to turn a village into a town, that NPPF 11d can be discounted, as shown in law and by application of the law, and that the applicant is already progressing an appeal against the Council and the Community.