

MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 15TH APRIL 2021, AT 7.00PM

Committee Members present:

A Cooper (Chairman), B Collier, Mrs M Cooper, S Dhaliwal, S Hayes, D Matthews, C Phelps

Also present:

Town Clerk – Mrs K Elliott-Turner, Assistant Clerk – Ms C Jenkins, Councillors Mrs A Clarey, H Pickering, J Talbot and B Saunders, and 12 members of the public

Prior to the commencement of this meeting, as a mark of respect following the recent passing of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, a minutes silence was held.

56/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received.

57/21 DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS ON MATTERS CONTAINED IN THE AGENDA

There were none. Members were reminded that if at any time during the meeting they feel they have an interest in an item being discussed, they should declare it at that point.

58/21 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & RESPONSES

Not at this point.

59/21 CLERK'S REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED & MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION

Nothing to report.

60/21 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Members considered returning comment on the following application:

CB/21/01248/OUT

Land South of Arlesey Road, Stotfold, SG5 4HD

Outline application (with all matters reserved except access) for a development of up to 181 dwellings to include up to 35% affordable, an integrated Care Village (C2 use) with ancillary community facilities, 11ha of public open space comprising parkland and woodland extension, Pix Brook flood mitigation proposals, extensive new landscaping, play areas, creation of biodiversity habitat, public car park, new access arrangements and all ancillary works.

Copies of residents' letters of objection to Central Beds Council were provided to members for information prior to the meeting. Comments from the public were welcomed before the application was considered by members. Comments included the following:

- proximity of the proposed development is considered to be detrimental to adjacent properties on Hitchin Road, with inadequate screening from those properties,
- loss of light and views for existing properties,
- proposed development would be out of scale and design with existing properties,
- proposal would be an intrusion on the quality of life of existing residents,
- existing oversubscription of doctor's surgery and schools in Stotfold would see increased pressure from this proposed development,
- detrimental impact on existing habitat and wildlife,
- proposed development is in an area identified in Stotfold's Green Infrastructure Plan and Etonbury Green Wheel Masterplan as green infrastructure, and therefore should be protected for the benefit of residents' good health and wellbeing, together with protecting the existing and protected wildlife,
- application incorrectly identifies properties to benefit from flooding mitigation proposals.

Members discussed the proposals and considered a document produced by the Vice-Chairman of the committee which outlined various concerns and proposed objections.

RESOLVED that the comments made on application CB/21/01248/OUT, as appended to these minutes, be forwarded to the Central Bedfordshire Council Planning department.

61/21 CONSIDERATION OF APPLICATIONS BY CENTRAL BEDS DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

RESOLVED that due to the size of this proposed development, it will automatically be considered by the Central Bedfordshire Council Development Management Committee, however, a request will also be submitted to our Ward Members to ensure that the Development Management Committee considers the planning application.

62/21 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES, RELEVANT TO THIS COMMITTEE ONLY

Nothing to report.

With no further business, the meeting closed at 8.35pm

MINUTES APPROVED (date):

SIGNED BY CHAIRMAN:

PLANNING DECISIONS

Meeting: 15TH April 2021

CB/21/01248/OUT

Land South of Arlesey Road, Stotfold, SG5 4HD

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STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL OBJECTION TO Planning reference CB/21/01248/OUT Etonbury Park, Stotfold – South of Arlesey Road

The Town Council strongly objects to the above application for the reasons set out in the sections below.

NOTE

1 At no point has Stotfold Town Council had any discussions with UKLand about our triangle of land at the end of the road Waters End, for the footpath connection shown by blue arrows on the proposed site plan under Key 7 – connectivity and permeability.

2 In the Design and Access Statement Section 6,(reproduced on the next page), page 32, the last bullet point states:-

“Further to obtaining pre-application advice, there was contact with the Parish Council with discussions about the proposed development.”

This is on a page with a plan showing development across all the land to the west of Hitchin Road and from Arlesey Road in the North to the A507 in the South, it is titled Pre Application Submission 1.

A member of the public reading this page would reasonably conclude that the content of the bullet point is related to the plan alongside it.

Such a conclusion would be completely wrong and misrepresents the Town Council’s involvement as we had no discussions with the developers during any of the four pre-application stages,

The first plan that the Town Council (Parish Council) saw was that issued by UKLand in their online publication Etonbury Park.

The application plan, CB/21/01248/OUT differs from the Etonbury Park plan.

A statement is given on page 36 under the heading Public Consultation:-

Stotfold Town Council Engagement. (This is the only dialogue the Town Council has had with UKLand)

“A presentation to the Full Town Council was provided with the evolving design explained followed by a Q & A session at the end of the meeting.” The meeting was virtual by ZOOM on 17/12/2020

Pre Application Consultation

Pre Application Advice

Initial discussions and pre application consultation was held with officers from central Bedfordshire council on a number of illustrative proposals over the course of the last two years. The scheme has evolved from a larger development proposal to the proposal that is being brought forward as part of this Outline submission.

Initial Pre Application comments received from the council during the first pre app meeting include;

- Officers were not comfortable with standard residential housing being provided south of the existing permissive route.
- Pedestrian access from the site to Hitchin Road is required.
- Development too far to the west - expected a parkland scape to be provided on the western edge to maintain views rather than the woodland suggested.
- The northern parcel needs a reduction in the amount of development proposed to allow for views through the site.
- Although the extension of the woodland is supported, this does not allow for the views to be maintained.
- Any lighting of the road or path must be kept to a minimum so as not to impact on the ecology, especially in the river corridor areas.
- The inclusion of play areas in the areas of ecological proposals and enhancements is a concern as these features do not sit well together. Careful thought of design and location to be developed.
- Junction on Artesey road may require a signal crossing or a roundabout.
- The SUDS scheme is still supported on the site noted as a significant benefit to Stotfold and central Bedfordshire council.
- The comments from Central Bedfordshire Council led to a number of design alterations and general evolution of the scheme proposals.
- Further to obtaining pre-application advice, there was contact with the Parish Council with discussions about the proposed development.



Pre Application Submission 1

The initial illustrative master plan provided above was tabled as part of the initial pre application submission (Ref: CB/19/02395/PAPC) 2019.

Contents

1. Context of housing developments in Stotfold
2. Inspector's Report
3. Stotfold Green Infrastructure Plan and Ecological Issues
4. Coalescence and Ribbon Development
5. Education
6. Parkland
- 7 Other matters; Sustainability, Health, Flooding
- 8 Conclusion

1 Context of Housing Developments in Stotfold

After the call for sites three sites were allocated for development in Stotfold, all of which are being developed. They are: -

HA11	Shawmer Farm	10 units
HA12	Land South of Arlesey Road (Phase 1)	89 units with a further 72 unallocated units
HA13	Roker Park	<u>62 units</u>
	TOTAL of ALLOCATED UNITS	<u>161 units</u>

Unallocated sites that have been given permission, under development or recently completed for 10 or more units.

The Green	CB/11/02016	33 units
Rook Tree Lane	CB/16/01148	15 units
Taylors Road/Astwick Road	CB/17/05038	26 units
Taylors Road	CB/17/05913	32 units
Land to rear of Silver Birch	CB/18/00725	95 units
Manor Farm	CB/19/00226	16 units
Taylors Road/Astwick Road	CB/19/01302	78 units
West of Astwick Road	CB/19/03872	<u>100 units</u>
	TOTAL of UNALLOCATED UNITS	<u>467 units</u>
	A GRAND TOTAL OF	<u>628 units</u>

In the CBC Core Strategy and Development Management Plan on page 59 it states that the new allocations required from 2009 (above those already planned) for Stotfold and Fairfield Park combined would be up to 250 homes (units).

Fairfield Park has at least 271 new homes and Stotfold 628 giving a total of 899 units under development or recently completed, 649 above the “Core Strategy” number of 250.

The impact of the application CB/21/01248 **which is on non-allocated land** south of Arlesey Road of 181 units and 135 units in the retirement village, a total of 316 units makes the Grand Total rise to a possible new: -

Grand Total of.....	944 units in Stotfold
	<u>271</u> units in Fairfield Park
	<u>1215</u>

None of the infrastructure mentioned in Section 3.17 and CS1 has taken place in Stotfold except for the relocation of Stotfold Football Club Ltd which was paid for by

the Town Council itself.

The number of 1215 units is nearly five times the projected level of housing envisioned in the emerging Local Plan.

In the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Page 9, Para 23** states; “Broad locations for development should be indicated on a key diagram, and land use designations and allocations identified on a policies map. Strategic policies should provide a clear strategy for bringing sufficient land forward, and at a sufficient rate, to address objectively assessed needs over the plan period,...”

Clearly with all the unallocated developments, including this application, **NPPF 23 has been ignored by CBC and developers alike.**

In the Central Bedfordshire's Local Development Framework (LDF), Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (CSDMP) **Vision** in Section 3.15.4 page 52, 'Arlesey, Stotfold and Fairfield Park will be planned for in a comprehensive and complementary way up to 2026 to deliver growth sustainably', as referred to **CS1**. The western side of the town is by its context in **CS1** land north of Arlesey Road, not land south of Arlesey Road as in this application.

There is no single CBC published comprehensive plan document covering these three communities.

Most of the developments in Stotfold went to Appeal by the planning Inspectorate and were lost by CBC mainly because of their failure to have an up to date Local Plan, and in some cases for a lack of a 5 year land supply. We believe that CBC does have a 5.94 year land supply which includes an adequate buffer, and now complies with NPPF 73 and 74. This means that this proposal is not needed and being outside the settlement in the open countryside it should be refused.

2 Planning Inspector Report

There was an appeal made by NFC Homes against the decision of Central Bedfordshire Council's refusal to grant planning permission for 58 dwellings at Shawmer Farm. Application ref: CB/17/02039 and appeal ref: APP/P0240/W/17/3184967.

This Shawmer Farm site lies adjacent to and south of the UKLand site. As such this appeal decision must be given great weight, there is not a more important and related Inspectors' decision.

Planning Inspector Mr John Morrison BA(Hons), MSc, MRPTI dismissed the appeal.

Paragraphs 4 through to 12 give the reasoned argument as to why he dismissed the appeal, saying in para 12: - **“Such that it would conflict with Policies CS14, CS16, DM3, DM4 and DM14 of the Local Plan.**

The main thread in his decision is that the properties on the western side of Hitchin Road have long narrow gardens, (including the houses bordering the UKLand site) which are different from those on the other side and further to the east. This can be seen in the illustration on the second page of this document.

In 8 the Inspector states; “The frontage character of built form to the west of Hitchin Road defines and gives identity to the manner in which urban gives way to rural on the south western fringes of the settlement. For want of a better way of putting it, the frontage buildings and their elongated narrow gardens directly abutting open undeveloped land draws a noticeable and character forming line in the sand. The appeal scheme would 'smudge' this line and appear on plan form to be something of an awkward bolt on to the edge of the settlement as a result and encroach into the open countryside.”

From 9; “To my mind, this would not solely be harm in plan terms. The appeal scheme, despite landscaping enhancements, would still be visible on pedestrian approach from the A507 along the route of Bridleway No.12. This route appears from written and site evidence to be well used and users would be on a constant approach to the appeal site, thus their views would be of a high sensitivity. The current situation shows open paddocks and undeveloped land with the rear elevations of what are clearly identifiable as frontage buildings behind. A contained estate would be identifiable as such and result in visual harm for the same reasons as I have set out above. I therefore agree with the Council (CBC) that the proposed development would not appear as a sympathetic extension to the town.”

The same view harm applies to views to the southeast and northeast from Bridleway No.12 whilst approaching the town from Etonbury Wood.

In his paragraph 26 under “Other Matters” the Inspector States that: - “It is perhaps pertinent to point out that, as well as being drawn up for the purposes of defining areas of character, settlement limits, envelopes, also seek to ensure that new development was contained within them to follow the principles of sustainable growth. In essence to those areas that have services to support it.” (See Section 7).

“So further development in this area would also conflict with Policies CS14, CS16, DM3, DM4 and DM 14 of the Local Plan (LDF CSDMP).”

3 Stotfold Green Infrastructure Plan and Ecological Issues.

The Mid Bedfordshire Green Infrastructure Plan, now part of CBC planning documents, shows all the land south of the Pix Brook between Etonbury Wood and Hitchin Road properties as **I3a (shaded)**. On page 30 it is defined as, 'Extensions of woodland/accessible greenspace to East and West as enhancements of the existing habitat/access and to prevent coalescence of Stotfold and Arlesey.' **Two of the habitats affected are Badgers and Skylarks.**

The Green Infrastructure plan for Stotfold is a document that should be taken into account when developments to change the use of land within the civil parish are being considered. The importance of the natural environment can outweigh and change size and/or the location of development. It should not be that the flora and fauna have to move elsewhere!

The map on the next page shows that on the west of the application site that land, coloured a shade of yellow, should be used to extend Etonbury Wood eastwards as accessible GI. Green Infrastructure assets include Accessible Greenspace, Green Corridors and Habitats for wildlife.

The NPPF section 177 states: - “The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.”

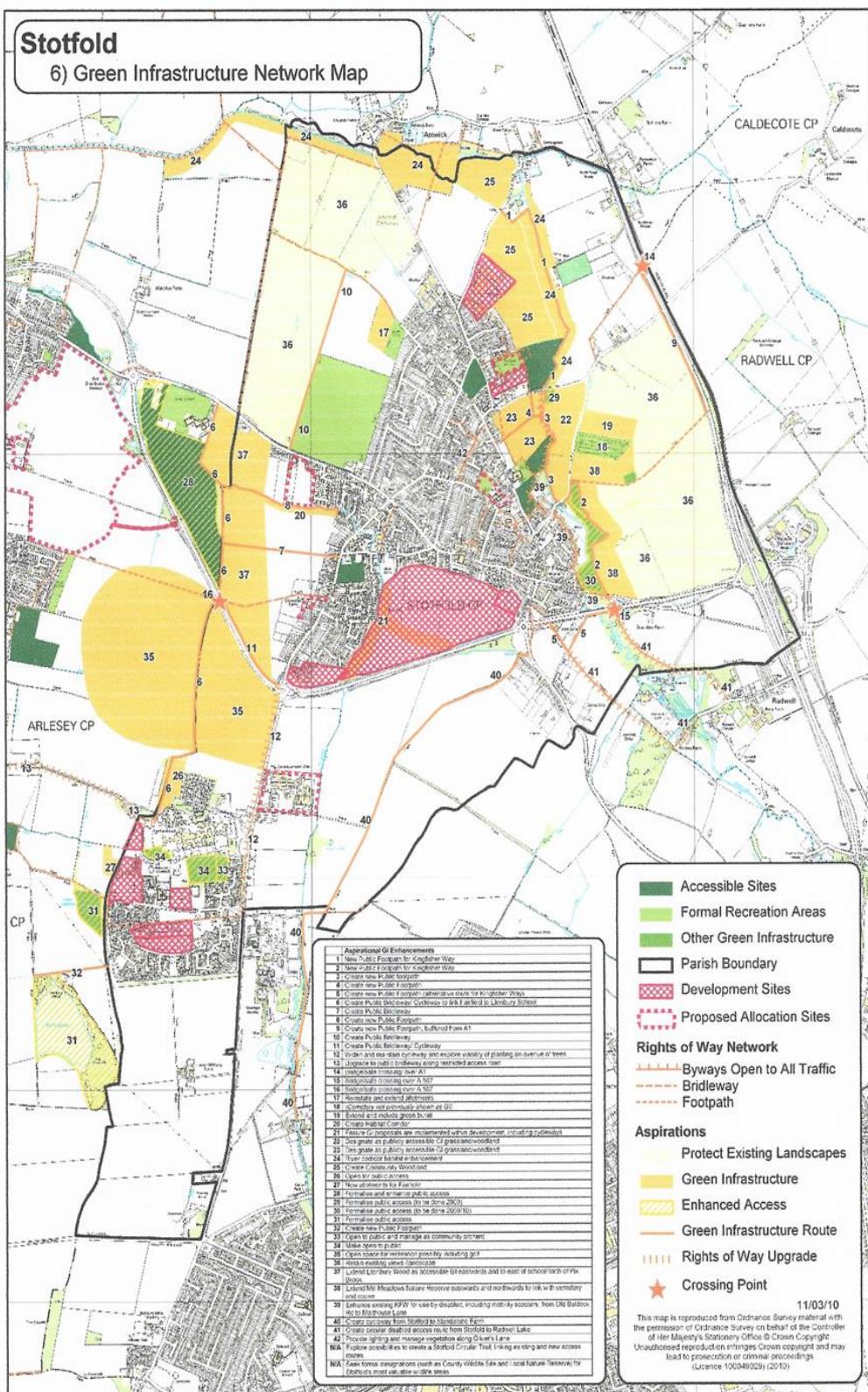
It is known that there are **Badgers** active in this area with a sett or setts nearby, the location of which is/are confidential. A small Badger group needs at least 35ha of roaming space, for larger groups it can increase to 125ha to find sufficient food.

The total site area is 21.55ha and the built area, including roads, is 10.55ha, so the green infrastructure area (including the Pix Brook) is 11ha. Therefore the current local roaming area of the Badgers is reduced by 10.55ha, (27.2 acres).

Badgers are a protected species, which are Protected under the Badger Protection Act of 1973.

GI Plan Map

The following map illustrates the aspirations identified by the community of Stotfold for the future provision and enhancement of their Green Infrastructure.



Acknowledgement of roaming badgers is contained in the Environmental Assessment. In chapter 6.1, Mitigation Measures there are twelve sections of which two relate to mammals, **Badgers** in 6.1.12 MM7, and **Hedgehogs (registered on the Mammal Red list as Vulnerable)** in 6.1.14 MM9.

In the Badger section there are 8 bullet points of actions that have to take place, many each day, to check for Badger activity and if necessary, rescue them from trenches with the help a suitably qualified ecologist who has to be called in on finding the Badger.

Pipes have to be blanked off, heaps of topsoil, sand etc have to be inspected. Special care has to be taken with chemicals, fires, food and litter. A buffer zone of at least 20m has to be placed around any setts identified within or adjacent to the site.

It is very clear therefore that the local Badgers will be significantly affected during construction and after if the planning permission is granted.

The experienced bird watchers that walk all this land and have seen the following birds which are all in the Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) Red list. (Red needs urgent conservation action, Amber is the next most critical group and Green is the least critical group.)

The Red list of birds seen is Skylark, Corn Bunting, Yellow Hammer, Grey Partridge, Starling, Song Thrush, Mistle Thrush, House Sparrow, and Linnet.

Skylarks after their migration back from the Mediterranean nest within all of the agricultural land from the Arlesey Road to the A507 shown on the Pre-application 1 map as potential development.

Skylarks are listed as Red in the Birds of Conservation Concern list, BoCC.

From the Environmental Appraisal document section 5.10 (page 31 & 32) ground nesting birds, Skylarks (Red) and Grey Partridge (Red) will be affected by increase of the built environment and the managed parkland will not provide sufficient height and density of planting away from paths, and loose dogs for the birds to safely nest.

In 5.10.6 it is said the effect of the development will be minimal, but this is contradicted by the statement: - “the developer would be very willing to contribute to any scheme that Central Bedfordshire Council is co-ordinating to fund compensation for Skylarks (such as Skylark plots).”

Skylarks cannot gain from progressive development on this land, with this phase 2 and

further possible phases as shown on the pre-application plan on the second page.

In the wider land context to the west of Etonbury Wood is the Chase Farm allocated development for 1000 dwellings, SA3 allocated land to the South of Chase farm to the Blue Lagoon adjacent to Fairfield Park for 2000 dwellings and the unallocated land North of Arlesey Road referred to earlier as CS1. These will prevent the wider use of the land by protected species. In the longer term, which has to be considered in habitat terms, all the currently undeveloped land will be essential to the survival of the Badgers and Skylarks in Stotfold.

With regard to the Pix Brook corridor the mammals there are Water Voles which are on the list of mammals as endangered, and Otters, which are a European Protected Species and protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The birds seen there are Kingfishers BoCC Amber, Mallards BoCC Amber, Herons and White Egrets.

All of the land south of the Pix Brook and about half of the land between the Arlesey Road and the Pix Brook is classified as the Best and Most Versatile Grade 2 agricultural land, and that the application is in the open countryside.

In the modifications to the Local Plan, SA3 Land South of Chase Farm, it now shows green space separating Arlesey from Fairfield Park. This green space includes retaining some farmland. This should also apply to all the land in this application as indicated in NPPF 170 b), as well as to prevent coalescence.

The proposals for 'Land South of Arlesey Road' lies in close vicinity to the Shawmer Farm site but it lies outside the defined limits of the settlement and is therefore, by definition in planning terms, in the open countryside.

This proposed development conflicts with: -

Two other National Policies: -

NPPF 118 b) Planning decisions should recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife.

NPPF 170 b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from the natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.

From the emerging Local Plan: -

SP5 New development in the countryside must avoid reducing open land that contributes to the form and character of existing settlements.

In considering applications for development the Council will have regard to maintaining the individual identity of towns and villages and will resist extensions to built up areas that might lead to coalescence between settlements.

SP7 Outside Settlement Envelopes the Council will work to maintain and enhance the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and only particular types of new development will be permitted. This includes the development of those sites allocated by this and previous development plans and residential development within exemption schemes or dwellings for the essential needs of those employed in agriculture or forestry.

And from the Core document: -

CS17 Development that would fragment or prejudice the green infrastructure network will not be permitted.

CS18 Development that would fragment or prejudice the biodiversity network will not be permitted.

DM4 Beyond Settlement Envelopes, (only) limited extensions to gardens will be permitted provided they do not harm the character of the area.

DM14 Any proposals that have an unacceptable impact on the landscape will be refused.

DM15 The Council will ensure that.....applications considered to be harmful to wildlife will be refused.

4 Further Coalescence and Ribbon Development

Considering the northern parcel adjacent to the Arlesey Road. There is currently a relatively short gap to the boundary between Stotfold and Arlesey. The hedge line between the Pendleton Centre and the Fox and Duck Public House is the boundary.

The Fox and Duck opened in 1858 as a beer house. The plan shows a Car Park for the users of Etonbury Wood and the Green Wheel. This is unnecessary as there is already parking for Etonbury Wood at the Pendleton Centre.

The phase 1 site of 161 houses, is largely hidden by the last row of houses along the Arlesey Road.

The proposal is to build 6 frontage houses and an access road to the remaining 67 houses in this parcel. The parcel of development abuts and curls behind the Fox and Duck site.

Across the boundary is a built part of Arlesey, the Pendleton Centre, Etonbury Academy and a Garden Centre across the A507 to the Gas House, then houses that lead down to the station.

The frontage 6 houses are ribbon development with an estate behind that effectively makes Stotfold coalesce with the built environments of Stotfold Road, Arlesey and Arlesey Road, Stotfold.

On page 14 of the Design and Access Statement in the Site Description (very small white writing on a black background), at the end of the second paragraph they say that:
- “....and a separate drive accessed off Arlesey Road to serve up to 5 dwellings,”
to serve five of the six frontage dwellings.

The most westerly of these five dwellings is line with a School Crossing on the Arlesey Road for children going to Etonbury School. This is additional to the manned crossing at the School. The crossing has red tar on the road, school crossing signs and ‘SLOW’ marked in the road on each side of the crossing.

The traffic along Arlesey Road is already dense during morning and evening rush hours that includes school runs. Putting the traffic from up to 477 new dwellings from phases 1 and 2 will lead to queues forming to exit the sites. These will then add to the current queues at the Arlesey Road, Hitchin Road and Norton Road roundabouts.

This application is over three areas of refusals to include as allocations for development namely, ALP282, NLP154 and NLP468.

The reasons given for not allocating are: -

ALP282. The site is not to be considered further.

This is because the site would extend Stotfold westwards and could potentially **lead to coalescence between Arlesey and Stotfold.**

The site would also adjoin Etonbury Wood in the west, which has potential ecological impacts. The whole site would also have a **landscape impact in terms of reducing the buffer between Arlesey and Stotfold.**

Stotfold has also had significant development over the last 10 years which has resulted in many facilities and services, such as education reaching capacity.

NLP154. The site is not to be considered further.

The site does not follow the existing residential line of development and would extend the development in an illogical way.

Comments from consultees highlight issues surrounding negative impacts on existing green corridors and the site's importance as a rural buffer.

Also, the site is not within a flood zone but may hold flooding issues from the adjacent brook.

NLP468. The site is not to be considered further

The site does not follow the existing residential line of development and would extend the development in an illogical way.

Comments from consultees highlight issues surrounding negative impacts on existing green corridors and the site's importance as a rural buffer.

Also, the site is not within a flood zone but may hold flooding issues from the adjacent brook.

It is considered that the environmental harm caused by the development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

Therefore, it is considered that this site is not worthy of further consideration for development.

The three above comments for; ALP282, NLP154 and NLP468 demonstrate that not only the Northern Parcel but the whole development should be refused.

In **SP5 and CS1** there is a commitment to keep Arlesey/Stotfold/Fairfield Park as separate entities. This Northern Parcel of the application coalesces Stotfold and Arlesey.

5 Education

The applicants have included an Education Briefing Note dated 11 March 2021. The estimation of child numbers by year group is probably reasonable but there reality ends.

With relation to the Pix Brook Academy it ignores that the only years available are those of the lead year as it progresses up the school and the years behind it. This has led to mistakes in the table calculations. They also assume that they alone will be sending children to the local schools. The admission comes at the end of the document when they admit they have not taken into account the cumulative effect of the child place requirements from the 7 other already active development sites in Stotfold.

With the potential numbers coming from the other sites and the change of the school system in 2023 the Education Department at CBC needs to address urgently the school building program for Stotfold and consult the Town Council as well as the Schools.

The Stotfold Lower Schools are close to capacity and with the change to Primary Schools will need extra accommodation or a new school. Such buildings will be needed even without this application. Nursery provision needs updated premises with expansion.

6 Parkland

Pre-emptive clearance of trees and shrubs has already disturbed and destroyed existing habitats for many forms of wildlife particularly in the Pix Brook corridor and has led to the collapse of some of the bank.

Further work on the proposed managed parkland will have detrimental similar effects on habitats made worse by disturbances caused by the use of footpaths alongside the brook, play areas, close mown grassland, and a new traffic bridge including its street lighting. This will produce permanent and irreversible disturbance along this whole stretch of the Pix Brook. This long bridge with its series of culverts underneath will form a barrier as all the culverts, except the one for the Pix Brook channel, will have to have safety bars/mesh for safety reasons to prevent children (including very young children) and pets from entering these tunnels. Because of these safety measures in periods of flood these culverts will be prone to blocking by debris.

In the Parkland Management Plan, it states that the green parkland areas will be managed by a private management company appointed by UKLand. The Management Company will use contractors to do the maintenance work according to their schedule.

This means the greenspace will not be adopted by Stotfold Town Council nor maintained at the public expense.

Therefore, the residents will charged a maintenance fee.

7 Other Matters

Sustainability

Their plan shows a wider road as a 'bus route' into the development to comply with planning requirements on distance from dwellings (400 metres). Whatever they may show on the plans cannot give any assurance that there will be either a bus company willing to take on this route or that CBC would be willing to pay subsidy towards its running costs! Without either of these assurances the development would fail that test leaving only the existing route and bus stops in place.

Fairfield Park is a local example of a bus service shown on a plan, given planning permission and then was never implemented. It should have gone from Letchworth Station to Arlesey Station and reverse through the centre of Arlesey.

These sort of 'developer promises' cannot be relied upon.

Health

The developers plan shows land behind the Health Centre in Stotfold for a possible extension.

The Practice has about 13,000 patients and finds difficulty in recruitment and retention of doctors. So much so that it has recently joined with another Practice to try to alleviate the situation. Without the staff a new building could not be used.

The Stotfold Pharmacy, in the centre of the town, is working at capacity in a very cramped space. The Dental Practice has, like the Doctors, a long waiting time before patients can be seen.

With the Covid 19 pandemic, more people working from home and being asked to exercise locally, there has been a significant increase in the number of residents walking routes in and around Stotfold. This is becoming a habit that will continue. It helps improve the general mental health of the whole population.

Flooding

The developers indicate on their plan that houses upstream in Stotfold will be saved from flooding of the Pix Brook by the overflow swales on site. This is quite incorrect. Flooding is caused by a combination of high volumes of water being blocked by debris collecting at Brook Street bridge, and/or the Hitchin Road bridge along with the higher water levels stopping the street drainage pipes flap valves from opening.

Apart from climate change for extra direct flow on land upstream of the application site, allowance should be made for the treated foul water from the 4,000 houses projected to be built within Letchworth and Baldock.

8 Conclusion

That the Stotfold Town Council strongly object to the application CB/21/01248 for the reasons stated above and citing:-

NPPF 23, NPPF 177, NPPF 118a, NPPF170b,

I3a

CS1, CS14, CS16, CS17, CS18

DM3, DM4, DM14, DM15

SP5, SP7.