Knights Hill Objections

Since 2011, when the Borough Council first proposed two locations in South Wootton for future new housing developments up to 2026, South Wootton Parish Council on behalf of residents has consistently opposed the scale of these developments. Over the years, we have submitted documents to the Borough Council independently and jointly with North Wootton and Castle Rising Parish Councils, outlining our objections to the developments. We note that the new government Housing White Paper says that building on green belt sites should be allowed only in exceptional circumstances. Yet both of these new developments are on green belt sites.

The currently proposed 635 dwellings at Knight’s Hill and the 65 dwellings on the adjacent Clayland site combined with the proposed 450 new dwellings west of Hall Lane will have a major impact on the quality of life of residents and the status of the village of South Wootton. In the local context, the combined numbers represent a greater than 60% increase in the size of the village. This increase is not sustainable and should be reduced to a more manageable level. This does not include traffic, pollution and strains on services from the Lynnsport development.

We note from a recent (Lynn News 13/1/2017) newspaper report that members of the Borough Council’s regeneration and development panel have expressed concerns regarding existing transport problems in and around the town. The panel’s chairman quoted “the feeling inside the town is that the transport in Lynn is dire”. The scale of the proposed development will impose a significant increase in traffic flows along the main route from Knight’s Hill into Kings Lynn Town Centre.

In 2012, the Parish Council submitted a Transport document (see attached) which showed the effects of traffic flows into and out of the junctions along Grimston Road, Low Road and Edward Benefer Way. They demonstrated that the Langley Road junction was already over capacity and others, Castle Rising Road, Nursery Lane and Hall Lane were close to capacity. The situation can only get worse. Based on the evidence provided, it was concluded that a reduction in numbers to 425 dwellings at Knight’s Hill and 225 dwellings at Hall Lane would be more sustainable.

When fully occupied, the maximum occupation is estimated between 1430 – 1670 persons. This is likely to produce 2000 – 2500 extra vehicles on the road. The traffic generated from this development, with the development from the Clayland site, Hall Lane and Lynnsport will cause significant delays and stress to road users creating reduced traffic flow creating delays. Traffic noise, disturbance, smells and fumes will also be detrimental to residents of South Wootton and the surrounding environment.

The proposed roundabout on the incline of Knight’s Hill will be dangerous to Heavy Goods Vehicles and other road user’s especially in inclement weather and is situated far too close to residential dwellings. This situation will not only be dangerous for road users but will have an adverse impact on residents in close proximity. A full independent traffic and infrastructure survey should be carried out before any Planning Applications are granted permission.

The proposed secondary access into Ullswater Avenue is not wide enough to cope with the possibility of a regular Bus Service. As shown in the plan, the Bus would need to cross into the other half of the carriageway encountering on-coming vehicles. There is also the problem of three 90 degree bends, plus the long slope down Ullswater Avenue which will add further difficulties if buses are used to run along this route especially in wet and icy conditions. This is very dangerous not only for vehicles but also for pedestrians and cyclists. The following alternatives should be considered to provide the necessary secondary access.

* Turning point within the new development to allow buses to enter and exit at the new roundabout on the A148.
* A slip road off the A149 into the new development with a further slip road for exiting back onto the A149 near the Knight’s Hill roundabout.
* Possible roundabout on the A149.

The other access points from the Clayland development and the potential access from Ullswater Avenue should be retained for pedestrian and cyclists only. This would incorporate the new cycle routes into the existing infrastructure – as per SW Neighbourhood Plan Policy T1.

The new development should conform to the housing polices laid out in our Neighbourhood Plan. The Design and Access statement says there will be mainly two storey houses with a limited number of two and a half storey houses. In contrast, in the Site and Description document some three storey houses or blocks in the central area will be permitted. Three storey townhouses will not be in keeping with the local character and history of the area. Within the objectives of the SW Neighbourhood Plan reference is made to being carbon neutral and mitigating any effects of climate change. The Parish Council would support the use of Solar PV panels/Air source heating and other energy saving systems.

In the Design and Access Statement and the Site & Development document the average density quoted is 18/19dph. This contrasts with the Borough Council’s policy of up to 16dph. This latter figure is consistent with average densities in other development within the village.

In the Proposal Plan, it is indicated that Hedgerows and Trees will be removed adjacent to the properties at the top of Ullswater Avenue, this will cause serious loss of privacy to existing residents. In the landscape report, it states a tree which incorporates a Bat Roost will be removed and that removed limbs will be ‘Strapped onto the limbs of retained trees’. This is totally against the SW Neighbourhood Plan Policy E1 and is totally adverse to the impact on nature conservation. Such areas should be enhanced to protect all wildlife.

The sensitivity of Roydon Common and Dersingham Bog has been given much thought, but the historical Reffley Wood will be subject to immense pressure from the overwhelming flow of public/pets/unaccompanied children into the woodland. This area incorporates many species of flora and fauna. More thought into the protection of the area should be considered.

The proposals fail to adequately recognise the sensitive landscape associated with the heritage of the area. Historical artefacts have been found in certain areas of the development site and should be subject to further investigation.

It is stated in the report (Water/Topography) that water will run off towards existing homes. To compensate, appropriate drainage systems must be incorporated to avoid flooding to existing homes. Concerns are raised whether the swales and drains will be able to cope with heavy rainfall/flash floods. Appropriate measures to ensure safety and ongoing maintenance of the swales, ponds and drains must be put in place. Sustainable drainage schemes should be used to protect wildlife areas. (Ref SW Neighbourhood Plan Policy E2).

Currently, water pressure is a problem to existing dwellings in the area. Appropriate water pumping stations must be provided to deal with the pressure/problems experienced by existing residents as well as for future residents.

We note that the existing public sewer system can only accommodate up to 428 dwellings. Any additional properties will require upgrading the system. Correct drainage and sewage systems should be provided from the outset. It is stated that the sewer systems are inadequate to cope during the day. Effluent will be stored in holder tanks and pumped out into the sewers along Sandy Lane at night. This is totally inadequate and systems/pumping stations should be put in place from the outset to accommodate all waste which will be produced by the development.

SW Neighbourhood Plan Policy S1 states that appropriate financial contributions are made towards education provision. The developer has indicated financial support through Section 106 funds for the expansion of Reffley Primary School. Also, financial support through Section 106 is proposed for funding a new GP surgery on the development. However, NHS England has stated that a new GP surgery cannot be justified on site due to insufficient numbers. They indicate that provision for new patients should be made through expansion of the existing GP surgeries in King’s Lynn and North Wootton. Therefore funding should be directed to support these expansions where appropriate.

The Knight’s Hill development involves three separate authorities, Castle Rising Parish to the north, Gaywood Ward to the south and a central section in South Wootton Parish. Since CIL funding is based on the number of dwellings and floor space (square metres) involved, it is likely that South Wootton’s CIL contribution (£60/square metre) will be less than for the other two authorities. As the new development will impact more on South Wootton compared to either Castle Rising or Gaywood, compensation should be made through improved CIL funding.

In the masterplan, provision is made for a Community Centre and outdoor leisure facilities. The latter being shown as football pitches. If used, any lighting should be sympathetic to the surrounding area. Residents in the adjacent area should be canvassed for their views on what outdoor facilities would be best. Whatever is decided, adequate adjacent parking will be required.

South Wootton Parish Council wishes to record its strong opposition to the scale of the proposed development at Knight’ Hill and would recommend that numbers be reduced to a level that would be sustainable.

Yours sincerely

David Price

Chairman of the Parish Council