

Fivehead Parish Council's response to 20/03111/FUL

Summary recommendation

Following a full Council Planning meeting on 15 February 2021, which included a public consultation with representation from 21 households within the Parish, Fivehead Parish Council **voted unanimously against application 20/03111/FUL**, as the proposed development, comprising of 7 dwellings, is located in Fivehead, a rural settlement, and in open countryside; therefore it is considered to be unsustainable, and contrary to Local Plan Policy (SS2) and to the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Please refer to the Parish Council's full briefing document for a detailed analysis of the key points highlighted below.

Key considerations

Development

There is a presumption against development on this site, which is a narrow strip of meadowland classed as agricultural land and deemed open countryside by the Planning Inspectorate. Five applications on this site have been previously refused and nothing has changed, other than the Local Plan now being current; SSDC has a 6-yr housing supply, contrary to what is stated in the applicant's Planning Statement.

The SSDC Housing and Economic Land Availability does not include Fivehead as a location for development. Fivehead has seen almost 10% increase in housing in the past two years. The Parish Council is in the process of conducting a Housing Needs Assessment, with initial returns showing 78% do not want more housing in the Parish. The consultation undertaken by the developer had a poor response and a number of concerns were raised. Currently 33 members of public have raised objections on the SSDC website (as of 24/2/21).

The housing density is not appropriate for the site and it is likely that the small proportion of lower cost housing, without garages, could be replaced with market housing under a future S106 application, to make the site financially viable for the developer. There is no identified need for larger, detached properties to justify variance from the plan.

Highway Safety

There are a number of highway safety issues that should be taken into consideration:

- The proposed access and estate road is too narrow and cannot be adopted as specified, due to restriction set by Highways.
- Vehicles are likely to block Butchers Hill, waiting to turn into the long access slip road, if this is blocked, which could cause further backing up of traffic to the main A378.
- A traffic survey of Butchers Hill is needed. The site is located within a 30mph zone where there are existing problems with speed, volume and inappropriate types of vehicles;
- Multiple accidents on the Village network are not acknowledged.
- All walking routes through the Village have no footpaths or street lighting.

Effect on character/appearance of surrounding area

Fivehead is an historic, agricultural settlement centred on an ancient crossroads. The meadowland affords a natural break from the small cluster of housing at the top of Butcher's Hill to the main Village hub. The location of this site is the joining point of two ancient settlements. The design and character of this modern estate, enclosed by a 2m wall, in proximity of Grade II listed turnpike houses is considered to be harmful to the local heritage and character, as well as one of the few remaining pieces of open countryside in Fivehead. It would not be possible to conceal this development with planting and landscaping; the materials and design of the dwellings are not clearly specified and therefore subject to change. The Council considers that any building on this strip of land would be detrimental to the green space which provides visual amenity for the community.

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Ecology

The meadowland is rich in diversity of wildlife and plant life, which is highly valued by the local community. Natural England has yet to survey the site but there are protected species on site, including those which have migrated from the developed site of Glendale, and further botanical surveys are required, based on previous recorded plant life.

Fivehead Parish's character is defined by its rural heritage and green spaces within the village, connecting its people to its precious wildlife and countryside. In summary, the Local Plan advises careful management and balance when developing in rural settlements; allowing yet more development would be contrary to this and the interests of the local community.

Fivehead Parish Council

26 February 2021