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Andrew Fenton  
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Dear Sir,

***Planning Application 18/01258/OUT | Outline application for the erection of 5 No dwellings, to include means of access (re-submission and amended description) | Proposed Residential Development Land South East Of Springbank Farm Shrewsbury Road Church Stretton Shropshire***

I am writing in my capacity of Chair of the Clive Avenue Residents Association, representing 59 properties in Church Stretton.

I wish to express deep disappointment and to challenge the validity of the decision made by the Southern Planning Committee at its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2021 to approve the Planning Application for five new properties outside the town building boundary and within the AONB. There are many grounds for this challenge, not least of which is the abject failure of the Planning Committee to observe and adhere to the proper protocols and property of public service as set out in Local Government guidance "Property in Public Office" [https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/34.2\\_Probity\\_in\\_Planning\\_04.pdf](https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/34.2_Probity_in_Planning_04.pdf)

The key relevant elements, which appear to have been overlooked include:

*1/ The courts have expressed the view that the Committee's reasons should be clear and convincing.*

The Committee's points are based on incorrect information and the rationale for disregarding Planning Officer recommendations are neither evident nor clear.

*2/ If a councillor is concerned about an officer's recommendations, they should discuss their areas of difference and the reasons for that with officers in advance of the committee meeting.*

There is no indication or evidence that this has happened and none presented at the meeting as far as I am aware.

*3/Where there is concern about the validity of reasons, consider deferring to another meeting to have the reasons tested and discussed.*

There has been no consultation or delay to the decision process in order to accommodate this assurance process.

*4/If the planning committee makes a decision contrary to the officers' recommendation (whether for approval or refusal or changes to conditions or S106 planning obligations), a detailed minute of the committee's reasons should be made and a copy placed on the application file.*

When I checked this morning (two weeks after the meeting) this had not happened and no account of the decision is posted on the Planning Portal. This is not a transparent process.

*5/ The officer should also be given an opportunity to explain the implications of the contrary decision, including an assessment of a likely appeal outcome based on policies set out in the development plan and the NPPF, and chances of a successful award of costs against the local authority, should one be made.*

The implication of this decision, because it is contrary to the updated Local Plan and recent consultations, will result in a great deal of negative sentiment within the community and an appeal is highly likely as the implications are far wider than this single application. My understanding is that it will be contested and this is a totally avoidable use of public money and resources.

6/ All applications that are clearly contrary to the development plan must be advertised as such and are known as 'departures' from the development plan. If it is intended to approve such an application, the material considerations leading to this conclusion must be clearly identified.

This decision is contrary to the updated development plan. The information relied upon at the meeting was incorrect and out of date.

From my understanding of the meeting, the committee decision went against the recommendation of the Planning Officers and the reasons cited were based on outdated and incorrect information and did not refer to the updated local plan. Local Residents and stakeholders, including the AONB were entitled to have been consulted and have not been despite the previous decision for this site and despite recent decisions relating to Church Stretton in the local development plan.

The Chair of the meeting declared a conflict of interest in the proposal and yet remained present for the duration of the item. Quite frankly, this is outrageous.

I'm sure you will have plenty to handle in the current situation and so I will not set out further detailed account of the grounds on which this decision is inappropriate and contestable.

I hope you can give this matter your consideration.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Fenton  
Chair, CARA