

**CENTRAL PLANNING COMMITTEE
SCHEDULE OF ADDITIONAL LETTERS**

Date: 3rd June 2014

NOTE: This schedule reports only additional letters received before 5pm on the day before committee. Any items received on the day of Committee will be reported verbally to the meeting

Item No.	Application No.	Originator:
7	13/04845/FUL	Morda Residents Group

Have submitted the attached comments in response to the officers report.

Item No.	Application No.	Originator:
7	13/04845/FUL	Officer

The recommendation should read **“approve subject to the applicants entering into a S106 agreement to secure the provision of affordable housing; a financial contribution to provide speed visors on Morda Bank and a management plan for the future maintenance of the areas of public open space and the drainage swales and subject to the conditions set out in appendix 1”**

Item No.	Application No.	Originator:
10	14/00797/OUT	Town Council

The Town Council's Planning Committee has considered the additional information and resolved to re-iterate the Town Council's original objections to this application and also to request that this application be considered by Shropshire Council's Northern Area Planning Committee.

Item No.	Application No.	Originator:
10	14/00797/OUT	Richard Unwin

The Appendices referred to in Mr Richard Unwin's objection have now been received and uploaded: Appendix 1 – Journey to St Peters C of E Primary School, Appendix 2 – Shrewsbury to Wem bus timetable and Appendix 3 – Wem railway station time table.

Item No.	Application No.	Originator:
11	14/00459/OUT	Agent

A signed unilateral undertaking together with a section 106 heads of terms document has been submitted.

Item No.	Application No.	Originator:
12	14/00344/COU	Agent

Two further representations have been received and are attached in full.

Item No.	Application No.	Originator:
12	14/00344/COU	Officer

The recommendation should read: **“approve subject to the applicants entering into a S106 legal agreement to secure the on-site affordable housing; to provide the open space and financial contributions towards the provision of a bus shelter, a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) on Wrexham Road (if required), maintenance of the open space and surface water drainage system and subject to the conditions set out in appendix 1”**

Paragraph 6.6.7 should state:

Overall officers consider that the layout and designs have been well thought out and take into account the context of the site and the wider area. Although the proposal will alter the character of the immediate area from agricultural to built development this harm is considered to be less than substantial and as such the adverse impact of the harm is not considered to

outweigh the benefits. Accordingly the development is considered to be acceptable and comply with the local policy requirements and also the NPPF and is therefore recommended for approval.

Item No.	Application No.	Originator:
13	14/00344/COU	Agent

The usage of land the applicant has on site is restricted to the equestrian cross country (which is utilised daily), the outdoor kitchen and he also farms the land which has been outlined in his application for an agricultural need dwelling.

The access to Blackoe Cottages is owned by Mr Wynn, and the occupiers of Blackoe Cottages have a right of way across this access.

Development Management Report – Issued 22 May 2014

The Morda Residents Group (MRG) members have reviewed the Shropshire Council Development Management Report (DMR), with particular focus on the initial Report (Sections 1.0 to 5.0) and the planning Officers Appraisal (Sections 6.0 & 7.0) for this Application reference 13/04845/FUL.

Taking the paragraphs within the REPORT and OFFICER APPRAISAL in numerical order, the Morda Residents have responded with constructive comments as follows:

REPORT COMMENTS:

2.0 Site/Location Description

2.0 Large houses are not only on the northern edge of the site but also to the West and beyond in both instances. The Cottams, to the South is also a large house and is the first property in the village of Morda. The largest property of all is to the East and hides much of the smaller housing referred to behind it.

The proposed mix of housing is far from appropriate and if the demand for houses due to an increase in employment should prove to be correct then large executive type housing will be needed for the managers and owners. If planning is to be granted the development should be low density which would reduce traffic numbers, and also assist in lowering the risk of any potential flooding.

2.2 Land in the South West of the application site is the steepest and slopes to the South West rather than from West to East. It is proposed to build on some of this area. In periods of heavy rain substantial surface water flows from this area to the river Morda at such a speed and depth that ripples can be seen. The river floods over its southern banks opposite the field. No provision is mentioned anywhere to rectify the situation which would be worsened with this and proposed development.

4.0 COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIONS

4.1 Consultee Comments

The readings from the groundwater monitoring pipes were taken in the period 30 September 2011 to 7 November 2011 which, according to the Met Office was during a period when rainfall for Shropshire for the year was the lowest since its records began in 1910. One can but assume the applicants were aware of this. The council was informed of this in late March 2014.

4.1.2 Policy Officer - No objection

It is well understood that Oswestry town will need to expand beyond its boundary against the wishes of an adjacent Parish Council but it is the only one where the physical gap would disappear and to all intents and purposes, with Morda would no longer being a village but part of urban sprawl, something that the government is against.

The distance between the hedge and ditch forming the southern boundary of the development and the existing property in the field is a mere 23.1 metres. The nearest house in the development is not much further away from that property at around 30 metres. **That is what the actual physical gap would be.** A further 18 metres South of the existing property is the river Morda, with further Morda homes and businesses on its southern bank.

4.1.5 Public Protection Officer - No objection

The council has been advised that there is a burial pit and that drilling has taken place at that location. Cores provided evidence of substantial numbers of bone fragments together with soil indicative of carcasses having rotted. An affidavit could be attained into the exact location if required.

4.1.6 Highways Officer – No objection

Traffic

As previously advised to the council a residents' traffic count was undertaken due to concerns regarding a published transport assessment which failed to record vehicle passing the site and entering or leaving the Glentworth development from or to the North, and because, through local knowledge, a large percentage of traffic is known to use a "rat run" starting in Weston Lane and joining Lower Brook Street so as to avoid problems at the traffic lights. This count recorded 14.98% of motor vehicles entered or left Glentworth. On that basis, it is reasonable to assume, based on the number of proposed properties that this site would add in the region of a further 8.5% to overall traffic. With existing planning permissions plus possible other approvals considered later in the agenda it could increase traffic by 25.5% which would substantially increase dangers/Risk and create even larger tail backs of traffic from the traffic lights, which at times, already stretch back towards Morda by a couple of hundred yards. Obviously the rat run would tempt a higher percentage of drivers to use it. The survey recorded 42 vehicles using the rat run compared to a lesser figure of 32 using the traffic lights between Upper Church Street and Lower Brook Street.

Accessibility

Travel

The council has long been advised that the Travel Plan is erroneously based on this rural field being in Castle Ward which incorporates much of the town centre rather than where it is situated. Despite this and the fact that it makes a farce of a substantial important element of the report content, it is disappointing that it seems that the Council is not concerned despite requirements for such a report. It should have been imperative that the information given in it is accurate, not only for the planning authority but also for the public to read and then to help them decide whether to support and/or object to the planning application or remain neutral. An example is that residents living in the town centre are more likely to walk to work or to the shops than would be the case of residents of this development who would probably have similar work/drive practices as those within Glentworth Estate.

4.1.8 Ecology Officer – No objection subject to conditions and informatives

The report also fails to say that it was notified (on the 28 January 2014) that there is a wildlife pond containing Newts in the grounds of The Cottams and situated about 25 metres from the proposed site.

6.0 OFFICER APPRAISAL COMMENTS:

6.1 Policy & principle of development

The designation of the site within the SAMDev is being contested at Planning Inspector report stage.

There was no advertised local public consultation on the SAMDev proposals, and in any case, this continues to be challenged by residents and the locally elected councillors.

As the appraisal says: 'Members may prefer to acknowledge that the site is being put forward in the SAMDev, but not give that any weight, and assess the sustainability as if the site was not being put forward.'

6.1.8 As stated, one of the reasons for refusal of planning previously was on the grounds of highway safety. Since that time, the traffic dangers/risk has now significantly increased due to a substantially number of houses being built within the area of Morda.

6.2 Is the site sustainable?

6.2.1

Read this paragraph again and you will understand that the objectors are not arguing about 'distances' but 'availability' of services. It is the quantity, regularity and supply of services that are at issue here not their remoteness. The services the objectors address are not distance issues but access and availability issues particularly of public transport, not just to access other services but for social inclusion as well, particularly in the evenings and at weekends. The NPPF requires planners to produce Transport Plans for significant developments. Taken together with the past present and future developments in Morda, the village is now a very significant development location.

6.2.2 Oswestry is quietly being promoted as a key sustainable settlement. Given the poor road and rail communications and expense of travel to employment sites elsewhere, Oswestry will continue to suffer economically unless these factors are addressed before housing or commercial development can be made viable.

Site specific interests are indeed important considerations.

Economic considerations?

6.3.1 The agent's statement is misleading. It is quite clear to the better informed local residents that this proposed development is in the wrong place at the wrong time. He of course may be referring to the current financial viability of the site!

Plans for Morda that have already been passed and are already underway or completed, significantly affect any notion that continued development of the area is sustainable without significant and expensive infrastructure improvements to roads, schools, public transport, health and social services first. It has already been determined that £144,000 is needed to fund the school places from this proposal alone never mind the other developments in the area.

6.3.2 There is currently a national shortage of builders. Locally this is being addressed by the college but it will be some time to come on line. Labour from outside the area will be of no benefit of the local economy. The agents have not even been able to show that they will use locally sourced materials and suppliers.

6.3.3 A CIL payment of just £300,000 is not enough for the infrastructure improvements required to sustain the increasing traffic through Morda from the new developments, including settlements and other areas south along the A483 that access Oswestry through this route.

6.3.4. It is true that the economic benefits would be greater on a site elsewhere with better communications.

6.4 Social considerations?

6.4.2 A description of being close to Oswestry only applies to the town boundary; the town centre is not close, especially when walked in the rain carrying heavy shopping on a Sunday when there are no buses.

6.4.3-6 The school spaces must be made available before any house is occupied. The report fails to mention that Morda Children are already having to travel to Trefonen (2.4 miles away from Morda school) or to the other side of Oswestry to attend another school.

6.4.7 "The officer remarks that the poor bus service 'is noted'. This is not good enough. A policy has to be implemented to address this serious problem.

The bus service must run all day every day and connect with Gobowen Station to be of any use whatever.

Consider the travel situation of a student at Shrewsbury or Wrexham colleges who may live on this development in the future. The officers remarks are misleading in so much as they ignore the overall poor transport in the area.

In para 4.1.6 Accessibility, 'it is considered that the site is adequately served by bus services linking to the town centre and therefore providing an alternative to car borne journeys.'

It is hardly adequate by any stretch of the imagination and not available at all outside 'normal' working hours.

6.4.8 The officers' considerations admit there will be social harm but on balance not enough to outweigh the perceived need for housing in this area. NPPF guidelines suggest:

Plans should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods or people. Therefore, developments should be located and designed where practical to:

- accommodate the efficient delivery of goods and supplies;
- give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, and have access to high quality public transport facilities;
- create safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians, avoiding street clutter and where appropriate establishing home zones;
- incorporate facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles; and
- Consider the needs of people with disabilities by all modes of transport.

None of these are complied with in this application.

6.5 Environmental considerations?

This report fails to quote important facts from LVIA such as, "this land together with the field to the South forms an important break between Morda and the Town. It presents a sense of separation and contributes to the setting of each settlement and goes on to say the field forms an intrinsic part of the valley that separates the two built up areas".

6.5.1 Clearly, the rural, agricultural landscape between the town and village will not be maintained but entirely removed. The site plan encroaches south of the development boundary as laid out in the SAMDev maps.

6.5.2 It is the combined effects of harm of this proposal that are the obvious reasons for refusal not the landscape value alone. The decision has to be based on the merits or otherwise of the entire proposal.

6.5.5 The loss of Landscape is acknowledged here and adds considerable weight to the objectors' arguments.

6.5.7 Previous planning errors allowing the Glentworth developments to encroach into the gap between town and village must not be considered as precedence when deciding a separate proposal. It has to be decided on its own merits alone. The fact that the Glentworth development exists should put more weight on the argument that without the landscape break on the Western Side of Morda Bank the Town and Village would appear to be one large conurbation.

6.6 Layout, scale and design

6.6.2 The 'active frontage to Morda Bank' comment quite clearly reinforces the landscape encroachment argument.

6.6.6 The property sizes and plot sizes are not considered to be acceptable by anybody but the developer, agent and planning officials. Any buyer of the properties will be looking to extend as soon as possible. The fact is that the garages will not be used to store cars and the roads will be full of parked vehicles.

6.8 Highways, access, parking and rights of way

The Agents Travel Assessment report is based on data from the 2001 census in the Castle Ward. 14 year old data for the wrong location! The site is not in an Oswestry Ward. Figure 4

(pg.30) clearly shows that the refuse vehicle and any other delivery vehicle will take up the entire width of the road on all curves, bends and cul-de-sacs allowing for no parked or passing vehicles on these parts of the roads within the development. Highways department have not picked any of this up in their comments.

'The routing of traffic along Weston Road has not been assessed based upon measured traffic count information, which would have been helpful.'

6.8.6 The predicted level of traffic movements can only be accommodated into the existing highway network with the demand as it existed before the other local developments were occupied. The recent and future completions since this report was made will impact severely on actual traffic movements and make this report considerably out of date.

'...Officers consider that this site complies with the promotion of alternative means of travel' (but not on Sundays, Bank Holidays or Evenings by bus)

6.8.7 A planning condition must be imposed upon any consent granted which would have the effect of preventing any permitted development rights to have access, pedestrian or vehicular, to Love Lane.

6.9 Ecology and trees

The agents refused local residents' request to allow Shropshire Wildlife Trust to survey the site and report on their behalf. The trust, having seen the Ecology report, does however have concern for the Love Lane hedge.

The proximity of buildings to the hedge, especially when foundations are prepared, will damage the roots of the hedging.

6.10 Drainage

The existing problems of surface water flooding a little down stream in Weston have not been addressed.

In heavy rain the inspection covers in Weston Road lift allowing water to flood the road and surrounding properties. No guarantee can be offered that this proposed development will not exacerbate this situation.

6.11 Other matters

All CIL monies should be paid to the Parish Council. Nobody wants expensive legal bills determining this basic right.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The site is located outside the current development boundaries of both Oswestry development boundary and is therefore classed as a departure from the development plan. However, it is not accepted that the site is in a sustainable location. It will suffer from very limited and restrictive transport links. The facilities, services and infrastructure offered by the market town will be stretched even further. The site could however provide low cost additional housing supply in accordance with the misguided national planning policy priorities. Furthermore, the development will result in a loss of agricultural land contrary to the wish in a speech by the Secretary of State for Environment and Rural Affairs for national self-sufficiency.

7.2 The proposed layout, scale and design are not considered to be appropriate. The density and layout does not respect the existing road frontage. Failure to retain the existing gap between the development and Morda and Oswestry will result in unacceptable harm to the amenities of the neighbouring residents.

7.3 As shown in the traffic study, the development will not be provided with appropriate vehicular access, internal layout and open space. Furthermore, the site cannot be provided

with guaranteed sufficient foul and surface water drainage arrangements that will not be harmful to local habitats, biodiversity or properties downstream.

Objectors Conclusion:

Policy & principle of development

National Policy must not be applied contrary to the Localism Acts 2011 which take precedence.

Is the site sustainable?

Not without considerable expense on improving facilities and infrastructure.

Economic considerations

Expensive infrastructure requirements will not be covered by financial payments by the developer. There will be no other benefit locally.

Environmental considerations

Loss of a Rural landscape and productive agricultural land.

Social considerations

Social isolation, especially as the new residents will not likely be locals.

Layout, scale and design

It's a Barratt Homes development, too crowded, small back yards and narrow roads with inadequate visitor parking spaces.

Impact on residential amenity

'It is recognised that new housing will alter the area and that there will be noise on a site which is currently quiet and increased traffic over the current levels.'

Highways, access, parking and rights of way

Residents and delivery drivers will be forced to park on Morda Bank because of the crowding on the estate.

Ecology and trees

Not been properly and independently assessed.

Drainage

Unable to guarantee plans will not have the effect of additional flooding for residents and drivers in Weston.

General Comments:

1, The Morda residents are concerned that there are several important and pertinent facts that that have been brought to the attention over the last few months that appear to have been ignored. It would have been of benefit to have had a more focused forum to communication with the residents/community.

2. The amount of detail that the Developer has progressed (at a cost) in the past few months and continues to move matters forward without being given Full Planning approval is unacceptable.

The discourteous way the Full application has been presented before outline permission has been approved is not only bad manners but shows arrogance on the part of the developer in assuming the planning authority will pass the plans against the wishes of their electorate.

3. There is no disputing the fact that the proposed development of the Cottams field constitutes “urban sprawl”.

To develop this field is to remove the final tract of green land - prime agricultural grazing land – that separates the town of Oswestry from the village of Morda. It is unnecessary, unwanted, unsuitable and furthermore unsustainable.

Morda Residents Group – 29 May 2014

Dear Councillors,

**RE: 14/00459/OUT – DEVELOPMENT LAND EAST OF 163 WREXHAM ROAD,
WHITCHURCH**

I am writing on behalf of a local group who have, not for the first time, collectively campaigned on behalf of the community as a whole against proposals to build on the land in this application. In view of this development being imminently put forward for a decision, and not being able to attend the meeting on Tuesday 3rd June due to work commitments, I would like to refresh your memories regarding our objections.

As I am aware that this application is just one of several to be discussed and that as such, you already have a substantial amount of paperwork to wade through, I will highlight our main comments and expand upon them in more detail later in this document for further clarification.

1. Contradicting the NPPF's ethos of allowing people and communities back into planning:

This site was previously removed from the SAMDev plan via a fair and democratic process and now our opinions are being overlooked. A petition was drawn up in 2012 in which several hundred local residents objected to any proposals to build on this land owing to its location (a fact which remains consistent regardless of any change in building proposals). At this time, the Council respected our wishes and acted accordingly by refusing the application. We are now utterly at a loss as to understand why a further development proposal on this same land is now receiving support.

It would seem that the land owners themselves also have such disregard for local opinion, as to attempt to take advantage of current relaxed Planning Laws, and re-present this land for development regardless of public disapproval. We can, therefore, only assume that either the Council are motivated by reaching targets or that this is a financially driven scheme in which residents' interests carry no weight. The majority of supporting comments come from outsiders.

Furthermore, community feeling has been misrepresented in the "Statement of Community Involvement" as we are aware of several local residents who strongly objected and whose comments are not shown here making it a biased document. Also, attendance at the meeting was by invitation to a restricted group of residents and held at such a time, that of those who were invited, many were unable to attend during working hours.

2. Site:

This development is situated on the very farthest edge of the town and currently in a derestricted driving zone. As such, it is not in line with natural town expansion, nor infill, and constitutes urban sprawl on Greenbelt land.

It is closer to road links leading out of the town such that it is more likely to attract those who work farther afield than to meet the requirements of the existing community. It will put a strain on the existing economic infrastructure and there are fewer benefits to the local economy as compared with town centre locations that we consider to be more viable options.

Of the community benefits, firstly and most importantly, much has been made of the proposed footbridge over the canal but these comments are now all irrelevant as the bridge has been removed from the proposals. Also, quite a number of the supporting comments concentrated on the provision of this footbridge making their support for the development now invalid. It does not contribute to the vitality of the town, particularly since the removal of the footbridge, as there is no longer any direct access into the town making it a disjointed out of town application. The peripheral location, together with its detachment from the town centre, makes it an incohesive development that does not promote any kind of social interaction.

It does not support rural tourism as it will be a visual blot on the landscape from the Sandstone Trail and the canal towpath, plus it does not respect the character of the countryside. It has

been identified by the local community as an area of importance to them yet this is now being ignored.

These proposals also serve to remove the existing benefits offered to health and well-being at this location by destroying natural open space in its rightful setting and contributing to urban sprawl. It will destroy valuable Green Belt, threaten wildlife habitats; and have a detrimental, negative effect on conservation and the natural environment.

3. Highways

We feel it is imperative that a site visit is undertaken by the Planning Committee as there is currently insufficient detail of what the Highways consider necessary. Traffic counts have not been carried out as part of this application as they have instead relied on that used for 14/00462/FUL which is known to be flawed. Any suggestion of cycle use is unfeasible in reality as the road is too narrow and busy.

The access and visibility standards are not acceptable owing to the site entrance's close proximity to an already dangerous junction, increasingly used by vehicles approaching town from the by-pass; and the further poor visibility owing to the road's curvature.

Again, owing to its out of town location and the removal from the plans of any links to the town, there would be increased dependency on the use of private vehicles and this extra volume of traffic generated by the proposed scheme will further exacerbate an already problematic situation making an already hazardous road more dangerous; as well as an increase in greenhouse gas emissions.

4. Massing and density.

Finally, this development does not meet the NPPF's guidelines on 'Requiring good design'. As can clearly be seen from the Site Layout, it represents an un-neighbourly form of development that would have an adverse impact both on the visual amenity of existing residents whose properties are on the perimeter of the site, as it does not respect the mass and density of its surroundings; and the wider community who have expressed their views that it equally irreversibly affects the current unspoilt views from the Sandstone Trail and towpath.

The current proposals are incongruous both in their close proximity to each other and in the plot sizes in comparison with the existing properties in the area. In particular, the two extensive mature period properties that bound the development to each side and whose gardens run the length of the proposed site. On one side alone 15 properties consume the same area as just one of these houses.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to read our comments (and more detailed analysis below if possible) and hope that you will see that granting permission for this application is untenable.

Kind regards,

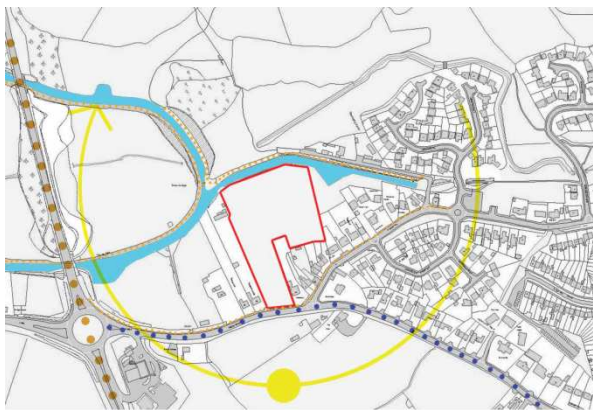
Rachel Saxty - On behalf of the West Whitchurch Campaign Group

Based on the statements made in the Design & Access Statement, please note the following:

- **3.1 CONTEXT ANALYSIS**

"The surrounding area is predominantly made up of detached and semidetached residential housing and countryside".

As can clearly be seen from the accompanying map, the site is Greenfield and the surrounding area is predominantly open fields, with less than 60° of the surrounding area (i.e. 1/6) being residential.



- **3.3 URBAN CONTEXT**

“... a substantial patchwork of open farmland and woodland, defined through hedged boundaries characterises the surrounding landscape and that of the town itself”.

This directly contradicts their previous statement that the surrounding area is predominantly residential.

- **3.4 CHARACTER AND AMENITY**

“At present, Whitchurch offers a variety of amenities listed below with distances from the site also noted (e.g.) Post Office 1.0 miles ...”

No doubt owing to the fact that the developers are located in Lytham St. Annes, and consequently have no local knowledge, they have used (I assume from having experimented with their quoted distances myself) Google maps, and as such, some of these distances are only achievable by driving the wrong way down the existing one way system!

- **3.5 STREETScape**

“An appraisal of the local residential development along Wrexham Road has been carried out as part of the contextual analysis”.

As can be seen from the photograph headings, these images are of Chemistry and the canal, and are not indicative of the streetscape along Wrexham Road, nor do they represent the visual impact of this development. As they say: *“The site lies in the background on the left”*. It does indeed. In fact the site couldn't be seen from this angle making it equally as irrelevant as the photograph of Chemistry.

- **3.6 VISUAL ENVELOPE**

“Visually the site... benefits from open views over the canal to the north... The proposed northern boundary along the canal frontage will be planted with hedgerow, natural scrub planting and meadow & wild flower planting...”

Currently, residents in existing substantial period properties benefit from these open views over the canal to the north. Once developed, this visual amenity will instead be afforded to the occupants crammed into this new development; and by the same token, the current view from the canal will be impacted upon by housing, no longer offering the same open views for all to enjoy.

- **3.7 SUMMARY**

“The visually contained nature of the site, combined with the orientation and location of the site provides the opportunity for the development of a well-integrated proposal that responds to the Wrexham Road street scene and existing urban grain of the town without detriment to the localised residential character and visual amenity”.

The layout and siting, both in itself and relation to adjoining buildings, spaces and views, is inappropriate and unsympathetic to the appearance and character of the local environment. We believe that the proposed development would not be well integrated owing to its out of town location. It would have a harmful impact on the open, rural and undeveloped character of the Green Belt, introducing a negative diverse element which would be entirely out of character with the area, to the detriment of the local environment.

- *3.8 OPPORTUNITIES:*

- *Whitchurch as an appropriate and sustainable area for growth*

This development will have a detrimental impact on local amenities as Whitchurch is at risk of having far more houses and people than the existing infrastructure can cope with. In addition to the brown site areas within town that have the potential to develop, there are other green land planning applications currently in the planning system which are nearer the town centre than here. This site could potentially create an oversupply of housing in Whitchurch and as such is unsustainable. If all the existing proposed properties are filled and the town is still sustaining the influx of new residents, then (and only then) should any new sites be considered.

Furthermore, the application site's edge of town location and proximity to the by-pass is such that it is more likely to attract a further inflow of new residents from outside rather than benefit the existing community.

- *Amenity offer and Local Centre within walking distance of site*

The site itself is isolated from the main suburban district, located in a predominantly low density residential area on the fringe of town. With regard to walking distances, these were based on the provision of a footbridge linking the area to the town which has since been withdrawn from the proposals.

- *Affordable housing provision*

Provision has only been made for 4 such properties and as yet, no figure has been put forward to define their interpretation of 'affordable'; nor is there any covenant to prevent local property developers buying them to rent out. Brown field sites could be developed instead, some right in the town centre. These developments would remove derelict sites, provide locations better suited to affordable housing, and improve both the appearance and economy of the town.

- *Potential for enhancement of urban grain as integrated development*

The site lies on the very edge of town and as such, particularly without the originally proposed linking footbridge, is not representative of an integrated development.

This development will have a negative impact on the existing character of the area and would have an adverse effect on the visual amenity of the area as a whole. Also, as mentioned in some of the objection letters, as well as an opinion expressed by residents at the meeting held at Dodington Lodge, the canal currently offers a rural escape for those currently living in the built up areas of town. It is favoured for its unspoilt views by walkers, families and dog owners alike. These views would be removed and either obscured by planting or disrupted by housing (that being precisely what people are in the vicinity to escape from). The land is not unused waste land but valuable open space enjoyed both by local residents and visitors to the area. The proposed development would not result in a benefit in terms of environment and landscape but to the contrary, would lead to the loss of valuable green space.

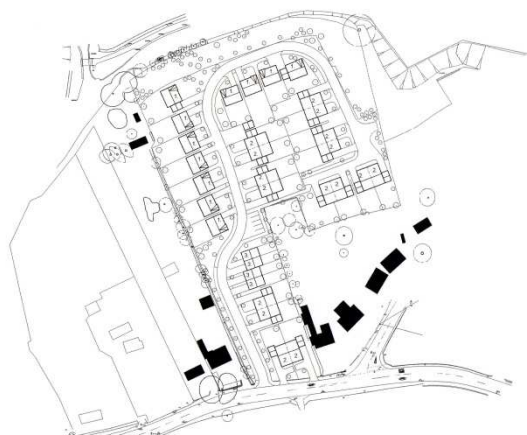
- *Potential provision for footpaths and footbridge for the benefit of the community linking Wrexham Road with the public footpath to the north bank of the canal*

As previously mentioned, the footbridge has since been withdrawn from the proposals owing to its invalidity, not having been properly thought through, nor any prior permissions sought as to its maintenance. This previously being their main selling point for the application, it was presumably intended to provoke enthusiasm for a site known to be unpopular with local residents for development and subsequently withdrawn once they have garnered support from the community, owing to it having been offered as an incentive without any evidence for its actuality.

- **4.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

“The site layout has been carefully considered to ensure the residential properties are well sited and spaced whilst adhering to characteristics of the site... It is considered that the proposed development offers an appropriate level of development that will both complement existing built form, whilst providing an integrated and sustainable extension to the settlement pattern. The layout and scale of the development has been designed to ensure it is in keeping with the character of the surrounding built form and wider setting”.

The proposed development would have an unacceptably adverse impact on the amenities of the properties immediately adjacent to the site and the surrounding area by reason of overlooking, loss of privacy and visually overbearing impact. The properties along this section of Wrexham Road are characterised by large plots with large spacing between. The proposed properties are substantially closer together compared with these existing mature properties and the gardens are significantly smaller. Therefore, the high density of the development does not complement its neighbours. It directly overlooks the rear of several existing mature properties and will create an immediate and irreversible loss of privacy to these residents.



- **5.1 USE**

“This application seeks to provide an appropriate urban extension to the town of Whitchurch. It is considered that the proposals detail a well-integrated development within walking distance to local amenities and that will complement the existing housing associated with Wrexham Road and Chemistry”.

It is located on the very edge of town and borders the canal so it is not integrated, the character of the surrounding built form is mainly that of period style properties and the wider setting is undeveloped countryside.

- **5.2 AMOUNT**

“The density of the residential accommodation has been informed by housing patterns of the surrounding housing stock and has been mindful of the existing site and surrounding characteristics. In physical terms, the amount of development is considered appropriate having regard to the surround context”.

It does not respect local context and street pattern or, in particular, the scale and proportions of surrounding buildings; and it would lead to a fragmented form of development along the

canal and diminish the visual amenity from the towpath and Sandstone Trail, as well as from the approach into the town.

- 5.3 LAYOUT

“... the design process has been carefully considered to allow a layout to emerge that will respond to its localised context to provide an integrated development... The form and massing of the proposed buildings has also been carefully considered to ensure that it reflects the architectural nuances of the surrounding vernacular and is seen as in keeping with the character with the surrounding setting”.

The proposed development will significantly alter the fabric of the area and create cramming in a comparatively low density area. It represents an inappropriate form of development within the Green Belt and in the absence of any special circumstances would by its inappropriateness have a harmful impact on the open, rural and undeveloped character of the Green Belt.

Finally, with regard to the supporting comments offered in respect of this development, we would like to point out that while some also raised concerns, so were not fully in support; others lived outside the area and so were not directly affected by the proposals. 24 in total are unsound.

Based on the statements made in the Supporting Comments, please note the following:

1. ROBINSON & YOUNG are from Wem, not Whitchurch
2. JAMES MCQUE thinks all the houses will be affordable, not just 4
3. MRS A J LUNT raises concerns over access and visibility; and increased traffic volume
4. MR D FISHER lives outside the affected area of Whitchurch
5. H EDWARD WARDLE lives in Fenn’s Wood, not Whitchurch, and raises concerns over access
6. MICHAEL & CHRISTINA BIRCH support the previously proposed bridge now removed from plans
7. EVELYN M. CALDER lives outside the affected area of Whitchurch
8. P FERRIS lives outside Whitchurch and raises access concerns
9. MRS SHEILA JONES remarks on the existing issues with Wrexham Road

Based on the SUPPORTING statements made in the Statement of Community Consultation, please note the following:

1. MR D FISHER lives outside the affected area of Whitchurch
2. HOWARD IKE lives in Hanmer, not Whitchurch
3. MRS J PROUDLOVE lives outside the affected area of Whitchurch
4. L. BUCKLEY has reservations about access
5. EVELYN M. CALDER lives outside the affected area of Whitchurch and supports the previously proposed bridge now removed from plans
6. DAVE CROUCH lives outside the affected area
7. DAVID SMITH lives outside the affected area
8. JILL CAFFERY lives in Bronington, not Whitchurch, and supports the previously proposed bridge now removed from plans
9. H.E.WARDLE lives in Fenn’s Wood, not Whitchurch, and raises concerns over access and highways
10. MR M HARDING lives outside the affected area of Whitchurch and raises highways concerns
11. LIZA & ROGER WILLIS raise drainage and highways concerns
12. C GUDGION raises concerns over visibility and highways
13. MRS R W JONES raises concerns over access and highways
14. MARGARET WOOD raises highways concerns
15. DAVID TORRENS lives outside the affected area and raises concerns over landscape maintenance and visitor parking provision

WEST WHITCHURCH SAMDEV CAMPAIGN
PLANNING NOTES – APPLICATION 14/00462/FUL 40 HOUSES ON WREXHAM ROAD,
WHITCHURCH

Dear Councillors,

This letter sets out why the reworked Wrexham Road proposal does not address the fundamental requirements of the NPPF. It is written with the full support of those living in the vicinity of this planning application. We are bewildered why this proposal has been given officer support when none of the underlying flaws articulated during this and previous consultations have been addressed. It is noted that the Council has failed to respond to the Rt Hon Owen Paterson MP concerning constituents' criticism of this plan.

There are many major concerns with the application and the manner in which the site has ended up being considered yet again. It has recently been excluded from the SAMDev plan for very valid reasons, none of which has been addressed adequately by the developer in their revised plans.

The developer has ridden rough shod over the views of the local people, ignoring a petition of nearly 500 locals. You will see below that the developer has produced factually incorrect and misleading data to justify their development. They have avoided a full consultation on the plans and have failed to acknowledge openly that this scheme would be the pre-cursor to a massive 300+ home development.

The key areas of concern have already been communicated to the planning department in response to their recent consultation on the Wrexham road scheme and that carried previously as part of the SAMDev process. The overarching message is that the proposals are not sustainable and will have a harmful impact.

Unlike other developers around Whitchurch the planners of this scheme have ignored local opinion and have avoided addressing any of the concerns raised previously. This site does not meet the NPPF guidelines on sustainability and should be REFUSED.

Set out below are new additional emerging concerns arising from the most recent versions of the developer plans and should be read in conjunction with the objections made by residents previously.

1: DRAINAGE

The site acts as a major sponge for the outlying area and holds water for much of the year, there is a pond on the site right in the middle of area A that does not appear on the developer's drainage statement.

Planning policy states that a site must show that it can deal with surface water run off in a way that will not affect the outlying area. In this case the developer plans to deal with run off by sending it down a small culvert and brook which is currently not maintained and the ownership of which is not known.



Wrexham Road during the many major storm events experienced over the last few years, notably in the winter 2013-14, has been like a river. Highway drains overflow regularly and surface run-off from the saturated fields flood the road. With more extreme rain events expected, this development will worsen the problem significantly. The developer plans fail to state how this problem will be addressed and do not recognise the major drainage problems associated with the fields and road. The culvert and stream currently draining the field will not cope with increased flows and is at risk of significant erosion and flooding caused by collapsed sides.

It is also now obvious that a total lack of research was originally done over sewer information especially when looking at pipework running from "The Crow" and along Wrexham Road from the town. As a minimum distance of 3 metres from the centre of a pipe must be adhered to, it is obvious that this was never looked at. If such a basic aspect of a proposed scheme has been totally overlooked and not considered properly until a neighbour points it out, then it raises many questions over the rest of the plan.

Having revised their Drainage Plans to comply with SC Drainage requests, the developer has now opted for installation of three Attenuation tanks.

- i) The latest drainage plan shows the tanks being located in the proposed community area;
- ii) The site plan has not been updated, and therefore shows new trees being planted in the same location.

Drainage tanks and tree roots together? Not a good idea as any builder would tell you.

The developer's drainage plans are poorly researched and not fit for purpose. They will worsen road flooding and overload the main sewers. They do not meet the NPPF section 10 requirements on flooding etc and are NOT SUSTAINABLE.

It should also be noted that even this week when the area has been mowed that the owners do not mow the permanent water feature which sits in the middle of the site. A photo here illustrates this point.



2. HIGHWAY

The Highway statement from the developer does not alleviate peak time congestion and will increase risk to cyclists and pedestrians. It is wholly misleading in that it states that Wrexham Road is 7 metres wide when for much of its length; it is less than 6 metres wide with extremely narrow pavements. Counter intuitively their plans make matters even worse by reducing road width away from the development by creating space for a pavement, this will make cycling a much higher risk and add to traffic congestion.

All the data they use is based around a 7m wide road. The Dept. for Transport (DfT) 'new road' data, which is available freely and used in objections already submitted to the Council has no information for a road of less than 6.1 metres wide. It also stipulates a massive reduction in traffic flows when the road has been made single file, as is the case for Wrexham Road due to 'on street parking'. Details of this are on objections already submitted.

It should also be noted that no measurements were made by the developer on Thompson Drive and Smallbrook Road which people now cut through at peak times because Wrexham Road is so bad.

The original scheme by the developer for a 'chicane system' along Wrexham Road, proposed when the area was looked at under SamDev, has now been quite rightly recognised as being nonsensical and removed. However the developer has not bothered to put forward an alternative, which means congestion will worsen to a critical level and safety compromised. A vague 'promise' of some money to the local authority for a future road plan is weak and does not in any way address the major congestion problems that will be caused by this proposal. No developer scheme that will raise traffic levels on a road already running at full capacity during peak times should be allowed without proper mitigation to prevent more delays and jams to road users. We are very disappointed with the Shropshire Council Highway report for both this site and the one at Chemistry. It does not follow the basic requirements / metrics stipulated by DfT, in fact it is shockingly lacking in detail and contains more opinion than fact. The view of the Highway Authority that more traffic can flow down Wrexham Road and Chemistry / Smallbrook Road without making the current congestion much worse, defies basic

logic and analysis of road capacity metrics. The Agency appears to be in denial about the current traffic congestion and is avoiding the inconvenient truth that lack of road capacity has yet to be tackled by the developers.

Cyclists as noted in our surveys rarely use Wrexham Road. This is due to the very high numbers of cars and lorries that now use this road and the extensive lengths of road which are in effect two way single file, due to road side parking. The developers transport statement would have you believe that bicycle use will be high; this is a completely unfounded statement. Their proposal allows for multi car houses and parking which will only add to car journeys made along Wrexham Road. We observed statistically significantly higher levels of traffic flows than the developer. Their survey machine was seen broken at one point, as pictured below. The developer's data under-records and is not reliable.



The developers have ignored the current traffic flows on Wrexham Road and the congestion at peak times. They make unfounded assumptions about use of cycles and pedestrians when their plans will only worsen the current difficulties. The plans do not meet the aims of section 4 of the NPPF on sustainable transport. NOT SUSTAINABLE.

3. PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

The most recent, desperate attempt to push this scheme through has been the addition of a pedestrian crossing in a position that does not meet DfT standards and is proximal to a dangerous corner where cars commonly exceed 40 mph. This illustrates yet again the developer's complete lack of care in thinking through the impact of their scheme on local people, notably children. Adding a pedestrian crossing to Wrexham road will make the busy peak traffic congestion even more fraught with risk, notably for people who might use the crossing. As seen below the crossing has been added without any proper research or safety risk assessment.



The DfT has stipulated requirements and metrics for the position of pedestrian crossings including

- stopping distances for cars
- minimum distance for pedestrians to view an oncoming car bearing in mind speed and road width.
-

This proposal does not meet those criteria, as even at 30mph there is a need for a minimum viewing distance of 80 metres. As you can see from the photos taken from the proposed position for a pedestrian and the approach to the area by car, the likelihood of an accident due to one or the other not seeing each other is highly probable. Although this is a 30mph road there are many occasions where people are travelling much faster and it is also a main escape route from town for the emergency services.

The proposed crossing has not been thought through. It will increase the risk of injury / death and will severely exacerbate congestion.

4. HOUSING STYLE and LAYOUT

The majority of housing opposite the planned Wrexham Road scheme are large, detached and also bungalow style houses. Why then is it considered acceptable by officers to build tiny semis in front of large detached properties? An email between the developer and officers indicated that a conversation on this matter had been discussed but in the area in front of 'Sunnyside' and Heritage Walk this has not been adhered to. Also the land at this point is

much higher than surrounding areas, virtually a storey higher which means the effect of a two-storey house will in fact be nearly 3 storeys.

In the officer's report Paragraph 6.1.7 we find it incredulous that with the design as it stands with clear areas set aside for further expansion access roads, the officers say it cannot be assumed that other applications will not be made!! The same developers have already submitted plans for over 300 houses as part of the Samdev consultation!! Of course they intend to carry on.

Slowly but surely by stealth we will see more and more traffic along Wrexham Road and Smallbrook Road with no scheme in place to deal with it. A developers dream, more houses and no costs to mitigate neighbours who have no driveway to park on. When Wrexham Road and Smallbrook road grind to a halt, what shall we do then? Where are all those cars that park on these roads going to go and who will pay for it?

5. ELECTRIC PYLONS

Can we draw your attention please to the following picture:-



There is absolutely no mention in any report by the Council or developer on what will be happening to the run of pylons that go right across the site ending in this location by Wrexham Road? What will happen to this supply of electricity? Why have the local power company not been consulted?

5. CONCLUSION

It is with great sadness and disappointment we have to communicate in this way at the last minute. The whole process has become unbalanced in favouring the developer. We have been working in an information vacuum with a complete absence of proper consultation either by the developer or the planning staff. We note the considerable help being given by planning officers to the developers using in many cases information that we as objectors have previously given.

The officers' salaries are paid for using OUR Council tax. It is increasingly apparent that finding the last 84 properties or 1% of the SAMDev is the highest priority for the planners. To achieve this goal they appear to be avoiding inconvenient facts and the views of local people. It appears they are not prepared to challenge the spurious and flawed plans and supporting data put forward by developers.

We had a democratic system in SamDev to decide where we as residents wanted to see housing. This flies in the face of that. There is a petition of nearly 500 people in West Whitchurch that rightfully believe this scheme will affect their lives in a detrimental way. Will democracy prevail in Whitchurch?