



# Wem Rural Parish Council

## **Planning Application 14/03268/OUT**

**Land Adjacent Ash Grove, Wem,**

**Outline application for the erection of five pairs of semi-detached dwellings**

At the meeting of Wem Rural Parish Council held on 5 August 2014 it was resolved to object to the application for the following reasons:

1. The Parish is designated in the draft Site Allocation and Development of Management SPD as Countryside and therefore no open market development should take place. This classification is confirmed in the Council's Future Development in the Parish Statement. The site is also classed as an open countryside location under the saved policies of the North Shropshire Local Plan following the adoption of the Core Strategy. This application is using Shropshire Council's lack of a 5 year land supply and the NPPF to justify its approval. However it is not the intention of the NPPF to facilitate unsustainable, highly speculative development.
2. The site in question has a planning history. Application 07/01613/OUT was determined in April 2004 and refused permission and the subsequent appeal APP/N3210/A/08/2069358 was dismissed by the Inspector. The Parish Council considers the reasons outlined in the Decision Report and Appeal Decision for open market development remains valid.
3. The Design and Access Statement states the site is brownfield and although the NPPF and Core Strategy encourages the use of brownfield sites it is clear from the planning history that not all brownfield sites are suitable for development. It could also be considered that due to the length of time the site had not been disturbed, prior to the clearance of the site in the last 15 months, the term brownfield is not wholly accurate.
4. The Arboricultural Report submitted with the application confirms that the site is 'wet' and Shropshire Council's Flood and Water Management Team acknowledged that it is at a moderate to high risk of groundwater flooding. It is also noted that drainage details, plans and calculations could be conditional and submitted at reserved matters stage. Due to the level of risk of groundwater flooding the Parish Council does not consider the details, plans and calculation should be made conditional as there are serious doubts that a practical and sustainable solution could be agreed.
5. Access to the site is proposed to be through Ash Grove. It is referred to in the Design and Access as the 'existing estate road' and this is not considered to be an accurate description. Ash Grove is a cul-de-sac of 8 houses with a turning circle and was never designed to be an access road. The suitability of Ash Grove has not been adequately considered as it is a narrow road, has to accommodate on road parking and has a concrete (not tarmac) surface. The Parish Council does not consider access to the site through Ash Grove to acceptable or sustainable and therefore does not comply with Policy CS6 Sustainable Design and Development Principles.

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6. The Parish Council is aware that the Round Meadow Steering Group (acting under Shropshire Council's Community-Led Housing Scheme) is still in discussion with Shropshire Council's Highways Development Control team regarding the siting of the pedestrian crossing for use by residents of the Round Meadow site. Until these discussions are completed to the satisfaction of the Steering Group the Parish Council has concerns regarding pedestrian access to the town.

The Parish Council would also point out the following:

- a. Section 9 states the number of affordable houses to be provided is 1 on the application where the Design and Access Statement states 3.
- b. Section 14 states the land is not contaminated, or suspected of being contaminated. The Parish Council was included in correspondence when Shropshire Council investigated a possible pollution incident in July 2013 when asbestos was removed by specialist contractors from the site. The Shropshire Council Officer confirmed that although not being aware of any development proposals for this piece of land he had informed site owner that Shropshire Council had identified the land as potentially contaminated land not because of the asbestos issue, but because of its previous military use and accordingly if a planning permission was ever granted in the future it would be subject to conditions that would require a detailed site investigation and risk assessment.
- c. Some of the economic benefits identified in the Design and Access Statement can be considered speculative.

In conclusion and to avoid any misunderstanding, the Parish Council wishes to make clear it supported the development of 23 affordable homes on the west of Ash Grove (Round Meadow) to provide housing for local people in line with Shropshire Council's Exception Site Housing Policies and its own Development in the Parish Statement. This application is for open market housing and is contrary to both Shropshire Council's and the Parish Council's Development Policies. In reaching its decision to object to this application the Parish Council has taken a consistent approach to development in the Parish for the future benefit of its parishioners.

Carole Warner  
Clerk to the Parish Council  
8 August 2014