

Presentation to CBC Development

Management Committee 6 Feb 2019

**Re: Application 18/02458/OUT – Biggleswade
East 1,500 new homes.**

My name is Gerry Sansom – I represent CPRE Bedfordshire a Bedford based environmental charity with over 30 years' experience of working in the planning system in Bedfordshire.

We objected to this application.

This is not a small application - 1,500 new homes is roughly 40% the size of Ampthill.

We are extremely concerned by the Officer's recommendation to approve this application.

CBC has already submitted its Local Plan for approval by a Government Appointed Inspector.

The Inspector will start a public hearing in the Spring – just 8 weeks away.

This proposed development is a key Policy within the Local Plan – Policy SA4.

When CBC submitted its Local Plan for approval it entered into a democratic process enabling all those who object to, or approve of, Policy SA4, to make their case in public in front of the Inspector.

The Inspector will then decide, if Policy SA4 should be approved or not.

The Officers recommendation for approval is an attempt to subvert this democratic process – depriving the people of Biggleswade and others of their democratic right to have their say on this important Policy.

Today, Committee Members should understand the impact a decision to trample on the rights of residents will have.

Why on earth should CBC councillors and the Local Plan process ever be trusted again by Town & Parish Councils or residents?

CBC should stand up for the democratic rights of the people they were elected to represent.

The Officer's Report – para's 9.9 and 9.10 identifies 2 reasons (a & b) where "Prematurity" can be used to refuse this application – the judgement is that (a) cannot be used – this is quite wrong.

(b) That the Plan is at an advanced stage i.e. submitted for approval - has not been dealt with by the Officer.

Well, the Local Plan has indeed been submitted for approval – the application can be refused - it is self-evident!

What else is wrong with this application?

- A Development Plan that the people of Biggleswade have never been consulted on – so lacking in detail that it is completely useless.**
- The Affordable homes content – the applicants S106 Final Proposal is not at all committed to delivering the Local Plan requirement.**

So, why the panic and rush to get this application passed?

Councillors should be asking some very serious questions.

Approving this application will confirm that CBC has its hands deep in the pockets of developers – a reputation that will stick for years.

Finally, the Officer says that:

“Significant weight should be attached to the contribution that this development would make towards housing supply”.

Well, CBC has more than a 5 year land supply.

We suggest that delivering some of the 5,000 new homes at Houghton Regis North given planning permission over 4 years ago would be a far better bet!!

This application should be refused.

Thank you.