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To: Planning Comments (Shared Mailbox)  
Cc: [REDACTED]  
Subject: Ref: 6/2019/1370/MAJ

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Re: Planning Application Ref: 6/2019/1370/MAJ

Proposed Site: East of Firs Wood Close, Northaw.

### Accessibility of Firs Wood Close

In the report by Milestone Transport Planning that was commissioned on behalf of Swing Limited, particular attention should be drawn to section 2.13. This refers to Coopers Lane Road (the only access road to Firs Wood Close). It correctly confirms that apart from the initial 300 yards the road (which is actually a winding country lane) has **NO STREET LIGHTING** or **PAVEMENT**. This totally counters the ludicrous suggestion that the area's amenities are within walking distance. Who in their right mind would walk along this road, use a pushchair or allow children to do so? There are several bends along it and it would be in total darkness for much of the winter months. The argument that Northaw can be accessed via the bridleway that runs off Hook Lane is again nonsense, for 6-8 months of the year it is extremely muddy (I can personally vouch for this [REDACTED] and again unlit - not a safe passageway for children particularly during the dark winter months. Northaw village doesn't have a shop and consists of very limited facilities anyway!

With regard to the distances and estimated travelling times to the area's local amenities that are quoted within the report by DLA Town Planning Limited, they need to be challenged. These distances have been greatly underestimated and the timings quoted are well off the mark. For example:-

- 'Potters Bar Centre' is quoted as being as approx. 2km away, 3 minutes by car or 7 minutes by bicycle (they cleverly omit to state the walking distance but it is fairly recognised that a 'brisk' walking pace covers 3 miles or 5 km per hour. Again walking would entail proceeding along an unlit country lane with no pavement for the majority of the way). The AA route planner estimates the distance as 2.6 miles or 4.18km more than twice the distance they quote. It is a journey I often undertake and have no doubt which is the most accurate.

- 'Tesco's' is quoted as being approx. 2.9km away, 7 minutes by car or 11 minutes by bicycle (again they omit to state the walking distance and who would realistically shop by bike?). The AA route planner estimates the distance as 3.2 miles or 5.15km, again differing greatly from the DLA report.
- 'Co-op' is quoted as being approx. 2.2km away, 4 minutes by car or 8 minutes by bicycle (once again they omit to state the walking distance). The AA route planner estimates the distance as 2.0 miles or 3.22km, again differing greatly from the DLA report.
- 'Northaw School' is quoted as being 1.6km away VIA THE BRIDLEWAY, 4 minutes by car which is a total nonsense as THERE IS NO VEHICLE ACCESS ALONG THE BRIDLEWAY! Or 6 minutes by bicycle but this route is not suitable for bikes. On this occasion they do quote a walking time estimated at 19 minutes but as previously stated this is not a suitable all year round route as in the winter months being extremely muddy, especially in the base of the valley and unlit. No parent would allow their child to use this route unattended. The AA route planner estimates the distance by road as being 1.6 miles or 2.57km.

I personally travel these routes regularly and confirm that these timings are significantly extended during the rush hours and school picking up times.

Use of vehicles is therefore a necessity in all circumstances that in turn increases traffic and pollution. A rural location that forces the use of private cars strongly counters the whole purpose of affordable homes.

### **Parking and the total reliance on private vehicle use**

The demand for parking on the new development has been grossly underestimated.

The proposed development consists of 9 x 2 bedroom houses and 15 x 3 bedroom houses. Each of the two bedroom houses are allocated just one parking space whilst the 3 bedroom houses have two parking spaces. There is an additional 9 visitors spaces. Due entirely to its location I feel it is a fair assumption that 100% of the residents will have to rely on their own cars and vans to go about their own business. Again due to their location these properties will not be suitable for the elderly - they are more likely to attract younger couples or families. The typical 2 bedroom house should comfortably accommodate a young couple or possibly a parent/parents with a small child - if the couple work they are likely to require not one but two cars but have only been allocated one space. Likewise the 3 bedroom houses are likely to attract a couple with children or a single parent with children, again they will be totally reliant on owning a car or two. Typically some of these residents may also require a commercial vehicle for their trade. With only 9 unreserved visitors parking spaces available the likelihood is that these will be used up by the residents themselves.

Likely outcomes if, as I believe, there is insufficient parking being allocated to this development:

- The overflow could spill onto Firs Wood Close itself causing access problems.
- The residents of the new development would start to use our already constrained **PRIVATE** parking facilities which would cause heated problems.

### **Land clearance**

Without warning this site, which was formerly an attractive natural wooded area, was cut down with dozens of small trees destroyed. This left the area open to light pollution from the neighbouring Oshwal Centre's car park which was not previously visible from the top of the road.

### **Maintenance of the Estate**

All residents fund the maintenance of the Estate (circa £1100 per Household per Annum) this includes the upkeep of the surrounding beautiful parkland gardens, communal power and lighting, an 'at capacity' sewage plant and the tennis courts. Can these proposed 'affordable homes' really be classed as such when they too will be subject to high maintenance costs and due to their locality, the residents will have no choice but to rely on their own means of transport?

### **Protect the Green Belt, it cannot be replaced.**

Landowners are prepared to invest £10k's in order to explore every avenue to maximise their profits. Where there is a direct infringement on the Green Belt one of the few options left open to them is to exploit the need for 'affordable homes' but these need to be 'accessible homes' and 'environmentally sited homes' - these are neither.

The protection of any green belt space is to the benefit of all not just the people who choose to live there. The Council should be protecting our precious Green Belt at all costs.

