

## **NPC Observations on LIG Planning Application – January 2016**

The Parish Council has been in discussion with the applicant for a number of months in relation to many aspects of the proposed scheme. At the same time the Parish Council is developing a Neighbourhood Plan which, inter alia, will include an outline development brief for this site as well as proposals for road modification to deal with traffic congestion in Cuffley and improvements to King George V playing fields.

If Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council would be minded to grant planning permission for this development, then the Parish Council would wish to widen its discussions with the applicant and include both Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council and the Highway Authority to reach agreement in relation to a number of the aspects of the scheme particularly in relation to funding, delivery process and timing. If this could be achieved the Parish Council could then embed any such agreement within the Neighbourhood Plan.

If, however, the Council are minded to refuse the application or should the discussions between the stakeholders not result in sufficient consensus, then the Parish Council reserve the right to subsequently submit a formal letter of objection to this application.

**Development on the Greenbelt** – The Parish Council submitted a detailed response to the draft Local Plan. The Council at that time did not in principle object to the release of this site from the Green Belt for residential development but would wish to see the overall quantum of development within the final Local Plan restricted to the quantum for Cuffley and Northaw currently contained in the Draft Local Plan. The Parish Council would ideally have preferred that this site did not come forward for consideration prior to adoption of the Local Plan. The Parish Council generally welcomes the package of measures agreed with the applicant and accepts that given the proposed redesignation within the current draft Local Plan that the site will be developed for residential use. The primary issue to be resolved is timing of development.

**Density** - The site in the draft Local Plan is scheduled for 110 units. The applicant has presented to the Parish Council a development plan for 121 units. However it is the Parish Council's view that although 121 units may be capable of being accommodated on the site the illustrative layout accompanying the application indicates a number of unacceptable compromises particularly in relation to the massing and location of the apartment buildings within the open space area on the highest point of the site. The Parish Council would wish to retain apartments within the development at an appropriate location but is of the view that a development of 110 units would lead to a better solution.

**Phasing** - There are no proposals to phase the development. If the development was developed and sold as a single phase this would raise issues about the ability of local facilities to absorb, within a short period of time, the impact of additional numbers. In addition, the draft local plan is proposing 193 additional dwellings in Cuffley in the period to 2033. It seems misguided to front load the delivery of the majority of that

number. We would wish to discuss further phasing options and the timing of proposed development on this site.

**Highways** -The Parish Council within its emerging Neighbourhood Plan will be including proposals for traffic calming and environmental improvements in Station Road which are considered necessary if this development proposal is implemented. We understand that both the applicant and the Highway Authority have in principle agreed that this application should not result in any major modifications to the Station Road/Northaw Road junction but modifications to the Cattlegate Road/ Northaw Road junction may be required. We would support these junction proposals. The Parish Council would wish to make it clear that the improvements to pedestrian safety, speed reduction measures and improvements to the environment of Station Road, as agreed with the applicant, are an essential and necessary part of the proposed development. It is vital, therefore, that the mechanism to deliver the package of measures for Station Road at as early a stage as possible, is set out in any s106 and s278 agreements.

**School Parking** - There is a pre-existing problem with school parking which results in parking in the local area and at the KGV car park. We have reviewed the applicant's proposals for mitigating parking related to the school and are of the view that these are acceptable.

**KGV access** - It is essential given the proximity of the new access to the development to the access to the KGV car park that the KGV access is modified to be a full two way access which is what we understand the applicant is proposing. As this car park is used for the setting down and picking up of children attending the Cuffley School, it is essential that this access modification is put in place at the commencement of any development on the application site.

**Pedestrian Access from South Drive** – The plans show a pedestrian access from South Drive through the proposed development to the KGV car park. The applicant has shared with the Parish Council its proposals to limit this through route to pedestrian traffic only through the use of offset obstructions to prevent through cycling. The Parish Council supports these proposals.

**Development views** – It is the view of the Parish Council that consideration should be given to the views from both Cattlegate Road and Northaw Road. It is the Parish Council's view that the height and location of the apartment buildings is not visually attractive and consideration should be given to a redesign which avoids the taller buildings being located on the highest point of the site. This area is sensitive in landscape terms and every effort should be made by design, layout and landscaping, to minimise the visual impact of any development

**Community benefit and highways funding** – The Parish Council would wish to see a significant contribution via a Section 106 agreement from the applicant towards the Parish Council's proposals for Station Road traffic calming and environmental improvements, enhancement of the existing KGV facilities together with the gifting of

the designated site for a new all-weather multi use pitch to the south west of the scheme. As the KGV is the responsibility of the Parish Council it is critical that the Parish Council is involved in the negotiation of the Section 106 agreement.

The Parish Council would wish that any section 106 contributions towards primary health care is secured for the benefit of the existing Cuffley GP practice and invested in building modifications to deal with disabled access and other issues.

The Parish Council would wish to agree the timing and funding package for any highway improvements to ensure that any agreed proposals are actually delivered within a reasonable timeframe consistent with the community's aspirations.