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Lee Walton  
Planning Case Officer  
South Somerset District Council  
Brympton Way  
Yeovil  
BA20 2HT

13<sup>th</sup> January 2017

Dear Lee

**16/05458/OUT RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF UP TO 26 NO. DWELLINGS, ASSOCIATED PARKING, LANDSCAPING AND CONSTRUCTION OF ACCESS, LAND SOUTH OF THE FOX & HOUNDS PUBLIC HOUSE, BROADWAY ROAD, CHARLTON ADAM, SOMERTON, SOMERSET.**

CPRE Somerset wishes to **OBJECT** to the above application for the following reasons:

The cumulative impact of this proposal combined with recently approved developments would be demonstrably harmful to the local character and distinctiveness of Charlton Adam.

In our view this application cannot be considered in isolation from the recent approval of 8 houses opposite the Fox and Hounds (16/02353/OUT). There comes a tipping point when the character and distinctiveness of a small rural settlement is in clear danger of being lost through too much development being concentrated within one small part of the village. That point has arrived for Charlton Adam with this proposal. Approval would undermine SSDC 's stated intention to safeguard the unique character of its villages. The cumulative adverse impact of the two developments would be to introduce a large belt of inappropriate and near continuous suburban built form consisting of 34 dwellings , hard surfacing, lighting and associated street paraphernalia, all concentrated within the eastern end of a famously beautiful and largely unspoilt South Somerset village. The combined size of this built form is clearly not commensurate with the scale or character of the settlement. Thus the application is contrary to the objectives of the Local Plan, Policy SS2.

Each of the two developments on their own significantly extend built form beyond traditional village boundaries into open countryside. The traditional separation between Charlton Adam and the secondary settlement of Broadway was lost with the earlier

The Somerset Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England exists to promote the beauty, tranquility and diversity of rural England by encouraging the sustainable use of land and other natural resources in town and country.

approval. Approval of this application would result in the loss of a large open space in a sensitive position behind the village pub. The cumulative adverse impacts of these near adjoining developments fail to reinforce local character and distinctiveness, contrary to the objectives of the Local Plan, Policy EQ2.

#### Non-Compliance with Policy SS2

At para 1.1.6 of its Planning Statement the Applicant claims that: *“The proposals are fully in accordance with the relevant policies of the NPPF and Policy SS2 of the SSLP”*.

However, SS2 requires that proposals should be consistent with relative community-led plans and should generally have the support of the local community following robust engagement or consultation. There is no mention of the Charltons Village Plan in the application documentation, despite its obvious relevance as a community-led plan, given its references to housing. This Village Plan clearly sets out the importance attached by the local community to the village open spaces in defining local character and distinctiveness, including the application site.

Para 3.2.4 of the 'Statement of Community Involvement' says that the Applicant *“recognised the need to engage with the site's near neighbours”*, and at para 3.2. 5 there is reference to 13 letters sent to them, and five responses, the contents of which are not disclosed. There was an *“exhibition' of the plans for four and a half hours on a Monday afternoon from 3.30pm to 8pm. Invitations were sent to properties 'within a reasonable distance of the application site”*, and to parish councillors. The SCI states that the exhibition boards were published on a dedicated link. However this link was not published. At para 4.2.3 the explanation given is that *“although we didn't publish this link we are aware that it has been shared on local community social media sites and has been visited by a number of individuals”*.

Clearly there has been no survey of the 700 people living in Charlton Adam (2011 census) conducted by an independent professional consultant, no independent analysis of the feedback, and no publication of same. On our analysis of the SCI, there has been no *“robust engagement”* with the community, on any reasonable interpretation of that phrase, as required by Policy SS2.

The applicant is required to identify a local housing need but has made no attempt to do so. The supporting text to Policy SS2 (at Para 5.32) says that: *“The community is best placed to determine local need and what will make their settlement more sustainable, and there will be an expectation that development proposals will have either come from the local community , or been tested and checked through local consultation and engagement”*. **We understand that results are expected shortly of a Housing Needs Survey commissioned by the Parish Council, and we ask that the outcome is given proper weight by the LPA.**

At para 4.1.4 of the Planning Statement the Applicant sets out why the LPA should give *“reduced weight”* to Policy SS2, given SSDC's lack of a five year housing land supply. However, it makes no mention of the recent clear guidance given to LPAs by the Court of Appeal in the March 2016 Hopkins Homes case \*. This makes clear that the LPA can still give Policy SS2 considerable weight if it chooses to do so as a matter of planning judgement, and that the weight will vary *“according to the circumstances”*. The court will not intervene unless the weight given the relevant policy by the decision-maker can be said to be legally unreasonable ie irrational. In our view, there would be nothing irrational in an LPA decision to refuse this application on the basis of the above compelling reasons.

Local concerns

CPRE Somerset supports objections made on the basis of local concerns regarding increased traffic on Broadway road, lack of safe pavements, flooding, and ongoing sewerage issues in Charlton Adam.

We hope you will take our views into account.

*\*This was the joined cases of Suffolk Coastal District Council v Hopkins Homes Ltd and Richborough Estates Partnership LLP v Cheshire East Borough Council and Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.*

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light green rectangular background. The signature appears to read "Becky Collier".

Becky Collier  
Branch Manager - CPRE Somerset