



Branch President
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Branch Chairman
Prof Chris Lewis

Please reply to:-
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M. Bale
Planning Officer
Taunton Deane Borough Council
The Deane House
Belvedere Road
Taunton
TA1 1HE

16th January 2017

Dear Mr. Bale

43/16/0135 - ERECTION OF 29 NO. RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS WITH ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE & PUBLIC OPEN SPACE ON LAND ADJACENT TO POPES LANE, ROCKWELL GREEN, WELLINGTON

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

Loss of Greenfield Land: We understand that this land is not allocated for development in the adopted Local Plan. Taunton Deane has seen one of the biggest rates of increase in new house building between 2014 and 2015 - second only to Exeter (figures from DCLG) and there are many more homes that have been given planning permission in the last year across the district - plus hundreds more in the pipeline. With this in mind, it is unnecessary and unjustifiable to allow more unallocated, greenfield land to be lost to development at this time. Until recently, this land was allocated as “green wedge” so must have been deemed by TDBC to have some significance as a buffer for development. To allow this same land to be built upon so quickly and with no proven need for housing at this site, would be disastrous. There are significant areas of brown field land around Wellington and CPRE believes that this farmland should not be sacrificed until all possibilities to use other land are explored.

Loss of Best and Most Versatile land: This proposal would lead to the loss of 2.56ha of agricultural land - 73.9% of which is classed as Best and Most

Versatile (BMV). The Agricultural Land Classification Report claims that “*the loss of a small area (2.3 ha) of Grade 3 agricultural land at the Site would not significantly harm agricultural interests in national planning policy terms (i.e. NPPF Paragraph 112).*” We disagree. Most of the approved and recently completed development around Wellington is on BMV land, so surely this makes the case for not losing more even stronger? BMV land is an irreplaceable resource and should only be developed as an absolute last resort. As mentioned earlier, this is **not** a case of last resort and further loss of this quality farmland cannot be justified.

Loss of Tranquillity: This site is just outside the Blackdown Hills AONB which boasts dark skies as one of its special qualities. With this in mind, and the fact that there is bat activity on the site, we would like to see strict conditions on outside lighting if this application is approved.

Yours sincerely

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

Becky Collier
Branch Manager - CPRE Somerset