

Bloxham Parish Council wish to register their objection to the following Planning application.

25/01009/OUT – Land East of Barford Road Bloxham.

Outline Planning permission for up to 120 dwellings with access off Barford Road.

Overview:

It is no longer always practicable to view Planning applications in isolation. The cumulative impact of multiple applications needs to be considered against the sustainability and strain put on local resources and infrastructure such as nursery and schooling, healthcare, road infrastructure and convenience stores. In this instance the NPPF “presumption in favour of sustainable development” para 11a does not appear applicable, the development will not promote a sustainable pattern of development as it is adding additional strain on the infrastructure to the south of the village, which is going to be under increased pressure from a recently approved development of 130 homes, also on the southern side of the village.

Approval of current Planning applications will have no impact in the short term on the current Housing Land Supply shortfall. Focus needs to be on removing the roadblocks to commencing the build of the 8,000 houses CDC have waiting to be started. One tool available to CDC to expedite development would be to apply NPPF policy 81, adding a planning condition that the development must begin within a timescale shorter than the default period.

Emerging Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan 2025 -2040.

Bloxham Parish Council have updated the existing Neighbourhood Plan to be more in line with the Government Housing Policy, updated NPPF and the CDC emerging Local Plan 2040. Our emerging Plan is currently in regulation 14, moving to regulation 15 on 6th October 2025. With reference to the 10 year plan period (April 2024 – March 2034), being used by CDC in calculating housing supply, the Neighbourhood Plan would need to provide approx. 218 homes (using the standard method of calculating housing supply for Bloxham of 21.8 homes per annum). Since April 2024 applications have been approved for a total of 160, with the allocated Painters Farm site in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan being for 125 homes, we would exceed that requirement, effectively extending the plan period to 13 years.

Adopting this approach with an allocated site in the BNP allows Bloxham to meet future housing needs whilst providing several community benefits including land for Primary school expansion, additional parking to improve safety issues around the school and land for a new cemetery. No such benefits will be provided by the proposed Barford Road Development, or indeed any benefits on the Parish Councils Community Benefits list provided to the land Promoter.

The Barford Road site was reviewed by AECOM as part of this update process and is not considered to be a favourable site for the Neighbourhood Plan housing requirements if more suitable sites are available, which is the case and which will be brought forward in the emerging BNP.

Development specifics.

This development does not comply with the Policies listed in Bloxham Neighbourhood Development Plan 2015 – 2031, made 2016. Although aging, this Plan is valid and was referenced in a Planning Inspectorate appeal decision dated 9th February 2023.

Although Cherwell District Council's Housing Land Supply has dropped from 5 to 2.3 years, resulting in the engagement of tilted balance in favour of development, this doesn't automatically mean approval of a site. Particularly where more suitable sites are available, which is the case in this instance.

This development is not indicated as a strategic site in the Cherwell District Local Plan 2011 – 2031 and has not previously been highlighted as a potential development site or included as part of the 2040 review. The proposals are therefore contrary to saved policies C8 and H18.

The site is located outside the built form of the village, within an area of agricultural land and open countryside and near a pond containing Great Crested Newts.

Flood risk:

As part of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan AECOM prepared a site assessment and commented that the desktop study identifies the site as low flood risk, but the site visit showed flooding to the southern extent of the site, which could mean the site regularly becomes waterlogged after rainfall.

Access to amenities (calculated using Google maps. Appendix A):

For planning purposes a general rule for walking to amenities from a development is 10 minutes (800 metres). The walking distance to local amenities are well beyond these.

Local Surgery; 15 minute walk, 0.9 km (0.7 miles).

Primary school; 23 minute walk, 1.65 km (1 mile).

Village centre and shops; 20 minute walk, 1.3 km (0.8 mile).

Secondary school; 33 minute walk, 2.45 km 1.5 miles).

Nearest convenience store is within the petrol station; 13 minute walk, 1 km (0.6 miles).

A further major concern is the pavement widths on several sections of the route to the village centre along Barford Road and Church street, where it is not possible to pass a pedestrian without entering the highway, and are not deemed suitable for parents with pushchairs and young children. There have been several minor incidents where pedestrians have been touched by vehicle wing mirrors.

Cumulative impact on sustainability:

The cumulative impact of recent approved developments to the south and west of Bloxham need to be considered in the context of their overall impact on the sustainability of Bloxham, specific concerns are the mini roundabout, already beyond capacity, pavement width on walking routes into the village, capacity of Healthcare surgery, which is already beyond capacity, education services from Nursery through to Secondary education. Examples of the cumulative impact are referenced in each Infrastructure sub section.

Infrastructure

Doctors surgery:

Over capacity. Along with the recently proposed developments in its catchment area the surgery will not be able to continue to provide the level of service it currently does. The ICB has already indicated there are significant capacity issues, with insufficient consulting rooms, having an internal area 16% below the minimum for the no's of patients. This is an important factor when you look at the demographics for the area, Bloxham and its surrounding villages have an aging population bringing with it more complex medical

needs and Dr/patient time. This development would add an additional 288 patients, **with a cumulative total including recently approved developments in Hook Norton and Milcombe to over 900**

Dental Practice:

List closed to new NHS patients

Primary school:

On paper, it is below capacity in certain areas, however reality could reflect an “overcapacity” future environment, due to the no’s of proposed developments in Bloxham and Milcombe adding additional pressures to teaching and support staff. Parking and drop off/pick up has been highlighted by school staff as a significant problem. This development would equate to an additional 36 pupils **with a cumulative total including other approved planning applications in 2024/25 of 95**. The existing 220 new homes with their young children coming up to school age it is not unreasonable to see a steep increase in demand for places at the Primary school.

Traffic and roads:

The cumulative impact of recent developments in the area will impact the road network.

The mini roundabout junction of Barford Road with the A361 is already classed as being at capacity by OCC, with no proposals to improve the situation. This matter has been made worse by the recent granting of permission for 130 homes on the A361 behind the petrol station, Milcombe and Hook Norton.

Convenience Store:

The Co-op was built in the 1960’s to support the local housing boom. The store footprint, with its narrow aisles and minimal parking, falls significantly short of that which would be required to serve over 1600 dwellings by today’s standards. A store serving a development of 1000 dwellings would typically be twice its size.

Cherwell Adopted Local Plan (2015) and the BNP.

Policy Villages 2: States that in villages a total of 750 dwellings (though not a fixed value) will be provided to support the need for new dwellings in the Cherwell District. Recent government targets have been amended upwards to over a 1000. This increase is likely to have been achieved solely from recent developments in the local area of 160 in Bloxham, 73 in Hook Norton and 50+ in Milcombe. Indeed, the Inspectors at Tappers Farm and Sibford Ferris stated there would be demonstrable harm from exceeding delivery of 750 dwellings at Category A villages within the plan period. Irrespective of Government policies that is still a valid statement.

Approved applications for Bloxham in 2024/2025 total 160.

Contrary to BL2: Allows only for the following:

Minor development of less than 10 dwellings.

Infill gaps in an otherwise continuous built-up frontage.

Category “A” village suitable for minor development within the built up limits

This development does not meet any of the BL2 criteria.

Contrary to BL3: Connectivity for all new developments to provide safe access to village services.

It is not possible for new residents, including those of school age and the mobility impaired, to have safe pedestrian, cycle or wheelchair/mobility scooter access to village services due to the poor quality and width of existing footpaths on Barford road and Church street.

Photos showing narrow paths on route from proposed development to village centre:

A361 Church Street, pavement width 90cm min, with the additional safety issue of narrow road



Barford Road, old railway bridge 100cm min, with the addition safety issue of narrow road



A361, Memorial Green to Red Lion 80cm min, with the additional safety issue of narrow road



Measured width on A361, Memorial Green to Red Lion, wall to kerb.



Contrary to BL7: Development should not increase flood risk.

Physical inspection by AECOM during the preparation of their Site Assessment showed areas of flooding, which could indicate that the site regularly becomes waterlogged after rainfall.

Contrary to BL9: Ensure that there is adequate wastewater and water supply capacity to serve the new development and to avoid the exacerbation of any existing problems.

Many properties on Barford Road experience low water pressure.

Contrary to BL9: Ensure that the impact of any additional traffic likely to be generated by the development has been satisfactorily mitigated and will not adversely affect the highway network.

Mini roundabout at the Barford Road junction with A361 is at capacity with no junction improvements deemed possible by OCC.

Contrary to BL9: For new housing developments, ensure that a sufficient supply of local primary school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new residents.

Additional 36 pupils, with a cumulative impact of 95 from recently approved developments in the school catchment area. This can easily impact availability for existing and new residents.

BL11 All development shall be encouraged to respect the local character and the historic and natural assets of the area.

This development would extend the “built up” boundary to the east of the village.

Remove an area of open space / agricultural land currently used for grazing, thus harming the rural character.

NPPF

79. To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services.

This site does not identify as any of the above, it will not support local services rather it will place a further strain on them. Due to the development’s location, being beyond the built edge of the village, poor footpath connectivity along with their widths and condition will only promote vehicle use, particularly for school runs.

100. Sufficient choice of early years, school and post 16 places are available.

The cumulative impact of multiple approved planning applications in the Bloxham Primary school and Secondary school catchment area will significantly impact this choice going forward. With Local village children not able to get places in their village school.

101. Public services infrastructure such as health. Significant weight should be placed on the importance of new, expanded or upgraded public service infrastructure when considering proposals for development, including.

This application does not support any infrastructure improvements in key areas of Bloxham infrastructure i.e Health care and mini roundabout capacity.

109.e. Promoting sustainable transport.

The proposed development is 0.6 mile from the nearest bus stop, which will not promote the use of public transport. The walking routes to village facilities are of poor quality and narrow, this will not promote walking . There is no designated cycle route in the vicinity other than the use of main roads

116. Considering development proposals.

Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.

The cumulative impact of recent developments in the area will impact the road network.

The mini roundabout junction of Barford Road with the A361 is already classed as being at capacity by OCC, with no proposals to improve the situation. This matter has been made worse by the recent granting of permission for 130 homes on the A361 behind the petrol station, Milcombe and Hook Norton.

The path on Barford Road is narrow and only located on one side of the road.

If the Local Planning Authority is minded to approve the application, please note the Community Benefits which the Parish Council requests for Bloxham as part of a Section 106 agreement, to mitigate the impact of the development on its residents. See attached.

Appendix A

