

DRAUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

The Pines
Draughton
Skipton
BD23 6DU
2 January 2017

Development Control Services
Craven District Council
1 Belle Vue Square
Skipton BD23 1FJ
Attn: Ms G Kennedy

Dear Sirs

Application Ref: 24/2016/17616 – Land at Draughton off access road to A65

Thank you for consulting us on the above planning application, which concerns a proposed development for 9 residential dwellings off the old A65 in Draughton parish. We object to this development for the reasons set out below.

Summary

The area of proposed development is a field sloping down from the old A65 road into the village to the tree lined Howgill Beck below, a tributary of the River Wharfe. It is currently used as grazing land. Draughton is a small attractive village, typical of the Yorkshire Dales, with stone built properties and dry stone walls much in evidence. Its pattern of settlement is tightly knit, having been strongly influenced by the steep contours created by the valley formed by Howgill Beck. The scenic Dales landscape surrounding the village is a key feature in its setting, and one which is recognised by the widely-drawn conservation area boundary. These are the main attributes from which the locality derives its character and appearance.

Against this background, there are no sites included as preferred options for housing development in Draughton in the draft Local Plan. Draughton is not regarded as a sustainable location for growth because of the lack of local amenities, facilities and infrastructure. This development will not bring any further facilities or infrastructure into the village; it will only put greater strain on the existing, very limited facilities.

The Parish Council's objection to this development is drawn from the views of residents expressed at an Extraordinary Meeting, convened for the purpose of discussing these plans and held on 22 December 2016. The Council objects to the development because of its inappropriate location in open countryside outside the boundary of a settlement area which is regarded as unsustainable for growth, and because of its adverse effects upon the close neighbouring properties and on the infrastructure of the existing settlement.

*Clerk to the Parish Council: Mrs Jane Markham
The Pines, Draughton, Skipton, BD23 6DU*

Tel: 01756 711305

Email: parishclerk@draughton.org

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Detailed Comments

Our objection is based on the following material considerations:

1. Planning Policies ENV 1, ENV 2 and H4

- Outside Boundary of Village:

The development is not compatible with (saved) Policies ENV 1 and 2 from the Craven District Local Plan 1999, nor with Section 5 of the new draft Local Plan, as the site lies outside the development limit of the village, and within the local Conservation Area, in an area of open countryside (referred to in 1999 as a Special Landscape Area). A development of new houses here would harm the character and appearance of this area of countryside at the entrance to this traditional rural settlement. This is also in contravention of the draft Local Plan PO2 which seeks to reinforce the distinctive character of village locations.

- Lack of justification for development in open countryside:

The development is not justified under (saved) Policy ENV 1 of the Craven District Local Plan as it would not benefit the rural economy and is not essential to its needs. The local economy is largely agricultural in nature, and the development would remove from use a field which, until very recently, and historically, has been used for agricultural purposes. There is no local economy, as such (in terms of businesses, shops or other facilities and amenities), to which residents of the new dwellings would be able to contribute; the local farms and liveries are family run and offer no local employment to residents in the community. Care workers at the nursing home are not drawn from the village but commute into it to work. With the exception of the parish council clerk, residents who work in the village do so as employees of other organisations based outside the area, or else are lone self-employed individuals who do not offer any local employment opportunities to other residents.

- Scale of development:

The development is not compatible with (saved) Policy H4 of the Craven District Local Plan which states that residential development in villages should be limited to infilling, conversions or small scale development, ie of a scale, density and layout appropriate to the size and form of the village.

The development is not appropriate in scale, nor in relation to the size and form of the village, whose pattern is shaped by the valley contours of Howgill Beck.

In a core settlement area of some 65 houses, a development of 9 houses, representing growth of close to 15%, is not small scale.

(Yet nor is it large enough to bring any new facilities into the village; a shop or pub, for instance, would still not be viable within a community of this size.)

Draughton has not been identified in the new draft Local Plan as the location for any of the preferred sites for housing allocations set to meet the District-wide housing targets. This is because it is regarded as a 5th tier location (ie small villages, hamlets and open countryside), unsuitable for any but low level housing growth. In spite of this, Draughton is currently contributing to the District's

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overall housing targets, with permission having been granted for three additional dwellings (which are infill small scale developments).

The proposed development does not conform to the requirements set out in the draft Local Plan for the type of low level of growth envisaged for 5th tier locations as it is not necessary to support the rural economy (as set out above), it is not justified in terms of improvements to the environment or conservation of heritage assets and it is not justified through the neighbourhood planning process (there isn't one, because no housing has been allocated to the area).

The applicant's planning statement seeks to justify the case for this development by referring to comments made by the Inspector on a previous application (24/2013/14195). This related to a much smaller infill development of 2 houses within the central part of the village.

Also, the 2009/10 Parish Plan aims are misrepresented in the planning statement. The Parish Plan principally reflected the aims of villagers concerned to maintain and protect the existing valued features of village life in this location, including preservation of its setting within the conservation area. Where housing was referenced, the Plan was interested in small-scale developments within the village boundaries to help ensure a stable mixed-age population for the community, but was not concerned with larger scale developments such as this one. The planning statement's references to the development of the local population are out of date; since the 2011 census (and the Parish Plan, whose aims were successfully achieved in this respect), where houses in the existing village stock have changed hands, the new households have introduced a proportionate influx of younger families with children into the community.

2. Previous Appeal Decision

An application for a housing development on this site in 1992 was refused for the reasons set out in paragraph 1 above. On Appeal, the Inspector noted that a development here would seriously detract from the rural setting of and approach to Draughton, and would harm the character and appearance of the designated Conservation Area. He commented that the site proposed for development "contributes valuably and in its entirety to the visual approach to Draughton from the south east and adds significantly to the quality of the Conservation Area".

3. National Planning Policy Framework Guidance

This development of 9 dwellings is not sustainable within the meaning of the guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, and the presumption in favour of development does not therefore apply to it. It is not a sustainable development because:

- It is not in the right place to support growth and innovation as the existing infrastructure is lacking (see point 4 below) and, contrary to the portrayal in the planning statement, there are no existing amenities and social facilities in the village, except the church and village hall (run by volunteers). The hall

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has a small playground for pre-school children attached to it but there are no public playing fields in the village. There is no shop or any other retail outlet, no pub or cafe, and no school or other public or commercial services. The mobile library service was withdrawn some years ago. The bus service referred to in the planning statement is an hourly service, unsuitable for most commuters and also for most social activities, as it does not run in the evenings or on Sundays. The majority of villagers thus use cars to access facilities in Skipton, Addingham and Ilkley. The addition of houses at this location outside the village would thus merely contribute to the growth in journeys by private vehicle and would therefore also conflict with PO1 of the new draft Plan which seeks to promote sustainable traffic movements (see point 5 below).

- Housing growth on this scale in Draughton is not required to meet the needs of present and future generations because of the village's lack of accessible local services, this being especially an issue for younger and non-car-owning households. The development comprises a mix of housing of a size and type which replicates the stock already available in the village, with no additional choice of accommodation therefore available to residents. A new housing estate would not improve the quality of life for the existing community, nor would it improve any of the conditions in which the existing population lives and works. It would, in all likelihood, have the opposite effect because of the additional strain it would place on the limited capacity of the local infrastructure.
- The development does not protect or enhance the natural and historic environment, in fact it has the opposite effect as it removes one of the natural and significant features at the entrance to the village, as set out in point 1 above.

The lack of sustainability in terms of local services, facilities and amenities is the reason why Draughton is included in the draft Local Plan as a 5th tier settlement, to which low levels of growth are directed.

Furthermore, since the presumption in favour of planning approval is clearly not relevant, as the development is not sustainable, we understand that planning guidance (where development plans are absent, silent or out of date) expects the core planning principles in the planning system to be applied. On this basis, we would ask that consideration be given to the protection of the Conservation Area and to the recognition of the intrinsic character and beauty of this particular area of the countryside between the Bradford urban-focused communities to the east and, to the west, the large, distinctive service environment of Skipton town.

4. Physical Infrastructure

There is a significant lack of capacity in the existing infrastructure to service this housing development.

- Access to superfast broadband is not comprehensive in the village. The proposed development site lies more than 1.5km from the nearest cabinet at

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Draughton bottom, and there are no plans to install a second cabinet at the top of the village. It is unlikely therefore that any of the nine houses would have the benefit of superfast broadband, but their additional connections would put strain on the current network service provided to the existing population.

- There is no piped gas service to the village, and residents of a housing estate here would be likely to use oil for heating. Tanker deliveries servicing the site would exacerbate traffic concerns (see point 5 below).
- There are questions concerning the capacity of the existing sewage and drainage networks. There have been instances of raw sewage leaking onto the lane by the Church (in the centre of the village).
- There could be flooding issues for households further down the village, bordering Howgill Beck, in that the natural drainage system afforded by the existing field for the absorption of run-off would be taken out of use by this development.

5. Highway Issues

The planning statement anticipates requirements for car parking on the site for some 20 vehicles. This is probably a minimum, as there will no doubt be visitors' cars to accommodate too. These cars would have to access the housing estate onto a double-decker bus route opposite two existing cottages which usually have parked cars at the side of the road, narrowing it significantly. Staff and visitors to the nursing home also park along the road. There is limited availability of safe on-road parking near the development, and thus very little capacity for overspill parking from the new estate.

The additional traffic arising from the development would exacerbate the safety concerns already under review at the two junctions from the village onto the A65 from Draughton, and down the single-track lane known as Donkey Neddy onto the A59. Delivery vehicles and oil tankers servicing the new houses would also add to the volume of traffic having to gain access to this settlement via narrow rural roads. It is thus not compatible with (saved) Policy ENV 2 of the Craven District Local Plan, nor with PO1 of the new draft Plan which seek to promote sustainable traffic movements.

6. Residential Amenity

The proposed development would have an adverse effect on the residential amenity of the neighbouring properties. We would ask you to take into account material considerations in this respect, including the loss of outlook, risk of overlooking and noise for nearby residents at the end of Spring Rise.

Yours faithfully

Jane Markham

Clerk to the Council

Copies: Cty Cllr R Heseltine

District Cllr D Pighills

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