

[REDACTED]

Malvern Hills District Council
The Council House
Avenue Road
Malvern
Worcester WR14 3AF

ATTN: DEAN KINSELLA

Dear Sirs

KEMPSEY PARISH - PLANNING APPLICATION 16/01396

I refer to the above Application covering the proposal for a new Community and Sports Centre for Kempsey Parish for which you should have received from the Parish Council a Business Plan outlining what is being sought for the benefit of Parishioners and others.

Let me at the outset make clear I fully support the basis of this proposal as it is the only realistic manner to secure these facilities which will be needed to meet the rising demands within the Parish and the adjacent neighbourhoods as the planned housing developments under the SWDP progressively are implemented.

I do however have several concerns as a Parishioner that the 'Business Plan as approved earlier this month by the Parish Council does not adequately inform either your Planners or the Parishioners of the true scale of the proposal, the financial requirements for implementing its construction, clear sources of funding, the realistic operating costs, financial risks, long term limitations imposed by the restricted area on offer to the Parish and the arrangements for ensuring our project is secured when the associated full planning application for 113 homes is approved.

The SWDP imposed a total housing for and adjacent to Kempsey Village Settlement Boundary [not Parish] of approximately 305 new homes, already increased to some 550 by further planning approvals post SWDP. The SWDP runs until 2030 but this new Centre will need to meet the requirements for many years beyond this point. It must be expected there will be successful pressure for even more homes in its 'catchment' area beyond 2030 when the next development is initiated.

The Parish Council is advised by Taylor Wimpey it will provide 5.2 ha farmland well suited to the Parish's intended use. This is confusing as the planning application refers to 6.08 ha. Which is correct? Irrespective of the answer to this it appears the Parish Council have simply accepted the first offer from the Developer without any negotiation and proper consideration of the realistic long term needs the Council will have to meet. This is a major concern to me and other Parishioners as whilst there are expectations that other adjacent land could be secured in the future this at best can be described as a 'possibility' with little certainty it can be delivered. There does not appear to be any reasonably clear idea of what is to be incorporated into this new centre and sports facility to meet the anticipated short/medium term needs of the Community let alone cater for the increased demand post 2030. Without some clarity on this issue it is impossible to judge the adequacy or inadequacy of the proposal as it now stands. My own view is the Council should be seeking at least 10 ha to safeguard the long term future whilst it has a degree of leverage with the Developer.

20th February 2017

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My other major concern relates to financial costs, both initial and ongoing, and funding.

Sports England provide useful broad brush cost 'estimates' for various types and sizes of sports facilities but without any clear indication in this Business Plan of the 'size and scope' of the desired facilities it is not possible to determine even very roughly the likely capital cost of the project. Without this how can there be any certainty that funding of an acceptable nature can be secured. There is reference in the plan to Parish funds and 'precept'. If there is any likelihood of precept funding Parishioners, no matter how keen they are for this to go ahead, do need to know the extent of any possible financial shortfalls they will be required to meet.

It is noted that matched funding from various sources will be applied for but there is no indication in the Plan of even informal indications from these sources that the scheme appears to satisfy their requirements and has a good chance of being successful.

Much of the anticipated funding has specific limitations on amounts available and timing of its usage. The 'reliability' of such sourcing does need to be set against the anticipated 'time line' for the implementation of project to demonstrate the compatibility between the two.

I am also concerned at the estimates given regarding the ongoing financial costs of running the Centre. These have been derived from other successful schemes and may well be justified but in the absence of any indication of how these other schemes match ours both in content and environment it is impossible to determine their true relevance.


Much is made of the success of Stoke Orchard however their facility and environment is very different from our proposal and I believe it is misleading to simply transfer their figures across to us even with some adjustments. Stoke Orchard commenced with extreme dependence on voluntary assistance and are already discovering this is not a secure basis for longer term operation. Kempsey has in recent years shown no great interest in ongoing sustainable voluntary support for local enterprises. It must therefore be accepted that from day one this facility will need the services of a full-time manager and some support staff.

There is no reference in this Business Plan to the arrangements to secure the transfer of the ownership of the land to the Parish. It is clearly essential that the Taylor Wimpey commitment to do so is legally watertight and irrevocable prior to there being any approval of their application to build 113 homes on the adjacent site. Is this the responsibility of the Parish Council? Will this be done by MHDC? Will it be a requirement of MHDC that this be concluded prior to any formal approval of the planning application. MHDC does not appear particularly strong on enforcing planning approval conditions and there is therefore a degree of concern at its ability and willingness to do so if any such conditions are specified but ignored by the Developer.

As I stated at the beginning of this letter I support this venture and am keen that we do develop this new facility BUT I do want to know the scale of the risks that are involved, particularly financial, and the extent to which the Parishioners may end up having to pick up the bill.

Yours faithfully

R C BOWLEY

cc Amanda Smith MHDC
David Harrison MHDC
John Michael MHDC
Peter Griffiths PGA Management, 
Kempsey Parish Council