

# Planning Committee

Notice of a Meeting, to be held as a **Virtual Meeting** in accordance with Regulation 5 of The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020

**A meeting of the committee will be held on:**

**Date:** Wednesday, 19 August 2020

**Time:** 6.30pm

**Venue:** Virtual Meeting

**Membership:** Councillors Adeoye, Bhutia, Bowler, Buckwell, Mrs Diane Chambers (Chairman), Curry, Etheridge, Sylvia Griffin, McDonald, Potter, Tranter (Vice-Chairman), Barrett, Thorne, Hubbard and Chrissy Stamp

## Agenda

- 11 **Additional Information - Supplementary agenda advice sheet** (Pages 3 - 18)

For further information please contact Ellen Wright, Democratic Services Officer on Telephone: 01634 332012 or Email: [democratic.services@medway.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@medway.gov.uk)

Date: 11 August 2020

### Information about this virtual meeting

Please note that any member of the press and public may follow proceedings at this 'virtual' meeting via a weblink which will be publicised on the Council's website ahead of the meeting. Please refer to this meeting via the meeting calendar for further details:

<https://democracy.medway.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx?GL=1&bcr=1>

Members of the press and public may tweet, blog etc. during the live broadcast as they would be able to during a regular Committee meeting.

**Medway Council****PLANNING COMMITTEE –  
19 August 2020****Supplementary Agenda Advice**

**Page 18      MC/20/1431      Land North of Medway Road, Gillingham  
ME7 1NY**

**Representation**

**The applicant** has submitted a summary of a public consultation that was carried out under planning application MC/19/1875. At that time, 3502 responses in support of the application were received and as planning application MC/20/1431 is a duplicate of MC/19/1875, the applicant has submitted these responses in support of this application.

**The applicant** has sent a letter to the members of the Planning Committee outlining that this application a duplicate of planning application MC/19/1875 along with the responses in support received via the public consultation carried out by the applicant under MC/19/1875 as mentioned above; and a summary highlighting the benefits of the proposal.

**Twenty-four** further letters of support have been received in relation to this current application. The following comments have been made in support of the application:

- Improve local economy
- Good use of land
- Good for local community
- Proposal would create jobs
- A new supermarket in this location will be popular with residents and students.
- Site would be accessible for people with limited travel ability
- Local people would not have to travel, reducing traffic
- There is a need for Lidl store in Medway
- Proposal would increase consumer choice and competition
- The site is an eyesore and needs development

**One** further letter of objection received from a resident outlining the following concerns:

- Increase highways movements
- Pollution caused by traffic

One further letter of objection has been received on **behalf of Asda** stating that a request has been made to the Secretary of State on 18 August 2020 for a screening direction, and citing case *R.(on the application of Roskilly) v Cornwall Council [2015] EWHC 3711 (Admin)* that they are of the opinion that should the Council determine the application prior to the Secretary of State decision, it would be unlawful.

**Page 46 MC/19/0287 Land At Town Road Cliffe Woods  
Rochester Medway**

## **Recommendation**

**Approval** subject to:

**A.** A section 106 Agreement under the terms of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 being entered into to secure the following:

**Amend** vi) to delete words” to access cooking related programme delivery”

**Amend** vii) to delete words “a new aerobics/dance/martial arts studio for” and replace with “improvements to”

**Replace** xiv) with A contribution of £5,000 towards safer routes to schools initiatives in Cliffe Woods and updating the school travel plan

**Amend** xvii) 4<sup>th</sup> bullet point to refer to **Cliffe and** Cliffe Woods Parish Council

**Add** xviii) Contribution of £53,455.50 towards improvements to Cliffe Woods Community Centre.

**B.** Subject to following conditions:

### **Add**

Condition:

29. No development shall commence until details of a Construction Surface Water Management Plan (CSWMP) detailing how surface water and storm water will be managed on the site during construction (including demolition and site clearance operations) is submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the LLFA. The CSWMP shall be implemented and thereafter managed and maintained in accordance with the approved plan for the duration of construction. The approved CSWMP and shall include:

Method statements scaled and dimensioned plans and drawings detailing surface water management proposals, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, to include:

I. Temporary drainage systems.

- II. Measures for managing pollution / water quality and protecting controlled waters and watercourses.
- III. Measures for managing any on or offsite flood risk associated with construction.

Reason: To manage surface water during and post construction and for the lifetime of the development as outlined at paragraph 165 of NPPF.

## **Representation**

**Twenty-five** further letters of representation have been received raising objection to the recommendation and the proposed development and expressing concern about the issues and matters that have been summarised in the officers report on pages 59 and 60.

**One** further letter from SAVE Cliffe Woods is appended to this report

**Additional** representations received to the application, detailed as follow.

**Councillor Mrs Elizabeth Turpin** (Ward Councillor) has emailed objecting to the proposed development, email content copied and appended to this report.

**Kelly Tolhurst MP** (Member of Parliament for Rochester and Strood), has emailed objecting to the proposed development, email content copied and appended to this report.

## **Planning Appraisal**

### *Climate Change and energy efficiency*

This is an outline application and with the exception of means of access all the other matters are reserved for future consideration. As such no details with regard to the design or construction details are available at this stage. However, at Reserved Matters stage, officers will ensure that all dwellings will be designed in accordance with the latest standards within Part L1a of the Building Regulations (2016) in order to ensure use of energy-efficient design and measures. Where appropriate renewable energy systems would be encouraged to be introduced to reduce carbon emissions to the level that satisfies the regulations.

At reserved matters stage the officers will ensure that the layout will be designed to give south-facing orientation and aspect to as many dwellings as possible to enhance sunlight and to capture natural daylight to reduce energy use and create more pleasant environment at micro and macro levels. Capturing sufficient daylight is linked to good design and maximising light gain and minimising heat loss.

To manage surface water on site the reserved matter application will ensure use of permeable surfacing and on site water storage are incorporated into the layout and landscaping design of the development.

It is the intention to ensure that all fixed electric lighting will be energy efficient. All appliances including gas boiler where installed to be at least A-rated further minimising the use of both electricity and hot water on this site and minimise the impact of the development on the local air quality.

Also as part of the site wide soft landscaping, a substantial number of new trees will be encouraged to be planted to make long term contribution toward carbon capture and also the use of the balancing pond on the application site for surface water storage will create opportunities for enhancing local biodiversity and ecology.

#### *Surface water management*

This aspect of development is considered on page 80 of the report and additional condition (29) is recommended above.

#### *Highway*

With regard to Highway issues, Highway England has considered the applicant's proposal for enhancement of public transport provision and has stated that they have no further comments to add to their previous comments that has already been reported on pages 69 to 71 of the committee report.

## **Letters appended:**

### **Email letter from Councillor Mrs Elizabeth Turpin**

**MC/19/0287 Land at Town Road, Cliffe Woods, ME3 8JL  
Outline planning permission with some matters reserved (appearance landscaping layout and scale) for up to 225 residential dwellings including up to 25% affordable housing, introduction of structural planting and landscaping, informal public open space and children's play area, surface water flood mitigation and attenuation, vehicular access point from Town Road and associated ancillary works.**

I write in objection to this planning application.

Medway Council's Planning Committee refused the application back in April 2017 for several reasons;

- the Development would be a departure from the Council's adopted Development Plan
- Lack of employment opportunity within the village, therefore meaning new occupants would have to seek employment elsewhere. Due to the nature of the roads leading out of Cliffe Woods these are unlikely to be used by pedestrians or cyclists due to reasons of safety.
- the unacceptable impact the development would have on this valued landscape.

These reasons have not changed, have not gone away. In fact they have only worsened since 2017 due to other developments that have taken place or currently taking place.

The National Planning Policy Framework Section 103 states, "The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth.....Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes."

Section 91.c states "enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling. I have major concerns with regards to the sustainability of this development. A rural location with an inadequate bus service only leads to car dependency. Buses only hourly, if missed or do not turn up, will cause the residents to have no alternative but to use their own cars. The B2000 is a very narrow road at times and does not lend itself to bike use, especially with the number of heavy vehicles and lorries using it. s106 contributions may give provision for additional shuttle service, but this will only assist commuters and more importantly would only be in place for 5 years. Those wanting to reach shops, sports facilities and other services will again be more likely to use private cars. Residents of Cliffe Woods and Cliffe can often be delayed considerably, either trying to travel into Strood and beyond or back home when an incident happens on this road. With no viable alternative routes, except on even smaller country road going miles out of your way, their commute to and from work/school can become very stressful.

There are a lack of primary and secondary school places in the area, which this development would only put further stresses on. Although section 106 may give provision to this, local schools cannot continue to expand and as an area we are running out of suitable sites to accommodate new schools on.

There was already pressure on GP services when this application came to committee back in 2017, but further development has made matters worse. This large development will put further pressure on an already strained service, including the Medway Maritime Hospital.

I urge member of the committee to turn down this application for the sake of current residents of not just Cliffe Woods but also the wider community that it would have a negative impact on.

Cllr. Mrs Elizabeth Turpin  
Member for Strood Rural

### **Email from Kelly Tolhurst MP**

Dear Dave

I am writing to you to again formally object to the recently resubmitted planning application MC/19/0287 regarding the proposal to build up to 225 homes on land at Town Road, Cliffe Woods, Rochester, ME3 8JL.

I am truly disappointed that this application has been allowed to be resubmitted, especially as only minor and superficial changes have been made to an application that was thrown out by the High Court only a year ago.

I have been contacted by a significant number of constituents who are deeply concerned that this application is being heard by the Planning Committee again, especially following the previous decision and High Court judgement last year. Gladman's keep coming back with slight variations on this predatory application, despite the clear message that has been given by residents, the Secretary of State, the High Court, and previously Medway Council.

Local infrastructure, including water supply, is becoming more and more strained with every further development that is approved while we have no new Local Plan in place to protect our area and provide the improvements which we already need, which will be in even greater demand if such a large development were to be approved. The need for more GP surgeries, schools, better roads, and so many more are already well documented to support the ever increasing amounts of new housing across my constituency.

Residents are also extremely concerned about the rapid way that this revised application appears to have been progressed, and that they have only been given a very short time to share their views with the Council and the Planning Committee about the updates to the application, prior to the meeting on Wednesday 19th August 2020. I have encouraged all those who have contacted me to submit their views directly to the Council and Planning Committee so that their voices are clearly heard.

With regard to the proposals in "Transport Improvement" notes, the "new-look" plan seems to now have an emphasis on improving bus services, including new bus stops. It should be noted that bus services have already had to be reduced even before the outbreak of the global pandemic, as with all public transport, with areas in my constituency losing valuable bus services as funding from the Council, from S106 funds, had ceased and Arriva Buses were not able to support them without the funding. Once any S106 funding runs out, residents could again be left in the lurch and bus routes unused.



This application again threatens another valuable greenfield site and the loss of further arable land in our area, with green spaces becoming steadily more hemmed in especially due to our continued lack of a new Local Plan.

I ask that the Planning Committee fully rejects this application again as it has done so before.

I have copied in the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee.

Kind

regards

Kelly

## Letter from SAVE Cliffe Woods

14<sup>th</sup>.August 2020

Mr. Dave Harris,  
Head of Planning,  
Medway Council,  
Gun Wharf,  
Dock Road,  
Chatham.  
ME4 4TR

Dear Mr. Harris,

### **OBJECTION to the revised Planning Application MC/19/0287 Land at Town Road, Cliffe Woods, Rochester, Medway.**

I wish to object, in the strongest possible terms, to the planning application named above and would ask you to reject this cynical rehash of a failed attempt to by-pass local opinion.

I would like to begin by paraphrasing President Clinton's saying:

"It's the **ENVIRONMENT**, stupid!"

This process is happening at a very sad and worrying time with yet another "canary in the coalmine," - the fatal rail crash near Stonehaven in Scotland, demonstrating yet again the terrifying consequences of man-made global warming. Few of our leaders seem to be looking or listening or asking the correct questions. I sincerely hope that this does not apply to the meeting of the Planning Committee to be held on the 19<sup>th</sup>. August 2020.

This committee has a poor record of protecting the environment around Cliffe Woods – the acceptance of the Esquire Development has already led to the destruction of the natural capacity of the recovering woodland on the site to absorb at least 15 Tonnes of carbon dioxide. Added to this is the huge amount of CO2 generated by the building works/materials over the next few years. The lack of understanding, that destruction of woodland and arable farmland may have an economic gain in the short term but that this is certainly wiped out due to the environmental degradation in the longer term, is truly worrying.

Planning Officers and councillors must not hide behind the NPPF (as amended) which most people would acknowledge as a charter for charlatans. This "framework" is a bodged job which fails to provide proper, effective protection to the environment and offers a route

map to those spivs who only see planning as an impediment to profiteering. Offering crocodile tears to local residents will not wash when they have a fund of a few hundred Pounds raised from individuals to stand against multi-millionaire land developers whose business models are dubious to say the least - ethically and morally bankrupt?

I know it is extremely difficult for local councillors to reject such fancy plans with “goodies” thrown in, especially after ten years of severe austerity which have stripped away the civic structure of the Local Authority. S106 and other agreements may look inviting when you are poverty stricken but they often have only marginal, short-term effects: or as Mr. Macmillan observed, “Events, dear boy, events” push them aside (see man-made global warming!) The agreements on offer are already out of date in environmental terms, just one example is Arriva’s deal with Gladman – the provision of Euro VI diesel Mercedes Sprinters; such vehicles in Germany have probably already been replaced by much cleaner electric eSprinters.

I truly hope that, at next week’s Planning Meeting, our local councillors can put the needs of their constituents first. That when someone of doubtful repute says “Jump” they will say “Why?” rather than “How high?” That if the answer to “Why?” is not in the best interests of their constituents, then I can rely upon them to vote to reject the planning application. Politics is certainly the art of the possible, but we must remember that the needs of those who will be affected by the votes of our elected representatives **always** come ahead of the wants of opportunists.

The above paragraphs represent my personal opinions which I hope you will pay most attention to if you are under pressure of time in preparing for the Planning Committee meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup>.August. However, if you can read further, thank you for your attention in my analysis of the officers’ report.

I only received this report, second-hand, late on 11<sup>th</sup>.August. I was appalled that, even though I have been in regular contact with the planning department on this subject, I was not contacted personally by the case officer with a copy of the report. If the care devoted to grammar, spelling and typographical errors and common courtesy is representative of the care devoted to the content of the report then both you and I should have serious concerns. Please accept my apologies for any errors and omissions as I am only an unpaid citizen with no access to office or IT support and very little time to address every aspect of this report. I will deal with the report by page number and paragraph reference as follows: -

Page 1

- A. ii) The contribution to nursery schooling is **not guaranteed to improve the sustainability** of the revised application as it will almost certainly generate extra car trips
- iii) The contribution towards primary schooling is **not guaranteed to improve the sustainability** of the revised application as it will generate extra car trips as evidenced by existing parent/carer practice
- iv) The contribution towards secondary schooling is **not guaranteed to improve the sustainability** of the revised application as it will generate extra car trips as evidenced by existing parent/carer practice

Page 2

- v) As this centre will not be located within the Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Parish it will **not improve the sustainability** of the revised application as it will generate extra car trips as evidenced by existing patient practice

vi) grammar?

vii) As this sports centre will not be located within the Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Parish it will **not improve the sustainability** of the revised application as it will generate extra car trips as evidenced by existing users of Deangate/Hoo sports facilities

vii) This does not make sense and the correct area names are **Bingham Roughs, Ratly Hills Wood and Great Chattenden Wood**. Does this demonstrate a lack of local knowledge or simply lack of care or concern?

ix) As presented, this is **not sustainable**. The council should be moving away from **single-use plastic bags**. More colour-coded 240 litre wheeled bins for sorting waste for recycling would make more sense.

x) All of this proposed contribution should be ring-fenced for the sole use of Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Parish Council

xi) – xiii) These contributions will mostly support the residents of the proposed housing estate. The shuttle buses being proposed are not sustainable (see above re. electric vehicles) and post-covid19 (which may be quite some time away) may not be the first choice of rural travellers, even with a £50 voucher as inducement.

xiv) This is what is known as a political sop! This is already being dealt with by others, added to which if Medway Highways has been incapable or unwilling to address this issue after all of the representations by the B2000 Road Safety Campaign over the last 21 years then this is of little or no value. It is incredible that we are still talking about “the possibility of reducing traffic speed” after all this time. If the contribution was for **“the erection of signs to provide 20mph speed zones throughout both Cliffe and Cliffe Woods villages”** then this would be a sustainable improvement for the whole community and I am sure that responsible local haulage firms, such as Bretts, would be happy to support such an improvement.

xvi) This area should be part of an extension to the Green Belt (**see the options proposed in the consultation for the Medway Local Plan 2019-2035**) If this proposed allotment is accepted then **there must be a condition that the land to the south west of the blue outlined amenity area (shown as a white rectangle on the outline plans) be designated public green space with no possibility of any future housing or industrial development.**

Page 4

6. Materials and finishes should be defined by a proper Design Code. The Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Neighbourhood Plan contains such a code which addresses local vernacular. Unfortunately the Plan has been delayed by Ministerial edict based on problems associated with the effects of Covid19 upon local democracy (consultations and referenda) Logically this should result in all consideration of planning applications being delayed to a similar degree (or are developers above the law?)

Page 9

21. This paragraph on Air Quality and Emissions should insist upon the developer maintaining a public register of complaints/concerns raised by owners of adjacent properties. The entries must be immediately copied to the LPA, so that appropriate enforcement measures may be carried out.

22. The two Hoo Stop Line pillboxes should be sealed in accordance with Natural England and English Heritage guidelines on conversion to provide secure bat roosts.

24. Final word (**PLAN**) is missing from last sentence!

27. The LPA must insist (in association with Southern Water) that appropriate plans to protect the Rising Foul Water Mains, which cross the site, are agreed in writing by the LPA and Statutory Authority. (see later representations by Southern Water)

Page 18

Kent Police – it is clear the applicant is doing the bare minimum on crime prevention and has not bothered to communicate with Kent Police about making a formal application for Codes, BREEAM and SBD. Most quality developers do this as a matter of course.

Page 19

GHQ Stop Line – see comments on Page 9 (para 22) above.

Page 22

SSSI – as a zoology graduate, I do not concur with the representations from Natural England, this appears to be another example of a poorly funded public body accepting small crumbs.

Ecological Enhancements – the developers offer of provision of bat hibernacula features within the on-site pillboxes must only be allowed if they precisely follow the guidelines and advice of English Heritage and Natural England (**this should be made a condition**).

Pages 23-25

Most of the comments from Highways England are anodyne. They would not convince me one way or the other about the true sustainability of the Travel Plan – they even think the applicant is offering “the upgrade of nearby bus stops by the provision of *shelters* and seating” in the plural which I do not believe is the case from my reading of other parts of the report. The section on cycling is typical of a highways engineer, what we lack are the views of a “cycle/pedestrian way” engineer! Nowhere do I find requirements on proper mixed-use footways with proper, safe separation from the B2000 and other local country lanes. Perfectly good standards were created in 2012 yet no mention is made by the applicant in any part of their extremely lengthy application. If you ask any resident of Cliffe Woods about the advisability of cycling on the B2000, the vast majority will consider it suicidal. In addition, most of those residents would be unlikely to cross the B2000 to catch a shuttle bus for exactly the same reason. (**Consider asking the residents of Ladyclose Avenue and Mortimers Avenue about crossing the B2000, many of them use a car to get to the other side for safety reasons**).

Page 28

Despite attempts by ministers to suggest that the NPPF is an objective approach to planning, it clearly is not. Our local author, through one of his characters, said that “The law is a ass!” (I apologise for Mr. Bumble’s use of English) This is a perfect example of “bad law makes hard cases.” The “Appropriate Assessment” is highly inappropriate and the concept of mitigation does not fit the natural world (though it may fit the developer’s world!)

Page 29

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF clearly shows no understanding of the overarching objectives of sustainable planning. **The first and most important objective is ENVIRONMENTAL.** Sadly, the Inspector had no concept of the importance of the context of the site and was and still is totally **WRONG** about the value of the landscape. There are over 379 people with real experience of valuing landscape **in context** whose views carry much more weight than the ignorant viewer from Bristol.

At this point I disagree wholeheartedly with the opinion expressed by the planning officer in the fourth paragraph on the page: **The proposal, in this location, will never be capable of forming a sustainable development by any reliable Life Sciences assessment.** (By reliable assessment I mean not carried out by any “scientist” paid for by a developer.)

As explained above the public transport “contribution” is simply an attractive sideshow which will make no sustainable difference to the proposal in the long term.

Page 30

As explained above, the revised application has **not** provided much improved public transport (except in the eyes of someone who does not use public transport!). The “robust” highway improvement is miniscule in scale and should have been provided by the local authority 30 years ago.

The two grounds on which the Secretary of State dismissed the appeal have not been addressed, neither the public transport nor the “appropriate assessment”, even through the NPPF (as amended), have been fully responded to.

Page 31

Again in terms of layout, scale and design the proposal provides only generic ideas with little information about the street hierarchy, it does not create a sense of place except as a large housing estate with little safe connectivity to the main part of Cliffe Woods.

The weakest and most worrying comment in the report is the fifth paragraph on the page relating to the form and size of the proposed buildings. The approvals given to the adjacent **Esquire development relate to a MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT**, the proposed Gladman development is a **single use development (housing only)** so the precedence has been set on **maximum house height of 2 storeys**: the only building of 2.5 storeys on the Esquire development is the large business unit adjacent to Town Road. Added to which the Esquire development has built the **first rank of houses** adjacent to the standard bungalow design characteristic of the original Cliffe Woods village **as bungalows** thereby gently grading the rise in house height to a maximum of 2 storeys. **LOCAL COUNCILLORS SHOULD MAKE THIS A CONDITION OF ANY PLANNING APPROVAL – THAT ALL RANKS OF HOUSES DIRECTLY ADJACENT TO THE EXISTING BUNGALOWS OF THE VILLAGE SHOULD BE OF SINGLE STOREY CONSTRUCTION, THEREAFTER RISING TO A MAXIMUM HEIGHT OF 2 STOREYS AS PER THE PRECEDENT SET BY THE ESQUIRE DEVELOPMENT.**

In relation to the calculation on housing density, I would suggest that the existing original housing to the west of Town Road is somewhere in the region of 10 dph which is **not** comparable with the proposal.

I do not know where paragraph 7 comes from but sounds like guesswork to me which does not align with already completed Gladman developments elsewhere in the county.

Paragraph 8 is a wish list which local councillors should convert into a condition at reserved matters stage (with no let-out on “viability”).

Page 32

For the reasons mentioned earlier, the proposed development would **not** relate well to the character, density and appearance of the adjacent village. This being contrary to Policy BNE1 of the Local Plan.

Air Quality – all the properties adjacent to the site would be severely affected by dust and vehicle exhaust particulates and noxious gases during the construction phase, being directly in the leeward side of the westerly prevailing wind. The local authority must place appropriate conditions on safe levels and ensure continuity of enforcement of those conditions. The standard air quality mitigation measures seem to come from an earlier era, from my perspective they should read:

- Installation of hybrid air source heat pump/gas-fired boilers
- Installation of electric vehicle charging points for all properties with a minimum charging rate of 7kW and at least 50% of properties with a charging rate of 22kW

Although the proposal may be in compliance with Policy BNE24 of the Local Plan, in 2003 no one in authority was listening to people such as myself in relation to man-made global warming – in 2020 we are all in The Last Chance Saloon.

Page 33

Archaeology – although installation of information boards about the pillboxes is worthwhile, they will be of little value if these heritage assets are not protected from vandals and drug-users which is their current clientele. They must be sealed to prevent unauthorised human access and made into bat roosts as mentioned earlier. Hopefully, Medway Council will forcefully promote designation by English Heritage.

Page 34

Drainage – Living next to the field drain (shown on all maps and plans) for 22 years I feel I can claim a doctorate from the university of life on this subject! During heavy, persistent rain this drain becomes a fast-moving torrent which can be over 750mm deep and deeper if detritus causes a blockage. For this reason, I clear the ditch adjacent to my boundary every year whilst maintaining features which slow the flow rate without deluging my property. I fully support the concept of SUDS but their maintenance can be quite a challenge, as Esquire has discovered to their cost in man hours, excavator hire and diesel! The LPA must ensure that enforcement of the conditions relating to drainage, flood risk and ecology are followed to the letter and in due time.

Pages 35-41

Affordable housing – I hope that the S106 agreement which “the applicant has agreed to” is legally watertight and cannot be reneged upon (I have heard that Gladman has a substantial staff dedicated to finding loopholes in the legislation to escape binding agreements. What apologists might describe as “Agreement Avoidance”)

Highways – As explained earlier the physical improvements are marginal in effectiveness. The upgrade of the informal footway on the eastern side of Town Road should be to the same 2m width as the new footpath on the opposite side. The scheme which Bretts offered to fund several years ago (rejected by Medway Highways!) including road widening with trief safety kerbing and cycle provision should be re-examined and promoted with the developer as part of the S278 agreement. This would encourage reduced vehicle road speed and make a 20mph speed zone self-controlling with subsequent improvement in road safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

Non-physical improvements – as explained earlier, although the applicant has put a large amount of effort into the transport aspect, the effects would be marginal. The geographical position of Cliffe Woods makes it inevitable that most residents (existing or future) will use the private motor car as their preferred mode of transport. This is evidenced by the fact that every child who lives in the village is within easy walking distance of the local primary school, yet many are brought to school in a car by their parent/carer.

The Hoo peninsula is no worse than most of the county, the transport infrastructure is antediluvian. Focussed mainly on the private motor car and heavy road haulage, there are no examples of an integrated rapid transit system in this area. Therefore, the Arriva proposal will have very little positive effect, no one anywhere in Cliffe Woods has reasonable access to public transport.

The final paragraph on sustainable travel in relation to walking and cycling simply accepts the status quo. However, if Medway Highways refused to accept the primacy of certain transport lobbies, then they could create an improvement plan

which gave much more weight to pedestrians and cyclists and their safety and separation from motor vehicles.

This would involve some creative use of CPOs to provide land for multi-use footways, physically separated from roadways. That would improve sustainability all round.

Pages 42-43

I have made comments on many aspects of S106 matters above. On bird mitigation, attention has been paid to the derisory sum offered being controlled by an appropriate NGO such as RSPB, BTO and/or WWT, which is an essential condition.

Page 44

Planning Balance – paragraph 3. Apart from the provision of some jobs during the construction phase this paragraph is incorrect. It does not introduce much needed housing for local people. **The defined need** for Cliffe and Cliffe Woods, from local surveys, lies somewhere between 11 and 35 which is some way from 225.

Paragraph 4 – On the provision of green open space, there was a well-loved and fully utilised green space known as the Copse opposite the recreation ground on Town Road. Unfortunately, before this could be designated in the Neighbourhood Plan, a developer was given permission to build houses on this site, with the encouragement of the same planning officer who is recommending this scheme. He seems quite determined to destroy the character of Cliffe Woods, perhaps we should remove the word “Woods” from the village name because the Esquire development has removed the only area of recovering woodland/wetland from the village! So much for “enhanced ecology”.

Page 45

The first paragraph is simply the expression of ignorance of the site and the area. The local group SAVE Cliffe Woods (SAVE stands for Save our Agricultural Village Environment) were shell-shocked when they attended the Planning Committee meeting which approved the Esquire development. They simply could not believe that having gone through the pain of Gladman mark one, that some other developer could have been allowed in through the back door.

The thing which saddens me most is the loss of faith in local democracy, many of the people who have talked to me have completely changed their views on the subject. Before it was always, “Their all the same, in it for what they can get out of it.” (Which I have never agreed with, it is simply laziness, not looking or listening carefully) Now they say: “It’s already sewn up” or “There’s no point, nobody ever listens to us” or “I expect Gladman will get MATE’S RATES.”

Perhaps the next local group will be called SUE – Save our **Urban** Environment???

Conclusions and Reasons for Approval – Paragraph 1, possibly.

Paragraph 2 – Completely wrong, simply driven by a lack of a timely report on housing land supply by the LPA (which deserves a severe slap on the wrist, considering the destruction being caused by this failure).

Paragraph 3 – This site is **not** in a sustainable location as explained many times above.

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Looks impressive except for the fact that, as explained above the original NPPF and NPPF as amended is bad law which is partial and severely unbalanced. The Medway Local Plan in 2003 was good planning legislation, but the passage of time has weakened its authority and allowed unscrupulous developers with deep pockets to undermine the wishes of locally elected representatives. It really should be in its third version, working on the next one.

We now know, through careful, forensic journalism, that those representations by developers about “Planning Red Tape clogging up the system” were all lies, with

hundreds of thousands of all approved housing applications unbuilt by those same developers. They were not developers at all but land bankers, sitting on land, looking for a fast and large pay-out. No interest in building quality, Eco homes at all.

It takes an incredibly determined and brave Local Planning Authority to take on Gladman Developments. Much has changed since 2016, Gladman has got richer and Local Government has got much poorer with many fewer experienced staff.

I do not envy the members of the Medway Council Planning Committee in determining this application (MC/19/0287) I wish them luck in their deliberations. I personally believe in sustainable housing developments i.e. the right houses in the right places, always on brownfield sites (sufficient for 1 million homes) and extremely rarely on greenfield sites. This application is simply not sustainable, the wrong houses in the wrong place. I hope you will vote to support the residents of Cliffe Woods.

For Cliffe Woods this would be a development too far, we want our village to remain a village, we have suffered enough overdevelopment and weak infrastructure since 1970 and beyond.

Yours sincerely,

Roger Brown

**Objection** email letter:

I am writing to object to the planning request made by Gladman on Town Road in Cliffewoods. I am very annoyed that this application, which has already been rejected by the Secretary of Transport, has been put forward again with limited time for residents to object. This seems to be poor timing to be hearing this again when most peoples attention is focused on the Covid pandemic.

The original application was rejected on the ground that there was not enough public transport in the village and that Arriva at the time said they had no plans to increase. I note in this application they have proposed £500K over 5 years for a minibus service. Firstly the Transport report submitted suggest that this service would only run in the morning and evening just to cover the rush hour. What happens to residents during the rest of the day? The existing bus service is scant and most residents resort to using a car to get where they need to go.

Given that most households these days have at least 2 cars that's at least another 500 cars on an already busy road. As the proposed development is meant for families then this estimation is likely to be much higher and could be as much as 1000 cars. With all these additional cars and families having to take their children across the busy Town Road then accidents are bound to happen.

I note that a 20mph limit has been proposed but as the existing speed limit is not adhered to how do you plan enforce this new limit? Any form of hazard like chicanes or speed bumps are impractical given the size of the lorries that have to come through the village.

Gladmans have conveniently had a flood assessment report done that suggests there is no additional flood risk. Given the existing development of 92 dwellings on Town Road had to have the site pumped from flooding during the winter on a number of occasions, a much larger development will create an increased risk. More concrete and tarmac will reduce the ability for water to soak away.



Our current doctors surgery is already oversubscribed for the residents already living here. With such a huge increase in residents the current doctors surgeries will be unable to cope. Like the rest of the country they are struggling to find new doctors to fill their current requirement. This leads to long waits for a doctors appointment which will only get worse.

Our local schools also suffer from oversubscription with no ability to increase the size of existing buildings. I would be interested to hear how the council proposes to use the promised money by Gladman to create a new school and where.

Given that other developments in the Medway area have been approved on the promise of funds to improve the amenities in the surrounding area, and you have been unable to secure these funds once developers have completed their development. How do you plan to make sure that Gladmans don't walk away leaving you with nothing they've promised. All evidence suggests that is what they have done in the past.

I don't believe that the financial sweeteners are sustainable in the long term for the amenities that this village sorely needs. I therefore implore you to reject this application like you have done previously as I don't see that anything has sufficiently changed.

Kind Regards

Andy Collins

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