

## **650 PLANNING APPLICATION**

THANK YOU MR CHAIRMAN. THIS EVENING YOU WILL HEAR MANY QUESTIONS TESTING THE VALIDITY AND CREDIBILITY OF THIS OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION WHICH GIVES THE APPEARANCE OF SUBSTANCE BUT IS ACTUALLY AN ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN THAT LACKS A LOT OF IMPORTANT DETAIL.

SOME OF THESE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS, I AM SURE, HAVE ALREADY OCCURRED TO MEMBERS OF THIS COMMITTEE. FOR INSTANCE:

- IS THE 40% AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROMISED GUARANTEED, GIVEN THE HIGH LEVEL OF INFRASTRUCTURE COSTS AND PLANNING OBLIGATIONS THAT WILL BE IMPOSED ON THE DEVELOPER TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF TRAFFIC? WITHOUT A FINANCIAL VIABILITY ASSESSMENT FROM THE DEVELOPER HOW CAN WE REALLY KNOW WHETHER 40% IS DELIVERABLE OR NOT?
- ARE WE SATISFIED ABOUT THE LACK OF PLANS TO SECURE SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION FOR ALL THE EXTRA CHILDREN THESE HOUSES WILL BRING? IT IS ALL VERY WELL TALKING ABOUT THE MONEY WE WILL RAISE FROM THE DEVELOPER TO BUILD EXTRA CLASSROOMS BUT THE COUNTY EDUCATION AUTHORITY HAS NOT EVEN HAD DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SCHOOLS CONCERNED TO TEST IF THAT EXTRA CAPACITY CAN ACTUALLY BE BUILT!

BUT THESE TYPE OF QUESTIONS, ALTHOUGH IMPORTANT, ARE NOT THE MAIN PROBLEMS WITH THIS APPLICATION. AS ONE OF THE TWO COUNCILLORS FOR LECKHAMPTON, I HAVE STUDIED THIS FLAWED APPLICATION IN SOME DETAIL AND THERE ARE 2 REASONS WHY I BELIEVE YOU SHOULD NOT SUPPORT THE RECOMMENDATION TO PERMIT AND RATHER YOU SHOULD MOVE TO DELAY THE APPLICATION UNTIL MORE INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE AND DUE PROCESS IS FOLLOWED.

FIRST, THE JOINT CORE STRATEGY HAS CHOSEN LECKHAMPTON AS ONE OF ITS STRATEGIC SITES AND THAT GIVES SOME LEGITIMACY TO THIS APPLICATION. YET THE JCS IS STILL ONGOING AND IS IN ITS FINAL PUBLIC CONSULTATION PHASE BEFORE GOING TO THE INSPECTOR FOR ASSESSMENT. COMMENTS WILL NOW BE ALLOWED UP TO 18 AUGUST. BUT TO CONSIDER THIS 650 HOUSE APPLICATION BEFORE ALL THOSE COMMENTS ARE IN IS AN ABUSE OF THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS. THERE ARE STILL MANY ISSUES THAT THE PUBLIC AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THE JCS. FOR INSTANCE:

- ARE THE HOUSING TARGETS IN THE PLAN CORRECT?
- AND THE RECENT SUCCESS OF THE COUNTY LOCAL ECONOMIC PLAN, ANNOUNCED ONLY WEEKS AGO, HAS HIGHLIGHTED THAT IT HAS INCLUDED LAND NEAR JUNCTION 10 OF THE M5 FOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, IN ADDITION TO ALL THE BUSINESS LAND ALREADY IDENTIFIED NORTH WEST OF CHELTENHAM WITHIN THE JCS. THIS DOUBLE COUNTING AND LACK OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE 2 GROUPS DRIVING THESE PLANS GENERATES REAL POTENTIAL TO RECONSIDER EARLIER DECISIONS.

SO IT IS PREMATURE TO CONSIDER THIS APPLICATION BEFORE THE PUBLIC HAVE PROVIDED THEIR COMMENTS CHALLENGING THE SOUNDNESS OF THE JCS AND BEFORE THE COUNCIL HAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONSIDER THOSE COMMENTS. STEVE JORDAN HAS GONE ON RECORD A NUMBER OF TIMES SAYING THAT HE IS PREPARED TO GO BACK TO COUNCIL FOR IT TO RECONSIDER THE JCS IF THE CONCERNS COMING IN ON THE PLAN ARE SERIOUS ENOUGH. HOWEVER UNLIKELY THIS MAY BE IN THE EYES OF THE JCS AUTHORS, IT IS SIMPLY OUTRAGEOUS TO IGNORE THE POSSIBILITY OF THIS HAPPENING.

MY SECOND AND PROBABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT REASON FOR DELAYING THIS APPLICATION BEFORE YOU, IS THAT WE HAVE YET TO DEFINE THE PRECISE LOCATION AND SIZE OF THE LOCAL GREEN SPACE THAT THIS COUNCIL AGREED WE MUST DO WHEN IT ACCEPTED THE JCS LAST APRIL. IF WE VOTE THROUGH THIS APPLICATION FOR 650 HOUSES TONIGHT, WE WILL NOT MEET OUR LEGAL OBLIGATIONS TO CONSIDER LECKHAMPTON FOR LOCAL GREEN SPACE STATUS.

ACCEPTING THIS ILLUSTRATIVE MASTER PLAN AND THE DESIGN PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING IT WILL MEAN THAT OUR HANDS ARE TIED AND THAT WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO PROPERLY ASSESS AND PROTECT THOSE PARTS OF THE LAND THAT HAVE AMENITY, LANDSCAPE, ECOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL VALUE. EVEN THOUGH THERE IS A LOT OF GREEN SPACE PROTECTION ALREADY OFFERED BY THE DEVELOPER, IT IS THE DEVELOPER'S IDEA OF WHAT SHOULD BE PROTECTED, NOT THE LOCAL POPULATION'S OR OTHER EXPERTS, SUCH AS NATURAL ENGLAND, CPRE AND THE COTSWOLD CONSERVATION BOARD.

PLEASE CONSIDER THIS. THE PIG FIELD ON SHURDINGTON ROAD IS A HIGH POINT ON THAT ROAD THAT PROVIDES A MAGNIFICENT AND FAMOUS VIEW OF THE LECKHAMPTON ESCARPMENT AND THE AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATIONAL BEAUTY. YET THE DEVELOPER PLANS TO BUILD THE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND A 3 STOREY BUSINESS PARK THERE, WHICH WILL DESTROY THAT VIEW FOR EVER. PERHAPS THAT IS WHY THEY HAVE NOT PROVIDED THE USUAL LANDSCAPE VIEWS THAT EVEN OUR OWN PLANNING OFFICERS WOULD HAVE EXPECTED TO SEE IN THIS APPLICATION.

WHAT WE NEED TO DO IS CONSULT IN DETAIL WITH THE PARISH COUNCIL, WHICH IN ITS LOCAL GREEN SPACE APPLICATION HAS CONSIDERED EVERY FIELD IN QUESTION AND ASSESSED ITS LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL SIGNIFICANCE. ALTHOUGH THE PARISH MAY HAVE BEEN SEEN AS ATTEMPTING TO STOP **ALL** DEVELOPMENT ON THE LECKHAMPTON FIELDS, THAT IS NOT THE CASE. IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN PREPARED FOR A MATURE DEBATE ABOUT SELECTING THE MOST IMPORTANT AREAS FOR PROTECTION AND IF THE JCS AUTHORS HAD CONSIDERED ITS LOCAL GREEN SPACE APPLICATION AS PART OF THE JCS, RATHER THAN RELEGATING IT TO THE CHELTENHAM LOCAL PLAN WHICH HAS YET TO BE ADDRESSED, THEN THAT DEBATE COULD HAVE TAKEN PLACE A YEAR AGO WHEN IT WAS SUBMITTED, AND WE WOULD NOT BE IN THIS POSITION TODAY, WHERE IT WOULD BE ILLOGICAL, UNWISE AND UNSOUND TO ACCEPT THIS APPLICATION FOR 650 HOUSES.

THIS APPLICATION MUST BE DELAYED!!