

Dear Cllr Bickerton

Thank you for your email in relation to Inspector Ord's Preliminary Findings Report and application 14/00838/FUL in relation to Redrow Farm Lane. As you are probably aware

Inspector Ord has been considering further information on the JCS but as you will also be aware the Secretary of State has already considered whether to call in the application to which you refer and with the knowledge of both the Council's resolution to grant planning permission and the Inspector's Preliminary Findings, he has confirmed that he would not be calling the application in.

Therefore the Council's resolution remains unaffected.

Yours sincerely

Mike Dawson

Chief Executive

**From:** Ian (Bitworks - Cheltenham) [mailto:Ian@bitworks-engineering.co.uk]

**Sent:** 11 March 2016 16:17

**To:** Paul Skelton; potluck@blueyonder.co.uk; alex@alexchalk.com; laurence.robertson.mp@parliament.uk; Tracey.Crews@cheltenham.gov.uk; Charlieandsue77@aol.com; r.j.lloyd@btinternet.com; adrian\_mears@yahoo.co.uk; margaretstephensonwhite11@gmail.com; Joan Desmond; Julie Wood; Chief Exec; Rachel North; cllr.steve.jordan@cheltenham.gov.uk; joandderek.sobey@btinternet.com

**Subject:** Re: 14/00838/FUL - Redrow land to the west of Farm Lane

Dear Mr Dawson, Ms Rachel North and Ms Julie Wood,

Have extracted the relevant paragraphs from Inspector Ord's December 2015 Preliminary Findings Report, can we all agree this is a very detailed assessment of the Leckhampton Strategic Site, the Inspector made two site visits and knows the area well and the development history. In the report Inspector Ord raised some important points on the Leckhampton allocation and requested a small amount of additional work, this was **highlighted** in the original text, please see below, para's 56, 59 and 66.

Please could you tell me if the Inspector's comments and questions have been considered by Tewkesbury Borough Council, and if so, the status of this additional work, for example, has any input been made to the Inspector ahead of the final April EiP session covering the site allocation and the need for Local Green Space/LAP?

We truly believe a sustainable development outcome is possible for Leckhampton, to achieve this goal we need the joint working of TBC and CBC under the JCS Framework, we request TBC to come back to the table and complete the JCS sustainability work for Leckhampton.

Best Regards

Cllr Ian Bickerton

Leckhampton with Warden hill Parish Council & Chair of LEGLAG

**EXTRACT FROM INSPECTOR ORD'S PRELIMINARY JCS FINDINGS REPORT, COVERS ALL THE STATEMENTS AND REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL WORK ON LECKHAMPTON**

**Leckhampton (A6)**

47. The third non-GB allocation is at Leckhampton on the south western edge of Cheltenham, located partly in Cheltenham and partly in Tewksbury. It is proposed as an urban extension to Cheltenham, contributing 1,124 dwellings towards Cheltenham's housing supply<sup>41</sup>. The site lies reasonably close to Cheltenham town centre and is partly enclosed by existing development.

48. Although that part of the site which lies to the south-west of Farm Lane (within Tewkesbury Borough) was considered by the AMEC GB Assessment to have potential to be added to the GB<sup>42</sup>, the report stopped short of recommending its inclusion. The AERC GB Review of Cheltenham<sup>[43]</sup> found that the Cheltenham part of the site did not score highly against defined GB purposes.

49. The Strategic Allocations Report<sup>[44]</sup> and Landscape Report<sup>[45]</sup> indicate that its overall landscape sensitivity is high to medium, and that whilst the site lies generally within flood-zone 1, there are small areas which fall within flood-zone 2.

50. A section of the site's southern boundary lies adjacent to the AONB and some areas of the site are very sensitive to development. In the SA it 10 scored major negative against the landscape sustainability objective, meaning that it is assessed as having a problematical sustainability effect, with mitigation likely to be difficult and/or expensive<sup>46</sup>. It is the only strategic allocation to have scored a negative effect above minor against any objective.

51. The Landscape Report indicates that a large part of the allocation, (including land to the south west of Farm Lane) falls within the highest category of landscape and visual sensitivity. One of the key considerations in the Report is that the site has a "very prominent landform and field pattern to the south adjacent to the AONB which is vulnerable to change and is considered a valuable landscape resource" <sup>[47]</sup>.

52. I have reservations about the soundness of developing that part of the proposed allocation which is highly sensitive and which, from my site visit, I noted to be in clear view from within the AONB and other public recreational areas.

53. A number of heritage assets also require careful consideration, including the moated site at Church Farm, the Rectory, Leckhampton Farmhouse

and Barn, the Olde England Cottage, the Moat Cottage and Church Farm[48]. The Historic Environment Assessment states that “there are major heritage concerns to development” due to the high contribution the area makes to the setting of designated buildings and the high potential for archaeological remains of medium regional significance[49]. Development should be avoided that could have a significant impact on these assets unless appropriate mitigation were demonstrated.

54. The section south west of Farm Lane, within Tewkesbury’s boundaries, is an existing allocation within the Tewkesbury Borough Plan. However, the Inspector examining the Tewkesbury Borough Plan had reservations about developing this area and recommended its deletion as an allocation[50]. This recommendation was not taken forward by the Council.

55. Tewkesbury Borough Council has recently resolved to grant planning permission for 377 dwellings on the Farm Lane site<sup>51</sup>, despite objections from Cheltenham Borough Council[52] and seemingly without integrated master-planning for the whole site.

56. Whilst these dwellings are intended to contribute to Cheltenham’s housing supply, it is unclear how this will work in practice, as there is no mechanism in place to achieve this at present and, as the main reason for the resolution seems to be Tewkesbury’s lack of a five year housing supply. **The JCS authorities are invited to provide further explanation.**

57. I have reservations about developing this area of high landscape and visual sensitivity, adjacent to the AONB and GB. I understand that the application is now with the National Planning Unit following a request for a call in [53].

58. The Cheltenham part of the allocation is proposed for 764 dwellings with no employment land<sup>54</sup>. An outline planning application for residential development of up to 650 dwellings and a mixed use local centre is currently the subject of an appeal and a decision from the Secretary of State is pending. However, it is not known how this will be decided and my preliminary findings have not been influenced by this appeal. I understand that another application for additional development is expected [55].

59. In summary, balancing the harms and benefits of this site<sup>56</sup>, in my judgement some residential development is justified on the Cheltenham part of the site. Nonetheless, this should not be on those areas that have high landscape and visual sensitivity. With this proviso, I am minded to find that the Cheltenham part of the allocation is sound. **Submissions are invited from the JCS authorities only on what capacity is justified on this site in view**

## **of my comments.**

60. On the other hand, for reasons of landscape sensitivity, I am not minded to find the Tewkesbury part of the allocation sound. However, this finding may be overtaken by events, depending on the results of the call in request.

61. Leckhampton with Warden Hill Parish Council has proposed the designation of LGS within the strategic allocation. Both the Parish Council and the JCS authorities have requested that I make a finding on the soundness of such a designation [57]. Therefore, LGS designation should only be made on areas of this site which are inappropriate for development.

63. The criteria for designation, as set out in the NPPF58, are that the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves, it should be demonstrably special to the community and hold particular local significance, and it should be local in character and not be an extensive tract of land.

64. What is an extensive tract of land is largely a matter of judgement and will depend on the circumstances of each designation. However, I consider the original area put forward by the Parish Council, as referred to in the Local Green Space Study Report [59], to be too large (54 hectares) and to conflict in part with areas that are justified for development. Nonetheless, there is scope for designation within the allocation.

65. Turning to the merits of designation, the proposed LGS lies close to the local community, and is well supported by local people<sup>60</sup>. Following public consultation, a range of reasons was submitted in support of the designation. Amongst other things, these relate to the beauty and interest of views, the importance of the network of footpaths for dog walkers and others, opportunities for all year round exercise such as jogging, enjoyment of the historic buildings, hedgerows and trees, and the area's overall tranquillity [61].

66. In my judgement, the evidence suggests that the NPPF criteria are met and LGS designation is justified. **The JSC authorities are requested to consider indicative areas for LGS designation based on two scenarios:**

- 1) development not proceeding on the Farm Lane site;**
- 2) development proceeding on the Farm Lane site. Further input from relevant developers and Leckhampton with Warden Hill Parish Council, limited to indicative areas, is invited at the forthcoming hearings.** Detailed boundaries are best left for either the Cheltenham Borough Plan or the forthcoming Neighbourhood Plan.

## REFERENCES

37 EXAM130, page 45  
38 EBLO 102, October 2013, pages 91-94  
39 EBLO 106, October 2012, pages 58-59  
40 See Exam 87 for summary  
41 EXAM 130, page 45  
42 ENAT 100-AMEC Green Belt Assessment, September 2011, page 55,  
paragraph 7.3.8  
43 EXAM 81, see Fig C: Ranked Scoring of Areas Against Green Belt Purposes  
44 EBLO 102, October 2013, pages 72-74  
45 EBLO 106, October 2012, pages 14-15  
46 SAPR 100, page 100; SASUB 100, page 101  
47 EBLO 106, October 2012, page 15  
48 ENAT 107-Historic Environment Assessment, March 2014, page 75  
49 ENAT 107, page 76, paragraphs 10.4.2 and 10.4.3  
50 EXAM 144C, see particularly paragraphs 2.25.15 and 2.25.17  
51 EXAM 127-Farm Lane Application; EXAM 144A Tewkesbury Borough  
Council planning committee minutes  
52 EXAM 121A, Annex C  
53 EXAM 144B  
54 Councils' Matter 8 written statement, answer to question 137  
55 JCS Statement Matter 8: Strategic Allocations, answer to question 148, page 30  
56 See summary of benefits in EXAM 87  
62. The NPPF states that local communities should be able to identify green  
areas of particular importance to them for designation through local or  
neighbourhood plans, which is consistent with the planning of sustainable  
development

On 09/03/2016 21:27, Paul.Skelton@teWKesbury.gov.uk wrote:

Dear Ian

Thank you for your email. I think you have misunderstood my last sentence. I did not say that joint work was carried out in relation to this planning application, I intimated that we spoke to colleagues at CBC on a regular basis. We do so on a wide range of matters, particularly with reference to JCS related matters including SD2.

The only written correspondence on this particular application I am aware of is as published on the Council website. I doubt there is any other written record but I will of course check with the case officer and colleagues at CBC and provide any relevant information within 20 working days.

Kind regards  
Paul

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From: Ian (Bitworks - Cheltenham) [Ian@bitworks-engineering.co.uk]  
Sent: 09 March 2016 20:39  
To: Paul Skelton; potluck@blueyonder.co.uk  
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[garetste](#)  
[phensonwhitell@gmail.com](#); Joan Desmond; Julie Wood; Chief Exec; Rachel  
North  
Subject: Re: 14/00838/FUL - Redrow land to the west of Farm Lane

Dear All,

For information the 806 letters of objection from the public where summarised for the planning committee to a single page in the officers report -008381FUL, please see below, I thought this might be useful to provide as a reference to aid discussion. Have **redlined and marked [\*\*]** a few line items where more detail of the precise objection would have been useful to the decision makers on the committee.

No letters of support from the public were reported.

806 letters of objection - to both the original and revised application on the following grounds:

- Premature [\*\*]
- Consideration should be given to the NPPF Local Green Space application first [\*\*]
- Loss of views to/from AONB
- Destruction of habitat, hedgerows, wildlife and amenity
- Extra traffic will exacerbate congestion problems on local roads and on the A46. Need to undertake JCS modelling work before application is considered. [\*\*]
- Schools in area are at capacity [\*\*]
- Cheltenham Borough Council housing figures which were fed into the JCS should be reconsidered
- Lacking in green space
- Will exacerbate existing air pollution problems
- Visual intrusion
- Will destroy attractiveness of footpath that crosses the land
- Flood risk and will move flooding problems downstream [\*\*]
- Pressure on local facilities and services
- Should develop on brownfield land first
- Area is not sustainable as isolated from Leckhampton and Shurdington and reliance of car travel an essential
- Heavy machinery cannot access site due to weight restrictions and narrow width of local roads
- Identified as best candidate for additional green belt in JCS report
- Lacks any infrastructure
- Will damage setting of AONB and views from AONB
- Rural nature of Leckhampton Lane and Church Road should be maintained and there should be no access onto Leckhampton Lane
- Density of housing out of keeping with area [\*\*]
- Additional houses are not required
- Should be consistent and reject application on similar grounds to those used by Cheltenham Borough Council for land opposite
- Out of keeping with character and needs of area
- Contrary to NPPF [\*\*]
- Would encourage further development in the area

There is a reference to joint work carried out with Cheltenham Borough Council in the final paragraph of Paul's email, could information be provided on the detailed correspondence, meeting minutes, and all other joint work on this planning application, please treat this as a formal FoI request if required to release this information.

Best Regards  
Cllr Ian Bickerton  
Leckhampton with Warden Hill Parish Council