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Clerk and RFO  
Burwash Parish Council  
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TN19 7YZ

Mrs S Shepherd  
Rother District Council  
Town Hall  
Bexhill-On-Sea  
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9<sup>th</sup> December 2018

Dear Mrs Shepherd,

**RR/2018/1787/P - Strand Meadow - Land to the south west of, Burwash TN19 7BS**

Proposed residential development with access from Strand Meadow.

Burwash Parish Council (BPC) resolved to object to the outline planning application and has also resolved to object to this full planning application for the following reasons:

**1. The position, size and scale of the development**

The proposed development sits on two sites. One is identified in the SHLAA BU2 and has been approved:

“Developers intend to build 17 homes with 40% (7) being affordable homes. Outline application RR/2011/2205/P detailing access arrangements was delegated for approval on 15/12/2011.”

In RDCs Local Plan the site is cited in Policy VL1. It states that proposals will be permitted subject to the following conditions:

<b>Policy VL1 Condition</b>	<b>Burwash Parish Council Comments</b>
No more than 17 dwellings are provided, of which 40% are affordable;	This application is for 30 houses nearly double the recommended number of dwellings. Also the affordable provision is 12.8 dwellings and only 12 dwellings have been allocated when this should be 13.
A footpath is provided to link the new development to the existing recreation ground and Ham Lane;	The Parish Council have been advised that the owners of the existing recreation ground have not been consulted on this application.
Developer contributions are made to provide for highway improvements in Strand Meadow	Even with the new proposed access provisions it is stated in the Local Plan policy LV1 that Highways recommends no more than 17 dwellings within this

to improve access conditions.	area.
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Rother's Local Plan Policy DS3 states and includes Burwash that 'The majority of all new development will take place within the development boundaries.' In conjunction with this Policy DS4:

"unless there is specific provision in these policies for the proposed form of development to be located in the countryside, the proposals will also be required to demonstrate that a countryside location is necessary for the development."

In accordance to the Local Plan this site has been given provision for 17 not 30 dwellings. Paragraph 172 in the National Planning Policy Framework states "The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited.". The Parish Council feels that the increase from 17 to 30 does not 'limit' the building within this area and will have severe affect on the AONB.

## **2. The design, size and scale of the houses**

The design, size and scale of this proposed development are poor and harm the overall impact of the area. The use of UVPC windows and doors along with composite weatherboarding on some dwellings is not reflective of this area and will not deliver the high quality homes the community expects.

The houses are unsightly at three stories high. It is noted that the roofs are now not so sheer but they are still unsightly due to the mix of slate and tiled materials on alternating houses.

## **3. The proposed development is in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

AONBs are protected under the following areas:

- a. Paragraph 172 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2018 states:  
"Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. requires that "great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in AONB's"
- b. Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires local authorities to have regard to 'the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of AONB's in making decisions that affect the designated area'
- c. RDCs Core Strategy Policy 2.4 cite that 'development should be restricted included...AONB'.

The intensifying of this site from 17 to 30 dwellings poses an unsuitable impact and effect on this AONB and harms the landscape character of this area. BPC cannot support such a high level of housing on the site considering the damage the AONB will incur.

The High Weald Joint Advisory Committee have submitted a response to the amended plans stating that:

“the revised plans do not overcome the objections I set out in my previous letter.”

#### **4. Environmental impact on the area**

There are wider environmental impacts resulting from this development in addition to the AONB:

- a. The impact on the trees protected under the TPOs.
- b. Dark skies. We enjoy one of the darkest skies in the county and there is real concern that this development will impact on these much loved views.
- c. The local and wildlife and fauna.
- d. The report from the County Ecologist states several items should be carried out for mitigation and monitoring on the impact of badgers, dormice, and how the management of Himalayan balsam will be managed but they also summarise that:

“mitigation strategies for dormice and reptiles and for the prevention of pollution of the on-site flushes and stream are required. Mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures should be addressed through an Ecological Design Strategy with long term management and monitoring addressed through a Landscape Ecological Management Plan.”

Due to the lack of information on how this will be managed within the current application the Parish Council asks that the application is rejected.

#### **5. The impact on the infrastructure is too significant**

There are a number of impacts on the local infrastructure which result from this development. Our main concern is the impact the extra demands resulting from this development will have on the sewerage system. We note that a letter from Southern Water states that:

“the proposed development will be drained to Southern Water’s Burwash Common Wastewater Treatment Works. The works currently does not have the capacity to accommodate flows from the proposed development.”

In a letter on the 02/10/18 Southern Water submits another letter with many points of concern but key items state:

“it appears the applicant is proposing to abandon/divert the public sewer. Southern Water requests a formal application for sewer diversion under 185 of Water Industry Act 1991”  
“The applicant is advised to consult the Environment Agency directly regarding the use of sewerage treatment plant which disposes of effluent to sub-oil irrigation”

As far as the Parish Council is aware neither of the above have been actioned and therefore asks that the application is refused until the above is carried out.

The Parish Council is also concerned about the impact this development will have on the Primary School and the local Doctors Surgery.

## **6. Geographical site constraints**

There are numerous issues with the site itself and the suitability for building on it. The Hay Barn pond was in Ham Lane, above and to the west of the Watercress field. It was fed by springs and overflowed into the small stream north of the new site off Strand Meadow.

This very large pond was filled with surplus soil when the main sewer was tunnelled under Burwash High Street in the 1950's. Many of the springs had to find a new water course through the Watercress field to flow into the stream at a lower point. Map ref:- Easting 567430 Northing 124973.

ESCC have objected to the application as 'the applicant has failed to meet the requirements to assess its acceptability in flood risk terms'.

There is also an issue of shifting land in area. One resident told the Parish Council she regularly (biannually) needs to replace her back wall due to the slippage of earth. Residents are greatly concerned the harm the building of these properties on such land will have on their own properties. Questions must be raised regarding the harm and impact on the existing houses and what assessments have been made to monitor and mitigate this impact due to the required level of building work and heavy machinery on site. This does not seem to be present in the existing plans.

All of the above points show that the land itself is not suitable for building on.

## **7. The access to the proposed site**

The community has great concern about access to and from this development. The community have raised a number of concerns including:

- a. Access for cars is very narrow
- b. Poor footpath infrastructure for pedestrians increasing the potential harm to residents using the new development and those in the existing area.
- c. The additional traffic will add to the already severe congestion in this area. Regularly the refuse trucks cannot get down Strand Meadow which also indicates that this would be a problem for emergency vehicles.

The developer's proposals concerning these issues are limited to changes to the existing footpaths and road widening in an area of circa 50m nearest their site. This will not deal with the already severe lack of parking provision throughout Strand Meadow nor the pinch point this creates at the corner of this road through which all the additional traffic including refuse wagons and emergency vehicles will need to navigate.

## **8. No plans for access on site for construction vehicles and materials**

We are also concerned that the plans provide no real evidence of how this will be achieved. There is also great concern over the potential to try and use Ham Lane for access which is not a made up road and would be totally unsuitable but has already been used by various contractors carrying out initial on site surveys.

As set out in paragraph 7 above, Strand Meadow is already a severely congested road which houses a number of families with children. Many residents are concerned of the safety with large trucks going through an already congested area.

## **9. The impact from the traffic will have a severely harmful impact on the area**

Traffic impact is a major concern for this community

- a. The submitted plan has the entrance coming onto Shrub Lane. This has poor access and visibility coming in and out of the site.
- b. The impact of increased traffic on the A265 junction with Shrub Lane has not been adequately considered by the developers
- c. The bus service of the 31 is no longer available to the village and has been replaced with the number 231 and is only available Mon-Fri not Saturday
- d. We are already facing the possibility of the Denton Homes scheme going ahead following the appeal with traffic for both of these developments coming out on to Shrub Lane.

## **10. There has been a total removal of all affordable housing**

This contravenes RDCs own policy for the need of 40%. The viability documents have now been made but lack of clarity around some of the figures in particular the Site Abnormalities which are listed at £2,063,707 with no breakdown of what these actually are. If the developer deems this scheme unviable with 40% affordable housing the Parish Council urges the Local Planning Authority to reject this planning application.

## **11. Understanding the Housing Need for the village**

Through the Parish Council's own surveys and public engagement, the proposed houses do not meet local need. The BPC would again refer to the feedback from the community from initial consultation over the Neighbourhood Plan. The majority of the local community stated in their feedback that to reach the Burwash village target of 52 houses this should be done on smaller infill sites of over 6 homes. Whilst fully aware the NP is not approved as yet, we have carried out extensive consultation with the community to understand their thoughts and views on the needs within the village.

Our Housing Needs survey shows that local need is principally two-fold with the largest requirement being for 2 bed bungalows or adapted housing principally for existing home owners to down size from larger unsuitable houses. The second largest need is for 3 bed homes for social rent to provide stable housing for local, often low paid, local families. These core requirements would support sustainable communities. The proposals made in this application will not deliver any local housing need solutions.

## **12. Viability**

It is the Parish Council's view that in cases where viability is being claimed that the District Council should insist that these reports are fully open to scrutiny with full disclosure of figures and how these have been built up in order to provide the ability to carry out a meaningful review. They should also be free of redactments and in instances where commercial

sensitivity is claimed the application should be returned pending a time when full disclosure can be provided.

This application is a case in point as it has come from a developer who is well versed in making viability claims. Their last three schemes which total over 130 units have not provided any affordable homes.

It is therefore not surprising with a developer who is so versed in this area of work that it has proved difficult to properly review the figures provided in the viability report. This is because there is not sufficient access to the way the costs in each section have been built up. It can only be hoped that that the District Valuation Officer has been able to obtain fuller details in order to make a considered decision on this vitally important aspect of this application.

### **13. Conclusion**

It is the view of the community and the Parish Council that for all of the many and varied reasons given above and the lack of detail the developers have provided in their application on key issues that this development is unacceptable and should be refused.

Yours Sincerely,

Jane Cheshire  
Clerk and RFO for Burwash Parish Council  
On Behalf of Burwash Parish Council