



Suzanne Webb MP

Member of Parliament for Stourbridge

Jenny North
Case Officer, Planning and Economic Development
Directorate of Place
4 Ednam Road
Dudley
DY1 1HL

19th August 2022

Dear Jenny,

Planning Objection: P22/1050 | Erection of 84 no. dwellings with associated works to include landscaping | Land adjacent to Corbett Hospital, Vicarage Road, Stourbridge

I am writing to oppose planning application P22/1050 and the proposal by Charles Church Homes to build 84 houses on Corbett Meadow for the reasons outlined below.

Firstly, the planning application runs contrary to Policy DSA4 of the Draft Black Country Plan and its designation of Corbett Meadow as a Local Green Space. As outlined in Paragraphs 101 to 103 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), decisions concerning development on Local Green Spaces should be 'consistent with those for Green Belts'. As Paragraph 149 of the NPPF states that 'a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt', the same protection should be afforded to Corbett Meadow Local Green Space. The Draft Black Country Plan recognises this and states that **"the site will be protected from inappropriate development unless there are very special circumstances"**.

As identified in the Draft Black Country Plan, one of the primary reasons why I object to this planning application is because it will negatively impact the natural environment and local wildlife. The Draft Plan correctly identifies that the site is a 'flower-rich lowland meadow' which supports a diverse array of flora and fauna. Moreover, a variety of old trees and wooded areas are protected by Tree Preservation Orders. In recognition of the need to preserve the site's rich ecosystem, Dudley Council has designated Corbett Meadow as a Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINC). The proposed development would severely undermine the site's status as a conservation area, damaging local flora and fauna.

In addition to its natural significance, Corbett Meadow is of particular importance to the local community. Bequeathed to the people of Stourbridge by local philanthropist John Corbett in 1893 to provide a hospital and public park, Corbett Meadow is of special



significance to local people. The public right of way that runs along the historic site offers outstanding views of the Meadow for the local community in the otherwise built-up area of Amblecote. The proposed development would result in the permanent loss of a beloved public amenity and its beautiful public views.

Furthermore, the proposals submitted would place significant pressure on local services and infrastructure, as well as reducing the quality of life for residents. The development would be accessed via Vicarage Road - a busy single carriageway that will be unable to accommodate the additional traffic without increasing congestion and air and noise pollution. Building houses to deal with population growth cannot happen without sufficient provision of local services. Local infrastructure and public services in Stourbridge, such as schools, healthcare, and emergency services, are already under pressure. These proposals would place additional strain on local amenities and as a result reduce the quality of life not only for existing residents, but also for those who would live in the proposed development.

Finally, and perhaps the most important reason for my objection, is the strength of public feeling against the proposals. Policy DSA4 concerning the future of Corbett Meadow states that 'the views of the local community will also need to be taken into account when considering any development proposals on the site'. As the Member of Parliament for the area concerned. I have regularly attended meetings of the Corbett Meadow Action Group (CMAG), a grassroots organisation of residents who take an interest in the future of the meadow. From my conversations with constituents and CMAG, residents overwhelmingly oppose the proposed development.

Whilst it is important that we unlock the opportunity of home ownership, we also need to ensure we are building homes where communities want them. There are around a million homes with permission across the country that have not yet been built. Why are we in a rush to build on our precious green open space? We are close to the end of electing our next Prime Minister and there have been commitments during this process to remove Whitehall-imposed top-down targets. Local communities are best placed to know where to develop and I would fully support this intervention.

In conclusion, I object to this planning application because it runs contrary to the Draft Black Country Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). **Beyond running counter to both local and national planning guidelines, the proposed development goes against what arguably should be the most important deciding factor in decisions like these – the wellbeing and views of residents.**

This concludes my comments on the application.

Yours sincerely,

Suzanne Webb
Member of Parliament for Stourbridge