

Whittington Parish Council

One Parish : One Community



Planning Application W/26/01592/OUT, Land At (Os 8952 4900), Abbotswood Road, Kempsey

Consultation Process

This is a very large and complex outline application, yet local residents have been given insufficient time to review and understand the extensive documentation. We are also concerned that the consultation was not properly communicated to Whittington residents and appears not to have been shared with the Parish Council in a timely manner. The limited consultation makes it difficult for those most affected by the proposal to participate meaningfully in the process.

In our view, this proposal cannot be considered in isolation. It forms part of the wider pattern of development associated with the proposed Wychavon New Town / Worcestershire Parkway growth area, and its impacts on local infrastructure, traffic, services and the rural character of Whittington should be assessed in that wider context.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraphs 39–40 state that planning applications should be supported by early, meaningful and proportionate engagement with local communities; we do not believe that standard has been met in this case.

Accelerated Delivery Timescales and Cumulative Impact

The application proposes up to 1,250 dwellings and associated development as Phase 1 of the Wychavon New Town proposal. However, the South Worcestershire Development Plan identifies this area as part of the phase 2 development beyond 2041. It therefore appears that yet another development is being proposed early (joining Merton College to give another example) and represents a significant acceleration of growth that has not been properly acknowledged in the application.

We are concerned that the proposal fails to address the cumulative effects of multiple large-scale developments coming forward at the same time. There is little evidence of how construction traffic would be coordinated, how utilities such as water and electricity would be provided, or how foul waste would be managed during both construction and occupation. In particular, the application does not demonstrate that the B4084, which is effectively the main route serving these developments, could accommodate the combined construction and operational traffic without severe congestion and disruption.

This is contrary to SWDPR 06 (Transport) which requires development to be supported by appropriate infrastructure and safe access arrangements, and to NPPF paragraph 116, which requires development to provide safe and suitable access for all users and to avoid unacceptable impacts on the transport network.

Construction Traffic

The application appears to rely heavily on the wider transport modelling without properly explaining how traffic will actually be managed while the planned infrastructure is not yet in place. The application also does not adequately explain how construction vehicles will be managed on the B4084, including their routing, frequency and hours of operation, or how disruption to existing residents will be minimised. There are particular concerns about pedestrian and cycle safety over the existing bridge, which is narrow and would potentially have to accommodate significant construction traffic.

This is especially important given the scale and likely duration of the development. These issues should not simply be left to a future transport plan or dealt with at a later stage. The SWDPR 06 (Transport) requires development to provide safe and suitable access for all users, while the NPPF paragraphs 115–117 require safe access and give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, while minimising conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. The application should therefore provide much clearer and more robust proposals for construction traffic management and pedestrian and cycle safety before permission is granted.

Transport

There is a significant concern about the timing of this application. The decision is expected on the 29th October 2026, yet the wider Infrastructure Planning Application is not expected until the end of 2026. That infrastructure plan is essential to the delivery and phasing of this development, so it is premature to approve the housing before the necessary infrastructure and its impacts have been properly established.

In particular, the transport assessment needs to consider the cumulative impact of this and other large developments on the wider road network, not just the indicative roads within the site. The roads around Spetchley traffic island, Whittington traffic island, Whittington Road, Crookbarrow Road and Pershore Road are already under significant pressure and could become alternative routes if the proposed infrastructure is inadequate.

Access for residents to the surrounding villages must also be maintained whilst at the same time avoiding the use of local routes as ‘rat runs’ for what will be a significant increase in car ownership within the development area. Roads such as Walkers Lane and Church Lane in Whittington already experience an unacceptable level of displaced traffic and routes such as this need to be afforded adequate protection to ensure that communities do not suffer significant and long lasting disruption.

The SWDPR 06 (Transport) is particularly relevant, requiring transport and land-use planning to be properly integrated and development to minimise congestion and provide appropriate transport infrastructure. The NPPF paragraphs 109, 115 and 116 similarly require transport impacts to be considered from the earliest stages, safe and suitable access to be demonstrated, and significant or cumulative impacts on the road network to be appropriately mitigated.

The outline application should not be approved until there is sufficient certainty that the wider infrastructure can be delivered alongside the development and that existing rural roads and communities will not bear the consequences of inadequate or delayed infrastructure.

Impact on Communities

The application does not adequately address the concerns of existing residents about how they will be affected during construction and once the development is complete. Although this is an outline application, there should still be a clear indication of how these impacts will be managed and mitigated, rather than leaving them to be resolved at a later stage. The main concerns are the likely impacts from construction traffic, dust, noise, pollution and general disruption. Given the scale and likely duration of the development, these could have a significant effect on the quality of life of existing residents, particularly those living along the B4084 and surrounding rural roads.

SWDPR 35 (Amenity) is directly relevant, as it seeks to ensure that development does not result in unacceptable adverse impacts on the amenity of existing or future residents and SWDPR 41 (Air Quality) is also relevant given the potential for additional traffic, construction activity, dust and emissions to affect local air quality. The NPPF paragraph 198 also requires the likely effects, including cumulative effects, of pollution on health and living conditions to be considered, while paragraph 199 requires appropriate consideration of impacts on air quality.

These impacts should therefore be properly assessed at this stage, with clear commitments and mitigation measures for construction traffic, dust, noise and pollution, rather than simply being left for future consideration.

Green Space and Sustainable Design

The application appears to give insufficient consideration to the needs and concerns of the existing rural communities affected by the proposal. Much of the application presents a positive picture of the development in the future, but gives far less attention to the immediate and long-term impacts on existing residents and the character of the surrounding area.

The proposed development is effectively a new settlement of considerable size, yet the design appears to treat the allocated green space as areas around the development rather than properly integrating green infrastructure and accessible open space into the community itself. We are also concerned that there appears to have been no involvement from a Green Space Officer, despite this being a previous commitment and vitally important if the vision for creating a 'great place to live' is to be realised.

This is contrary to SWDPR 05 (Design) and SWDPR 07 (Green Infrastructure), which seeks high-quality development that responds positively to its surroundings and creates attractive, inclusive and well-connected places. It is also inconsistent with the NPPF, which places considerable importance on good design, creating places that are safe, inclusive and accessible, and ensuring that development reflects the identity of its surroundings. The application should therefore give much greater consideration to the existing rural communities and demonstrate how the proposed development will genuinely integrate with, rather than simply be imposed upon, the surrounding area.

Water and Waste Infrastructure

The section dealing with water and waste raises serious concerns (Chapter 8). The application appears to suggest that Severn Trent will be responsible for water supply and waste removal, but this does not reflect the position set out by Severn Trent itself, particularly in relation to infrastructure within the development boundary. The application should very clearly explain how water and waste will actually be managed within the site.

Of particular concern is the acknowledgement of a significant future water supply deficit, identifying that by 2040-2041 there will be a deficit of 244 million litres of water per day, rising to 549 million litres of water per day by 2050-2051 (the same as 220 Olympic sized swimming pools) if no action is taken.

The proposed approach appears to rely primarily on reducing demand, tackling leakage and improving water efficiency rather than securing additional supplies. It is impossible to see how this provides sufficient certainty when the proposal itself would substantially increase water demand through the construction of 1,250 homes and associated development. The application needs to demonstrate, rather than assume, that the proposed development can be accommodated within Severn Trent's available and planned water resources.

Severn Trent acknowledges there will be a deficit for 25 years or more, but there appears to be no credible plan to manage this. This is not an emergency situation where people have to use tankers and bottled water, this is being proposed as long term realistic solution. These matters should not simply be treated as a 'low-magnitude issue' given the scale of the proposed development and its potential long-term consequences for affecting thousands of people.

This raises concerns under SWDPR Policy 40 (Water Management) and NPPF paragraphs 20, 161 and 162 which require that larger developments are supported by the necessary infrastructure and can demonstrate that adequate water supply and permanent waste infrastructure can be provided without placing unacceptable additional pressure on existing communities or water resources.

There needs to be clear and independently verifiable evidence that sufficient water resources and appropriate permanent waste infrastructure are available, together with a clear and deliverable plan for providing that infrastructure. It is not sufficient to rely on assumptions about future reductions in water consumption or on temporary measures such as tankering. If the necessary infrastructure and capacity cannot be demonstrated now, then the development cannot reasonably be considered sustainable or deliverable and planning permission should be refused.

Previous Consultations

There have already been separate consultations on the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and the initial Infrastructure Plans, during which residents and Parish Councils raised detailed concerns. These representations need to be fully considered as part of this application where they are relevant. Residents should not be expected to repeatedly raise the same concerns with every individual planning application where those concerns relate to the wider development and its infrastructure. The cumulative views expressed through previous consultations should be taken into account when assessing whether this proposal is acceptable.

This is consistent with the NPPF paragraph 39, which emphasises the importance of meaningful community engagement and ensuring that local communities have the opportunity to contribute to the planning process. The application should therefore demonstrate that relevant concerns raised through previous consultations have been properly considered rather than treating this application in isolation.

Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, we do not believe that the application has demonstrated that this development can be delivered safely and sustainably without unacceptable impacts on existing communities, local roads, water resources and other essential infrastructure. In particular, there remains insufficient certainty over the timing and delivery of the necessary infrastructure and the management of construction and operational traffic.

The scale of the proposal and its relationship with the wider Wychavon Town/Parkway development mean that its impacts need to be considered cumulatively rather than in isolation. We therefore respectfully ask that Planning Application W/26/01592/OUT is refused unless and until the outstanding infrastructure, transport, water, waste, environmental and community impacts have been properly assessed and satisfactory mitigation has been demonstrated.