

Whittington Parish Council



Clerk to the Council: Carol Chambers, 1 Crookbarrow Cottage, Whittington, Worcester, WR5 2RL

Email whittingtonpc@live.co.uk: Tele 01905 358470

Web Site Worcestershire.gov.uk/myparish Facebook.com/whittingtonpc

MINUTES of the Extra Ordinary meeting of Whittington Parish Council held on Wednesday 22 July 2015 at 6.30pm at St Philip & St James Parish Church Whittington.

Democratic Period/ Question Time:

Members of the parish addressed the Council, they accused the council that inadequate/short notice had been given for the Extra Ordinary meeting, the Chair pointed out that there was a decision dead line to adhere to and time needed to be allowed to write a letter. The Clerk pointed out that legal notice of 3 days had been given which was publicised on the two notice boards, the WPC website and WPC facebook. Parishioners expressed their concern at the engagement of a planning agent to write a holding letter and questioned whether there was a mandate to use public money for the hire thereof and that the council had not used a consultant on the Bloor Homes, Kilbury Drive development that was currently under construction. Parishioners who were present urged the council to 'work' with the developers, parishioners also questioned the integrity of the Council as they thought that the proposed development would only effect 2 houses, the Chairman reminded the parishioners that the Council had debated, and voted to object to the development in open council and reminded all who were present that the Council represents the whole parish not just the centre of the village, the council thought that the additional 300 houses in addition to the 273 house development that was currently under construction would have a substantial impact on the parish. The Council also reminded parishioners that a survey of the parish confirmed parishioners would like to keep their rural identity. Following a question from a parishioner the Clerk confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

1) Attendance and Apologies -

Those Present:

Chairman: Cllr S Macleod
Councillors: Cllr A Guy, Cllr P Whitehead
Officers: Mrs C Chambers (Parish Clerk)

Attendees: Mrs Hodgetts, Mrs M Hallmark, Mr N Hodgetts, Mr D Hallmark,
Mr S Brooker, Mr R Phillips.

Apologies: Cllr M Baker and Cllr F Richards

2) Declarations of Interest and Ethical Matters.

- a To receive declarations of Personal (non prejudicial) Interests in items on this Agenda and their nature. None.
- b To receive declarations of Prejudicial Interests in items on this Agenda and their nature.
- c Ethical Matters. None.

3a) Overview: The Clerk had circulated with the agenda a report which explained the that at the Extra Ordinary Meeting of Whittington Parish Council which was held on 1st July 2015 the Council debated Application Number : W/15/01514/OU - <http://bit.ly/1eLuuSI> - Robert Hitchins Limited - Land Rear of Hill House, Swinesherd Lane, Spetchley - Proposal: Residential development (up to 300 dwellings), including infrastructure, ancillary facilities, open space, and landscaping. Access from the A4440 Swinesherd Way. All matters reserved. Following debate it was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the application be refused. Following further discussion it was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that due to the size of the development WPC would request an extension on the consultation date as there were many issues that needed to be addressed. It was agreed that the Clerk would enquire if it was plausible to engage a Planning Consultant to assist with a detailed response to support the objection.

3b) Resolution: The Clerk also circulated with the agenda a letter to Grant Thornton the external auditors from the Clerk dated 20 July 2013 which confirmed that a 'fighting fund' had been put aside for use to combat development within the parish, a bank reconciliation as at 30 June 2015, which showed Whittington Parish Councils total balance of £31,527.29, she also attached two quotes from professional planning consultants who could write a Holding Objection Letter to Wychavon District Council on behalf of Whittington Parish Council. Following further discussion it was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Council would not engage a planning consultant and that the Council would draft its own objection to Wychavon District Council. Whittington Parish Councils objection are annexed to these minutes.

4) Date of Next Meeting.

The date of the next Ordinary Meeting of the Council will be Tuesday 8th September 2015 at Whittington Village Hall.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.35pm.

Councillor S Macleod
Chairman

Whittington Parish Council



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Web Site Worcestershire.gov.uk/myparish Facebook.com/whittingtonpc

David Addison
Planning Officer
Wychavon District Council
Civic Centre
Queen Elizabeth Drive
Persnore
Worcestershire
WR10 1PT

27 July 2015

Location: Land Rear of Hill House, Swinesherd Lane, Spetchley

Proposal: Residential development (up to 300 dwellings), including infrastructure, ancillary facilities, open space, and landscaping. Access from the A4440 Swinesherd Way.

Reference: W/15/01514/OU

At a meeting on 1 July 2015 of Whittington Parish Council it was resolved that the council **OBJECTS** to this application.

The reasons are set out in detail in this letter, but are summarised here as:

- Non-conformity with NPPF, emerging policies of SWDP and Saved Policies of the Local Plan
- Sustainability is unachievable as non-vehicular transport options are not viable
- Dangerous roads and access present major risks to lives in vehicles, on bicycles and on foot
- Control measures on a strategic route will hamper traffic flows, increasing congestion
- Surface water accumulations are such that dwellings will be flooded
- Loss of green space and rural landscape character
- Lacks provision of space for sport and recreational uses
- Noise levels exceed acceptable standards

The proposed development fails the acid test of the NPPF's primary objective, as set out in the opening statement of the National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF"):

"The purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development."

The NPPF continues by defining and qualifying sustainable development:

"Sustainable development is about change for the better, and not only in our built environment. Our natural environment is essential to our wellbeing, and it can be better looked after than it has been. Habitats that have been degraded can be restored. Species that have been isolated can be reconnected. Green Belt land that has been depleted of diversity can be refilled by nature – and opened to people to experience it, to the benefit of body and soul."

Eric Pickles, recently Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government said:

“Britain must remain a ‘green and pleasant land’ with new housing development concentrated on brownfield sites – We’ve always been a green and pleasant land and we must stay that way, preserving the best of our countryside and other green spaces.”

Sustainable Development

Paragraph 7 of NPPF gives three dimensions by which development must be measured if to be considered sustainable. The proposed development of Swinesherd Way fails to satisfy all three dimensions because it is not:

“land of the right type [...] available in the right place and at the right time”; nor

“supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, [...] with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs”; nor

protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.”

NPPF47 uses the term **“developable”** which a footnote qualifies as:

“in a suitable location for housing development”

Based on the NPPF it seems the factors which feature ahead of all others in considering a proposed site for development is whether that site is “developable” in the first place and if it were to be developed whether that development would be “sustainable”.

This site is neither developable nor sustainable.

Core Planning Principles

NPPF demands at paragraph 17 that plans must, inter alia:

“take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it”;

“tak[e] full account of flood risk”;

“contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value”;

“encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land)”;

“recognis[e] that some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage, or food production)”;

“actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable.”

This proposal to build 300 houses on Swinesherd Way runs counter to all of the above. The evidence that the site is neither developable nor sustainable, measured both by volume and strength, is compelling.

Inappropriate for Housing

Paragraph 23 of NPPF states:

“... local planning authorities should... recognise that residential development can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres and set out policies to encourage residential development on appropriate sites.”

Para 51 of NPPF says:

“Local planning authorities should identify and bring back into residential use empty housing and buildings in line with local housing and empty homes strategies and, where appropriate, acquire properties under compulsory purchase powers.”

And para 111 says:

“Planning policies and decisions should encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value.”

Para 178:

“The Government expects joint working on areas of common interest to be diligently undertaken for the mutual benefit of neighbouring authorities.”

Until September 2014 this site was always intended to remain undeveloped protected greenfields (“open countryside”) in the Local Plan and (“Significant Gap”) in the SWDP “Preferred Options” document.

Every SHLAAs since 2008 has identified and documented other sites more “developable” than Swineherd Way, which was one of the **“Sites ruled out”** (see Figure 1).

The “duty to co-operate” is very clear and evidence is plentiful that Wychavon has gone much further than most districts in helping its neighbouring districts to reach shared targets. In Whittington Parish alone there are 273 new dwellings already under construction which will count towards Worcester City’s target, not Wychavon’s. Bearing in mind that Whittington is a Parish of only 247 dwellings, we think, as a parish, we have already “done our bit” towards SWDP.

NPPF demands “mutual benefit” yet, the fact remains and is not disputed that Swinesherd Way is entirely within Wychavon, which can demonstrate a five year housing land supply, whilst Worcester City currently cannot. Nevertheless Worcester City planning committee rejected a recent proposal to build hundreds of houses at Middle Battenhall Farm (SWDP ref WO08 / WO79) within the Worcester City boundary (see Figures 1 & 2).

Given the foregoing, it is the view of Whittington Parish Council that Wychavon has already more than met its “duty to co-operate” with the 273 dwellings already approved, but to approve another 300 in the same parish would violate the “mutual benefit” demanded by NPPF.

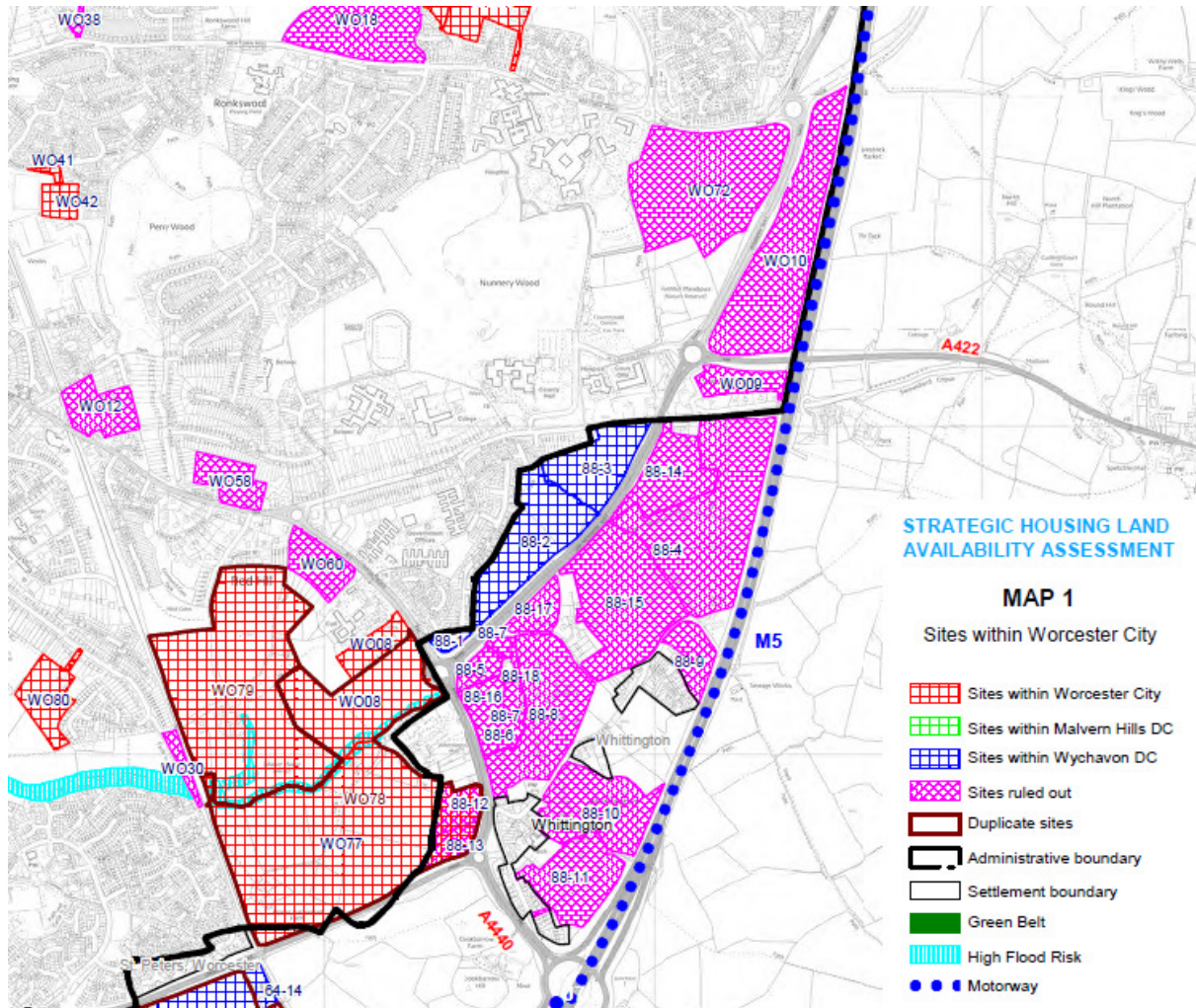


Figure 1

Map Extract from SHLAA of December 2012

Transport, Access & Traffic Safety

NPPF para 29 stresses:

“The transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel.”

and para 30 goes on:

“... local planning authorities should therefore support a pattern of development which, where reasonable to do so, facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport.”

Para 32 demands that:

“safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people”

and para 34:

“Plans and decisions should ensure developments that generate significant movement are located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised.”

Para 35 says developments must:

“give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, and have access to high quality public transport facilities”

“create safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians”

“consider the needs of people with disabilities by all modes of transport”

But para 41 insists that:

“Local planning authorities should identify and protect [...] routes which could be critical”

and para 69 says:

“Planning policies and decisions ... should aim to achieve places which promote: safe and accessible developments, containing clear and legible pedestrian routes.”

The A4440 Swinesherd Way is a 70mph dual carriage way. It is classed as a strategic route. It is the bypass around Worcester and the main distributor road for the eastern side of the city. The A4440 cannot be both the major fast, safe and free-flowing road its designers intended if it is to be choked by traffic jams, subject to reduced speed limits and disrupted by countless junctions, at the same time as providing safe access to housing developments built along it.

After the 2003 Public Inquiry, HM Planning Inspector Richardson described land between the A4440 and the M5 to the north of Swinesherd as follows:

“It is an edge of town greenfield site remote from the city centre and smaller shopping facilities in Worcester, not well related to public transport and, where accessed by foot and cycle from the City, extremely unsafe given the need to cross a dual carriageway road with a 70 mph speed limit.”

CITY OF WORCESTER LOCAL PLAN 1996-2011 - REPORT OF THE INQUIRY INTO OBJECTIONS

Correspondence between the applicant and HM Inspector Clews regarding the SWDP has revealed that for development to proceed at this site, HM Inspector requires that a new access to be created off Swinesherd Way. Yet, this application shows access unchanged from the existing LILLO “T” junction at Swinesherd onto Swinesherd Way. The radius of the curve on the exit from A4440 into Swinesherd shown in the applicant’s plans is considerably smaller than the required radius of exit roads from a 70mph road. It will be a dangerous corner.

Under the applicant’s current proposal a vehicle travelling at speeds up to 70mph could find itself turning a corner that is too sharp and losing control just outside the children’s nursery in Swinesherd. This would be unacceptable by any measure.

To make traffic movements only marginally safer will negate the benefits of a major arterial road and strategic route through the county and irrespective of whatever speed limits may be introduced, all experience has shown that road users do not observe them and will instead drive along dual carriageways at speeds which are dangerous to pedestrians and cyclists, often well in excess of 70mph.

Access to this site for non-vehicle users will be restricted by the “boxed off” and inaccessible nature of the location itself and by the inevitable reluctance of many to use a footbridge when a more direct route across the road exists, namely to walk or run over a 70mph dual carriageway. The vast majority of movements to and from this site will be by motorised vehicle as there will be few

circumstances under which a car owner would choose to walk or cycle instead of driving. Every school child will have to go to school and be collected by car. Every older person will either need to drive themselves, arrange lifts from neighbours or call a taxi. (NB The nearest bus stop is at County Hall, the other side of the A4440.)

Additional traffic would be undesirable in and of itself anyway - there are already "Queues Likely" signs southbound on Swinesherd Way. Queuing traffic in and out of the Swinesherd Way site and on the A4440 itself coupled with queuing to get on and off the M5 will certainly result in tailbacks, which is already a regular problem which would be further exacerbated by the increase in traffic from the extensive development on Kilbury Drive, the South Worcester Urban Extension and the upgraded Southern Link road, all of which will bottleneck at The Swan and Whittington Road roundabouts. Traffic will be bad enough without another 300 houses and the associated car journeys of a development on Swinesherd Way itself.

Tailbacks onto the motorway or indeed along the dual carriageways (all 70 mph zones) will result in shunts and collisions that, given the speeds involved, will be severe or even fatal. Moreover, the progress of an ambulance to an emergency call-out on the east side of Worcester from and then back to the Worcestershire Royal Hospital will be seriously impeded by traffic jams. The additional delays caused by hundreds more cars on the A4440, could cost lives when time is of the essence.

It has been noted that Highways England is insisting that the SLR is completed before this development could proceed. If nothing else, this confirms just how close to breaking point the road network around Whittington has already become.

Community & Wellbeing

NPPF para 50 states:

Local planning authorities should ... plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes);

and at para 55 says:

"housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities... Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside"

with para 58 adding that Local Authorities should:

"respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and ... create safe and accessible environments"

and para 61 adding:

"planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment."

This site cannot support sustainable transport options. As a result the mix and diversity of the community will be minimal, with only car owners able to live in any of the proposed houses. A community demographic as is promoted by NPPF will not form at Swinesherd Way.

As car ownership will be a prequalification for living in Swinesherd, anyone living there will almost certainly consider the proximity of the M5 combined with the traffic queues into and around

Worcester to be a compelling inducement not to work in Worcester, but elsewhere along the M5. The perverse outcome will therefore be that although Swinesherd is Wychavon land intended to be a development that contributes towards Worcester's housing target, it will, in fact, facilitate dormitory behaviours for commuters to the West Midlands conurbation – entirely contrary to the NPPF primary goal of sustainable development.

Simon Hurley, CEO of English Heritage recently made public comments regarding places under threat from thoughtless housing. He said:

"This expansion is happening without due thought and attention being given to things like traffic, schools, the health service, hospitals, and all those other things.

"I think the biggest and most worrying threat we have at the moment is these huge identikit slabs of housing being tacked on places like Worcester, Henley, King's Lynn, Dorchester, Chichester, without properly thinking about how to do it."

Such a direct rebuke from the head of the public body charged with protecting and preserving this country's built and environmental heritage cannot be dismissed lightly. That Worcester was the first to be named on Mr Thurley's list of threatened communities and that Swinesherd Way was the last place where the drafters of SWDP wanted housing (evidenced by the fact that it was indeed the last place to be allocated for housing by the SWDP drafters, only 14 days before the vote on the SWDP by local authorities) combine to make Swinesherd Way the ultimate example of where housing should not be built.

Flooding

NPPF para 100 states:

"Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided"

and para 121 says:

"Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that: the site is suitable for its new use taking account of ground conditions ... including from natural hazards or former activities ... , pollution arising from previous uses..."

It must also be reiterated that one of the core principles of plan preparation, according to NPPF is to:

"tak[e] full account of flood risk";

The term "full account" is noteworthy as it implies that flooding is a consideration which must not be taken lightly or in passing, but is of fundamental importance to the assessment of sites for development.

Locals already know that there are weeks and months, every year, when the land in question has been so saturated that it is impassable on foot, even in wellington boots. The water is more than ankle deep over acres of this site.

It has been noted that Worcestershire County Council, as the Lead Local Flood Authority, has already commented on this application as follows:

"the site is at considerable risk of surface water flooding."

See Figures 2 & 3, the Environment Agency data maps both on the likelihood and the severity of surface water flooding on this site.

No potential purchaser of a house would want a flood, or the risk of a flood, that does not soak away even in their gardens, let alone in their houses. Development would only exacerbate this problem with vast areas of hard surface run-off to land which cannot cope with even normal rainfall.

It would be unreasonable, if not legally impossible, to seek to prevent householders from creating even more hard-surfaces in their gardens over time.

This site is the lowest ground for some distance on all sides. The residential development underway on Uffnell's Farm, to the west of Swinesherd Way, is already channelling its run-off under the A4440 onto this land. What is known locally as a perennial quagmire can only get worse as a result, even before any of the proposed additional housing might be built. The applicant will seek to dismiss worries about flooding with promises of watercourses and attenuation sites, but this site already has deep watercourses across it but they still cannot drain the clay-like soil and no amount of surveys will convey just how waterlogged this ground gets from October/November to April/May every year.

The attenuation measures proposed by the applicant will be inadequate – a view shared by the County Council – and with a single access road, should there be extreme flooding which covers this road to any significant depth then a number of the dwellings will be cut off and will require evacuation.

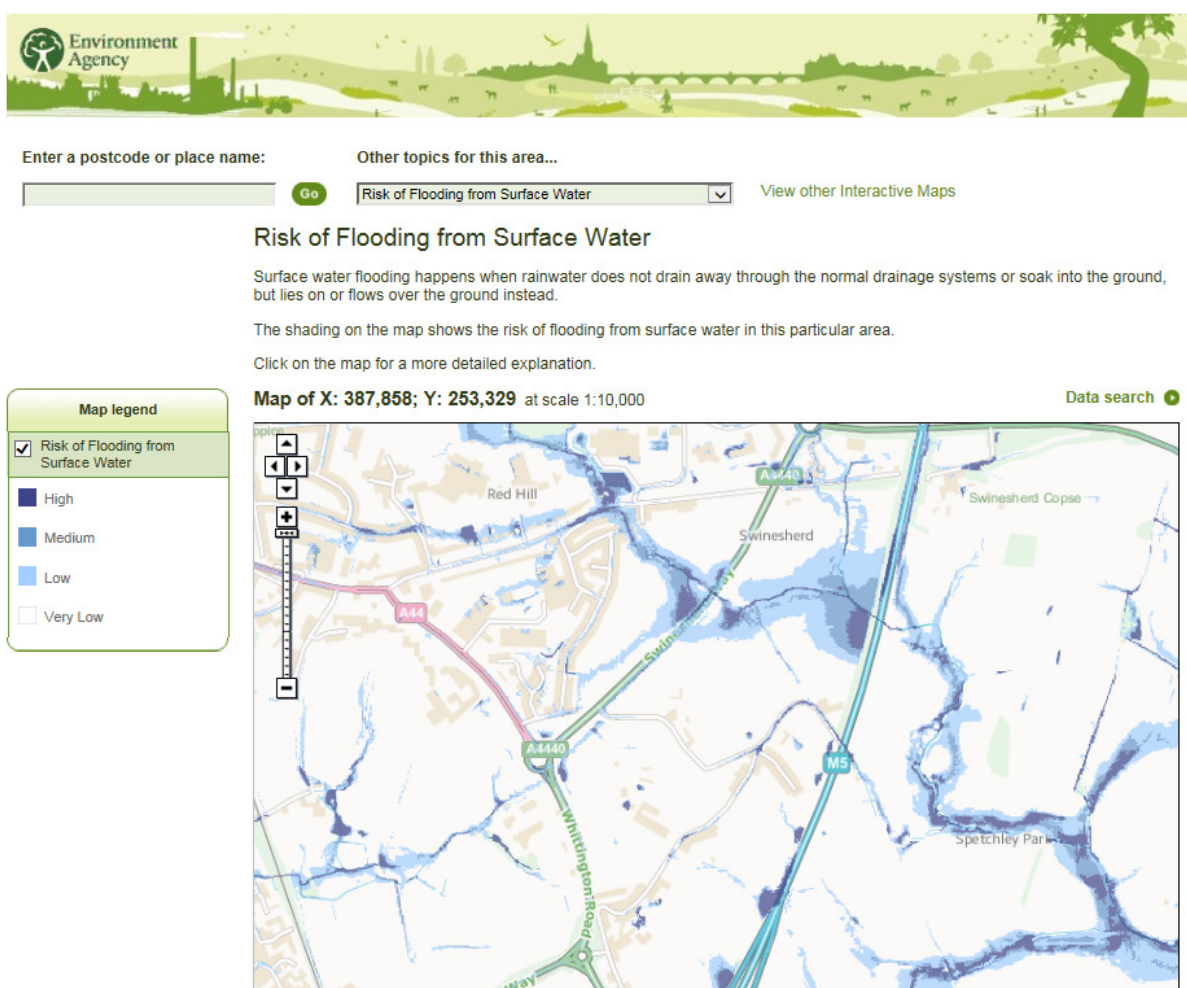


Figure 2



Enter a postcode or place name: Other topics for this area...
 Risk of Flooding from Surface Water

Surface Water Depth - Low Chance of Occurring

Surface water flooding happens when rainwater does not drain away through the normal drainage systems or soak into the ground, but lies on or flows over the ground instead.

The shading on the map shows the estimated water depth when there is a low chance of flooding.

Click in the legend to see estimated water depths for high and medium chances of flooding, and for estimated velocity (speed and direction of the water).

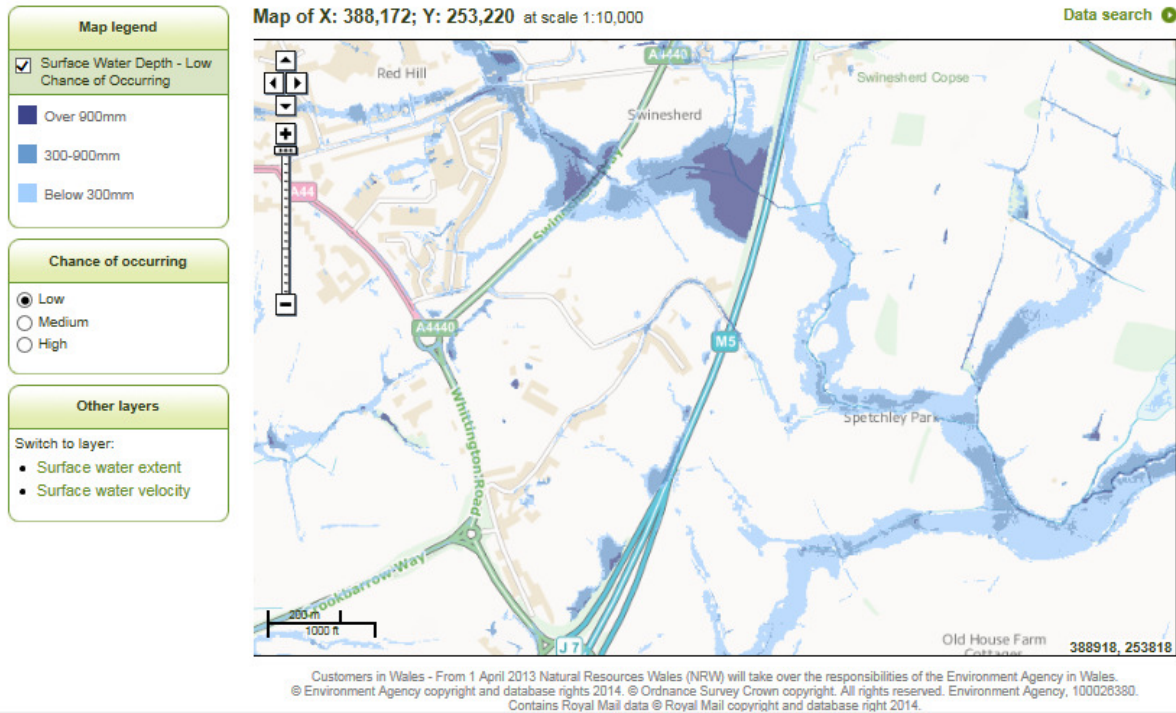


Figure 3

Add to the physical damage, cost and inconvenience that will inevitably arise from flooded housing the health risks too. In recent months the Environment Agency had to deal with raw sewerage pollution which badly contaminated the watercourses on this site. It was traced back to the faulty septic tank of a property west of Swinesherd Way, but given the nature of the soil in this area it did not soak into the ground but was washed along the watercourses right across this site.

Consider too that with the combination of such a high water table and flooding, there may well be seepage from the foot and mouth burial pit on the adjoining land into the watercourses and maybe even up into surface water too.

Environment

Paragraph 9 of NPPF demands:

“moving from a net loss of bio-diversity to achieving net gains for nature”

NPPF paras 79 & 80:

The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

Green Belt serves five purposes:

- **to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;**
- **to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;**
- **to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;**
- **to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and**
- **to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.**

and at Para 71:

“Existing open space ... should not be built on unless: an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location.”

NPPF Para 109 states:

“The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- **preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution...”**

Para 118:

“planning permission should be refused for development resulting in ... the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland.”

para 123:

“Planning policies and decisions should aim to: avoid noise from giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life...”

NPPF also makes the following definitions:

“Green infrastructure: A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.”

“Open space: All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.”

In addition to the importance of open green space for biodiversity as a home for flora and fauna, NPPF has the clear intention of defining green open space as a recreational and visual asset. This site at Swinesherd serves all of these purposes and the loss of its green space will not only damage the wildlife on it, but also all around it as it connects other important bio diversity sites.

Heron, buzzards, kestrels, owls, woodpeckers (green and lesser spotted), skylarks and wild muntjac deer have been seen on this site and seen many more species on the land surrounding it. Land to the west of A4440 is a protected habitat for Slow Worms. A full biodiversity audit should be undertaken of this site, whether or not this application is approved.

The footpaths and bridleways criss-crossing this site provide access to green and open countryside for the people of Whittington without them having to travel some distance or cross the M5

motorway. If this site is developed then the opportunities to walk, ride or otherwise enjoy open-air recreational activities in green space will be reduced.

There is a major infrastructure feature that traverses the site, namely pylons and 132KV transmission lines. These are relatively commonplace in the countryside and despite previous attempts by developers to claim that they compromise the rural setting of the site, they do not. Whether or not these HT lines actually present a health risk to the public, the public will not want to buy homes under or near them. The lines also crackle noisily when humidity is high. The sound they make would detract significantly from homeowners' ability to enjoy their gardens were houses to be built here.

Noise pollution is specifically mentioned in the NPPF.

The two 70mph roads on either side of this site are indisputably noisy. Some respite might be afforded by a benign wind direction were this site alongside just one such road, but between two means there will be no relief from constant and loud traffic noise. The noise would be intolerable – a consideration documented in the SHLAA of 2012 (See Figure 1) and in the comments submitted about this application by Worcestershire Regulatory Services. Again, whatever noise attenuation or mitigation measures might be suggested by the applicants, prospective homeowners would rather not live back-to-back with a motorway or dual carriageway.

There are also about a dozen oak trees on the site of girth and height that suggests they must be of considerable age. Whether or not these trees are classified as “ancient” by the formal definition, they are nonetheless magnificent specimens and should not have to make way for housing or be compromised by it. All of them should (if not already) be made subject to tree preservation orders.

Local Plan / SWDP

Para 155:

“Early and meaningful engagement and collaboration with neighbourhoods, local organisations and businesses is essential. A wide section of the community should be proactively engaged, so that Local Plans, as far as possible, reflect a collective vision and a set of agreed priorities...”

Para 182:

“Positively prepared – the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development.”

It is worthy of note that at the 30 September 2014 Wychavon District Council vote on the SWDP not one of the councillors that spoke welcomed or was in favour of the allocation of Swinesherd Way for housing. All that spoke specifically made a point of disagreeing, sympathising or apologising for its inclusion in the proposed modifications to SWDP. The local District Councillor for Whittington disagreed with the proposed allocation.

The minutes record that:

“The Managing Director explained about that process for finding the additional sites requested by the Inspector and added that he would be very disappointed if the Inspector did not ‘test’ the sites during the next Examination in Public state of the process.”

In the minutes the Leader of the Council appears to be steering the council officers towards providing a detailed critique of the site allocation and asking them to:

"...feed into the process factual information why the site was thought to be inappropriate for development."

which similarly confirms that despite the vote in favour of the SWDP, no-one present considered Swinesherd Way to be a good site for housing.

Andrew Ford of Wychavon Planning Department confirmed on 22 September 2014 that Wychavon is 468 houses in excess of its revised housing target. It seems, however, that despite being "Ruled out" as inappropriate for development by Wychavon and/or SWDP planning officers in every SHLAA prepared for South Worcestershire, including the latest in 2012 (see Figure 1), that Swinesherd Way was dropped into the SWDP housing allocations in the 59th minute of the 11th hour ahead of other more suitable sites. The proposed modification was only finally made public at 5pm on 15 September 2014 just two weeks before the SWDP vote.

Sir Peter Luff (until recently MP Mid-Worcestershire) wrote to Jack Hegarty (MD of Wychavon District Council) in an email prior to the 30 September 2014 vote on SWDP having been informed by the then Chairman of Whittington Parish Council of the lack of consultation with the local people:

"I understand [these] concerns only too clearly and I know you will recognise the cogency of his argument."

Whittington Parish is only 247 dwellings and is already accommodating 273 new build houses. A recent survey of its residents for its formative Neighbourhood Plan found "**an overwhelming majority in favour of retaining the rural identity of Whittington**".

Another Planning Officer at Wychavon said in the days following a presentation from Pegasus Planning at The Swan in Whittington that housing at Swinesherd was:

"a non-starter"

"a helluva place to live, boxed in by the bypass and the motorway"

and that planning policy clearly stated that:

"300 houses cannot have just one narrow access road".

Conclusion

A cold reading of so much of the NPPF gives rise to the conviction that this site is neither developable nor sustainable (if developed). The arguments for its development cannot simply be considered marginal but actually at (or in many cases over) the extreme limits of the most generous of all possible interpretations of so many of the NPPF paragraphs that, on balance, its development cannot be justified based on the cumulative effect of so many stretched interpretations.

This well-defined strip of land between Junction 6 & 7 of the M5 has long been instrumental in defining the rural hinterland and the character of Worcester.

The A4440 is the edge of Worcester (the developed land of the settlement, not the administrative boundary of the Local Authority) and should remain so. New development has already leapfrogged the M5 with the coming of Worcestershire Parkway Station (and all its associated development) and Worcester Six. Therefore this strip of landscape should remain green to protect and preserve the green appearance, infrastructure and wildlife corridors that connect the Worcester Woods Country

Park, Nunnery Wood, Hornshill Meadows Nature Reserve, Warndon Wood, Whittington' Saxon ridge & furrow pastureland, Spetchley Copse and Spetchley Hall with its parkland, gardens and deer park.

Also - and although not strictly a planning consideration a major one nonetheless - there is significant local feeling against this proposal, which is fully acknowledged by the applicant in their submission. It is noteworthy that there is only one supporting comment submitted (at the time of writing) but that originates from outside of the Parish and is anonymous. When the applicant presented its plans at the village hall the question was asked "Does anyone here think this [proposed development] is a good idea?" and no-one did.

Therefore, as the democratic representatives of its community, Whittington Parish Council objects to this application.

Yours sincerely,

Susan MacLeod

For and on behalf of
Whittington Parish Council

Susan MacLeod
Chair
Whittington Parish Council