



We care for the Chilterns

Roger Smith
Planning Field Officer for Chesham
11 Sunnymede Avenue
Chesham, HP5 3LE
4 June 2018

Emma Showan
Planning Department
Chiltern District Council
King George V Avenue
Amersham HP6 5AW

Dear Emma,

**CH/2018/0659/OA | Outline application for the development of site to provide up to 99 dwellings (matters to be considered at this stage: access)
Land South West of Asheridge Road (adjacent to Darvell Drive) Chesham Buckinghamshire**

The Chiltern Society is the major environmental group of the Chiltern Hills covering 650 square miles with some 7,000 members, and I am their Planning Field Officer for the Chesham area.

We are writing to **object** to the above Planning Application, regarding the development of the site off Asheridge Road.

The site is located within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Green Belt. National Planning Policy Framework states “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”.

The application site clearly contributes under the first two of five purposes for land to be included in the Green Belt, namely:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of built-up areas.
- To safeguard the surrounding countryside from further encroachment.

The NPPF also states “Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan”. As part of the Emerging Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan a series of Green Belt Development Options Appraisals have been conducted. These detailed, evidence based appraisals do not result in this application site being considered eligible for release from Green Belt.

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The proposed access to the site (matter to be considered at this stage) is to the North West of Darvell Drive. It should be noted that Asheridge Road beyond Darvell Drive narrows to a country lane, coinciding approximately with the boundary of the AONB. Any widening or improvement of the road will thus be a change in the character of a country lane within the AONB, thus the detail of the access is a matter for both Planning and Highways.

The NPPF also states: inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. A supply of sites for housing is already addressed in the Councils' Emerging Local Plan and the Chesham Community Interest Company Masterplan. The latter offers solutions which comply with Central Government's recent draft new NPPF, i.e. higher densities in town centres near transport hubs. The local Councils have also recently updated their Brownfield Register for Chiltern & South Bucks that demonstrates there is a supply of previously used land that may be used for development. Thus it is clear that there are no "special circumstances" that would justify building on Green Belt nor any means whatsoever of mitigating the effects of this proposal.

The above matters alone require that this application is refused. Brief mention should also be made of the already inadequate infrastructure of Chesham.

Most vehicle traffic from this site will head towards the Town Centre and Bucks Highways have already acknowledged that many roundabouts in the centre are already operating beyond capacity. As this site is not included in the draft Emerging Local Plan the impact on roads, schools, public transport, medical facilities and environmental issues such as pollution and waste etc. have not been considered by the Councils or addressed in the application.

Yours faithfully

Roger Smith
Chiltern Society