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David Gauntlett,
Planning Dept
Central Bedfordshire Council
Priory House, Monks Walk
Chicksands, Shefford SG17 5TQ

24 March 2025

Dear David,

Application number: CB/25/00292/OUT
Location: Land at Mount Pleasant Golf Course, Station Road, Lower Stondon, Henlow, SG16 6JL
Proposal: **Outline Application: For a Community Hub site, including car parking, Multi-Use Games Area and up to 1,000sqm of use class E(d)/F2(b)), land reserved for social infrastructure (including either a 2 form entry primary school with nursery or a village green with pavilion), public open space including footpaths, cycleways, up to 0.50ha of allotments, habitat creation, landscaping and play space, associated drainage, landscaping, internal roads, utilities and other service infrastructure. All matters reserved except for means of vehicular access.**

Objection by Stondon Parish Council

Stondon Parish Council strongly objects to the above planning application. To support our objection, we have commissioned Andrea Pellegram Ltd to provide a detailed professional response, which is enclosed for your consideration.

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this submission, we encourage the Planning Authority to verify the information provided before making a decision. Stondon Parish Council cannot accept responsibility for any unintentional errors or omissions.

Yours sincerely,

James Stirling
Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
Stondon Parish Council



Andrea Pellegram Ltd.

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Development Management
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19th March 2025

Dear Mr Gauntlett,

STONDON PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS ON PLANNING APPLICATION CB/25/00292/OUT

Pellegram Ltd has been instructed by Stondon Parish Council to submit a letter of formal objection to planning application CB/25/00292/OUT on Land adjoining Station Road, Lower Stondon, Henlow, SG16 6JL. The proposed development is submitted in outline for a Community Hub and associated infrastructure on land currently forming part of a golf course.

Stondon Parish Council supports the principle of improving community infrastructure, particularly where it enhances local services and facilities in an effective and sustainable manner. However, there are questions regarding the scope, scale, and justification of the proposal, as well as its strategic implications for future development.

Whilst Stondon Parish Council wishes to formally object to this application, it recognises that the scheme would generate some local benefits. Therefore, this response sets out the Parish Council's detailed comments on the application in two parts, assessing:

1. The content of the proposal itself, including potential improvements and amendments that would better align with local needs.
2. The wider planning implications, particularly in relation to local and national policy, and the risks of further unplanned housing development in an unsustainable location.

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1. The Proposal

The proposed development is submitted as an outline application for a Community Hub and associated infrastructure on land at Mount Pleasant Golf Course, Lower Stondon, with all matters reserved except for vehicular access. The proposal comprises:

- Community hub for up to 1,000sqm of Class E(d)/F2(b) floorspace, expected to include a sports centre with a sports hall, fitness suite, and gym equipment, alongside car parking and a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA).
- 2.04ha of land reserved for social infrastructure – either a new 2-form entry primary school with nursery or, alternatively, a village green with a pavilion. It is stated in section 3.3 of the transport statement that the school would replace an existing school.
- Public Open Space & Green Infrastructure comprising an extensive parkland with footpaths, cycleways, play spaces, allotments (0.50ha), a community orchard.
- Habitat creation and Sustainable Drainage Features (SuDS), including balancing ponds and a permanently wet wildlife pond.
- Enhanced pedestrian and cycle links to improve accessibility between the eastern and western parts of the village.

The applicant has engaged with the Parish Council and with members of the community through local engagement. The proposal does not specify the scale of housing that may come forward in connection with this development or how it would integrate with existing infrastructure, however, minutes from meetings between Bloor Homes and Stondon Parish Council (attached to this letter) confirm the site was being considered as part of a wider residential-led proposal for up to 405 homes.

School

The proposal includes land reserved for a new two-form entry primary school with a nursery, or alternatively, a village green with a pavilion. While school provision may seem beneficial in principle, the proposal is slightly misleading here given that section 3.3 of the transport statement confirms this would necessitate the closure of an existing operational school in Stondon, raising the question of whether it can be considered a planning benefit of the scheme.

There is a lack of clear evidence demonstrating the need for a new school in Stondon. Currently, Stondon has two existing lower schools – Shillington Lower School and Stondon Lower School. Data from the 2021 Census indicates that the parish has a population of approximately 3,100 people, 13.5% (419) of which are between the age of 5 and 14. The headteacher of both Lower Schools has confirmed that Stondon School is at near optimum capacity and Shillington Lower School is not at full capacity and that its pupil numbers are declining. These factors raise questions about the necessity of a new school with an assumed

larger capacity when two are already in operation and one has an undersupply of students, and the applicant should provide this information.

The construction of a new school and assumed demolition of an existing school accordingly reduces the sustainability credentials of the scheme. Furthermore, the Landscape Officer has raised concerns about the location of the new proposed school, noting that it would result in the loss of a locally important rural view from Station Road towards the Chiltern Hills. The site is currently part of an open and important rural gap and introducing a built development in this location would permanently alter the character of the area, conflicting with local plan policies on landscape protection.

It is understood that Central Bedfordshire Council may have requested school provision during pre-application discussions, but no evidence has been provided in the application to justify the requirement. The application does not set out whether the viability of the school is dependent on additional housing development in the area, which raises further concerns about whether the proposed provision aligns with actual local need.

Community Hub and Facilities

The proposed Community Hub includes up to 1,000sqm of Class E(d)/F2(b) floorspace, incorporating a sports centre, fitness suite, Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), and associated car parking. While the principle of providing new community facilities is welcomed, further clarity is needed on its necessity, management, and long-term sustainability to ensure it delivers genuine benefits for local residents.

While the applicant has indicated that a sports consultant was used to identify the need for these facilities, no independent assessment appears to have been conducted to demonstrate local demand. Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Services has confirmed that there is no identified requirement for a new indoor sports facility in Stondon. Sport England has also raised concerns about the loss of the existing golf facility, stating that the current use of the site is important and the proposal does not currently offer sufficient alternative provision. Stondon PC consider that this should be addressed in the application.

Additionally, Central Bedfordshire Council has confirmed that it would not be responsible for operating the proposed facility. Given that Stondon Parish already has a new Community Centre under construction, which will provide a hall, meeting rooms, kitchen, and sports changing spaces, it will be important for the application to ensure that any additional provision complements rather than duplicates existing facilities.

Additionally, to ensure the long-term success of the scheme, it is essential that a formal management and funding plan is established at this stage. The Parish Council has previously

indicated a willingness to consider managing the public open spaces, but for the wider sports and community facilities, early engagement on Section 106 agreements and governance structures is necessary to avoid uncertainty over their future operation.

Transport and Highways

The proposed development will introduce new vehicle movements onto Station Road, relying on two new priority T-junction access points. While the Transport Statement (TS) concludes that these access arrangements are appropriate, the Parish Council has concerns regarding the wider transport implications, particularly in relation to traffic congestion and existing infrastructure capacity.

The village green design currently includes two separate access points and a looped access road, which appears excessive given that a single access would be sufficient to accommodate such uses. The inclusion of a full loop around the green raises concerns that it could facilitate future housing development to the east, which is not part of the current proposal. A single access arrangement would prioritise the safety of pedestrians and help to preserve the village green as a standalone community space, rather than leaving it open to potential expansion.

The Bird-in-Hand roundabout is a key junction linking Station Road with the A600 Bedford Road and Hitchin Road that already experiences congestion at peak times. The increase in vehicle movements associated with the Community Hub, allotments and potential future school would place further pressure on this junction at peak times, yet the TS does not include an assessment of its operational capacity and this should be addressed.

The Travel Plan Officer has confirmed that a Transport Plan will need to be secured by condition, covering measures to reduce private car use and encourage sustainable transport. The Travel Plan will need to include measures such as improved public transport linkages, cycle parking, and incentives for sustainable travel.

Open Space

The proposal includes a country park, village green (as an alternative provision to the school), and various public open spaces, which in principle could provide a valuable community asset. There is currently a lack of detail regarding the long-term management and accessibility of these spaces.

While the provision of open space is welcomed, there are no firm commitments on how these areas will be delivered, funded, or maintained in the long term. The application should clarify who will take ownership of these spaces and how their ongoing upkeep will be secured, particularly given the risk that underfunded or poorly managed green spaces could diminish their usability and community value over time. Furthermore, the design must address waste

management and public facilities within these spaces to ensure that they remain clean, safe, and functional.

Enhanced Pedestrian and Cycle Links

The Parish Council welcomes the opportunity to connect two previously separated areas of Lower Stondon through land that is not publicly accessible. The proposed new routes will improve accessibility and cohesion between Lower Stondon and Henlow Camp.

The masterplan indicates the provision of a formal hard-surfaced pedestrian route, which is supported and should be secured as part of the development parameters. This will ensure a durable, year-round surface suitable for both pedestrians and cyclists. However, the PC consider that lighting for this route requires further consideration to ensure that the route is safe to use at night, whilst remaining aware of ecology and landscape sensitivities.

2. Strategic Implications

Sections 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 require the Council to determine any application in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

While the current application does not include housing, Stondon PC believe it is relevant to consider the wider context of the site and its potential role in future development. Minuted discussions between Bloor Homes and Stondon Parish Council confirm that the land north of the site was previously being considered for residential development. As such, it is considered that the long-term implications of delivery of community infrastructure in this location should be at least considered, particularly whether it will meet existing local needs or contribute to a case for further housing growth.

As part 1 indicates, many elements of the proposal have not been clearly justified in relation to existing local demand, and it remains unclear whether these facilities are being brought forward in response to an identified need. If the viability of these facilities is reliant on additional housing, this should be confirmed and accordingly it is important to consider whether the provision of community facilities would align with the development plan's spatial strategy.

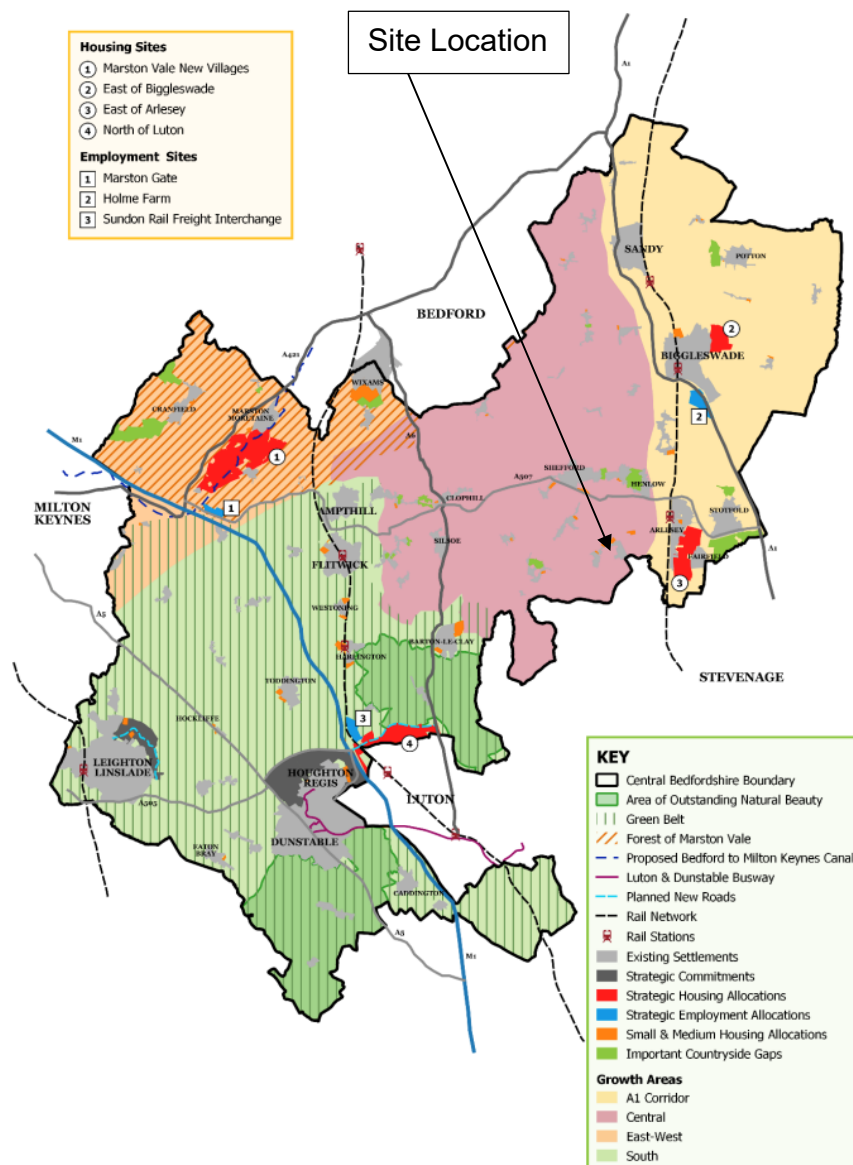
Policy SP1

Policy SP1 establishes that 39,350 homes will be required during the plan period and in doing so highlights the necessity of balancing growth with the protection and enhancement of existing communities, landscapes, the historic environment, and the countryside. A core principle of the strategy is the prevention of settlement coalescence, which is achieved through the identification of important gaps. Housing Land Supply considerations are set out within Appendix 1.

The Proposed Locations for Growth (pg. 29 of the CBLP) categorise areas based on their capacity to accommodate development. It is noted that the proposed development is within the Central Area, which is identified as having low capacity for strategic-scale growth due to existing constraints, including limited infrastructure and the risk of further unsustainable piecemeal development. The CBLP acknowledges that the Central area has already been subject to a large number of speculative permissions, leading to fragmented development that has failed to deliver infrastructure in a coordinated and sustainable manner.

As confirmed on page 31 of the CBLP, further large-scale development in the Central Area is not appropriate due to infrastructure limitations, particularly concerning transport constraints along the A507. The Sustainability Appraisal and transport modelling evidence indicate that further residential growth in this area is not sustainable, as the incremental expansion of

existing settlements has already placed pressure on the road network and local services. As such, further unplanned expansion, which could in theory be enabled by the proposal, would be contrary to the plan-led approach set out in Policy SP1.



Policy SP5

Policy SP5 seeks to prevent the physical and visual coalescence of settlements. It recognises that not every important gap can be pre-identified and, therefore, places weight on ensuring that

new development does not compromise the individual identity of towns, villages, and settlement ends. The policy states that outside designated Important Countryside Gaps, proposals must demonstrate that they will not result in coalescence and that any harm to the character and appearance of a settlement must be mitigated appropriately.

The proposed development site forms part of an open gap between Lower Stondon and Henlow Camp. It is considered that the introduction of built form in this location would urbanise a part of the landscape and erode what currently is a clear separation between these settlements. While the current application is for community infrastructure and would not, in itself, result in full coalescence, it may lead to coalescence by setting precedent for development in this location. Future development facilitated by this proposal would close this gap and as a result directly conflict with the objectives of Policy SP5.

The Landscape Officer has raised concerns regarding the urbanisation of this rural gap, noting that development in this location would remove an important visual break between settlements and erode the distinctiveness of Lower Stondon. Additionally, the proposal would result in the loss of identified long-distance views across the vale towards the Chilterns, which are a valued landscape feature within the Stondon Neighbourhood Plan and Design Guide.

The distinct identity of each settlement is a defining characteristic of the local area, and Policy SP5 is clear that this should be protected. The introduction of new development in this location is considered to conflict with this policy by facilitating urban sprawl and removing a key area of open land that visually and functionally maintains the integrity of the settlement pattern.

Policy SP7

Policy SP7 establishes that windfall development should be proportionate to the scale and role of a settlement and must be contained within settlement envelopes unless an identified community need justifies a location adjacent to the settlement. The proposed site lies outside the defined settlement envelope and does not form part of any allocated site or recognised rural exception scheme.

The policy allows for community facilities adjacent to a settlement, but only where an identified need exists, and there is no available land within the settlement. In this instance, no clear evidence of an unmet community need has been provided, nor evidence if that no available land exists within the settlement. As such, it is considered that the proposal does not comply with Policy SP7.

Furthermore, windfall development should respect the existing character and settlement pattern. The urbanisation of this countryside location would fail to align with the established grain of development, contributing to an unsustainable pattern of growth. Policy SP7 seeks to

ensure that windfall development is proportionate and respects settlement patterns, requiring that new development aligns with the spatial strategy of the Local Plan. While the application itself does not propose housing, the introduction of built form in this location risks facilitating future growth beyond the settlement boundary, leading to incremental expansion that could undermine the plan-led approach to sustainable development. It is therefore critical that any decision on this application fully considers its long-term implications for the character, identity, and strategic growth of Lower Stondon and Henlow Camp.

Conclusion

Stondon Parish Council objects to the current proposal, but acknowledges that the proposal includes some potential benefits. Key clarifications and assurances are needed, particularly regarding justification, delivery, and long-term management. The Parish Council remains open to further engagement to ensure that any development is appropriate and sustainable for the community.

Yours sincerely,

Pellegram Ltd on behalf of Stondon Parish Council

Appendix 1 – Housing Land Supply Considerations

Sections 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 require the Council to determine any application in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The statutory development plan consists of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan (CBLP) 2015-2035 (adopted July 2021) and the Saved Policies of the South Bedfordshire Local Plan, adopted 2004 (SBLP). Having been adopted prior to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021, due weight should be given to the policies having regard to their consistency with national policy. A draft Stondon Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) is currently under preparation; the Parish Council (PC) completed a Regulation 14 consultation in April 2024 and are preparing to submit a revised plan to Central Bedfordshire Borough Council (CBBC) (Regulation 15). Scoping on a 'Central Bedfordshire New Local Plan' commenced in Summer 2024 and a call for sites is expected to take place in Summer 2025.

An example of material considerations is when the Council cannot demonstrate a deliverable five-year housing land supply (5YHLS). The NPPF indicates that in such circumstances, the policies which are most important for determining the application have to be considered out-of-date, triggering the 'tilted balance' of paragraph 11(d)(ii). However, if policies are found to be out-of-date, it does not automatically follow that they should carry no weight in the determination of the application.

For the five-year period commencing 1st October 2024, Central Bedfordshire Borough Council states it maintains a deliverable five-year housing land supply of 5.05 years, including the appropriate buffer required by the NPPF.¹ This is being considered in these comments as the proposal was initially understood to be accompanied by 405 homes.

In the appeal APP/P0240/W/24/3341832 relating to land east of Langford Road, Biggleswade, the Inspector concluded that the Council could not demonstrate a 5YHLS, calculating it at 4.84 years, following the exclusion of certain disputed sites. This position was re-evaluated in the subsequent appeal APP/P0240/W/24/3348840, which re-affirmed that the Council did not have a 5YHLS. However, the Council has challenged aspects of both conclusions, stating that the trajectory of disputed sites was underestimated, and that past over-delivery has made a significant contribution towards meeting overall needs and therefore this should be

¹ Five year housing land supply statement and methodology (For the five-year period commencing 1st October 2024), Central Bedfordshire Borough Council

appropriately factored into the supply calculation. The latest published trajectory and monitoring data confirm the Council's position that a 5YHLS is in place.²

Given that CBBC can demonstrate a 5YHLS, it follows that the tilted balance under paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is not engaged for housing development. This means that the adopted spatial development strategy and settlement policies remain up to date and should be given full weight in decision-taking.

Even if it were to be considered that the HLS position is below five years, it is critical to recognise that a minimal shortfall does not automatically justify speculative development in inappropriate locations. The Inspector's reasoning in appeal APP/P0240/W/24/3341832 acknowledged that some sites may be reconsidered in future assessments (because their delivery can be unpredictable) and that adjustments in the trajectory could restore the 5YHLS. The Council has demonstrated a clear track record for delivering homes in previous years and it is often the case that the delivery of larger allocations is less steady, with some years showing significant levels of housing completions and others appearing to exhibit underdelivery due to the resolution of complex planning issues linked with strategic housing delivery and cyclical nature of major site build-out rates. As such, the weight given to a tilted balance if it was applied would accordingly need to be tempered by the marginal nature of any potential shortfall and the established pattern of housing delivery in the area. Additionally, the established strategy for development set out within the CBLP should still be given significant weight, and therefore proposals which significantly undermine this strategy should be refused.

² Response to the Inspector's decision for Sear Farm, Harlington Road, Upper Sundon, Luton, LU3PE (APP/P0240/W/24/3348840) 20 February 2025, Central Bedfordshire Borough Council

Stondon Parish Council Report on Meeting with Bloor Homes
Date: 20th August 2024

Attendees

Representatives from Stondon Parish Council (SPC)

Alessandra Marabese
James Stirling (Clerk)
Neil Hansford
Alex Perkins
Nigel Benson
Paul Gibbons
Gavin Simkins

Please note references to the Council denote the Parish Council

Name	Role	Organisation
Katie Coles	Strategic Planning Manager	Bloor Homes
Alex Smithers	Land Director	Bloor Homes
Christine Manley	Architect	Woods Hardwick Architecture
Mark Percival	Architect	Woods Hardwick Architecture
Greg Jones	Transport Consultant	i-Transport
James Delafield	Planner	Woods Hardwick Planning

Meeting Objective: Bloor Homes wished to discuss their proposals following a robust presentation at the last Council meeting in July and address questions raised by residents.

Summary of Discussion

1. Community Concerns and Parish Council's Position

The Chair of SPC, Alessandra Marabese, highlighted the community's concerns regarding Bloor Homes' emerging proposals for the site. The Council emphasised the need for Bloor Homes to reflect the community's views in any formal consultation and expressed a desire to ensure that new any new development aligns with community needs and objectives.

The Council signalled a likely opposition to the development, reflecting current parishioner feedback, but stressed the importance of ensuring that Councillors remain impartial and avoid any perception of bias or predetermination. Should the proposal proceed, the community benefits from any potential outcomes must be clear from the outset.

Bloor Homes suggested this could be a prime location to create a central community hub for the village and an exemplar development for Bloor Homes.

2. Design and Village Character

Meeting attendees discussed the potential for the site to become a focal point for the village, with an emphasis on raising the standard of design and adding character to the heart of Stondon. A request was made by the Council to understand more about the design approach and philosophy behind the development.

3. Key Changes to Proposals

Christine Manley provided an overview of the changes made to the proposals in response to public feedback from the last consultation meeting. Key modifications include:

- Rotation of the primary school site to enhance openness along Station Road and provide views towards the Chilterns.
- Reduction of proposed residential development to the northern parcel, with the southern parcel dedicated to public open space.
- Inclusion of a medical centre in the proposals.
- Commitment to meeting Central Bedfordshire Council's (CBC) policy on affordable and accessible housing.

4. Transport and Connectivity

Greg Jones explained how the proposals aim to align with the National Planning Policy Framework by prioritising sustainable transport modes.

Discussions included concerns about increased traffic, especially around the proposed new primary school, and suggestions for enhancing village connectivity through pedestrian and cycle routes with suitable surfaces for pedestrians, those with disabilities (wheelchairs), pushchairs or pedal bikes.

Suggestions for traffic calming schemes for Station Road raised concerns as this is a primary East/West route.

5. School and Medical Centre Needs

The Council raised questions regarding the proposal for a new primary school and medical centre in the near future and requested consideration for potential alternative uses for these spaces.

The Council noted that the current Surgery was in the process of expansion and, at present there are no plans to change the school tier system soon.

The Council reminded Bloor Homes of the requirements and policies within the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

6. Allotments and Community Space

Bloor Home proposed the inclusion of allotments and a community orchard.

7. Play and Health

Discussions also covered the lack of play equipment suitable for older children and accessible for those with disabilities. There is no equipment in the community at present that provides a degree of adventure for older children.

It was also suggested by Bloor Homes that trim trails and outdoor gym equipment could provide health benefits to the whole community.

With the lack of sporting facilities in Stondon, with only one small football pitch and MUGA, multiuse facilities allowing for a range of sports such as cricket and tennis could be accommodated in the open space or as an alternative to the school/medical facilities.

8. Design Considerations

The Council raised a major concern regarding the large volumes of soil that may need to be moved to level the ground for potential new development and the additional impact of traffic movements.

The Council raised concerns about building heights due to current raised ground levels and privacy and overlooking to all residents.

9. Planning and Legal Considerations

The Council requested early access to any proposed Section 106 agreement to ensure that community commitments are adequately addressed in the planning process.

Close of meeting

The Council reiterated a likely opposition to the development, reflecting current parishioner feedback, but stressed the importance of ensuring that councillors remain impartial and avoid any perception of bias or predetermination.

Bloor Homes advised that there would be further public consultation events before submitting an outline planning application.

Stondon Parish Council Report on Meeting with Bloor Homes

Date: 21st October 2024

Executive Summary

This report summarises key discussions from the meeting held on 16th October 2024 between Stondon Parish Council (SPC) and Bloor Homes regarding revised development proposals. The discussions focused on design changes, community concerns, transport and connectivity, and community benefits. The Council emphasised the importance of aligning the development with local needs and policies, while Bloor Homes presented revisions, including enhanced open spaces, sports facilities, and improved pedestrian routes.

Meeting Attendees

Stondon Parish Council: Penny Lazenby, James Stirling (Clerk), Neil Hansford, Alex Perkins, Nigel Benson, Paul Gibbons, Chris Jenkins

Bloor Homes: Katie Coles (Strategic Planning Manager), Christine Manley (Architect, Woods Hardwick Architecture), James Delafield (Planner, Woods Hardwick Planning)

1. Community Concerns and Council's Position

SPC reiterated the community's concerns regarding the proposed development, based on feedback from parishioners. The Council highlighted the likelihood of opposition but stressed the need for Councillors to remain impartial.

- **Parishioner Feedback:** SPC conveyed the community's reservations about the scale and nature of the development.
 - **Impartiality:** The Council emphasised the importance of avoiding any perception of bias or predetermination while ensuring that parishioners' interests remain central to the discussions.
 - **Clear Benefits:** The Council requested that any community benefits, should the development proceed, be clearly outlined from the outset.
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2. Key Design and Village Character Proposals

Bloor Homes presented revised design proposals aimed at enhancing Stondon's village character and addressing earlier community feedback.

2.1. Revised Proposals Summary

- **Medical Centre** - The NHS Integrated Care Board (ICB) has now confirmed that it has no interest in a new medical centre.
- **Focal Point for the Village:** The development is proposed as a central hub with improved design standards, serving as a potential exemplar for future projects.
- **Sports Facilities:** The proposals include a sports hall similar to the one in Silsoe, as well as multi-use games areas (MUGA) and parking.
- **Public Open Space or Village Green:** The proposals include a revised concept for the area originally allocated for school premises. The village green could be adapted for either football or cricket, depending on community needs.
- **Primary School Site** - Alternative options have been explored for the school site.
- **Increased allotment space** and the addition of a community orchard.
- **Children's Play** – A 1,000 square metre play space with a range of equipment was proposed, catering to various age groups and accessible for children with disabilities.

2.2. Village Character and Layout

- **Residential and Open Space Zones:** The northern part of the site is intended for residential development, while the southern part is designated for public open spaces.
- **Accessibility and Design:** Bloor Homes prioritised features that enhance village character, aiming to make Stondon more cohesive and community focused. They also recognised that additional connections could benefit the community by providing more direct links between the east and west sides of the village.

3. Transport and Connectivity Enhancements

Transport and accessibility were key discussion points, particularly in relation to improving connectivity and managing traffic.

- **Site Access:** Two access points are planned on Station Road.
- **Pedestrian-Friendly Routes:** Enhanced pedestrian routes were proposed, with surfaces designed for wheelchairs, pushchairs, and bicycles.
- **Traffic Calming:** Although no specific traffic-calming measures were confirmed, the Council raised concerns about speeding on Station Road, and suggested solutions such as a pedestrian crossing near the proposed site.

4. Community Facilities and Green Spaces

Bloor Homes addressed community preferences for increased green spaces and recreational areas.

- **Primary School Site** - Alternative options have been explored for the school site. The shape of the parcel has been reconfigured so that it could function as a village green, laid out with a cricket pitch or football pitches. As the application is in outline, it will present options for the use of this site – either a 2 Form Entry Primary School with a nursery OR a village green with a pavilion. Consultee comments on the application will help inform a final decision on use. It may be that the land is safeguarded for a certain period for school use, and if not requested by the Education Authority within that timeframe, it is then laid out as a village green.
 - **Expanded Allotments:** Bloor Homes proposed increasing allotment space and adding a community orchard.
 - **Play Areas:** Bloor has listened to a local requirement for play spaces equipped mainly for older children but with play opportunities for younger children as well. Bloor proposed to provide a play space of approximately 1,000sq m. This will provide sufficient space for accessible play equipment. Examples of images of a Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP) sized facility and accessible play were tabled during the meeting. The Parish Council advised that this could be of benefit to the existing community if developed with care and planning.
 - **Outdoor Fitness:** Trim trails were suggested as part of a wider health and wellness initiative for the community.
 - **Public Open Space and Community Sports Hall:** In discussions with a Sports Consultant working on this project, Bloor have identified an opportunity to bring forward a community sports centre that will accommodate a sports hall that can be used for a variety of indoor sports. It could also have a separate fitness suite for exercise classes and gym equipment. Externally, a MUGA is proposed which can accommodate other sports including tennis, football and netball. This type of facility was delivered by Bloor as part of a development that came forward in the last 10 years. The ownership of the sports centre has transferred to Silsoe Parish Council, and it is operated on its behalf by a leisure provider.
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5. Planning and Legal Considerations

Bloor Homes informed the Council of their intention to submit an Outline Planning application for up to 405 homes, with a Reserved Matters application to follow.

- **Early Access to Plans:** The Council requested early access to Section 106 agreements and planning documents to allow adequate time for community consultation and feedback.
 - **Planning Process:** The Council will ensure that parishioners are kept informed of the planning process, especially as the application progresses.
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6. Next Steps and Future Engagement

- **Public Consultation:** Bloor Homes will update their consultation website in due course with information about the application once this has been submitted to Central Bedfordshire Council.
 - **Council Follow-up:** The Parish Council will continue to monitor the development process closely and engage with the developer, ensuring that community concerns are represented and addressed.
 - **Timescales:** Bloor are working towards submission of the application before the end of the year – most likely in November. The consultation website will be updated with application documents when available. CBC will consult with the Parish Council and wider community after validation of the application.
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Conclusion

The meeting concluded with SPC reaffirming its concerns and likely opposition based on parishioner feedback, while stressing the need for Councillors to remain impartial. Bloor Homes indicated a willingness to incorporate further community feedback and would be happy to listen to concerns and feedback via their website.
