



Claypole Parish Council

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South Kesteven District Council Planning Department (by email)

Planning application S19/0951
Larkfleet Homes

Following our recent meeting with the case officer to discuss the above application and the consultee responses received; as discussed we set out below a supplementary comment to our original submission made on 28 June 2019.

1. Opening Up Additional Land

In para 3.19 of their application statement, Larkfleet state that they have had discussions with the prospective developer of “the adjacent site”. The developer being Lindum, and the adjacent site being the field to the west of the applicant’s proposed development, and to the rear of Moore Close.

As we discussed Claypole Parish Council was approached by Lindum in November 2018, when they expressed an intention to develop this field as an “entry level exception site”. Such sites are provided for under para 71 of the NPPF. This presented Lindum with two problems. Firstly, the NPPF states that such sites should not be larger than 1 hectare – this site is 1.3 hectares and so is too large; and second Lindum would need to demonstrate local need for such housing in Claypole.

Lindum had already carried out a housing needs survey in 2016, but received a poor response, which may have demonstrated a lack of need. They commissioned a new survey, carried out in January/February 2019 across not just homes in Claypole, but across a much wider area including Fenton, Stubton, Dry Doddington and Westborough, inviting residents to express support for new housing ‘in their village’ but without making clear that any interest would in fact be used by Lindum to support housing in Claypole. We understand that this survey also produced little justification for the proposal, and we have heard no more from Lindum regarding them pursuing the application as an exception site. In our own submission we refer in para 39 onwards to the housing needs survey carried out by Claypole Parish Council in December 2018 when every home in Claypole was encouraged to indicate any future housing need, pledging that the Parish Council would work to ensure such needs were met. The very small demand made for new homes is reported in the submission.

Given the comments made by Larkfleet, and given that the design of their proposal is clearly made to facilitate the development of this second site, it is apparent that if the Larkfleet application was agreed then an application by Lindum would inevitably then be made to develop the enclosed area, probably for normal market housing which may be difficult for the Council to reject if the Larkfleet scheme had been approved, given that the

adjacent Lindum site would effectively become surrounded by development on three sides if the Larkfleet scheme were to be approved.

In our submission we make the argument that there is no policy or need to justify the 14% increase in Claypole dwellings that the Larkfleet proposal would represent. This would be a disproportionate increase and would add cumulatively to the past levels of growth we have previously set out. In determining the Larkfleet application the inevitable cumulative impact of the Lindum site coming forward should be considered as part of the planning assessment. If the Larkfleet application was agreed then the total effect on Claypole would be, not a 14% increase in dwellings, but nearer a 20% increase in the size of the village with the Lindum site that would then inevitably come forward. This would be an even greater disproportionate impact on a village that the Council's Settlement Hierarchy, Core Strategy and emerging Local Plan assess is not suitable for any large-scale housing development.

2. Pedestrian safety

Claypole Parish Council support the opinion of the County Footpaths Officer that the public right of way through Coulby Close is not suitable as a primary pedestrian access to the site.

This narrow footpath would be insufficiently wide for use of the elderly and infirm who may be reliant on using mobility scooters, walking aids or wheelchairs – a factor of some significance given the proposal is for bungalows for the elderly. As indicated in our earlier submission, with a footpath on only the north side of Main Street, access to village amenities (including convenience store, bus stop and village hall) from Coulby Close requires crossing Main Street at the cross roads with Rectory Lane, crossing School Lane, and then crossing back across Main Street at the point where parked cars obscures vision and hinders crossing the road. At the point where Coulby Close emerges onto Main Street, there is very limited vision with a blind bend less than 50m to the right. The village speed sign has recorded vehicle speeds in excess of 55mph from that direction. There is also a lack of suitable crossing facilities on Main Street. This would present unacceptable safety risks especially to the mobility impaired.

3. Lincolnshire Highways response

We understand that Lincolnshire Highways require the widening of Doddington Lane from the site access to where Doddington Lane meets the village to a width of 5m; along with a footway on one side of the road with a minimum width of 1.6m.

The Parish Council agrees that Doddington Lane is completely unsuitable in its current form to serve the development. However the Parish Council would object to the suggested improvement measures which would increase the urbanisation of this rural lane and the southern approach into the village. In addition we note that these measures would have no impact on the safe movement of vehicles on Doddington Lane within the village at its junctions with Peacocks Launde, Moore Close and Wickliffe Park, before its junction with Main Street.

4. Housing Supply

The Parish Council are pleased to note that the District Council remain strongly of the view that they have more than a five year deliverable housing supply, and accordingly that this does not present a reason for approving the Larkfleet application.

5. Unsuitability as a location for a large development for the elderly

In the Parish Council's submission, together with observations about unsuitable access for the elderly, we pointed to the Government Planning Guidance issued on 26 June 2019, that

effectively rules out Claypole as a specialist site for the elderly because of its lack of appropriate services, not least the lack of health services and pharmacy. Larkfleet have circulated to all Claypole homes, during the week commencing 22 July 2019, a statement (attached) which seems to acknowledge the importance of these factors, claiming that they would make a section 106 contribution towards the provision of these services.

The provision of health services is a matter determined by the relevant health bodies. It is disingenuous to suggest that the amount of money generated from a 75 home development would lead to such services becoming provided locally; as such we consider that the suggestion that Larkfleet could support such services through a section 106 contribution should be afforded no weight. It is noted that the developers responsible for the 3500 dwellings adjacent to Fernwood made similar proposals that have not led to any new health services being provided.

6. Lack of confidence in Larkfleet

Claypole Parish Council was disappointed by the standard of the application submitted by Larkfleet. Not only are there repeated typographical errors (including in their own address!), but significant errors in the submitted material demonstrate a lack of care and responsibility when producing their case. For example:

- their claim that the “Core Strategy identifies Claypole as a Local Service Centre” (pp5.16). It clearly does not, and given they state in pp5.25 that the “Core Strategy and other framework documents will be used to determine this application”, it follows that the application should be rejected.
- Their claim that Claypole was “dropped as a Larger Village in the Consultation Draft Local Plan with no explanation” (pp5.51) is not true. In fact, both the settlement hierarchy criteria and the assessment were subject to public consultation that Larkfleet simply failed to note. Their omission is further exemplified by their statement in pp 5.56 claiming “there is no clear reasoning” for Claypole being classed as a “small village” in the emerging Local Plan, and the argument put forward at pp5.17.
- Their statement that “the existing tree line along the northern boundary is retained” (pp3.14) is incorrect. There are **no** trees along the northern boundary.
- Their statement that parking for cars and cycles “accords with LCC parking standards” and “will be facilitated by garages and sheds” (pp3.17). There are no garages or sheds shown on the plan. In the context of a development for the elderly, it is a failing that there is no provision for the parking and charging of mobility vehicles.
- Their claims in both their statement and on their recent leaflet that their flood risk assessment “demonstrates the site is not at a risk of flooding”. In fact the assessment does **not** support that statement, and the evidence, well known to residents, and as shown in the Parish Council’s submission, is that flooding is common on the site, not least where properties behind Redthorne Way would be located.
- Their claim that their development would create a “balanced community”, and that it will “contribute towards helping create a vibrant, healthy and active community” (pp5.53 and elsewhere), is not supported by any evidence and simply not borne out by the facts. The creation of 75 homes for the elderly will significantly change Claypole’s age profile, increasing the number of residents reliant on services that the village is unable to provide.

- Their claim that their proposal would provide a “new, well-landscaped, public open space for all residents to enjoy” can only be a reference to the small area around the attenuation pond and SUDS at the farthest point of the site. This area is relatively inaccessible and in our submission we have expressed concerns about a large deep pool of stagnant water which would make this area far from an enjoyable public open space.

These errors undermine any confidence by local residents in the assessments, statements, and assurances made by Larkfleet. Claypole Parish Council, acting on behalf of the Claypole community, continues to strongly oppose this application. We understand that the application will be determined by a future meeting of the Planning Committee; at which the Parish Council will exercise its right to speak.

The Parish Council would like to be re-consulted on any material changes or amendments to the planning application.

John Freeman
Vice Chair
Claypole Parish Council