21 May 2015

Mr M Williams
Planning & Development Services
Harrogate Borough Council
Knapping Mount
West Grove Road
Harrogate
HG1 2AE

Dear Mr Williams

Application Number: 15/01484/FULMAJ

Proposal: Erection of 131 dwellings, with associated access, public open space, Landscaping and play area (site area 5.1 ha).

Location: Land comprising field at 446635 452142 Southfield Lane, Tockwith, North Yorkshire

Applicant: Linden Homes North Ltd

We refer to your consultation on the above application. The application identifies a major development proposal that would have a significant impact on Tockwith Village and its community.

As this Application relates to a major development for the Village the Parish Council would want the Planning Application to be considered by the full Planning Committee and not left to Officer’s delegated powers.

Due to the scale of the proposed development Tockwith with Wilstrop Parish Council has carried out a local public consultation exercise seeking to inform the Council’s decision on the matter. That consultation exercise comprised of a leaflet drop to parish residents requesting comment and observations on the application. Further comment and observations were obtained from a Public Meeting held on 13 May 2015. That meeting was attended by 200+ people from the local community.

The vast majority of responses to the leaflet drop were against the proposed development. Similarly almost all of the comments and observations derived from the Public Meeting were against. Councillors have taken those responses into account and in addition have also independently considered the detail contained in the Application before coming to their decision.
As a result Councillors advise that Tockwith with Wilstrop Parish Council objects to the above Application on the following grounds:

1. **Southfield Lane Access**

The proposed development is accessed by Southfield Lane from Kirk Lane to the East and/or Rudgate Lane to the West. For the majority of its length Southfield Lane is a single lane road approximating to 3.0 metres in width. It is important to understand and therefore we emphasize the fact that Southfield Lane is the sole access to the proposed development.

The entrance to Tockwith CofE Primary School is located at the eastern end of Southfield Lane and is very close to the Connexions/HCT Bus Depot which again uses Southfield Lane for access. At the Rudgate Lane, western end access is provided from Southfield Lane for two large business activities; one of which involves LGV/HGV transport operations. Southfield Lane is also used by Tockwith residents as a commuter route and by residents from Bilton and Bickerton to access the Doctor's surgery, shops, church, etc in Tockwith.

Public transport serving the village is inadequate, necessitating residents to use their own vehicles in the main. Residents of the proposed development would therefore in the main have to use their own vehicles adding to the existing problem. Tockwith is a rural setting, not "an edge of town development" as suggested in para 4.12 of the Traffic Assessment.

Currently major traffic problems occur with congestion on Southfield Lane particularly at school drop off/pick up times. The addition of the proposed development traffic will add to this congestion and can only make what is already an unacceptable situation worse.

The Applicant proposes to provide a 4-car lay-by on Southfield Lane. That is totally inadequate and will not address the situation.

The Applicant in their Transport Assessment claims that the car park associated with the recently approved Nursery School building will alleviate some of the problems on Southfield Lane. The Parish Council maintain this facility will not address the Southfield Lane issues.

Councillors believe that Southfield Lane in its current form ie; primarily a single lane road is totally inadequate to provide the necessary safe access for the additional volume of traffic to the proposed development. The system is already unacceptably congested.

Councillors maintain that the Applicant’s current proposed alterations will not resolve the matter and therefore the proposals are considered both inadequate and unacceptable.

**As a consequence Councillors object to the Application.**

2. **Green field Site/Conservation Area**

The proposed development site is currently a beautiful open green field site with mature hedgerows and tress that contribute to and compliment the Conservation Area in which the village sits.

Tockwith is an important conservation area and protection of our Heritage is important. The setting of the conservation area would be harmed by the proposed development.

This proposed major development (131 dwellings) would be highly visible from the conservation area. Indeed part of the development site appears to be located within the
conservation area. On both counts the setting of the Conservation Area would be harmed by the proposed development and as a consequence it would be contra to Local Planning Policies and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

**As a consequence Councillors object to the Application.**

In making their objections to this proposed Green field development with its consequential detrimental effect on the conservation area Councillors draw attention to the fact that there is a huge amount of Brownfield site land available on the disused wartime airfield adjacent to the Western perimeter of the Village some of which is recognised in Harrogate's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) document. Councillors believe that this land should be considered as a preferred option in light of the Government’s commitment to avoiding building on Green Field sites, particularly where there are Brown field sites currently available. The Tockwith situation is a relevant example of that scenario.

Harrogate Borough Council's Core Strategy maintains the use of Brown field sites as a preferred option for our future housing needs. Building on Brownfield land is sustainable, building on Green field sites such as that proposed is unsustainable and therefore contrary to the NPPF and common sense.

**Councillors request that HBC take note of their comment relative to the preferred Brown field development in that it reflects an important element of feedback received from the public consultation process.**

3. **Proposed Site Design/Layout/Housing Allocation.**

Councillors are concerned that the overall design and layout of the proposed development is poor. It is very insular and isolated with restricted vehicle access in and out via Southfield Lane. It does not address the issue of social integration and inclusion with the rest of the village.

Councillors are also concerned at the proposed increase and change of accommodation and layout throughout the various consultation stages. The original Local Development Framework (LDF) Plan talked about 96 houses, Linden Homes initial pre-application proposal was for 121 which has now been increased to 131 with this application. The current proposed mix of housing gives cause for concern.

Affordable homes comprise 40% of the total development. Those Affordable homes are located in a number of large clusters which is unacceptable. Indeed one cluster unconsciously invades the privacy of residents of Lucas Road in that 7 affordable properties are located in very close proximity to the resident's eastern boundary. This is poor design and contrary to HBC’s policy on the matter which in turn is informed by National Planning Guidelines.

Affordable units should be distributed throughout the site. Virtually all of the affordable housing is terraced whilst virtually none of the market value housing is. This is again poor design and contrary to National Guidelines.

Affordable housing should be visually indistinct from market value homes. These are not. In addition both the inadequate size and layout of the Affordable units give cause for concern. Again some do not comply with Local and National Guidelines.

Councillors are concerned at the lack of parking space in general and the limited availability of parking for visitors in particular on the proposed development.
Councillors are concerned that the play area open space has been relocated from the middle of the proposed development to an area on the perimeter adjacent to Southfield Lane. The proposed location is isolated and could put children’s safety at risk. Indeed its proximity to Southfield Lane traffic could be considered dangerous.

Councillors are concerned that the proposed development of 131 dwellings is too large for the village and will adversely effect the character and amenity of the village. The proposed development would add 20% more houses to the village. That is disproportionate and unacceptable and is contrary to the guidance set out in the NPPF (2012) guidelines advising that any such development should be sustainable and not be to the detriment of the community.

Councillors are concerned that Tockwith village currently experiences major problems with parking throughout the village. A particular problem area is the main street (Westfield Road) which is basically turned into a single lane road due to the large amount of parked vehicles on both sides of the road accessing local facilities, ie. Shops, public houses, medical centre, village hall, etc. Adding another 20% housing with the associated pedestrian and vehicle traffic would exacerbate the current problem further.

**On all of the points noted above Councillors register their objection to the Application.**

4. **Local Facilities and Services**

**School** - concern was expressed at the Public meeting in regard to an anticipated potential negative effect posed by a substantial influx of children if the proposed development was commissioned. It was felt this would stretch existing facilities and teaching resources. Unless further facilities and resource was made available that situation would be unacceptable.

**Doctors Surgery/Emergency Services** - the Doctors Surgery has taken into consideration the proposed housing development and has confirmed they will still comply with guidelines setting out per ratio doctor to population requirements. However, Councillors remain concerned that emergency services such as the Ambulance Service, Police, Fire Brigade and Social Services, etc are already stretched and provide very limited cover currently. Budgets are forecast to reduce in the future which in turn threatens to reduce such services further. An increase in population in an area where adequate level of emergency cover is already unavailable is of concern.

Councillors register their concern relating to the above points and need to register their objection to the application unless and until appropriate measures to accommodate the anticipated shortfall are identified and implemented to coincide with the proposed development.

5. **Drainage/Sewerage facilities/Water supply pressure**

**Drainage** - The proposed site is in an area where drainage problems already exist. The Applicant suggests that surface water discharges will be to existing watercourses in the area and particularly to the culverted watercourse along the western boundary. Councillors are given to believe that this watercourse is already running at maximum capacity. Local flooding occurs in the area. The Applicant has not taken into account nor adequately explained how access will be gained to this Culvert in the event of an emergency repair being required.
Due to the inadequate explanation provided by the applicant relating to drainage Councillors object to the Application.

Sewerage - The applicant advises that the foul drainage from the proposed development will discharge to the existing foul sewer crossing the site. Local residents are very familiar with current problems affecting the system which necessitates frequent maintenance and repair to be carried out to the existing foul pumping station. In addition frequent problems occur in the Westfield Road area due to the inadequate nature of the mains pipework. The addition of sewerage/grey water from the proposed development would only serve to exacerbate the current situation.

In the absence of any firm proposals to address the foul/grey water problem Councillors object to the Application.

Water Pressure - The mains water pressure and flow to existing properties in the area is already unacceptably low. The additional requirement from the proposed development will make the problems worse. It is not clear from the Application if the Developer is aware of this situation and what measures, if any, would be put in place to provide adequate pressure and flow to the new development.

In the absence of such detail Councillors object to the Application.

Electricity Power Supply – the village currently experiences frequent power supply cuts and Councillors believe that the addition of 131 homes onto the system can only make matters worse. The developer makes no mention of the power supply and current problems and therefore does not address what remedial measures, if any, would be put in place to alleviate the problem.

In the absence of such detail Councillors object to the Application.

IT Broadband – internet connections in Tockwith are very slow. Connecting additional houses will do nothing to improve the situation unless the developer intends installing new high speed broadband connections. There is no proposal from the developer to do so.

In the absence of such commitment Councillors object to the Application.

6. Ecological Issues

Linden Homes has failed to provide an adequate Ecological Survey and appraisal of the site. The detail of the inadequacy of the Ecological Appraisal (Brooks Ecological, December 2014) is contained in a report dated 14 May 2015, compiled by Dan McAndrew, Principal Ecologist, HBC and submitted as a consultation response to HBC.

Councillors agree with Dan McAndrew’s Report and as a consequence object to the Application.
The preceding script, items 1-6 sets out the detailed reasons for Tockwith with Wilstrop Parish Council objection to the Linden Homes application.

We anticipate that Linden Homes may seek to make changes and modifications to their application in the light of this and other objections. Should that be the case Tockwith with Wilstrop Parish Council request that we are kept fully informed of and consulted on any such representation to HBC by Linden Homes.

In the event that the Application is given approval the Parish Council would recommend that the village be given priority in relation to the allocation of affordable housing. Equally we would seek to be involved in the detail of the determining and allocation of any Section 106 monies provided by the Developer.

Yours Sincerely

D. Dyason

Parish Clerk
For and on behalf of Tockwith with Wilstrop Parish Council