

# **BLEADON ACTING TOGETHER (BAT) INTERESTED PARTY STATEMENT OF CASE**

**APPEAL REFERENCE – APP/D0121/W/18/3211789  
LAND OFF BLEADON ROAD, BLEADON, NORTH SOMERSET**

The proposal is for a residential area of up to 200 dwellings alongside a Health Centre/ GP surgery, retail outlets and office space.

**APPELLANT – MR C SANDERS  
AGENT – MRS A SUTHERLAND (SUTHERLAND PLS)**



**NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL REFERENCE 17/P/5545/OUT**

## **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Bleadon Action Group (BAG) formed during 2017 and met to discuss views and concerns about planning applications affecting the village. Activities included a household 'letter drop' and public meeting on 19 September 2017. Consequently residents volunteered to participate and research into housing development in the area.
- 1.2 In May 2018 the group renamed itself 'Bleadon Acting Together' BAT. The group began collaboration with other organisations, such as Bleadon Parish Council.
- 1.3 Rule 6 (6) Status was granted to BAT on 19 November 2018 by The Planning Inspectorate. BAT decided against using the Rule 6 status due to the risk of substantial costs being allocated to the individuals. Instead we will act as an Interested Party and want to make the following points.

## **2 OBJECTION HISTORY TO APPLICATION REFERENCE 17/9/5545/OUT**

- 2.1 Over 300 objections to the application. The vast majority of these were from local residents (98%).
- 2.2 Planning permission was refused by NSC on 17 September 2018 on the following grounds (summarised from decision notice) –
  1. This unallocated rural site is in an unsustainable location outside the settlement boundaries of Bleadon and fails to have regard to the requirement that residential development needs, at least to be within the boundary of the village.
  2. The development by reason of its scale and character would fail to make a positive and visual contribution to the quality of the local environment.
  3. The applicant failed to provide sufficient or adequate information in the Transport Assessment to inform the application.
  4. The applicant failed to provide sufficient information in terms of flood risk.
  5. The applicant failed to provide adequate ecological survey information to demonstrate compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
  6. BAT support North Somerset Council's reasons for refusal and agree with the councils planning strategy. We are simply to talk about why this area - which is rich in Wildlife, has a unique landscape in a village full of character - is an unsuitable site for this development.

## **3 THE CASE FOR BAT**

- 3.1 The village has a population of 1,079 according to the last Census, in 2011.

3.2 Whilst the population has increased since the Census, the proposed erection of 200 new dwellings outside the established settlement boundary of the village represents a form of development that will be out of keeping with the overall character of the village and its landscape setting and quality and will result in harm to the setting of the village.

3.3 The proposal will increase the population of the village by more than 50%.

3.4 Bleadon is defined in the Core Strategy as an 'infill' village as part of an overall plan-led approach to sustainable development which seeks to ensure development of this scale is located in areas with higher levels of services, facilities and public transport.

3.5 The nearest primary schools are Uphill and Lympsham, though they also attend schools in the Sedgemoor area. Currently, there is a feeder school system in Somerset and most families make use of this.

#### **4 LANDSCAPE**

4.1 BAT will demonstrate that the Bleadon Moor has a Landscape that frames the village and that landscape is important to the character of the village and ensures it is recognisable.

4.2 Contrary to claims that the impact from the AONB is minimal we will demonstrate how the houses are viewed from this and other areas of the village. The development will impact the view into and out of the ANOB.

4.3 The landscape of Bleadon Moor is an attraction/amenity for visitors to the village of Bleadon and we will demonstrate that the loss of this landscape will be of detriment to the area economically

4.4 We will demonstrate that the landscape around the site will be damaged by the development

4.5 We will show evidence of floods in the area.

#### **5 ECOLOGY**

5.1 BAT will demonstrate that the Bleadon Moor has a unique Ecology

5.2 BAT will demonstrate that the Ecological Character of the Bleadon Moor would be damaged by this development

5.3 BAT will demonstrate that there are protected species of animal that live on the fields and in the rhynes surrounding the fields – including Water Vole, Water Shrew, Smooth Newt and Great Crested Newt

5.4 BAT will demonstrate that there are protected species of animal that rely on the fields and rhynes surrounding the fields including Long Eared and Horseshoe BAT

5.5 BAT will demonstrate that relocation or building habitats within developments have a poor chance of success

5.6 BAT will demonstrate that there will be harm to Purn Hill and HELLENGE HILL from this development. Purn Hill is home to three plants that are nationally rare or threatened. These are honewort, Somerset hair-grass and white rock rose, which is only found at two sites in the UK

5.7 BAT will insist that the LPA is made to apply the 3 Derogation Tests the development must be for one of the reasons listed in regulation 53(2) of the 2010 Regulations. This includes imperative reasons of overriding public interest of:

5.7.1 a social or economic nature or of a public health and safety nature

5.7.2 there must be no satisfactory alternative, and

5.7.3 favourable conservation status of the European Protected Species in their natural range must be maintained

5.8 We may wish to call we upon evidence from Somerset Drainage Board, Avon Wildlife Trust and Natural England.

## 6 SOCIAL INCLUSION

6.1 We will demonstrate that such large-scale development will adversely and irrevocably impact the quality of life and the soul of what makes this a small rural village

6.2 BAT will demonstrate that the development will upset the social and environmental balance that has grown organically to create a beautiful environment which is an asset to both the residents and the County.

6.3 BAT will demonstrate that the integration of such a large additional community will accelerate the change to the social character of the village

## 7 CHARACTER OF THE VILLAGE AND SURROUNDING AREA

BAT will demonstrate that:

7.1 The impact of this development on the rural character of the village is considered adverse and therefore contrary Policy DM10 of the Sites and Policies Plan Part 1 - Development Management Policies.

7.2 The impact of a residential development of this excessive and inappropriate scale at this rural location is considered contrary to the provisions of Core Strategy Policies CS14 and CS33

7.3 The proposal fails to respect and enhance the local character and fails to contribute to place making and the reinforcement of local distinctiveness.

- 7.4 A development of this size cannot be readily assimilated into the existing village of Bleadon and will result in significant adverse impacts on services and infrastructure.
- 7.5 A development of this size would have a serious impact not only on the lives of the individuals who live in the area but on the whole character, feel and social structure of the village
- 7.6 The development site would, by its location and nature, not look or become part of the existing village. It would create a very visual division between current and proposed.

## **8 EVIDENCE**

BAT will use documents, photographs and both local and expert witnesses to demonstrate the case. We anticipate that we will have 7 witness who would like to speak at the enquiry.

It is likely that we will refer to the following documents.

- The North Somerset Replacement Local Plan (2007)
- The North Somerset Core Strategy (2006 - 2026)
- Inspector's Report on the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan (2006)
- The North Somerset Sites and Policies Plan Part 1 – Development Management Policies (Publication Version) February 2015 – unless subsequently superseded.
- The North Somerset Sites Allocations Plan (Consultation Draft) March and associated background documents – unless subsequently superseded
- The National Planning Policy Framework
- The National Planning Policy Guidance
- North Somerset Travel Plans SPD (November 2010)
- The North Somerset Biodiversity and Trees SPD (December 2005)
- The North Somerset Landscape Character Assessment SPD (December 2005)
- The North Somerset Development Contributions SPD (January 2016)
- The Draft North Somerset Employment-led delivery at Weston-super-Mare SPD (August 2014)
- Sustainability Assessment of Settlements and Development Proposals in North Somerset 2015 (Draft)
- The Core Strategy 'Remitted' Policy Hearings are to be held in June 2016 and adoption is anticipated in the autumn. The Inquiry will be updated with the Inspectors report and Council evidence submitted to the hearing
- All relevant correspondence and documents in connection with the refused planning application.
- National Character Area Profile: 141. Mendip Hills. Published 20 March 2013 by Natural England
- Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan 2014-19 (Nov 13)
- Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan Delivery Plan 2014-19 (Feb 14)

The above is not conclusive, and BAT reserve the right to add or amend in our proof of evidence

## **9 Conclusion**

Bleadon acting together will show that this development is contrary to the NPPF which seeks to ensure that LPA's protect the rural nature of infill villages.

BAT will show that the development is not in the public interest or of public benefit – in fact it is detrimental to the 1000 strong community that already lives in Bleadon.

BAT will show that the development will damage the character of the village of Bleadon in terms of its landscape, ecology, use and the community and demographic of the people who live here.

BAT will demonstrate that the development will be detrimental to habitats for rare species of animals including Water Voles, Newts, Many Birds and Bats.

BAT will demonstrate that the proposals will not be sustainable and exclude many users and that there are no facilities within walking distance. The site will be mainly car reliant for transportation and movement.

We will show that the development will have unacceptable landscape impacts and negative impact on the AONB.

In conclusion the applications proposals are unsuitable and unsustainable and these will significantly and demonstrably outweigh any claimed benefits of the application when taken as a whole when assessed against the NPPF

We will evidence and prove that the application should be refused