

WINSLOW TOWN COUNCIL



**Appeal by Gladman Developments.
Land East of Little Horwood Road, Winslow.
10/01132/AOP
10/00049/NONDET**

**Statement of Winslow Town Council
presented by Cllr Llew Monger**

Introduction

1. I am Cllr Llew Monger a member of Winslow Town Council on which I chair the Development Committee which considers all planning applications.
2. The Town Councils response to this application dated 2nd June 2010 is no doubt in your information packs but perhaps I could reinforce one or two points and then comment on the Town Councils position on future development.

Suitability of the site

3. The Town Council is encouraged by the comments about the application site included in the Inspectors Report following the enquiry into the AVLDP, - Part 2, Chapter 12, Rural Areas Counter Proposals - in which he unreservedly dismisses this site. In particular, Sir, I would draw your attention to Para 12.21.4 in which he states, inter alia, that'
'Little Horwood Road forms a strong defensible boundary that clearly defines the eastern edge of Winslow' he further states that **'development at the objection site would thus constitute a major incursion of built development into open countryside beyond a clearly defined and established settlement boundary'** Significantly, in our view, the Inspector also dismissed suggestions that screening of development at this site would mitigate any adverse effects of such development.
4. Turning now to the application submitted to AVDC by the appellant in 2009 reference 09/01423/AOP and the subsequent appeal against refusal.
In dismissing the appeal in her report dated 20th April 2010, the Inspector states, at para 24, **'In particular, Little Horwood Road continues to form a strong defensible boundary that is not breached at any point along its length, providing a clearly defined and established settlement boundary to this part of Winslow. Residential development on the appeal site would, as a matter of fact, extend built development into the open countryside, beyond that boundary.'**
5. At para 26 the Inspector went on to say, **'I am in no doubt that the housing proposed would fundamentally affect the attractive rural landscape that abuts this part of the built-up area, with an adverse affect on the character and appearance of this area of countryside, contrary to the relevant development plan policies and national guidance in PPS 4.'**

6. When you visit the application site I hope that you will take the opportunity to walk along Little Horwood Road and see for yourself how all of the existing properties face in toward the town thus emphasising the 'edge of settlement' nature of Little Horwood Road.

Separation between Winslow and the Hamlet of Shipton

7. The open countryside between Winslow and Shipton is critical to retaining the separation of the two entities and preserving the 'hamlet' status of the latter. The illustrative layout of the proposed development shows an area of undeveloped land between its Eastern edge and Shipton but compared to the existing extent of the separation this amounts to little more than a village green.
8. As far as the outward appearance is concerned, this development would give the impression that Winslow and Shipton have merged into one. However, in practical terms, the proposed development would be an isolated community belonging neither to Winslow nor Shipton. The houses in Elmfield Gate bordering the Little Horwood Road, which define the edge of Winslow face away from it and there is no access to Shipton. The houses in Shipton also face away from the proposed new housing.

Highways issues

9. Winslow Town Council strongly disagrees with the County Council in its interpretation of the highways issues which would be created by the proposed development. Traffic movements will be in three directions as follows.
 - a. South toward the A413.

This would inevitably result in congestion and possible accidents during peak hours at the junction of Little Horwood Road and A413. The latter is heavily used during peak hours with an average of 801 vehicles passing the junction on weekdays between 8.00 and 9.00am. (Data from Transport for Bucks speed survey w/c 23/11/09). There is an accident black spot just 250 metres to the East (junction of A413 and B4032) where there have been several serious accidents and fatalities.
 - b. North toward Little Horwood

This route would be taken by those heading for Milton Keynes and requires a right turn across oncoming traffic emerging from a tight 'S' bend. The route would result in increased traffic through narrow country lanes leading to the

small village of Little Horwood and thence to the increasingly congested A421.

c. West through Elmfield Gate or Magpie Way.

This route is of the greatest concern to residents of Winslow and in particular those living in the two residential developments which would be affected. Whilst traffic calming measures are proposed in the Unilateral Planning Obligation these would not, in our view, make any significant difference to the extra volume of traffic using the roads in question and this would be to the detriment of those already living there.

Unilateral Planning Obligation / Section 106 Agreement

10. Whilst the Town Council remains opposed to this development we have taken a pragmatic view and discussed with the appellant the options for a Section 106 agreement. The Town Council notes that changes have been made to the proposed agreement which reflect comments made by us at the previous enquiry. In particular we note and approve the inclusion of a Community Building Contribution to a value of £500,000.

The proposed development would take the expansion of the town to almost 30% in recent years with this and the Verney Road development accounting for two thirds of that increase. These developments will take community facilities in the town over the 'tipping point' where new facilities are required and the community centre is judged to be the most critical in that respect. This proposed contribution, together with £632,903 due from the Verney Road development would cover the basic build cost of a new community centre.

Public consultation

11. Yesterdays (6th December) announcement by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government makes it abundantly clear that the Coalition Government intends to hand planning over to communities. Quotes from the announcement include the following,

'Communities will be able to propose the boundaries of their neighbourhood'

'Parish councils and new neighbourhood forums of local people - rather than town hall officials - will lead the way in shaping their community'

'...taking power away from officials and putting it into the hands of those who know most about their neighbourhood - local people themselves'

In this regard Winslow is ahead of the game. The Town Council has consulted locally on recent and current planning issues and we have confidence in our understanding of local opinion

12. Within the last eighteen months the Town Council have conducted three major public consultation exercises on development matters. In February and March of last year we organised two of the four public meetings held in the area in respect of the Winslow Green application, which of course was from the same applicant. The two meetings had an attendance of over 500 and as a result contributed to the 1000 plus written objections to that development. In July 2009 we held a Planning Open Day where 100 residents took the opportunity to take part in an exercise to 'draw their own plans'. We gave residents copies of the SHLAA plan and invited them to select their preferred view of where development should be if we were obliged to take more as a result of the LDF. This plan was supplemented by a PowerPoint presentation running continuously to give the background and by large scale plans of the SHLAA sites. Some people selected the Little Horwood Road site, some of the comments were unprintable but the majority favoured an extension to what is known as the Verney Road site to the West of the town which is currently under development.

The Town Council's position regarding future development

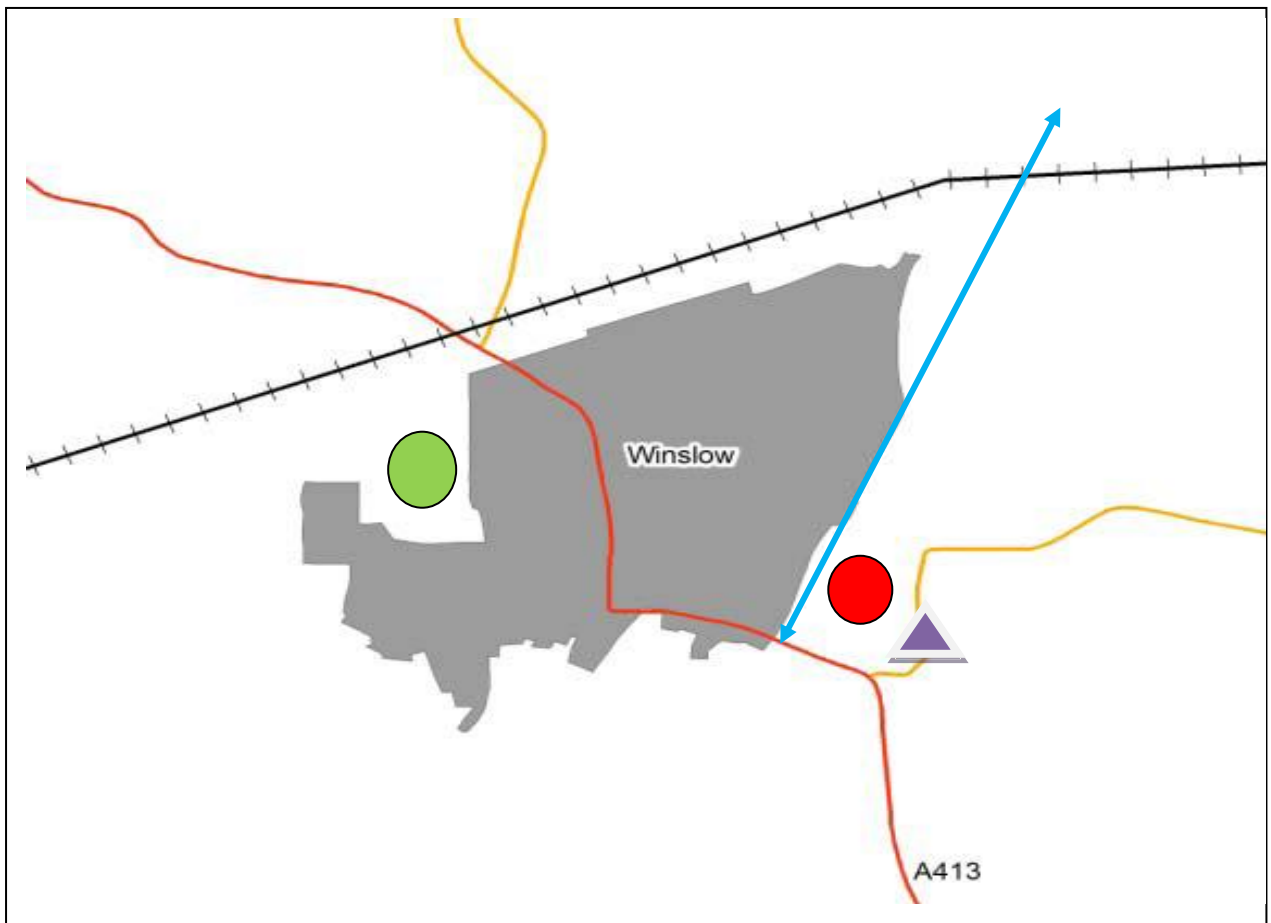
13. All of the consultation exercises mentioned have illustrated that the residents of Winslow are not NIMBY's. A majority of residents recognise that Winslow cannot be wrapped in aspic. However it is very clear that residents supported the position of the Town Council at the time we responded to the AVDC Core Strategy consultation which is best summarised as follows.
 - i. No further major development beyond the 220 at the Verney Road site which already have planning consent. This will take expansion of housing in the town to a rate of 17%* since the adoption of the AVDLP and we feel we have played our part already.
 - ii. If we are obliged to take more housing through the LDF process then sites to the West of the town centre present the most sustainable options but only if developed in conjunction with infrastructure improvements.

**(The proposed development of a further 175 houses would take the increase to 28%)*

If this development of a further 175 houses is permitted the town will have been expanded some 28% in a very short period of time. The clearly expressed wishes of the community and the carefully considered plans of the Town Council will have been thwarted and this would be contrary to the emerging planning policies of the Coalition Government.

I urge you to support the local community and reject this appeal.

Cllr Llew Monger
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Schematic illustration of Winslow showing the existing settlement area, key roads, railway line and preferred development area.

Preferred future development area



Application Site



Shipton Hamlet



Little Horwood Road

