

A message to the community from the Directors of Biddulph (Buckinghamshire) Limited

Little Chalfont Park

A good housing development should provide much-needed housing appropriate to the community, placed close to public transport, education and other facilities, so that dependence on cars is reduced and walking and cycling is encouraged. It should also be of a size that can give back to the community, with hub facilities, play areas, space for schools, open space, parkland and should come with financial contributions that will be used to improve infrastructure and public services beyond the site. Good development must also play its part in meeting the climate challenges of the 21st century, with housing that is heated by renewable sources, that generates some of its own electricity and provides Electric Vehicle charging points. A well designed scheme will provide homes for the young, the older, first-timers, downsizers, those who need a hand to get started and those looking for larger family homes. We have tried hard to design Little Chalfont Park to be a very good development, which will be an asset to Little Chalfont.

Over the last few months we have engaged with many in the Little Chalfont residential and business community. Whilst we acknowledge that there are objectors, we have also met and heard from many in the community who support the provision of new homes and have appreciated the quality of the proposed neighbourhood and the benefits it will bring to existing and new residents.

You will have recently received a leaflet from the Little Chalfont Community Association (LCCA) and the Parish Council, urging you to object to the planning application for Little Chalfont Park.

We would like to address their suggested reasons for you to object.

- Yes, the site is in the Green Belt. However, it was one of the few sites which the Council wished to remove from the Green Belt in the Draft Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan (following a report from the Council's own Consultants) in order to address the severe shortage of housing (particularly affordable and social) in Chiltern district. The justifications for the site's removal are as relevant now as they were then - it is surrounded by development on three sides and was assessed as performing very poorly in meeting the tests of the Green Belt, referred to by LCCA. The Council's provision of housing, especially affordable, has been seriously inadequate over the last 20 years (e.g. a net 24 affordable homes every year over the last four years, against an identified need of 104 every year) and this scheme opens the site, which currently provides no public access, with parkland and a route to the wider AONB.
- The Chilterns Conservation Board (which manages the Chilterns AONB) was consulted during the Council's Local Plan process. It did not consider that the site would harm the setting of the AONB – they requested the scheme be reduced from approximately 700 homes and should exclude the paddocks on Long Walk, both of which have happened.

- In our view, this is not ‘radical urbanisation’. We are proposing housing on a site surrounded by existing housing, to address the acute housing shortage locally, including that for affordable and social housing, retirement housing (to allow older people to downsize) and starter homes for those people currently priced out of the area. “Affordable Homes” is defined as including social rent, shared equity and first-time buyers.
- The location of the site, including the new pedestrian and cycle access to Oakington Avenue, will reduce dependency on cars. The site is walkable to the village centre, schools, the station and bus routes. The inclusion of a new Community Centre will also help alleviate the current difficulties of parking around the existing Village Hall and provide much needed additional space for community activities.
- During the design phase we sought the views of Buckinghamshire Council Highways department to make sure the scheme was designed to mitigate any inconvenience from an increase in traffic, and the suggestions included an improvement to the junction of Cokes Lane/Burtons Lane/A404. Additionally, Lodge Lane will be widened to improve road safety and the pedestrian/cycle link over the railway line will ensure pedestrians will not need to negotiate Lodge Lane.
- Far from harming biodiversity, the site will deliver a 25% improvement, with nearly 7 acres of grassland paddock (north of Long Walk) being re-wilded, with exploration paths. No woodland anywhere on the site, ancient or otherwise, is being removed or harmed.
- We understand the importance of the dry valley. That is why there will be no housing in it. On the contrary, the dry valley will be opened up for full public access and enjoyment, as part of a natural and semi-natural green space of over 20 acres (in addition to the existing woodland) – for the first time it will also provide a safe pedestrian access for walkers from the village to reach the AONB to the east.

In summary, we hope you will consider what we have said in this note, along with the newsletter which accompanies it, and make up your own mind about our application. If you would like to read more, we would point you to the “Design and Access Statement”, which can be found near the bottom of the list of documents on the planning application page of the Buckinghamshire Council web site (ref: PL/21/4632/OA).

If you think the scheme will be beneficial for the village, delivering much-needed housing in a thoughtful and responsible way, we hope you will be able to express your support to Buckinghamshire Council, by commenting during the consultation period.

The Directors
 Biddulph (Buckinghamshire) Ltd
 30th December 2021