

## Chilton Town Council Response to:

### Planning Application DM/26/00024/FPA Land to the West of Lyndhurst Nurseries

**DL17 0RF:** Hybrid application comprising full planning permission for 148no. Dwellings with associated SuDS and landscaping; and outline planning permission with all matters reserved for the development of up to 320no. Dwellings with associated SuDS and landscaping

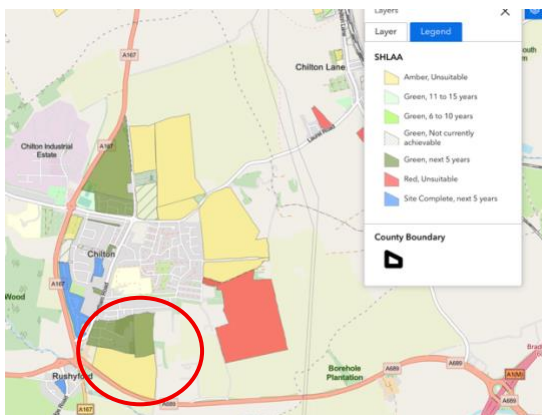
Chilton Town Council is the statutory consultee representing approximately 4,744 residents within the ward of Chilton, SW Durham, categorised as a 19<sup>th</sup> Century Industrial Town within the County Durham Design Code SPD.

The Town Council has facilitated two public meetings, one with DCC's Strategic Planning Team and one with AVANT Housing, to provide residents with the opportunity to find out more detailed information on the application and to raise any concerns.

In addition, the Town Council has previously consulted residents on infrastructure needs as part of a consultation on the development of a neighbourhood plan which although not at the submission stage does have evidence of community views in respect to planning and development within the Town.

This response outlines the feedback from consultations, including some significant concerns relating to the impact of a large -scale development on the current infrastructure and what mitigations we wish to be considered if the development is approved.

## 1. Location



The site is located to the south of Chilton:

1. **Planning application** SHLAA Reference 7CH/118c Land Typology Greenfield 100% identified as suitable for development within the next 5yrs
2. **Outline planning application** SHLAA reference 7CH/118c Land Topography 100% Greenfield, identified as amber unsuitable for development primarily because it would represent ***a significant incursion into the countryside (covered under policy 10).***

Residents have expressed concern that the land identified in phase 4 for outline planning permission is currently identified as unsuitable for development. The site for

this development falls to the south of the existing built-up area and does not meet any of the specific exceptions as being necessary for agricultural or rural land-based developments.

Members of the community have highlighted concerns of the impact on the local ecology, noting sightings of rare/protected species and that the land itself forms a temporary wetland area during the year due to poor drainage.

The size of the proposed development appears contrary to policy 10 and represents a significant encroachment into the countryside.

*(Note: a number of residents who purchased properties in the adjacent housing estate advised that were given assurance from the developer that this land would not be built on as it was identified as unsuitable within the SHLAA)*

## **2. Infrastructure Capacity – impact on policy 25**

By far the greatest concern relates to the unacceptable strain that will be placed on the existing infrastructure. Key issues include:

- NHS appointments: the lack of capacity for GP appointments for Chilton Resident within the Ferryhill and Chilton Practice. Although previous housing developments within the town boundary provided S106 funds to increase the GP capacity to meet the increased number of households, members of the Chilton community advise that they have not seen a reduction of waiting times and or improvement in the access to GPs at the Chilton surgery, citing that they are referred to the Ferryhill Centre or elsewhere within the SW Durham area for appointments, which is challenging when relying on public transport.

*Note- there is no NHS dentistry provided in Chilton even though the infrastructure is available within the medical centre.*

- Education: Although residents have raised concern in relation to the capacity of Chilton Academy to take on additional pupils, clarification has been provided that this would be to accommodate a shortage in capacity for early years provision; the academy has capacity for expansion in other year groups.

Linked to this are concerns about traffic management and safety at key times during the day- specifically drop off and pick up due to the current level of congestion and lack of parking or pickup/drop off zones.

Currently there is no proposed amendments to the current footpath infrastructure or access routes to the school which would improve walking routes and encourage movement in line with DCC “Moving Together in County Durham” (2023-2028) strategy.

*Note- Chilton does not have secondary education provision and students are required to use public or private transport to attend.*

- Community assets- through numerous consultations residents have highlighted the lack of community facilities and support especially for young people. Whereby there are various facilities and groups within Chilton that offer organised activities and open spaces available in the Miners' Welfare Recreation Grounds, Town Council play parks and Chilton Academy playing fields, there is still a need to provide a facility and community/youth support workers for young people who may be at risk of disengagement and drifting into low level ASB.

Residents on the existing AVANT development have reported ASB, dark public footpaths and dark areas leading to criminal activity and are concerned that additional housing following similar design patterns will further exacerbate the situation and put additional pressure on already stretched resources.

- Utilities – residents in the existing AVANT housing development have raised concerns in relation to electricity supply and the capacity within the substation. Adjacent rural business also raised concerns about the infrastructure to deal with will increase pressure on the sewerage system.

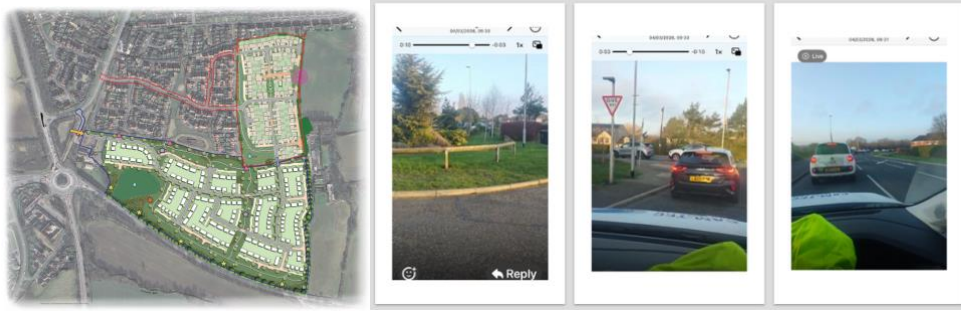
### **3. Transport-**

- Public Transport - Chilton is designated as mixed urban/ rural, due to the levels of economic and social deprivation in large parts of the town access to public transport is vital in terms of addressing social inequality and providing access to training, employment, education and health services. All of which has been emphasised by individuals and business with the Chilton boundary.

Currently there is no feasible commutable option for those that need to use public transport to access Bishop Auckland College, Bishop Auckland Hospital (or other related services such as dentists), retail, cultural events and activities.

Without further investment, any new housing development will add further pressure on an inadequate public transport system and therefore increase usage of private vehicles- this is contrary to the County Durham Plan that focuses on promoting, suitable accessible travel.

- Highways and congestion- there are already concern relating to high levels of congestion at peak times (see above education) and in particular access to the A167 at the southern end of Durham Road currently taking 20- 30 mins. Access to phase 3 will be via the existing route on Bradbury Road (identified in red below) phase 4 will have a new access road (yellow arrow) but it will still enter Durham Road to feed on the A167.



AVANT schematic of proposed access roads / Resident footage of current congestion even after peak period

Further concerns have been raised in relation to congestion at Rushyford Roundabout.

**Noting that there are a number of new developments proposed in the neighbouring areas we would ask that a Cumulative Impact Assessment is carried out to address factors such as traffic, infrastructure capacity, air quality and biodiversity.**

#### 4. Meeting local Housing requirement

The current County Durham Plan Policy 15 determines that the housing needs assessment for Chilton has identified the requirement to move away from high density terraced properties towards a more diversified housing stock. There is still a need for affordable and social housing with feedback from community consultation on the development of a neighbourhood plan highlighting the shortage of accessible bungalows, starter homes and four-bedroom properties.

**Whereby we note that any new development must meet statutory requirements for affordable housing and has identified 15 % of housing in phase 3 application to be affordable, we would request that a review is undertaken to assess if this meets the needs for the demographic profile of Chilton residents.**

#### 5. Design Principles



Given issues that residents have raised in relation to antisocial behaviour we have concerns that the current design does not adopt the core principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).

The design does not benefit from high levels of natural surveillance due to building orientation; open spaces are not naturally overlooked which has potential for unobserved ASB, there is also potential for pools of darkness in cul-de-sac areas.

There is also no evidence that that the design supports active movement through safe walking, wheeling and cycling routes and green open spaces are not integral features within the site.

**We would therefore ask the plan is reviewed to take into consideration residents' concerns.**

## **6. Economic Development**

Some local businesses and residents have highlighted that the new development could have a positive impact by increasing local consumer spending and access to targeted developer contributions (S106) to improve the local infrastructure.

**We welcome any investment in improving the local economy and infrastructure however we cannot see that an Economic Impact Assessment or similar evidence has been obtained in association with the development and would ask that this information is made publicly available.**

### **Options we ask the Planning Office to consider:**

We recognise that within the hybrid application submitted by AVANT Housing, full planning permission for development of 148no. dwellings with associated SUDs and landscaping is on a site identified for development with the SHLAA and will fall within the current Durham Strategic Housing Target, if it meets planning policy requirements has a high potential for approval. Conversely the site that covers the outline planning permission with "all matters reserved for the development of up to 320no. dwellings" is deemed unsuitable for development.

We, therefore, have concerns that due to the hybrid application, outline- planning for phase 4 will be approved by default and would therefore request that the application is decoupled and dealt with separately in order that a full planning application is required and full details of the proposal assessed from the outset particularly in relation to Policy 10.

**Mitigations should the application be approved:** In line with residents' concerns and evidence of need gathered through community consultation we would request that funding, including S106, is ring fenced towards:

1. **NHS-** the Chilton site of the Ferryhill and Chilton Medical Practice to ensure that services will to be delivered within Chilton and residents will not be forced to travel to Ferryhill. The 2024 CQC assessment has already noted "difficulties in accessing the service".
2. **Education-** Chilton Academy to increase capacity for early years provision
3. **Traffic Management-** further improvements to access roads and the A167 junction, safer walking, wheeling and cycling routes to Chilton Academy and drop-off and pick up zones

**(see above request for a Cumulative Impact assessment).**

4. **Community Facilities** – to support the re-development of community sports facilities and community hub aligned to the approved planning application DM/23/03019/FPA and to upgrade other community facilities with Chilton.

**In addition:** we are aware that S106 is not used for revenue funding therefore would highlight the need to identify other funding streams to assist with mitigating against the additional strain that a large-scale development will place on the already stretched infrastructure and service provision within Chilton. For example, working with the Primary Care Network and ICB to access the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme for additional GPs; provide community funding to recruit a youth community co-ordinator to address local issues of disengagement, ASB and support building community cohesion.

**Cllr Sue Reece**

**On behalf of Chilton Town Council**

**18<sup>th</sup> March 2026**