

**WEEDON PARISH COUNCIL**  
**CLERK TO THE COUNCIL MRS BARBARA MITCHELL**

Mick Denman, Planning Officer  
AVDC Development Control  
The Gateway  
Gatehouse Road  
Aylesbury  
Bucks HP19 8FF

18.1.2013

Dear Mr Denman

**Parish Council Comments on Planning Application**

**12/02850/AOP Site for up to 220 residential units and a Park & Ride facility. Land North of Weedon Hill Major Development Area Buckingham Road Aylesbury.**

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Weedon Parish Council resolved to OPPOSE this application at its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2013.

Reasons for objection

**1. Unnecessary and intrusive development into open countryside**

- 1.1 The proposal is an unnecessary and intrusive development into open countryside beyond the established limit of built development.
- 1.2 The site is not identified by the current Aylesbury Vale Local Plan for development, apart from a relatively small area currently designated as a park-and-ride facility as part of the Weedon Hill MDA (now Buckingham Park). Therefore the proposals conflict with policy RA14.
- 1.3 Weedon Hill MDA originally gained outline planning permission for 850 homes. As the detailed reserved matters have been realised, the number of homes on the MDA has increased to over 1,000. Building yet another 220 homes, effectively extending the size of the MDA significantly, is excessive.
- 1.4 Since AVDC is in the process of preparing a new Development Plan, approval of this planning application would be premature. Development on this site is in our view very unlikely to be provided for in the new plan, and would therefore be in direct conflict with its provisions, providing additional housing which would be excess to AVDC's requirements over the longer term.

**2. Transport**

- 2.1 As ever with developments which propose to extend the urban spread of Aylesbury, in the absence of an up-to-date higher-capacity ring road/bypass system, the transport issue is a key one.
- 2.2 As users of the A413 Buckingham Road at peak periods, Weedon residents are only too aware that three of the four junctions they have to negotiate on their way to and from work appear already over-capacity – the A413/Watermead traffic lights, the A413/Oliffe Way roundabout, and, most importantly, the Horse and Jockey traffic lights. We are not convinced that the mitigation measures proposed by the applicant would be sufficient, particularly at the Horse and Jockey lights.

We have specific concerns that no mitigation measures have been proposed for southbound traffic in the AM peak period, probably because of the bridge issue outlined in 3.4 below. More traffic in the AM peak

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Mrs Barbara Mitchell  
The Well House  
26-28 East End  
Weedon  
Bucks HP22 4NJ

Telephone : 01296 640865  
E-mail : [bcmitchell123@gmail.com](mailto:bcmitchell123@gmail.com)

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will simply lead to unacceptable delays and increased use of the "rat run" round Buckingham Park and Watermead.

- 2.3 The baseline data in the Transport document, which was used for modelling future vehicle flows, appears to have been based on just one day (29<sup>th</sup> March) which may well have fallen into the Easter holiday of non-state schools. This would hardly represent a "typical" day, as the morning and evening peak traffic is significantly less in school holidays than term time.
- 2.4 The A413 transport corridor on the Aylesbury approach has a major problem which has been the subject of heated debate when previous planning applications have been put forward and has always seemed insurmountable without huge investment which no-one is prepared to make. The problem is the limited width of the road bridge over the River Thames, which has only one lane in each direction, and acts as a funnel for traffic – a significant cause of tailbacks.

Unless this bottleneck is widened, there will always be a problem with A413 traffic, and any additional housing development on the northern edge of Aylesbury which would increase traffic on this route is bound to exacerbate the situation. Further development should therefore be strongly resisted.

### 3. Park-and-ride

- 3.1 Building additional housing on the currently designated park-and-ride site necessitates finding a new site for the park-and-ride. The proposed new park-and-ride site is totally unsuitable, for the following reasons.
- 3.2 The land to the east of the A413 between the buildings of Watermead and the hill at (old) Weedon Hill is substantially in the flood plain of the River Thames. The proposed new replacement park-and-ride has therefore been positioned just outside that floodplain on rising land close to Weedon Hill House.
- 3.3 The network of old-established fields and hedgerows rolling down to the River Thames on the eastern side of the A413 forms a pleasing rural landscape. The field within which the park-and-ride site is proposed shows clear evidence of historic ridge-and-furrow.

Building an oblong of tarmacked car-park in the middle of this tranquil landscape would be a travesty, bringing to mind the words of the Joni Mitchell song: "They pave paradise – and put up a parking lot!"

- 3.4 The new P/R would harm the amenity of the neighbouring residents of (old) Weedon Hill as the whole development would look intrusive and out-of-place in the landscape. Simply planting perimeter hedging (which has a very urban appearance) would not mitigate the harm.
- 3.5 The currently designated park-and-ride site has excellent access from all directions, this access being taken directly off the western link road roundabout. Everyone can get in and out of it easily. In contrast, the new park-and ride (P/R) presents huge access difficulties.

Left-in left-out works well for vehicles going into the P/R along the A413 from the north; and is of course fine for those which are exiting wanting to continue southwards. It is potentially just about satisfactory for vehicles exiting the P/R which want to go north on the A413, as presumably they would turn left, southwards down the A413, then do a U-turn using the western link roundabout.

But how do vehicles coming from the south, travelling northwards from Aylesbury on the A413 (including those who are coming along the western link road and then joining the A413 at the roundabout) turn in to the P/R? They are not allowed to turn right into the P/R. There is nowhere for these vehicles to do a

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U-turn on the busy, fast A413 – unless it is envisaged that they use the Weedon Hill access track – which would be an appalling suggestion!

3.6 There is a potentially very serious highways issue with high speed traffic coming over the Weedon Hill Farm brow meeting buses either turning right into the P/R (crossing the on-coming traffic) or slow vehicles exiting the site. The current speed limit on the A413 up to the western link roundabout is 60mph and vehicles, particularly motorbikes at weekends, fully exploit that limit.

Therefore, from a safety perspective, the P/R would be much better sited as per the existing permission directly off the roundabout.

For all the above reasons, Weedon Parish Council urges AVDC to refuse permission for this development.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Mitchell  
Clerk to Weedon Parish Council

cc Cllr Ashley Bond

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