Charlotte Dew

From: Parish Clerk <parishclerk@alconburyweston-pc.gov.uk>
Sent: 23 June 2025 22:02
To: Christina Riley
Cc: Charlotte Dew
Subject: RE: Planning Permission Consultation - Land North East Of High Gables Buckworth Road Alconbury Weston (ref 25/00890/PIP)

Good evening to you both,

We had an extraordinary meeting for this application tonight and have the below response.

Further to AWPC Extra-Ordinary Planning Meeting on 23-06-2, AWPC recommends refusal of the above detailed planning application.
The primary reason for AWPC's objection to the above application is that the village is committed to reducing flood risk in the Alconbury Brook Catchment Area (ABCA) and there is insufficient data in the application to evidence an improvement in flood risk impact.
Additionally AWPC notes the following;
Adverse impact on the amenity of the residents of High Gables
The proposed development would provide five large detached homes immediately adjacent to the eastern site boundary of High Gables. At present our home benefits from extensive views eastwards towards the designated Conservation Area and open countryside. The urbanisation of this section of the village would clearly be harmful to the rural character of our village. In addition, the overbearing nature of the development through its massing and quantum of development would have an adverse impact on our amenity and enjoyment of our home.
The submitted site plan outlines the applicants intention to maximise the density of the site with each of the dwellings built close to the plot boundaries. There is limited relief to each of the dwellings in the form of an attached garage, however the elevation closest to our boundary would be a full two-storey in height and provide a poor outlook from our home. The development would also adversely impact our privacy and enjoyment of our home.

Inappropriate development in the countryside and harm to the character of the area
Firstly, the applicant states that the 'tilted balance' should be engaged in the assessment of this planning application. The Council's 5 year housing land supply (5YHLS) is stated as 5.79 years as published on the 25/10/2023, therefore we do not consider this position is correct. The council's 5YHLS position was confirmed at appeal on the 4th December 2023 and full weight is (and should) still applied to the development management policies in the District Plan.
This published housing land supply position or application of the councils planning policies does not appear to have changed following the issuing of the updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in December 2024. Full weight should therefore be applied to the policies within the Huntingdonshire District Council Local Plan 2011-2036.
This plan designates Alconbury Weston as a 'small village'. The village does not have a designated settlement boundary, therefore new housing within or adjacent to this village conflicts with District Plan policy LP9 (Small Settlements).
District Plan policy LP9 states that development will only be supported where it is located within the Built-Up Area boundary and is considered to be sustainable under the following considerations:

a) level of service and infrastructure provision within the settlement;
b) opportunities for users of the proposed development to access everyday services and facilities by sustainable modes of travel including walking, cycling and public transport;
c) effect on the character of the immediate locality and the settlement as a whole.

The village has very limited services or local amenities, and poor transport links to the larger designated settlements in Huntingdonshire. As shown on **Figure 1**, there are no local amenities within the village and only three bus stops. The 'AW1' bus provides a limited hourly service to and from Huntingdon, therefore residents of the proposed development will be fully reliant on services outside of the village and inevitably private transport.

The poor sustainability attributes of Alconbury Weston were highlighted in the Huntingdonshire DC SHLAA (2017) which included only two sites adjacent to the village (sites 081 - Off Butchers Close / Vinegar Hill & site 190 - land off north road). These sites were removed at stage 1 and reviewed as 'not in a sustainable location', without any local amenities to support new development.

The applicants planning statement highlights the limited amenities in the village, and the reliance on the RoW to access the only public inn in the area. It should be noted the RoW running north to south past the village is located 500m west of the proposed site entrance with only a grassed verge to access this RoW.

District Plan Policy LP10 sets out that development in the countryside will be restricted to the limited and specific opportunities as provided for in other policies of this plan. Additionally, all development in the countryside must (in summary);

a. Seek to use land of lower agricultural value in preference to land of higher value
b. Recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside; and
c. Not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive light or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others

The site is designated as grade 3 agricultural land, therefore not considered inappropriate for development. The sites location away from the main built-up development north of the site is clearly out of character and would provide a harmful precedent for development in the village.

The principle of windfall residential development in the village was considered under the dismissed appeal APP/H0520/W/23/3327277 (**Appendix 1**) for the development of a rural exemption site of 15 homes on the land north-west of No.1 Chequers Close, Alconbury Weston.

The Planning Inspector's assessment of this case found that this development (only 200m north-west of the application site) would be wholly contrary to the plan-led system and 'undermine the growth strategy of the council'. This appeal was assessed under the same District Plan and sets a valid precedent against windfall development outside of the village boundaries. The inspector stated the following:

15. The only policy that could lend support to the proposal is LP24, which generally supports the provision of affordable housing to meet the requirements of the community. To this extent, it is common ground between the main parties that there is currently an acute district-wide need for affordable units as evidenced through the Council's Annual Monitoring Report.

16. What policy LP24 does not do however is provide support or justification for market dwellings outside of a settlement boundary. Delivering market housing on the appeal site would be wholly contrary to the plan-led system and undermine the growth strategy of the Council, thus causing unsubstantiated harm to the countryside. The proposal for 9 affordable and 6 market houses would therefore be contrary to the Development Plan.

This development will adversely impact the openness of the countryside in this location and there has been limited efforts to provide screening on the majority of the site boundaries. The development would be highly visible from numerous viewpoints and harmful to the rural character of the village. Whilst the proposed site plan shows planting on the southern boundary of the site, this would do little to reduce visibility of the proposed dwellings from all directions or harm to the openness of the countryside in this location.

Development in an area of high surface water flooding risk;
The site is located within Flood Zone 1 (FZ1) and at low risk of flooding from rivers and sea, however large areas of the site are shown to be within an area of high risk of surface water flooding.
The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 170 states "I*nappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future). Where development is necessary in such areas, the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere*".
The submitted Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) shows that the proposed dwellings would be built close to / bordering an area of high risk surface water flooding. As a 'More vulnerable' proposed residential use for the site, this is clearly inappropriate development and conflicts with paragraph 170 of the NPPF.

Housing need and proposed housing mix.
The proposed site plan shows five large, detached dwellings of a similar size to the 5-bed dwelling Highgables adjacent to the site, and an indicative footprint similar to other large detached dwellings in the locality. We question whether this site layout will provide an appropriate housing mix to meet the local communities needs for new housing.
The proposed site layout indicates that the development would provide large 4+ dwellings meeting only 20-30% of the required housing mix in the district. The development is therefore unlikely to support the demand for smaller, affordable households to address the acute housing need in the district.

There is also a significant supply of other housing (ex. Alconbury Weald) in the district meaning there is little or no need for inappropriate new windfall housing development such as this. Alconbury Weald is a major strategic development located in close proximity to the site. This major development of 5,000 dwellings (and other infrastructure) and is currently under construction and will continue for many years. This development provides a surplus of sustainably located market and affordable dwellings for the district. There is little demand windfall sites such as this development, especially sites with poor connectivity and limited accessibility to local amenities.

In addition, the village has benefitted from recent small scale residential developments under permissions 19/02429/FUL, 23/00211/FUL and 22/00298/FUL providing an appropriate pipeline of new development in the main village.

Highway safety;
Buckworth Road is a busy road and will serve as the principal access to the site. The speed limit of this road changes from 60mph to 30mph less than 100m west of the proposed site entrance. The site lines from the proposed site access are also poor and present a potential highway safety risk. We do not consider an access serving multiple dwellings in this location to be safe or characteristic of other dwellings in the locality.

Best

Louise

From: Christina Riley [redacted]
Sent: 12 June 2025 12:29
To: Parish Clerk <parishclerk@alconburyweston-pc.gov.uk>
Cc: Charlotte Dew [redacted]
Subject: RE: Planning Permission Consultation - Land North East Of High Gables Buckworth Road Alconbury Weston (ref 25/00890/PIP)

Dear Louise

Thank you for your email and apologies that it has taken me a few days to get back to you.

As I think you will be aware the Government requires Local Planning Authority to make decisions as quickly as possible on planning applications. Our target date for this application is 27.06.2025, and unfortunately as a result of this, we cannot agree an Extension of Time that is beyond this date.