



PRESS RELEASE

snts lambasts planners for failure to use Public Consultation

snts.today issued its detailed 29 page response to the amended Bloor Homes hybrid application for the mixed use development of 2000 homes on Sandleford. Two things stood out from the papers the public were asked to comment on:

- 1) the failure of West Berkshire's planning department to follow proper legal procedure in granting planning permission for the alteration of Warren Road; and
- 2) the failure of West Berkshire's planning department to pay any regard to the responses from the general public to the prior consultation on the Sandleford plans.

Commenting on the first of these omissions, Peter Norman, spokesperson for snts said:

“To learn that WBC planners failed to conduct a wildlife survey on Warren Road before granting planning permission, a statutory obligation under the Wildlife and Countryside Act ,should come as no surprise. Unfortunately our planning department has form in ignoring legal procedure whether it is giving incorrect advice on Faraday Plaza, ignoring statutory consultees such as Sport England, or being prepared to rig selection criteria to support a political decision of choosing Sandleford as the site for 2000 homes.”

“The fact that no wildlife survey was conducted prior to granting New Donnington Homes permission to alter Warren Road which includes the destruction of trees that are currently bat roosts is depressing but to be expected. Thankfully this has emerged before any work has commenced and the planners have an opportunity to rectify this error and rescind planning permission whilst this vital survey work is undertaken. This would also allow any Warren Road amendments to then be properly considered as part of the overall Outline Planning for Sandleford in accordance with the Core Strategy.”

snts is particularly concerned that no regard is being paid to the public's response to the consultation. This is particularly evident with the planning department insistence on making Warren Road all-vehicular access to the development.

“The planning department is putting cost and convenience before the health, safety and welfare of local residents in ploughing ahead with Warren Road” Peter Norman goes on to say “It beggars belief that in an era when air pollution is being acknowledged as this country's biggest killer that you would put a major road junction that brings hgvs, construction vehicles and going forward a huge concentration of cars into close proximity with mothers with buggies and young children trying to get to school. But again this Council has form, they have done exactly this on the A339 bringing traffic in close proximity to a skate park and children's play area, removing a vital area of greenery acting as a screen for pollution in the process. The NPPF is crystal clear that the adverse affect of pollution is a major planning consideration and on these grounds alone planners should stop their consideration of Warren Road and look for alternatives instead.”

He concludes:

“As we move forward it is vitally important that the planning department does not continue to ignore the wealth of local knowledge at their disposal, but use it to correct the inaccuracies in the current proposals and come up with a proposition that is genuinely sustainable for future generations.

End of Press Release

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

SayNOtoSandleford (snst) is a campaign group set up to oppose the development of 2,000 homes on a single site in south Newbury, and instead to pressure West Berkshire Council to develop smaller more sustainable mixed use brownfield sites in and around Newbury. It has since mutated into a community action group pushing for sustainable development and a holistic view to the development of Newbury embracing all areas of the town's future. As a campaign group they have 273 followers.

Sandleford is an historic site in South Newbury that contains a number of ancient woodlands, a bio-diverse flood plain to the River Enborne and is adjacent to a number of sites of Special Scientific Interest to which it has been ecologically linked. In addition it is the setting of a parkland for the Grade II listed Sandleford Priory landscaped by Capability Brown some 300 years ago. However, it is probably best known as housing the warren in the opening chapters of Richard Adams much loved novel *Watership Down* from where the rabbits escape destruction by developers. The 40th anniversary of the book's publication was marked by West Berkshire Council announcing fiction would become fact with the development of Sandleford as a strategic site for 2,000 homes.

Contact - Peter Norman
peter@saynotosandleford.org.uk
01635 550693
www.saynotosandleford.org.uk