

Bunbury Parish Council

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The Planning Department
Cheshire East Council
Via On-Line Submission and email at planning@cheshireeast.gov.uk

21st December 2025

Dear Sirs

Re 25/4407/FUL - Erection of 20 Dwellings on Land at Parkside, Bunbury Lane

I write with reference to the above application to which this Council **objects** in the strongest possible terms.

Our reasoning is set out below.

Planning History

1. There have been two previous appeals for speculative residential development on this site within the last 5 years and in both cases the appeals were dismissed primarily on the grounds of protecting the character and appearance of the open countryside as the site was (and still is) outside the development boundary of the adopted Bunbury Neighbourhood Plan which runs until 2030.
2. There was a third appeal in July 2024 relating to the development of the site for 20 First Homes. This was granted on the grounds that, at that time, First Homes had been included in paragraph 73 of the NPPF as an exception to policy. However, it is of great importance to note that within the current NPPF (December 2024) this exception no longer exists. This means that any application for residential development on this site, which is in open countryside outside the settlement boundary, must be weighed against the background of the most up-to-date policy in the CELP, the SADPD and the made Bunbury Neighbourhood Plan.
3. Given that the exception upon which the above mentioned appeal was upheld no longer exists, no weight must be given to this element of the planning history of the site. This means that we need to revert to the first two appeals relating to this site for planning precedent. In both of these cases applications for speculative residential development, similar to that now proposed, were rejected because the Inspector concluded that the protection of the open countryside and maintaining an effective and coherent built-up edge to the settlement in this location to preserve the open countryside was a key component of the housing policies of the Bunbury Neighbourhood Plan and Policy PG6 of the Cheshire East Local plan.

Other Material Considerations

4. As set out above, the application site still lies outside the settlement boundary of Bunbury and this boundary defines the limits of development for the village, making it very clear where development will and will not be allowed. The views in this part of the village and the glimpses of open countryside through the gaps in housing are inherent aspects of the village's landscape and character, a point that has been supported in previous findings by

HM Inspector. The landscape and character of the village would be significantly damaged by this proposal.

5. The Local Plan, in Policy H1, states that planning permission will be granted for a minimum of 80 houses to be built in Bunbury between April 2010 and March 2030. To date 124 new homes have been built or granted consent, including a number of affordable houses. Bunbury has, and is, continuing to deliver a range of new houses to meet its local need and in view of this we are firmly of the view that no further houses need to be built in the village until Cheshire East have consulted upon and published a new Local Plan. CEC, in an online seminar on Tuesday 9th December, indicated that this work is about to commence.
6. The current application is contrary to Policy H2 of the made Neighbourhood Plan which clearly states that no more than 15 houses should be built on any one site. We note that the applicants have attempted to support their proposal by suggesting that it would make a "contribution to the urban mass". This, in our view absurd, statement underlines the inherent misunderstanding of the context of the site. Bunbury is a rural village and Policy H2 of the Neighbourhood plan is designed to help maintain its rural character while accommodating a reasonable and manageable level of development - an intention which has worked well up to now. Implementation of this proposal would be especially damaging as it would not only exceed the 15 house maximum but do so at the edge of the village resulting in the urbanisation of one of the main approaches.
7. The proposed density of housing is considered to be too great for the site, a point highlighted by the fact that the proposals include a great deal of tandem parking (as opposed to side-by-side parking) provision. This has been demonstrated in other developments to result in increased on-road parking which is already a significant safety and capacity problem in Bunbury.
8. The NPPF points out that housing should be located in the most sustainable locations however, Bunbury has ceased to be a functionally sustainable location. Despite the inaccurate information included in the application, there is only one shop left in the village (a small convenience store) which means that even for many day-to-day needs it is necessary to travel outside the village. There is also very little employment in the village. As there is no bus or rail service serving the village the occupants of any new homes will be reliant on private cars for both day-to-day needs and to reach any employment. There are many much more sustainable locations in Cheshire East and so we are of the opinion that Bunbury cannot legitimately be considered a 'most sustainable location' a point confirmed by HM Inspector in one of the rejected appeals referred to above.
9. The road network in the village is already often at breaking point from both practical and safety points of view. Even within the settlement boundary there are many stretches of road that are narrow and which have no pavements or footpaths. Specifically, the routes from the proposed site into the centre of the village, and to the school, lack pavements or footpaths and pedestrians have to cross the main road through the village several times even to make use of those that do exist.
10. The levels of traffic and of associated parking are already very problematic with several narrow bottlenecks that at times become completely impassable because of parked vehicles that, given the size of the one small car park in the village, have nowhere else to go. The combination of these two factors - the lack of footways and lack of vehicular traffic capacity - create a dangerous situation which would be significantly exacerbated by the inevitable additional of both vehicular and pedestrian traffic that this application would generate if granted. Some of this is implicitly acknowledged in

the application which suggests that residents of the proposed houses would walk into the centre of the village. Making and widening of paths would be necessary to make this safe and would still not address the vehicular traffic element of the problem - indeed, as this would further narrow some of the already narrowest stretches of lanes in the village many of the existing problems would be worsened. This would be evident on a physical inspection of the site and its position in relation to the centre of the village.

11. In the context of the above, the proposed access and egress point onto Bunbury Lane is also problematic because of the narrowness of the lane, which is one of the main access routes into and out of the village.
12. The applicant suggests the use of bicycles for access to nearby towns and services (Nantwich and Tarporley). The nature of the A49 and A51 make this a dangerous proposition and would, in any case, only be an option for the fittest of residents.
13. The application includes the provision of some affordable housing however, a housing needs survey has not been undertaken. The application of current CEC policy would require the scheme to include 6 affordable dwellings which should include 65% social or affordable rented housing and 35% intermediate housing. The application is lacking in this respect, and in terms of the proposed type of affordable housing and we note that CEC's own Affordable Housing Officer has criticised the proposals, making similar points in their own objection to the proposal.
14. This Council asks for the application to be refused.
15. Should the Authority be minded to grant consent we would argue that it is essential that a Sites Inspection Panel visit the site *before* any decision is made by the Planning Committee so that members are fully informed and can appreciate fully all of the issues set out above.

Yours faithfully



Clerk to Bunbury Parish Council