



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Sarah Kay  
Planning Manager  
Bolsover District Council  
The Arc, High Street  
Clowne, S43 4JY

4<sup>th</sup> September 2023

*Don Seach,*

**Re: Clowne Garden Village (17/00640/OUT)**

As the Member of Parliament for Bolsover I am writing to outline my opposition to the Clowne Garden Village proposals.

This is the first time I have felt compelled to object to a planning application. Since 2019 I have not been involved in planning matters, as the District Council is the relevant authority for such decisions. The site for Clowne Garden Village was adopted in the Council's Local Plan in early 2020, giving a de facto approval for development by the Bolsover District Council. Yet the range of objections, complications and impacts this development will have on the local area are too wide-ranging. The population of Clowne will increase by nearly 50%, and yet the mitigations for this scale of development are woeful. I urge Bolsover District Council to follow the lead of Mansfield District Council and urgently review the Local Plan; as this development is entirely unsuitable for the current location.

The residents of Clowne and Barlborough feel that the town simply cannot take this scale of development, especially without proper investment in local transport, health and education services. As I will go on to outline, the current plan falls far short of what is required. That is before we go on to consider the impact it will have on the environment. I note that prior to the Local Plan, some of the land allocated for this development was green belt land; a status that was removed to encourage the development of Clowne Garden Village.

Over my three and a half years as the Member of Parliament, I have continued to raise my concerns regarding the impact of this development on the local community with senior officers at Bolsover District Council, with the Highways team at Derbyshire County Council and with the Developers of Clowne Garden Village regarding the impact the increased number of housing would have on the local road infrastructure network.

I have spoken to hundreds of residents across Clowne and Barlborough either via email, through my Clowne Housing Survey, at surgeries, or knocking on doors. The overwhelming response is clear – opposition.



It is my strong belief that new housing must be accompanied by the necessary infrastructure and services. Since being elected I have been campaigning for sustainable development. That means building new homes that residents can afford – while making sure we have the right infrastructure, like GP surgeries, schools, roads and public transport.

Whilst I am extremely supportive of the Government's house building agenda - having campaigned during the 2019 General Election for more affordable housing - it must be done in consultation with and with the support of local residents and the Council must work with the housing developer to ensure there is the necessary infrastructure in place so that it does not have a negative impact on our beautiful countryside, public services, and the local community. That's why I oppose the Clowne Garden Village development, as I feel it is not sustainable and will exacerbate, not help resolve, existing issues within Clowne.

I am deeply concerned about the following impacts on our area:

- The **impact on the local highways network** with an - estimated - extra 3000 cars on our roads. Anyone who drives in Clowne at the moment knows that the local road network is unfit for the current level of development; nothing in the plans for Clowne Garden Village will alleviate the issues, it'll simply add more traffic.
- The **very limited number of affordable housing provision** on the site. I regularly meet constituents wanting to buy a house locally – often working as nurses or other vital public sector workers – and yet we keep building houses that are £400,000 or more, which are entirely out of reach. Only 6% of the houses in Clowne Garden Village are allocated as affordable, about 108. This is far short of what is required.
- A **£10 million funding gap for our local schools**.
- The **environmental impact on wildlife, green belt land, and Harlestone Dam**.
- Only **£684,000 out of £1.62 million requested for local healthcare**.
- The **main entrance to Clowne – just off Oxcroft Way – being turned into an industrial estate**.

Since Waystones submitted their additional documents in May 2023, I have taken some time to review the outline application again and have outlined my reasoning for opposing Clowne Garden Village in more detail below.

### **Education**

The developer of Clowne Garden Village, Waystones, has suggested it would be appropriate to keep their education contribution at the level negotiated in 2018, totalling around £10.4 million. Derbyshire County Council, as the local education authority, is categorical that this is far short of what is actually needed to mitigate the impact of this development on education and has requested a contribution of £21.6 million.

The County Council has also requested £10.7 million towards the provision of 360 pupils at Heritage High School (a nearly 38% rise on current pupil numbers!), so the £10.4 million proposed by Waystones does not even cover secondary education costs - never mind funding for our local nursery, infant, primary and junior schools. We cannot underfund our children's future!



## **Road Network**

I note from the newly submitted documents that the developer has undertaken significant work with the Highways Authority to agree in principle a design for Treble Bob roundabout. However, it is clear to me that a number of concerns remain in relation to the impact on roads in and around Clowne.

In their letter of 25 June 2018, Derbyshire County Council stated that: "At this moment however, I must advise that we don't see a clear solution to the wider highways issues – particularly in relation to the rest of the network around Clowne and in the settlement centre south of A616 (Station Road, North Road, Boughton Lane, High Street), despite 20% of development related traffic travelling through this part of the network." With the nearest supermarket (Tesco), the local schools and amenities all being in the centre of Clowne, the impact on the actual town centre is likely to be significant.

Derbyshire County Council went on to request that the following be made clear if the planning committee was minded to approve the application: "That Bolsover District Council acknowledges the proposed works to Treble Bob and Junction 30 will not solve the long term highways issues for Clowne, nor will the proposed contribution of £3.4m cover the costs of mitigating the impacts of development on the wider highway network. Similarly, the timescales over which the financial contributions are proposed to come forward will result in the immediate highway network having to cope with the increased traffic volumes from the development with little or no interim mitigation confirmed. These issues need to be addressed in a fundamental way through the development and agreement of mitigation and funding strategies by Bolsover District Council, supported by Derbyshire County Council, in advance of development commencing."

While I am aware that the Local Highways Authority has responded to this consultation and has not made an objection, it is my understanding from Correspondence with Councillor Will Fletcher that the LHA does still have these core concerns about the viability of Clowne's road infrastructure, which they would intend to address through reserved matters. I would also note that National Highways have expressed concerns regarding the traffic impact on the area.

I would argue that these concerns are of such a magnitude that they must be addressed before outline planning permission can be granted.

## **Health**

I am also deeply concerned that contributions for local health services currently stand at £684,000 - despite the Derby and Derbyshire Integrated Care Board requesting £1.62 million for funding to support existing services. This contribution cannot and should not be in the form of a new health centre, which the ICB has made clear is not their preferred option for providing increased health capacity.

This will only add unwelcome pressures on local NHS services - at a time when we are looking to reduce waiting times and improve GP services. It is completely unacceptable that residents in Clowne and Barlborough will bear the brunt of this funding shortfall.



### **Environment**

The loss of wildlife and green open spaces, as well as light pollution, will have a negative impact on residents in Clowne & Barlborough. Leaving very little green infrastructure left, in what was once a rural village.

The proposal includes an access road across Creswell Road and to the side of Harlesthorne Dam. Should the dam breach and the sluice gate need to be opened, this may lead to the flooding of lower Clowne and water flowing as far as St John's Church.

### **Affordable Housing**

The developer has allocated just 6% of the 1,800 for affordable housing. I am deeply concerned that development is prioritising 4–5-bedroom houses which are out of the price range for many young and first-time buyers. This means more and more local residents missing out on the dream of owning their own home.

The Local Plan is clear that applications for 25 or more dwellings should provide 10% as affordable housing on site. In providing for only 6% affordable housing, this application is clearly in contradiction with this policy. I would argue that it is highly important that this development meets the Council's approved policy of providing 10% affordable housing on site.

### **Overdevelopment**

The Local Plan specifies that this site is expected to accommodate approximately 1,500 dwellings. I can find no rationale given in the updated planning statement for why an application should be approved for 1,800 houses as opposed to 1,500. As this represents an increase of 20% over the amount specified within the Local Plan and the developer has provided no rationale for this, I would suggest that this is a clear instance of overdevelopment.

### **Clowne Housing Survey Response**

My recent 'Clowne Housing Survey' which had responses from hundreds of residents across Clowne, Barlborough, and the wider community provided further feedback on resident's views of this development. In response to the question 'Do you support the Clowne Garden Village development?', 60% of responses stated 'No', 19% had never heard of the proposals, and only 16% said that they supported Clowne Garden Village.

Most revealing was that a staggering **98%** of people who responded did not believe our infrastructure/services can cope with an extra 1,500 houses.

Residents listed their two planning and development priorities as '*Ensuring our services and roads are not overcrowded*' and '*Protecting green spaces*', both of which are completely failed by the Clowne Garden Village proposals.



### **Site Designation**

I have two further concerns 1) The allocation of greenbelt land for commercial use 2) The prominence of industrial units to the entrance of Clowne.

I am concerned to see that the commercial land is proposed to be sited at the south west end of the development. Given this, the character of Clowne would be changed considerably for those entering the town from the M1, as the first sight that would greet them would be warehouses.

This commercial land includes some land that was previously designated as greenbelt, but for which an 'exceptional case' was found to redesignate it within the Local Plan.

### **Flooding**

In the Local Plan, the Council states that it will only permit proposals for new development where it 'has regard to flood risk, and does not put new development in areas liable to flood or existing settlements at increased risk of flooding'.

I have received a large volume of correspondence from residents in Clowne East about the flooding that already regularly takes place there. I also note that even the planning outline itself identifies a flooding risk: "It is worth noting that a small portion of the Site was found to be subject to flood risk in the event of Harlesthorne Dam breaching."

I have also read with interest the previously submitted letter from Stillwater Associates dated 5 April 2018, regarding their expert assessment of the potential impact of this development on Harlesthorne Dam. The letter notes that Harlesthorne Dam is given the highest designation for UK dams by the Environment Agency, due to the potential loss of life should a failure occur. It is therefore critical that we ensure that the dam will not be unduly adversely affected by the proposed development.

However, Stillwater Associates state in their letter a number of concerns about the impact of the development on the dam and offer their opinion that "it is clear that the implications of the proposed new developments need to be examined in greater detail than has been the case for this Planning Application."

It is clear that this application does not have regard to flood risk and – as the planning outline itself notes – that it puts areas at an increased risk of flooding. It is clear to me that this development would present an unacceptable risk of increased flooding in Clowne.

### **Conclusion**

I recognise that not all of the concerns or opposition points may be covered by this letter and others have raised legitimate opposition on environmental, wildlife, and legislative grounds, but these are the primary concerns raised to me by residents and from my own analysis into the development.

Despite the clear opposition and evident negative impact on the local community, I find it staggering that the Council will proceed with the development.



On health it fails. On roads it fails. On education it fails. On affordable housing it fails. To continue with this development and to ride roughshod over the legitimate views and concerns of local residents would be a complete dereliction of duty to the local community.

To conclude we all agree on the need for more housing, but this must be accompanied by investment into our services and infrastructure so that the local community does not suffer. This development does not pass those tests. Ultimately, Clowne Garden Village is unsustainable and not fit for purpose.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Mark Fletcher". The signature is fluid and includes a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**MARK FLETCHER MP**  
**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR BOLSOVER**