

*Mr & Mrs M F Palmer
Cookley, Worcestershire.*

18th March, 2013

Mr B Gammond
Programme Officer
Kidderminster Town Hall
Vicar Street
KIDDERMINSTER

Email: Bradley.gammond@wyreforestdc.gov.uk

Dear Mr Gammond

Re: Site Allocations & Policies Local Plan and Proposed Modifications to current Plan for the Former Lea Castle Hospital Site, Cookley

We write following our attendance at a public meeting on the 22nd March, at Cookley Village Hall to discuss the above.

In principle, we support the introduction of a percentage of C3 dwellings to be added to the mix of the current plan for the proposed development of the former Lea Castle Hospital site.

We understand at this stage the proposed percentage is undeterminable but we would hope to be consulted again on this as plans progress.

We would also like to state that:

1. We **are** in support of this site being developed sensibly given its location and current residents in The Crescent and Cookley, the local infrastructure (incl road system) and that its development might be mutually beneficial for local residents and surrounding area e.g for employment.
2. We **are** in support for the development of this site being sooner rather than later to prevent any further disrepair or misuse of the site.
3. We understand that only the current 'footprint' can be built upon, albeit, it can be moved around but we **are not** in support of extending the current footprint in any way, without consultation.
4. We **are not** in support of any kind of housing estate type dwellings as the current infrastructure of the village and surrounding areas **cannot** support this e.g local schools, shops, doctors, road system, employment.
5. We **are not** in support of any kind of joining of Cookley and Kidderminster.

We feel strongly that this site or part of it lends itself perfectly to a Retirement Village as it is quiet, flat and rurally attractive. There are currently dwellings on this site which were previously used by clients for independent living. A retirement village would 'tick' a number of boxes as it

would create employment particularly for local residents, attract business and recreation as well as support the elderly/vulnerable. A retirement village could provide:

- Bungalow/low level or appropriate flat type dwellings
- community/recreation/activity centre which could also be made available to locals
- café/restaurant
- doctors, podiatry etc
- shops
- possibility of a small pool (which could be accessible to the local elderly homes e.g Drumart House, Westley Court etc and in particular Cookley Sebright Primary School especially since the County Council were unable to replace the one it lost in the re-build!)
- grounds/maintenance staff
- on-site carers, cleaners
- small independent businesses e.g fitness/relaxation classes, entertainment, dance sessions, creative workshops, hairdressers, gift/card shops etc
- local bus service run by Council or privately
- on-site wardens or security
- laundry service

Employment/business is a much needed requirement for our local area. As we know, loneliness is a massive problem for the elderly/vulnerable and a village of this nature would enable in particular, the elderly residents of Cookley and the surrounding areas the opportunity of moving into a place which enables them to socialise more readily and easily and feel supported in a safe and comfortable environment. It would more importantly enable them to remain part of the area where many have grown up and thus be accessible to family and friends.

In turn, this might also free up housing for families who would like to live in Cookley and the surrounding areas and would not impact negatively on the current local infrastructure as a retirement village would be applicable for the 60+.

I have a relative who lives at Shenley Wood Extra Care Village in Milton Keynes so am aware what a retirement village can mean to people. Please see: www.extracare.org.uk as an example of a retirement village concept.

Many thanks for your time and hope it goes some way to help with the plans for Lea Castle.

Yours sincerely

Caroline & Mark Palmer