

Email exchange (text only) between Sue Fowler and Councillor Fran Oborski about the Draft Local Plan Consultation September 2019

1. Sue Fowler to Cllr Fran Oborski - Wednesday 11th September at 22:44

Fran

Thought you should see my post on the Churchill and Blakedown Facebook page. I look forward to receiving the statement from Worcestershire County Council.

“Just been to the Local Plan consultation meeting at the Parish Rooms (open to 6- don't forget to go!). Councillor Fran Oborski informed me that if Wyre Forest doesn't present the Draft Local Plan with the 170 (+80) car parking spaces on the Green Belt at Blakedown (and the 50 houses to pay for them), Worcestershire County Council have stated that they will oppose the Draft Plan, the Plan will fail, and that any developer will in future be able to apply for and win (on appeal) unsuitable development on Green Belt throughout the District, because there isn't an approved Plan in place. To me that's blackmail.

I've asked Fran to produce written confirmation that the whole of the Wyre Forest Local Plan is now dependent on 250 parking spaces which should be in Kidderminster, but are being located in Blakedown because it is a "sustainable village" (it's got a shop, a school and a station) - no thought about safety, congestion, access (other than they'll put in a wider left turn onto the A456)....

Feeling very cross at this very late change to the Draft Plan which puts Blakedown firmly in the firing line.”

Regards,

Sue

2. Fran Oborski to Sue Fowler - Thursday 12th September at 10:39

Hi

The figures for parking at Blakedown Station come directly from WCC. It is part of an overall Station Parking need within Wyre Forest (so we can't spread the burden to Hartlebury which is within Wychavon)! Whilst some additional parking should be achievable at Kidderminster, post 2022 WCC and Rail Companies estimate up to a 40% increase in Rail Passengers over the next 20 or so years and we have to try to prepare for that.

We need to pay attention to transport hierarchy so as well as supporting WCC plans to upgrade A450 to improve the road from the Black Bridge to Hagley we also need to acknowledge their need for additional parking at Blakedown.

I am personally unhappy that we are effectively being forced to take large areas out of the GreenBelt. I personally accept a large development on Lea Castle as it will mean enough housing to create a sustainable village with a 2 Form entry Primary School and Drs Surgery. The previously agreed 600 home development on that site WOULD have been a burden on the existing services in Cookley.

I accept the 1,000 Houses at Stone Hill North (east of the existing Comberton estate) but am extremely unhappy at the 3-400 properties to the east of the existing Offmore estate which will impact badly on existing residents, will harm the setting of a Residential Care Home and will impact on breeding grounds of curlews and other species!

IF Blakedown Station Parking expansion goes ahead then I will be arguing that, because it will attract traffic from the east of Kidderminster, there MUST be a second railway bridge at Husum Way so that

there can be a “bypass” through any new development so that the existing Offmore Estate does NOT become an effective Kidderminster Eastern By Pass!

I do not know ANYONE who totally supports ALL parts of the Local Plan.

We have to try to produce something which causes minimum distress to existing communities.

Best wishes

Fran

Cllr Fran Oborski, Offmore Comberton Ward WFDC, St Chad’s Division WCC

3. Sue Fowler to Fran Oborski - Thursday 12th at 1:45pm

I acknowledge your response below Fran – but at the consultation meeting yesterday you stated that without the additional 170 parking spaces on the Green Belt land at Blakedown the Wyre Forest Local Plan would not be supported by Worcestershire County Council, and would fail, and this was the critical issue of the whole Draft Plan. I asked you for written confirmation that this is Worcestershire County Council’s position, because you clearly said that if Blakedown residents blocked the proposal developers would be able to put forward applications to build on any Green Belt land in Wyre Forest, and would be guaranteed to be successful in gaining permission, even if only after appeal, because Wyre Forest would not have a firm Plan in place. You confirmed to me, in front of other residents, that the fate of the Wyre Forest Local Plan 2016 -2032 hangs purely on the inclusion of 170 parking places at Blakedown station.

It may be that you have overstated the case – some reflection overnight reminds me that Wyre Forest have SALP, the Core Strategy and the Kidderminster Central Area Plan which are combined to form the current Local Plan and which, together with the Churchill and Blakedown Neighbourhood Plan, all run until 2026, covering the period until a revised Plan can be approved and made. This would provide continuing protection against random applications to develop on Green Belt land. Either way, please provide a statement from Worcestershire County Council or yourself to make sure that Churchill and Blakedown residents have clear knowledge of the importance of the issue under consultation.

That the figures for parking at Blakedown come from the County is already known, and I have obviously already looked at the 2017 WCC Rail Investment Strategy which is based on a 97% (not 40%) increase in rail usage by 2043, and which requires an additional 10 parking spaces at Blakedown (total 20) to deal with a doubling of daily return journeys, together with an additional 217 places at Kidderminster. Simply transferring the shortfall in the Kidderminster provision to Blakedown does not take account of the fact that, whilst all trains stopping at Blakedown will have come from or being going to Kidderminster, the same is not the case for trains from Kidderminster. Based on the predicted increase in use from the Rail Investment Strategy, Blakedown passengers will have 1.01 parking places per passenger, presuming that all users are non-residents (which we know is not the case).

Regards,

Sue

No further response