



WOODNEWTON PARISH COUNCIL

6th March 2023

Troy Healy
Via email: troy.healy@northnorthants.gov.uk
Ref CUS3880

Re: Area your ref CUS3880 letter dated 2nd February 2023

Dear Mr Healy

Thank you for your response to the Parish Council's complaints about the handling of this Planning Application.

Unfortunately, whilst some of our comments and questions were answered at some length, eg the commercial activity; other issues raised appear to have been glossed over and not addressed properly.

On a general note, the Case Officer's report simply lists the objections made by the Parish Council and residents, but in most cases, does not, reference or address these objections directly in the body of the report: You say that "*The objections and thoughts of the Parish Council were appropriately considered and given relevant weight in the determination*". The Parish Council (and residents) can see no evidence of this, hence our complaint. A properly written report seeking to address what is quite a significant number of objections, would demonstrably address them. This report does not, and we believe it is flawed, in not doing so.

The Settlement Boundary is a particular bone of contention and was poorly handled in the Case Officer's report. Even your 2.5-page letter only allocated 8 lines to this issue leaving unanswered questions on this particular concern:

1. The Parish Council and most of the Residents' objections drew attention to the fact that the proposed building, actually, extends beyond the Settlement Boundary (or Building line as some have described it). Yet the subsequently drafted Case Officer's report, para.7.1.2 states, "*The proposed building would be located within the Settlement Boundary for Woodnewton as defined in the Council's Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan*". The Case Officer clearly hasn't taken any notice or consideration of these objections and hasn't checked the accuracy of his statement, his Update Report makes no reference either. This is surely unacceptable, it will undoubtedly have mislead Councillors, Councillors who will expect the Case Officer's report to be factually correct. What is your answer to this point?
2. In the light of the above, the further references to the Settlement Boundary in paragraphs 7.1.5 and 8.3 of the report to create a very disingenuous picture as the Case Officer seeks to compare Bricks and Mortar with Amenity space, muddying the water with comments about gardens extending down to the Willow Brook, all in an attempt to justify

something that hasn't been admitted to the Councillors at the meeting. The main justification (end of Para. 8.3) seems to be the comparison with the building line of Brookview Barn and 19 Main Street (Class Q planning), both of which are positioned according to prior use conditions - as advised in my earlier letter and in the Parish Council and Residents' objections. Why didn't the Case Officer's report properly address this point and answer our questions directly, indeed in your words, give weight to our concerns consistently highlighted. You say that in the meeting it was commented that the Settlement Boundary "*was drawn very tightly*". This is highly subjective and does not answer questions that have been raised multiple times or can really be constituted as a discussion. Taken with the statement in 7.1.2 which was never corrected, you cannot be surprised to hear that we feel there is good justification for our belief that the objections and thoughts of the Parish Council were not appropriately considered and were not given relevant weight in the determination. Given the above, how could you draw any other conclusion?

There are other issues as well, as we have detailed. These are mostly very subjective, but given the chorus of objections from the Parish Council and Residents we did deserve a more respectful treatment of the issues by the Case Officer and (for example) the Conservation specialists at the Council. For example, were these objections ever properly re-referred back to the relevant departments for a review in light of the number of objections and concerns raised, this was never made clear - another reason for our belief that our objections were not given appropriate consideration and weight.

The Case Officer's report mentioned only two listed buildings in the immediate vicinity, there are in fact four listed buildings in the immediate vicinity. This is important - please explain. This build actually shares boundaries with at least three listed properties not just two.

In summary, the Case Officer's report falls short in many areas, is demonstrably misleading to Councillors and very vague in detail barely referencing the concerns initially stated.

The Parish Council and Residents are quite reasonable asking, why and what, you propose to do about such issues to avoid this sort of thing happening in future. We in the village, must live with the consequences and quite reasonably expect better of our Planning Officers and Local Councillors

Yours sincerely

Amy Miller
Clerk to the Woodnewton Parish Council