

Appeal no. APP/D0840/A/14/2221834

**Wainhomes, land off Tregony Road, Probus
Cornwall Council application PA13/09823**

I am the Cornwall Councillor for the Probus, Tregony and Grampound division, which includes the appeal site on the edge of the village of Probus.

I object to the application and I would like to speak at the public inquiry.

The grounds of my objection are as follows:

Scale of development in relation to housing numbers in the emerging Cornwall Local Plan

I am not someone who opposes new housing lightly. I support the figure in the draft Local Plan of 47,500 houses over the plan period across Cornwall. I am happy with the allocation proposed for the Truro and Roseland community network area.

I am happy with Probus taking its fair share of that allocation. What a fair share would be for Probus is open to debate. However, what is obvious is that a single development of 90 houses would be far in excess of any reasonable quota for Probus especially considering that it has already had 69 houses built within the plan period in the Taylor Wimpey estate.

What is likely is that there will be a number of smaller applications over the plan period that will result in a few dozen more houses being built in Probus. There is, for example, a current application for 8 properties close to the centre of the village.

Probus will accommodate a fair and equitable proportion of the Local Plan housing target.

It is not necessary for the Wainhomes proposal to be given permission in order to meet the Local Plan targets.

Traffic and road access.

The proposed location for the development is on a road that is simply unsuitable for this proposal. Of all possible locations for development within the village of Probus, this site is about the least suitable.

The Wainhomes transport assessment was superficial and strewn with simple errors concerning actual traffic flows, names of roads, bus routes etc. It assumed that the majority of the traffic from the site would flow to and from the A390 bypass. It made no attempt to analyse the movements that would have shown that local residents avoid using the junction with the A390, because they feel that it is an unsafe junction, and they choose to drive to the village centre even when they are going to leave the village for Truro or St Austell. Residents of the potential new estate will do the same and add significantly to the flow through the narrow part of Tregony Road.

The proposals by Wainhomes for coloured paving and different surfaces on the narrow sections of Tregony Road would be no more than cosmetic and would not alleviate the problem of mixing of vehicles and pedestrians in a very unsatisfactory environment.

I, along with a number of local residents, carried out a full day traffic flow census of Tregony Road from the centre of the village to the bypass. A copy of the report from that exercise was submitted to Cornwall Council and was included within the documents on the planning portal. A copy is also attached to this email for ease of reference.

Since carrying out the survey, nothing has happened to change the conclusions that Tregony Road is unsuitable for any significant housing development. The highways proposals put forward by Wainhomes would not provide suitable mitigation of the problems.

School capacity

Probus Primary School is a one-class per year primary school with virtually all classes at their statutory maximum number of 30 pupils. Any new pupils moving into the village above reception class age will be unable to get into Probus school and will have to travel to other villages or to Truro. It is likely that some children living within the catchment area, and even within the village itself, would be unable to get into the reception class because of excess demand.

Wainhomes have offered land next to the school to enable an expansion of the school to take place and monies would be available from the s106 education obligation. It would require Cornwall Council to find additional capital monies from other sources to meet the total build cost and there is no certainty that the school expansion would be granted planning permission. The school is located in a part of the village that has significant traffic and congestion problems in Chapel Street, Ladock Road and Cullen View. An increase of 50% in school traffic (which is what the potential school expansion would entail) would make the situation intolerable for these residents and it is likely that there would be opposition to an expansion of the school.

There is no easy fix to the school capacity problem that would be caused by the additional demand from a new 90 home estate. A free field and some s106 monies are not going to solve it.

Affordable housing

There is clearly an overall need to build more affordable houses in Cornwall. The Wainhomes proposal is for 50% affordable on this estate. I am sure that there is existing demand for such accommodation within Probus, but there is no evidence that suggests that there is a latent demand for as many as 45 for local residents in the short term. Provision of such a large number in a village with very little local employment would not be the right solution to the affordable housing problem.

I have not been approached by anyone suggesting that the development should be supported because of their need for an affordable house in the village.

Local opposition

Whilst it is not unusual for any new housing estate proposal to generate widespread opposition, I would normally expect there to be support from at least some local residents who would see benefits from a new development. In this case, there were 137 public comments on the planning portal objecting to the application and not a single comment in support. At the public meeting held just prior to the Council's Central Planning Committee's consideration of the item, there were no speakers in favour of the proposal.

I carried out a survey of all residents of the parish of Probus in February 2013. It was a general survey of local issues and was not aimed directly at the Wainhomes proposal. A total of 1050 houses received the survey form which covered a variety of issues of interest to the residents, e.g. waste collections, highways, affordable housing, renewable energy, flooding. A specific question was included relating to what, at that time, was the potential application by Wainhomes. There were 233 responses (a return rate of 22%). Of those, 204 (89% of those who answered this question) were opposed to the Wainhomes proposal. The main reasons cited for opposition were road access and capacity of the school.

Environmental Health

The issue of the possible environmental health problem that would arise from building houses so close to a spray paint workshop has been pointed out to Wainhomes but no amendments seem to have been made to the plans.

In summary, I believe that any benefits derived from the provision of more housing and, in particular the affordable houses, are outweighed by the detriment that would be caused to the local community and the facilities within the village.

I ask you to refuse this appeal.

Bob Egerton

12 October 2014

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