

Sherbourne response to SWLP – March 2023

The residents of, and Parish Councilors for, Sherbourne have some grave concerns over the likely over-development of Sherbourne and the complete change to its current rural small village nature, should many of the sites listed in the draft local plan go ahead.

The SWLP already identifies Sherbourne as a 'Limited Infill' village and that is a realistic description of the village. It has no sustainable infrastructure that will be able to support any significant building whether for housing or commercial properties.

Sherbourne does not have the following:

- Shop
- Pub
- School
- Employment opportunities
- Footpaths on most of the roads – with the exception of one side only of Church Road and one side of Fulbrook Lane.

The nearest local services are one mile away in Barford, all of which necessitate crossing the very busy A429, which is planned to become a lot busier, or in Warwick 3-4 miles away which necessitates crossing the A429 and the M40 Junction.

It does have a bus service but this is infrequent and not suitable for regular commuting to either Stratford or Warwick/Leamington for work. Therefore any additional house building in Sherbourne will have to have all their transport needs met by private cars, adding further to the traffic on surrounding roads and contravening SDC and WDC planning policies.

The interactive map has large swathes of land around Sherbourne marked as having the potential for industrial / commercial development primarily around the A46 / M40 Junction

- Both sides of the A46 north of the junction
- The north side of the M40 between J15 and J14
- The south side of the m40 between the River Avon and the junction

If all this goes ahead this will turn the outskirts of Warwick into an area akin to the M40 approaches to Bicester with all available land covered in large industrial or logistics buildings. While a desk-placed planner will look at the maps, see some logic to this and think the road network is ideal for this, it will change the whole nature of the southern approaches to Warwick.

This will spill over and surround Sherbourne completely destroying its rural character as a small estate based village.

As the definition of ‘limited infill’ describes, Sherbourne has the potential for some infill, a couple of houses at most, on sites in and around the village, but its total lack of infrastructure means it cannot handle anything more.

The following are our responses to the Sherbourne sites listed in the call for sites are shown in the table below.

For information the people identified as ‘Sherbourne Owner Occupiers’ is the local residents association concerned about protecting the village and they are not proposing the sites identified should be developed.

Comments have been added below each site where appropriate.

File no.	Site name	Site Address	Submitted by	Proposed use
181	Land South of M40 Junction 15, Longbridge Warwick	Field to the east of Watery Lane	Turley	Employment / Industrial / Commercial
<p>181 – this is one of the most worrying of the potential sites. The suggestion is that this be turned over to distribution warehouses. From a desk based planning approach this may seem logical, it is just off the M40 and adjacent to the A429 which is already a major route to the Distribution Centre in Wellesbourne, so the argument would be that there wouldn’t be much extra traffic.</p> <p>Site 181 covers two parcels of land one of the west side of A429 and one on the east side. Firstly this parcel of land is in the flood zone which should make it unsuitable for any such development.</p> <p>Secondly, although it is on the A429, this is a relatively short stretch of road and it would be very difficult to create a road junction large enough to handle HGVs turning in and out of a distribution site. Rush hour traffic already causes tailbacks from the roundabout down the A429 to Fulbrook Lane, and sometime beyond, which is all well past where a distribution depot entry would be needed. There are already traffic problems on that part of the A429 with HGVs who park overnight in the laybys or on the access road to the Highways Depot in the corner of the M40 junction.</p>				

Thirdly and most importantly any such warehouses would tower over all the houses along Watery Lane, the cottages at the end of the Stratford Road and all the houses in Moat Green. This would change completely the nature of this side of the village visually, plus would also subject the whole area to a vast increase in noise from HGVs which would inevitably need to work 24 hours a day to make any sort of distribution centre a viable proposition.

Interestingly one possible use for this site does not seem to have been considered. Developers have already submitted planning applications for solar farms at two locations on the green belt farmland to the north of the A46 adjacent to the Sherbourne roundabout. One of these has been rejected for green belt and associated reasons. The second application is going through the system at time of writing (March 2023) and assuming the refusal of the first application sets a precedent, this is likely to be refused.

This site **181** – could usefully be used as a solar farm. It has a large south facing open aspect, the solar panels are normally installed on piles taking them above ground level and could be mounted high enough to not be at risk of flooding. Significant access would only be required during the construction phase and following that, there would be minimal access and traffic requirements and no increase in A429 volumes. The size and nature of the solar panels should all be low enough to be screened from the Sherbourne residents by the current hedge and tree planting along Watery Lane – although this could benefit from some improvements.

196	Land east of Vicarage Lane	Sherbourne	Pegasus Group	Housing / residential
<p>196 - This is known as the Black Barn Paddock in the village, and currently is used for grazing animals – normally horses. It contains a large metal barn which in the past has been used for stabling /livery. Despite the size of this site, it is not suitable for the development of a large number of houses due to the lack of village infra-structure mentioned. At best if it were to be developed then it could support a couple of large properties along Vicarage Lane and a couple along Watery Lane. All residents would still be reliant on Barford, Warwick etc for infra structure and while there are no employment opportunities in the village this should not generate significant amounts of traffic in the lanes.</p>				
201	Land between Vicarage Lane and Watery Lane, Sherbourne	Sherbourne, CV35 8AL	Godfrey Payton	Housing / residential
<p>201 - this paddock is between Watery Lane and Vicarage Lane with Fulbrook Lane along its southern boundary and is also used for grazing, currently for goats (as a petting zoo type of attraction) with a parcel of the paddock sectioned off for dog care / walking. Even this minor use is causing problems in the village with site visitors parking either on the grass verges, or part on the verge, part on the lane, narrowing the already limited access. For all the reason listed above this site is not suitable for a significant housing development.</p>				
364	Land south of M40 Jctn 15	Nr Sherbourne, Warwick	Stoford Developments Ltd	Employment / Industrial / Commercial

364 - is similar in nature, and adjacent to Site 181 and our objections are similar Again this area is in the flood zone making it unsuitable. While any such development would not be as close to the Sherbourne housing as Site 181, and therefore not be as over-bearing, this would change the nature of the area from the M40 down towards Barford.

533 (a)	Black Barn Paddock (Sherbourne Farm)		Sherbourne Owner Occupiers	Open Space / Biodiversity / Green Infrastructure
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533 (a) see comments above for 196

533 (b)	Corner Paddock/Ryefield	Corner of Vicarage Lane and Fulbrook Lane	Sherbourne Owner Occupiers	Open Space / Biodiversity / Green Infrastructure
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533 (b) see comments above for 201

533 (c)	The setting of Sherbourne Priors		Sherbourne Owner Occupiers	Open Space / Biodiversity / Green Infrastructure
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533 (c) has recently been the subject of a planning application W/22/1508 for two houses to be built within a portion of the grounds of Sherbourne Priors (Grade II Listed Building) which has now changed use from a Language School back to residential. A portion of the land was retained by the last owners who planned to build on it. While the addition of two houses in the village and the limited traffic they would generate would not have had an overly adverse effect on the village, the application was refused by WDC on the following main grounds:
The siting and design of the proposal are considered harmful to the character and appearance of the area, the Conservation Area and the setting of the Grade II listed building.

533 (d)	Land at the north end of Church Road		Sherbourne Owner Occupiers	Open Space / Biodiversity / Green Infrastructure
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533 (d) is a small parcel of land on the corner of Church Road and Fulbrook Lane. This is currently used for grazing sheep and while it is potentially large enough to build one house, portion of it does flood regularly as Sherbourne Brook flows along its western edge.

533 (e)	Coplow Hill and surrounding farmland		Sherbourne Owner Occupiers	Open Space / Biodiversity / Green Infrastructure
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533 (e) is a large tract of land with Fulbrook Lane to the south and the A46 to the north. This is a steep sided hill, some of which is wooded (Coplow Wood) and most of which is used for dairy farming on a long lease. This land should be retained for agricultural and open space purposes.

A number of 'glamping pods' have been installed in Coplow Wood in the past few years and these have had minimal impact on the area and residents, and in fact are invisible from Fulbrook Lane below the woods. It has been intimated that the landowner may wish to install a few more pods and as long as the number is not excessive and then are no ancillary building proposed, then the site could sustain this level of development.

533 (f)	Watery Lane and A429		Sherbourne Owner Occupiers	
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533 (f) see Site 181

533 (g)	Fields adjacent to A46		Sherbourne Owner Occupiers	Open Space / Biodiversity / Green Infrastructure
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533 (g) relates to the fields on the north of the A46 adjacent to the m40, the Sherbourne roundabout and heading up the hill towards Stratford.
 This land has been the subject of two planning applications for solar farms:
 W/22/0548 Which has been refused by WDC
 W/22/0997 now re-submitted as W/23/0150 mentioned above which is currently going through the Planning Application process.

Both these sites raise an interesting conundrum. Firstly they are in green belt and good agricultural land so in principle should not be used for development and should continue to be farmed.
 However, over time the rules around green belt have been known to change and we do not know how/if they will change in the future. If some of the other proposals go ahead much of the land around the M40 J15 and A46 could well end up as industrial/ commercial / distribution used.
 So while the local preference is that the land should remain in agricultural use, having solar farms on the land for an initial 40 year lease period, would effectively neutralise it and save it from commercial development for at least the next 40 years.

Local infrastructure

If both councils are serious about developing a long-term plan, then they should be looking at much more than just a call for sites and what development people / companies want to do over the next 20 years. None of this will work properly without improving the infrastructure in this area. Indeed many of the current traffic and transport problems which currently beset us are due to the lack of infrastructure over the last 20 or so years while allowing unrestrained local development in and around all the major towns and villages in the area.

A couple of local items will help improve the immediate situations around Sherbourne:

- 1) Watery Lane in Sherbourne is regularly used as a short cut (rat run) by local residents who wish to avoid driving round the M40/A46 and the Sherbourne roundabouts to join the A46 towards Stratford upon Avon. Despite being a narrow rural lane with no footpaths the speed limit is 40 mph which is excessive for a narrow lane which is regularly used by pedestrians, dog walkers and horse riders. The speed needs to be reduced to 30 mph both for safety reasons and to reduce the benefit and the desire to take the short cut. Previous attempts to have the speed limit reduced have been rebuffed by WCC on the basis that there have been no fatalities. The local residents would like that to remain the case.
- 2) The other problem that Sherbourne residents face is that of joining the A429 heading either north or south. Often the northbound traffic is continuous and causes long delays exiting Fulbrook Lane heading north, In theory polite drivers would allow residents to pull out, but this doesn't happen. Trying to exit heading south is even harder as this relies on gaps in traffic in both directions.
 - a. As a minimum this junction needs updating with a right turn 'ghost island' in the centre of the A429 to allow cars heading south and wishing to turn right to pull into the centre to await the opportunity to turn, or for cars exiting Fulbrook Lane to cross half the A429 and wait for a gap in the southbound traffic.
 - b. There is enough land there to do this as the southbound side of the A429 has a large grassed area, although this currently has a number of Green BT cabinets installed which would need moving.
- 3) Moving further afield there are a number of traffic problems with the layout and running of M40 J15 and J14.
 - a. M40 J15 used to have yellow boxes painted on the roadway to keep the access to the various sideroads clear and keep traffic flowing. This generally used to work well, not always, but much of the time. When the roundabout was widened to four lanes all round, National Highways changed the layout and removed the yellow boxes, which now causes delays getting off the A429 onto the roundabout – particularly for those heading towards either Warwick or the M40 South. Similarly the traffic on the roundabout blocks the road where the Stratford Road from

Warwick joins the roundabout, which lacks traffic lights, causing considerable traffic backlogs along the Stratford Road.

- i. Suitably placed yellow boxes would help improve traffic flow on these roads without slowing down the traffic from the main routes – A46 and M40.
 - ii. Having convinced National Highways to paint yellow boxes on the roundabout they need to address their maintenance schedule. They have a schedule for re-painting the main lane markings which is done for them by their contractor Keir. This is not done frequently enough. The traffic volumes on the roundabout mean the lines wear out every couple of years and there is another couple of years before they are repainted. They are only just visible on a clean road on a clear day. But they are next to invisible in wet weather or when there is salt on the roads – basically most of the winter. At time of writing (March 2023) there are signs around the roundabout saying NO WHITE LINES so someone official knows they need doing, but nothing is happening. The area doesn't just need infrastructure being put in place, it needs to be maintained properly.
- b. M40 J14 is just an accident waiting to happen. It should never have been designed as a half junction so close to J15, but that is too late to worry about now. Now the problem is that during rush hours, traffic trying to exit J14 southbound backs up so far that it takes over the hard shoulder. Although this keeps some of the queues off the carriageway there are still numerous occasions where drivers of both cars and trucks change lanes suddenly to either try and leave the motorway, or to avoid unforeseen queues. I see this every morning I go to work heading south on the M40 and while I have never actually seen an accident I would be astounded if there hadn't been any.
- i. This junction was improved slightly a few years ago, which improved the situation a little, but not sufficiently.
 - ii. The junction needs to be radically improved so that when the traffic leaves the motorway, the roundabout is removed, there are two lanes of traffic heading along the A452, so the left hand lane can head towards Warwick,

Warwick Technology Park and Europa Way into Leamington, while the right hand lane can take traffic up to the roundabout and onto the Banbury road towards Bishops Tachbrook, M40 J13 and on to the new Upper Lighthorne town, the Gaydon Aston Martin and JLR sites and Gaydon village.

Cllr Tony Merrygold

Chair – Barford, Sherbourne & Wasperton Joint Parish Council

