Dear Sir,

‘Rowden Country Park’ development proposal

The plans for the development of Rowden Country Park are flawed, inconsistent and incomplete. Therefore the development proposal should be rejected.

There were fundamental questions and objections raised by myself and others in January 2015 which have still not been addressed in the revised documents. In the absence of satisfactory answers to those issues and objections, there is a high risk that the committee’s decision will be ill informed.

In addition to the points raised in my letter of last year, there remain a number of major shortcomings in the latest application which need to addressed.

Objection 1 – Procedural Failure

There has been a failure in the process of notifying the change in the proposals. The residents of Rowden Manor hamlet only became aware of the revised proposals when I found a notice (Regulation 22) lying in Rowden Lane on 13 August. This required any objections to be submitted by 18th August. Given the significant number of documents presented on the website, this seems to be an unrealistic timescale. This is particularly so given the timing of the submission - in the summer holidays.

I understand that the Town Plan inspectorate hearings are due to commence on 26 September yet the planning meeting for this application is scheduled for 21 September. If outline consent is granted at the meeting on 21 September, of what relevance is the Town Plan to this proposal? Surely the Town Plan should be agreed before piecemeal consent is granted, particularly considering the impact on infrastructure.

Objection 2 - Traffic Congestion

The revised traffic assessment shows a significant increase in traffic in some areas. The latest traffic impact assessment suggests that there will be increased traffic flow between the A4 Bath Road and Coppice Close. Such projections are significantly higher than those suggested in the 2014 proposal. More importantly, there is no comment on the Eastern Link Road.
which would significantly reduce traffic congestion resulting from the Rowden Country Park proposal. The East Link Road seems to be essential in order to relieve congestion, not just resulting from this development proposal, but across the whole of Chippenham.

Furthermore, the application fails to take into account the housing development which the applicant, Redcliffe Homes, is currently pursuing in Rowden Lane itself, nor does it consider the TRO which is proposed to prevent the residents of Rowden Lane exiting directly onto the A4. These points need to be addressed since without a complete assessment any decision taken by the planning committee is likely to be flawed.

Objection 3 - Cycleways and light pollution

The plans show various changes to the existing footpaths, yet I have been unable to find any request to amend these nor to convert them to Bridleways. I would also object to any formal paths and cycleways laid across the Conservation Area as I fear these would detract from the tranquillity of the area and I object strongly to any lighting of pathways or cycleways for the same reason. There is inadequate consideration given to the light polluting effects of such concepts.

Objection 4 – Flood Risk

I have a significant concern regarding the increased risk of flooding in the region of the Rowden Manor hamlet owing to the reduction in permeable land area close to the river Avon and the Pudding Brook. The fields to the south of the Conservation Area and directly in the location of the proposed development are frequently flooded in the winter months. There needs to be further flood risk assessment performed and effective mitigation plans generated to avoid such risk prior to any decision being taken regarding this application.

There is a significant amount of information on your website which I have not yet been able to assess, but having already identified a number of flawed analyses, I believe you should reject the application until all issues have put to rest by suitable revisions to the application.

Yours faithfully,

C P Blackman (sent by e-mail)