

Statement by Councillor Mrs A Hooks for Rayne Parish Council – Application No. 18/01065/OUT - Land South of Gilda Terrace and North of Flitch Way, Braintree

Good evening Chair and Members, the Parish Council thanks you for this opportunity to support the Planning Officer's recommendation to refuse this Planning Application. The village of Rayne, the west side of Braintree and the beautiful Flitch Way has had the "Brook Green" proposals hanging over its head for many years now. The land in the proposed development area has already been dismissed at a planning appeal in 2019 and this new proposal offers no new benefits to the community, whilst still destroying the area.

With this application, yet again, the Developer is trying to circumnavigate the Local Plan. The land in question was rejected in the Call for Sites exercise and is not included in the emerging Local Plan section 2. Although much will be said about a lack of 5 year housing supply by the Developer, this is not a good enough reason to accept all speculative development, especially when the adverse impacts of the development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits that it would bring to the area. It is also concerning that this developer is trying to get his original application passed by stealth, by getting smaller parcels of land planning permission at a time.

The development of this land would lead to the coalescence between Rayne and Braintree. This is unacceptable and is against Braintree District Council policy and it was also stated by the Secretary of State in refusing the Appeal by the same applicant for Land North & South of the Flitch Way, Pods Brook Road, Braintree that "the proposal would appreciably diminish the sense of separation between the settlements of Braintree and Rayne". This application diminishes the same green wedge that is used to protect the existing settlements.

The detrimental impact on the Flitch Way and the surrounding landscape character is huge and unacceptable. The Flitch Way is a linear Country Park. This means that it should be an area for people to visit and enjoy, in a countryside environment. The building of the proposed site would essentially make the scenic Flitch Way a footpath next to a housing estate. With views from the Flitch Way changing from a rolling open field landscape to houses. Unfortunately this kind of change has occurred further long the Flitch Way, namely at Takeley. These developments have had such an adverse effect on the country park, that Braintree District Council should not allow this to happen in our District, on our watch.

Although the consultee reports do not agree with the Parish Council and local residents, there will be an adverse impact on infrastructure which includes Highways (traffic), health and education.

Another concern that the parish council would also note that the comparator used for housing density is Braintree town centre when the site is just as close to the village of Rayne which clearly has a completely different housing density as it is a rural area rather than urban town.

Lastly we have had little engagement from the developer who did not attend meetings to discuss this new application, so therefore we have very little confidence in the building of the proposed development.

Rayne Parish Council thanks you for listening and urges you to support the officer's recommendation for refusal.