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YEARS



Campaign to Protect
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Northamptonshire

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Mr C Bates
West Northamptonshire Council
One Angel Square
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17th July 2026

Dear Mr Bates

2026/2019/MAF – Construction of 26 dwellings, a local shop, car parking, a local equipped area for play, Public open space, landscaping and associated Infrastructure

CPRE Northamptonshire lodges a formal objection to planning application 2026/2019/MAF the above proposed development in the village of Helmdon. This objection is submitted under our remit to protect and promote the countryside for its intrinsic character, landscape value, biodiversity, and amenity.

Our assessment is based on the applicant's documents on the West Northamptonshire Planning Portal, reviewed against national policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS), and the Draft Local Plan.

We respectfully request that this application is refused for the following reasons:

1) Inappropriate development in open countryside and harm to landscape character.

NPPF 187(a)-(b) requires policies and decisions to protect valued landscapes and to recognise "the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside", including "the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land". The proposal develops an area of open countryside close the village of Helmdon and outside the current village boundary. This conflicts with JCS Policy R1. (See also NPPF 131, 132 and 135 on design quality; especially 135(c) – being "sympathetic to ... landscape setting".

2) Loss of agricultural land (BMV)

BMV protection is addressed in NPPF 187(b) and footnote 65 (to para 188): where significant development of agricultural land is necessary, areas of poorer quality should be preferred to higher quality land.

While it is recognised that a significant proportion of the site is to be retained as public open space, with improvements, access to the area is through the development.

2) Affordable Housing Needs Statement

We acknowledge that West Northamptonshire has a lack of affordable housing and that suitable provision must be made to meet this need. This statement provides background and also identifies Helmdon as being in one of the least affordable areas of the county. The statement does not however, demonstrate that Helmdon has an affordable housing need.

Locating affordable housing in a rural village without local employment and public transport would be a mistake and is not a sustainable solution.

3) Affirmation Report

The applicant has presented this report as justification of an affordable housing need in the village of Helmdon. The survey underpinning the report is based on survey carried out in four villages and while a need of 14 households is found it is not clear where these are located. The arbitrary selection of villages, all without public transport, is not explained.

The applicant has not demonstrated that Helmdon has a need for 14 affordable houses or that locating all the need in this village is suitable or sustainable.

3) Transport Statement

This document confirms that while active travel routes are available within the village no Public Transport links exist to nearby villages or larger centers of employment. This makes the village a poor choice for affordable homes.

The development is not sustainable as it relies on ownership and use of private road transport.

4) Flood Risk Assessment

The Flood Risk Assessment sets out the strategy for controlling run-off by the use of an attenuation pond, defining the slopes used for the landscaping and specifying that it should be lined.

The FRA also states that additional SUDs measures will be included in the final design but without any detail.

5) Visual effects – inadequate assessment

The applicant has failed to demonstrate that the development will harmonise with the current built environment of the village.

6) Planning, Design and Access Statement

This defines the mix of affordable housing, by type, and confirms that it is 50% of the total development. We note that the separate drawing P25 030 006 Tenure Plan showing this information has been superseded but no replacement is showing on the Portal.

We are concerned that the Developer will seek to reduce the percentage or reduce the type of affordable housing proposed on the basis of viability. This is common practice and should be resisted. The viability of the development is a developer risk. No diminution of the affordable housing provision should be accepted by the Council unless the developer can demonstrate that Central Government Policy has changed viability adversely.

Conclusion

The proposal does not align with the current Joint Core Strategy or with the Draft Local Plan, recently open for consultation. Development for housing in 'Other Villages' is linked strongly to the provision of affordable housing. In the Draft Local Plan this linkage has been strengthened – Policy R3, HO4 and HO5 refer. In both Plans the provision of Affordable housing is linked to an identified need.

In this development Project the applicant has not demonstrated that there is an affordable Housing need of this scale in the Village of Helmdon. On this measure alone it should be refused.

The Joint Core Strategy Policy H3(c) and the Draft Local Plan Policy HO4(ii) requires arrangements for the management and occupation of the affordable dwellings to be in place. Such a structure or commitment is absent from the submitted planning application.

WE believe that the proposed development does not meet the requirements set out in the Joint Core Strategy or the Draft Local Plan that would allow approval. We therefore recommend that it is refused.

Please record this objection and we ask that CPRE Northamptonshire is consulted on all future applications or amendments relating to this site.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony Lynes

For and on behalf of CPRE Northamptonshire

