

**ADDRESS TO BOLSOVER DISTRICT PLANNING COMMITTEE
ON BEHALF OF BARLBOROUGH FIRST
REGARDING A PROPOSED PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL
AT BARLBOROUGH LINKS, BARLBOROUGH.**

INTRODUCTION

The proposal for a secure psychiatric hospital on this site was always going to be very controversial and the overwhelming opposition to the proposal should come as no surprise to anyone. Barlborough First strongly believes that the opposition is not an emotional response, which can be dismissed as having little rational basis; quite the reverse, there are cogent reasons why the Planning Committee should today refuse planning permission for Cygnet's proposal.

BARLBOROUGH FIRST'S OBJECTIONS

Barlborough First's case against the secure psychiatric hospital may be summarised as follows:

1. Barlborough First strongly supports the Case Officer's Recommendation to refuse planning permission for the psychiatric hospital for the reasons set out in the Officer's report which I would summarise as follows:

- i) The proposal is contrary to the South Barlborough Brief because of its height, fortified appearance and impact on views from the surrounding area, all of which are contrary to the aim for good design set out in PPS 1, Policy 4 of the East Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy, policies GEN1 and GEN2 of the Bolsover District Local Plan.
- ii) The site could be developed for B1 or B2 uses with more knowledge-based jobs than a C2A use, the proposal will not produce sufficient community or employment benefits, and no overriding need for the facility has been demonstrated. The proposal, therefore, conflicts with Policy 22 of the East Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy, EMP5 of the Bolsover DLP, the aims of the Bolsover Community Strategy and the Alliance SSP sub regional strategy.
- iii) The site is not well located to serve its proposed catchment area, has poor public transport connections and is, therefore, not a sustainable location, contrary to PPS1, PPG 13 and TRA1 of the Bolsover Local Plan.
- iv) The fortified design of the building will intensify community fears about public safety and crime, and is, therefore, contrary to policy 4 of the East Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy and policy GEN 1 of the Bolsover District LP.

2. Barlborough First, in addition, objects on the following grounds:

- i) The highway and traffic impacts are generally under-estimated by the applicants who would never have to live with the impacts of extra traffic generated by the proposal. Conversely, the quality of the public transport facilities and advantages of existing pedestrian access arrangements have been exaggerated.
- ii) The applicants have also exaggerated the employment and other community benefits arising from the proposal and have made assertions without the necessary evidence to support them; for example, the likelihood of anything other than a small number of local people getting jobs at the secure hospital; or the local purchase of goods and supplies on any really significant scale.
- iii) The proposed Section 106 benefits are imprecise and there is no evidence they will continue in the long run; for example the extra policing will only be funded in the short term.
- iv) Community consultation has not been carried out to any significant extent and should have been in line with the recent Government Circular (CLG1/2006).
- v) There is little evidence that alternative sites have been looked at and in view of the controversial nature of the proposed psychiatric hospital, they certainly should have been; it is also the case that such proposals are more appropriate to existing hospital sites where possible.
- vi) The Aspen Lodge case in Mexborough, Doncaster, raises similar issues (particularly design and community concerns and fears about crime and safety) which the Inspector in that case cited in dismissing an appeal against refusal of planning permission for a similar kind of use.
- vii) Cases quoted by the applicants in support of their proposal are significantly different and Planning Committee would be well advised to ignore them (an old military base in one case and an existing similar use in the other).

CONCLUSION

For all these reasons including both those referred to in the Officer's report, summarised above, and the additional ones set out specifically on behalf of Barlborough First, the Planning Committee is urged to refuse planning permission to construct a 60 bed psychiatric hospital and other facilities at the Barlborough Links site, Barlborough.