

# Plans for 90 new homes in Christchurch described as 'madness'

5:00pm Monday 13th August 2012 in Christchurch By Katie Clark



UP IN ARMS: Residents protest against the scheme.

PLANS to build a 90-house development at the back of homes in Christchurch have been labelled ‘madness’ by councillors.

Portfield ward members Margaret Phipps and Lisle Smith have raised concerns that such a development would only lead to more traffic congestion on Fairmile Road, which already sees around 20,000 vehicles a day travelling through the area.

The properties, which were proposed as part of [Christchurch Borough Council](#)’s core strategy, will be in addition to homes already given planning permission, which include 38 properties currently under construction at Bronte Avenue.

The pair’s criticism echoes 600 objections already logged by residents, who set-up a campaign to make fellow neighbours and homeowners aware of the plan.

Responses from the Marsh Lane Action Group have also been backed by Natural England and the RSPB.

And as well as the increased traffic issues, the Portfield councillors also have concerns regarding the proximity of Marsh Lane, to St Catherine’s Hill, a site of special scientific interest.

Cllr Phipps said: “The B3073 Fairmile Road is a main route into Christ-church, which runs very slowly at peak times and is sometimes at a standstill.

“This development would add even more traffic to this road, which is totally unacceptable.

“It is suggested in the Core Strategy that mitigation measures can be taken to alleviate the impact on the highway system but I can’t see how that will be possible.

“There is no room to widen Fairmile and it is just not suitable for even more traffic.”

Cllr Smith added: “One day it took me 17-and-a-half minutes just to exit from **Jumpers** Road onto Fair-mile because the traffic was so heavy.

“To even think of building an additional 90 houses and adding to the cars using this main route is madness.”

Not only will the traffic affect Portfield and Jumpers but it will have a knock-on effect causing further traffic problems on the B3073 towards the town centre and also at Blackwater junction, they added.

Their responses have been admitted to planners, who will be analysing all feedback.

A response is due to be issued in the autumn.

## **HUGE PRESSURE TO PROVIDE HOUSING**

Christchurch faces major pressure to provide more housing.

There is a high level of local housing need that cannot be met in the private market.

The local economy also requires new homes to provide for the workforce.

The Core Strategy recognises that new developments are constrained by the importance of the natural environment and flood plains with the designated greenbelt limiting growth prospects.

The future economic requirements of Christchurch, East Dorset and the region are said to provide exceptional circumstances for changes to greenbelt boundaries.

## **CONCERN OVER LOSS OF GREENBELT LAND**

THE loss of greenbelt land has become the main issue for Christchurch residents responding to the Core Strategy.

While it is recognised that Christchurch is one of the least affordable areas in the South West for housing, residents are concerned that by building on the greenbelt, it will set a precedent for the future, leading to the loss of open space in the borough.

There are plans for an urban extension of 850 new homes at Roeshot Hill, where the largest allotment site in Christchurch, currently lies.

And as well as the 90 homes at Marsh Lane, planners are also proposing 45 homes in Burton, which has also provoked a large swathe of opposition from villagers, determined to save their precious green space.