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'Bad day for democracy' as 212 homes approved

by CHRISTINA MASSEY

"YOU should be ashamed of yourselves," one angry resident shouted following the decision to approve a controversial housing development near Burton.

Despite fierce objections from both parish councillors and villagers, the plans for 212 new homes on greenfield land off Burton Road, Tutbury, were given the goahead at a meeting of East Staffordshire Borough Council's planning applications committee.

The proposals, submitted by Peveril Homes, include the construction of 14 commercial units on the 15.2-hectare site, as well as a community building, the provision of open space, allotments and a sports pitch.

A second application to build 12 detached self-build dwellings on the site was also approved.

The development will represent a large chunk of the 13,000 new homes the council needs to build by 2031 to meet population forecasts.

A core strategy is currently under consideration by planning bosses and will be released next year, outlining the borough's future development strategy.

At the moment, however, critics argue the council is unable to demonstrate a deliverable five-year supply of housing sites, potentially leaving it open to legal action from developers.

Councillor Ken Builth said: "My problem is that we haven't got a core strategy in place. If we're not careful our options could be decided by developers."

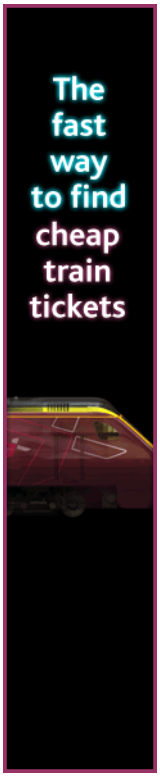
Joanne Roebuck, from the borough council's planning team, warned that if the committee decided against the application and the planning inspectorate overturned it, the authority could be left with a hefty legal bill, potentially reaching up to potential £7,000 per house.

The fear among parish councils is that now the application has been approved, it will open the floodgates for similar developments in villages such as Barton and Rolleston.

Speaking after the meeting, Tutbury parish councillor Sue Adams said: "They'll approve every big development now because they're scared.

"Why did they have a meeting anyway if they're so afraid of being turned down that they have to say 'yes'?"

Former Tutbury Parish Council chairman Bill Crossley said: "It's a bad day for democracy."



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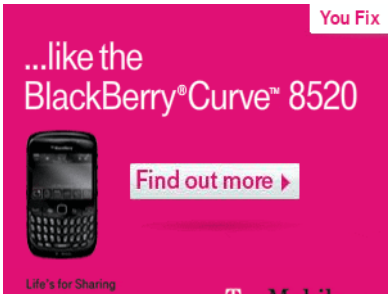
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