



Hartlebury Parish Council

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4th July 2025

Dear Wychavon planning authority

Re application W/25/ 01088/OUT at De Beers Garden Centre.

The Parish Council is dismayed at the proposed loss of facilities (DeBeers) currently available for Hartlebury residents and those destination visitors from further afield. Plans have been developed over a period of 3 years with advice from the planning department. It is clear where suggestions have been made resulting in this application. (3rd version- each time with more units).

The site has been progressively developed over about 50 years, starting with a caravan and a poly tunnel. It doesn't have proper frontage on Worcester Road as the gates are set back where Charlton Lane and Summerway Lane combine on the outside of the bend. This made for an awkward junction with vehicles converging and crossing on the same area just off the main road. The widened area also serves as a bus stop. This is not ideal but is quirky and typically rural. Someone has suggested that a change of road layout may help achieve a positive outcome if included as part of the application. The case is not well made and some of the Transport comments do not make sense.

The argument that replacing ugly rural agricultural buildings with even worse urban housing is appalling even if it is screened from the main road. Hartlebury Parish deserves better than this.

Torton is not even a village but a small hamlet with circa 100 residents with dwellings mainly fronting onto Torton Lane plus some ribbon development on Worcester Road. The proposals will take away local facilities and double the number of residents, cramming them into a very small site.

The transport implications have not been thought through. The site has parking probably based on national parameters of 55 +2 visitor spaces. The current usage has cars coming and going steadily throughout the day with occasional deliveries. A residential site will have a concentration of journeys at rush hour when there is queueing towards black bridge in the morning and towards Kidderminster in the evening. The increase in cars coming from the

site will likely have to wait in a queue to get out onto the busy Worcester Road. As will delivery vehicles serving 24 households.

If we look at the routes likely to be taken by any new residents the following observations can be made. If the destination is north in the Kidderminster- Wolverhampton direction traffic will turn left towards Low Hill traffic lights. Should the destination be Hartlebury- Ombersley- Worcester- Hagley etc. traffic will turn right towards Black Bridge traffic lights and Wilden View Special School which both cause delays at busy times. The return routes will be more problematic especially from the Hagley- Droitwich direction. Return traffic will almost certainly use Torton Lane because there is no right turn towards Kidderminster at Black Bridge traffic lights. That looks at the North/South traffic from and to the site.

If we look at traffic with a destination in the direction of Stourport- Bewdley etc. to the West, the likely route to use would be one of the two other lanes impacted by this proposal. Either Charlton Lane or Summerway Lane. Both lanes are single track with occasional passing spaces as, of course, is Torton Lane. Vehicles often must reverse a considerable distance to be able to pass each other. Speed is already becoming an issue even before this proposed development. Whenever there are local diversions, they already cause extreme chaos in these narrow lanes.

If we look at the landscape and visual impact assessment there are all sorts of mistakes showing a lack of local knowledge. (too many to list here) The arguments are weak and poorly based as a result. Let's look at the view of the site. Coming down Summerway Lane there are 3 right angle bends proposed. As you turn right onto the estate you are confronted by a row of cars backed by a barracks type row of 7 houses, then a left handed 90 degree bend, this time with unsighted parking spaces (dangerous), then almost immediately the access road, followed by the final 90 degree turn onto Charlton Lane, (single or double carriage way – not clear on the plan). There are large and long agricultural vehicles that use these lanes. This is taking an Urban type of community and placing it in a rural setting. In no way does this proposal sit comfortably in the setting. The visual effect will be of a car based urban environment with houses arranged in the worst possible way, too close together, all done to maximise profit.

Let us look at services expected. The current residents of Torton are not well served. The mobile signal is extremely weak and often cuts out. There is no fibre broadband. Most of Torton is not on mains drainage – the plans dodge all these issues.

Let us have a look at the site layout. The plans seek to screen the site with hedging etc. Change a right of way (Summerway Lane) and move the bus stop. There must be provision for walking and cycling. If you assume you are walking. How do you approach the front of the house? Answer- between cars! Are there pavements? Answer- not everywhere (access from the bus stop to units 3 to 11, & then units 12 to 17 is down the road between parked cars)

Access to facilities and services- The nearest shop is the Post Office in Hartlebury Village, well over a mile. The railway station is even further. The nearest playground is adjacent to the village hall. There is no way that you would choose to walk anywhere from this site, everything is too far. Most travel will be by car. The impact on the surrounding lanes will be severe and impact all the existing residents adversely.

There is no indication of how the affordable homes claim of 50% is achieved or of how it will be managed.

To summarise –Hartlebury Parish Council strongly oppose and object to this application on the grounds that it is an over development of the site in terms of the number units, is poorly designed in terms of traffic around and within the site and it fails to sit comfortably in the

environment. The Parish Council believe that housing development in this area is not appropriate and is not consistent with the SWDP and green belt policy
Yours sincerely

Signed by the Clerk and RFO to Hartlebury Parish Council
On behalf of Hartlebury Parish Council
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