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Littleton-upon-Severn residents' concerns over activity centre proposal U-turn

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PEOPLE in Littleton-upon-Severn are up in arms over a U-turn by planning officers, which they believe will put children's lives at risk.

Residents living near the Whale Wharf Business Park are outraged by South Gloucestershire Council's change in opinion, which could now allow the site to be turned into an educational activity centre despite concerns over flooding.

The application has received more than 40 objections from local people concerned the site is not suitable to house children, because of its proximity to the River Severn and the poor road network.

Charlie Tull, the developer behind the plans, wants to convert the existing buildings into accommodation for 300 children, plus staff and teachers, a sports hall, classrooms and a dining hall, and make use of two lakes and a large field.

Local resident Julian Cooper said: "Local lanes are blind, single track and dangerous.

"It is impossible to imagine how large coaches could use these lanes safely, when they are also heavily used."

Fellow resident Jim Turton said: "It is impossible for residents to support activity in a place that is so dangerous and difficult to access in times of flood."

Cllr Mike Hawkins, chairman of Aust Parish Council, said: "I understand why South Gloucestershire has had to change its view, but the risks in my opinion are far too great.

"I believe we have to oppose it because it's unsafe. We will have children asleep below sea level, at risk."

Last month South Gloucestershire Council's development control committee voted to defer making a decision and asked for legal advice on whether or not requesting a flood evacuation procedure be in place before the site was occupied, would be adequate measures.

At the time planning officers at the authority recommended councillors refuse permission but that has now changed to approval.

In his revised report, planning officer Simon Penketh said: "The provision of an evacuation procedure that can be complied with is a reasonable solution.

"On this basis, it is considered that the officer's previous consideration and approach was overly pre-cautious."

South Gloucestershire Council's development control committee will meet today, Thursday, April 14 (2.30pm) at the council offices, Castle Street, Thornbury, to decide on the application.

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<https://www.gazetteseries.co.uk/news/8968441.littleton-upon-severn-residents-concerns-over-activity-centre-proposal-u-turn/>