

NEWINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 14 January 2020 in the Newington Room, Newington Village Hall.

Present: Cllr Stephen Harvey (Chairman), Cllr Richard Palmer (Vice Chairman), Cllr Steve Godmon, Cllr Debbie Haigh, Cllr James Morgan; visiting Members Cllr Ryan Condron, Cllr Richard Geldard, Cllr Elaine Jackson, Cllr Tony Mould; and Mrs Wendy Licence (Clerk).

Also present were Paul Paulding, Andrew Wilford and Tom Wolfe-Murray from Esquires Developments and thirty- two members of the public.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Cllr Harvey welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Members of the Parish Council and the delegation from Esquires Developments to the attendees.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Cllr Eric Layer (holiday); apology noted.

Apologies had also been received from County Councillor Mike Whiting (at another meeting) and Ward Member Alan Horton (at another meeting).

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were declared

4. CONTEXT: SUMMARY OF THE PLANNING PROCESS AND THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

Cllr Harvey said everything requires planning permission and the Parish Council always comments on proposals within the parish. The proposal for the next phase of land at the rear of Eden Meadow is not a formal application.

5. PRESENTATION BY ESQUIRE DEVELOPMENTS REGARDING THEIR EMERGING PROPOSALS AT LAND REAR OF EDEN MEADOW

A presentation was given by Esquire Developments on their proposals for forty dwellings on the land rear of Eden Meadow.

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS.

1 - I am concerned about air quality and the volume of traffic.

2 - The language used for the presentation is confusing and makes reference to other land. The proposal for a green tree is a modern design which is not suited to the Conservation Area in the village centre which has historic buildings. The city tree is best suited for a city site rather than a rural site.

3 – I dispute your traffic figures, the aggregate with other developments in the village is a concern. The A2 cannot cope and the effect of the Watling Place development opposite has not been felt yet. This proposal will add to the traffic problem. Twenty-five years ago the A2 could not cope and a by-pass was considered although it was not built; the traffic has since quadrupled.

Cllr Harvey said the Government decided against a by-pass twenty-five years ago. The air quality monitoring station is being moved and a new station will be installed next to the Co-op.

Mr Wilford said that they have to look at a wider area in the context of land so that other land is not prejudiced. There will be a foot path to enable residents to walk into Newington. The green tree is very modern and a bespoke tree can be made to fit in more appropriately with Newington. There is flexibility to the site of the green tree and it will help improve the rural area. The A2 is a busy road however vehicles are moving towards electric vehicles although this will not solve the situation overnight.

Cllr Harvey said it has been reported that brakes cause more pollution.

Cllr Mould said the proposal is for forty houses on four and a half hectares and there is an option on another forty-five hectares so there could be a further one hundred houses.

Mr Wilford said there is an option on the land and that there is potentially a second access onto the A2.

4- We bought our house two years ago, what will you do to protect our view?

5- Five cars an hour use the turning circle in Eden Meadow, this proposal will bring sixty to ninety more cars. If cars are parked on the road, vehicles have to mount the kerb to pass.

6- When we bought our house in Eden Meadow we were told there would be no further development.

7- We pay for the maintenance of the road; how will construction lorries get to the site?

Mr Wilford said there is potentially a second access by 148 High Street. Esquire Developments has documentation to show that there were no promises regarding no further development.

8- You cannot widen the road, I own the land.

Mr Paulding said residents contribute to the maintenance of the road, Esquire Developments owns the road. A highways consultant has advised that there is still the ability to widen the road. Esquire Developments has control of the road and can widen it to accommodate construction vehicles.

9- It is a private road owned by the residents and we can change the management company.

10- I have lived here for forty-eight years and there has been considerable development during that time. If this continues Newington will lose its village status. We were told that this land would never get built on.

Cllr Harvey said every authority must have a five-year plan; Swale is short on its housing target. This site has never appeared on a list of sites to be developed.

11- Pollution is a big concern for residents. It has been said that this will be resolved soon, why not wait until it has been resolved and then look at building more houses?

Cllr Palmer said the traffic model is incorrect. The development will be for two, three, four and five bedroom houses and that 60% of vehicles will turn right at peak time, if this is the case they will not be able to leave the development. Drivers will have to turn left. There is also a problem with air quality in Keycol Hill. You may have electric car charging points on the

properties but not everyone will have electric cars. If you were serious about air quality you would include green measures such as heat pumps and solar panels in each house. Mr Wilford said that a city tree would be on the roundabout, there is government money available for this. The primary route for construction traffic would be through Eden Meadow.

12- This is Grade 1 agricultural land and the expansion of house building is an unwelcome intrusion into a farming rural area that results in significant adverse impact on the natural beauty and qualities to a distinctive character landscape of the area.

13- The footpath from Callaways lane to Cranbrook Woods is elevated higher than the site, there needs to be a realistic plan showing what will be visible. The site is outside the built-up boundary. The Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment document (NN2) ratified by Swale Borough Council, states there must be a strategic gap between Newington and Keycol Hill, forty houses would destroy the gap. This is Grade 1 agricultural land.

Mr Wilford said the view point on the presentation is just one example, there will be full landscape views. CGI will show what the development will look like. Swale Borough Council is progressing a new Local Plan, the government wants over 1,000 houses per annum but Swale has only managed 755 houses per annum. The grade of the land will be checked.

14- When is a village a town? Will the birds like the city trees?

Mr Paulding said he did not know.

15- Your leaflet said this would be phase 2 of the development and you have said there could be phase 3 and phase 4. This is destroying Grade 1 agricultural land. Are you aware that there will be brickearth lorries going through Newington for the next twenty years which will cause dust and further vehicle emissions? The A2 is in a poor state.

16- Will the charging points be at every property? Who will pay for the running costs and maintenance of the city tree?

Mr Wilford said every house will have a charging point. The city trees have solar panel and are self-filtrating, further information will be obtained from the manufacturer. If the city trees if on public land there will be S106 money for the maintenance of the tree.

17- There will be forty-nine houses on the site, the Persimmon development has one hundred and twenty-four houses, there are more new dwellings at The Tracies and at other sites in the village, where will the children go to school?

Mr Wilford said there is an application for a new secondary school at Rainham and KCC has a strategy for younger children, the developer pays a contribution to this.

Cllr Harvey said the proposal is for a High School and there would be no increase in grammar places, Newington is in a selective area. S106 money will go to Quinton for primary education so parents will have to drive. KCC has stated there can be no further expansion at Newington School. People moving into Newington are unable to get their children into the village school.

18- There are badger setts in Cranbrook Woods.

19- There are one hundred and twenty-four houses at Persimmon, this proposal is another one hundred and forty houses, there will be a further two and a half thousand houses between Newington and Bobbing. There is talk of electric cars but this will still add to the traffic on the roads. Developments are being done piecemeal.

Cllr Harvey said the Parish Council has a very limited remit; the Borough Council deals with housing, the County Council deals with roads, and the Highways Agency deals with larger roads.

20- The proposed houses are much smaller than those already built, what about car parking space?

Mr Wolfe-Murray said the proposal is for a mix of two, three, four and five-bedroom houses, some attached, some semi-detached and some terraced. There will be a broad mix as in the village. The car park density is not known. The majority of the houses will have two parking spaces and also visitor spaces and will be compliant with KCC and Swale Borough Council standards. The five-bedroom houses will have more than two parking spaces. There are not many garages. All the details will be in the detailed planning application.

Mr Wilford said that garages cannot be counted. The courtyard plot will have barn parking.

20- There is little local employment, what is the railway doing?

Cllr Harvey said that previously it has been mentioned that the railway will respond to demand.

21- Will there be any properties to suit elderly or disabled residents?

Mr Wilford said the layout does not have any bungalows.

Mr Paulding said there will be affordable housing on the site.

Mr Wilford said 40% of the housing will be affordable housing, so sixteen units.

22- Swale has a plan for housing and the need swayed the Planning Inspector when the nine houses went to appeal. I am concerned that there is still a shortfall in housing numbers.

Cllr Harvey said there is pressure to increase it to 1,000 houses per annum. The Planning Inspector said that at Pond Farm, the lack of supply was less of an issue than air quality and effect on views over the landscape.

23- How many residents are estimated per dwelling?

Mr Wilford said 2.4 people per home and forty houses would be just under one hundred people. The impact on the local school and doctors increases although it is difficult to know where they will come from, they may be local and in the school and doctors already.

Mr Paulding said developers are dictated to and are told the site will generate demand.

24- In the green space, will there be a play area outside S106?

Mr Wilford said that they could look at doing this or if the existing facilities need upgrading there would be S106 money available.

25- The housing number is currently 755 per annum, the government want 1050 but Swale thinks this is too many. There are many areas in Swale which are not suitable for development because it is marshland, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or air quality issues.

Mr Paulding said that he was pleased residents liked what was built at Eden Meadow and hoped that if Newington had to meet Swale's demand for housing that residents would support Esquire's scheme.

7. CONCLUSION: SUMMARY OF THE EVENING AND NEXT STEPS

Cllr Harvey said that the evening had been a consultation not an application. Hopefully Esquires will take comments into consideration. Details of the application, when lodged, will be published in the Village Voice and residents must send comments into Swale Borough Council.

Cllr Harvey thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.37pm

Signed as a true record of the meeting

Chairman

28 January 2020