

NEWINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the **Planning Committee** held virtually on 9 April 2020.

Present: Cllr Stephen Harvey (Chairman), Cllr Richard Palmer (Vice Chairman), Cllr Steve Godmon, Cllr Debbie Haigh, and Cllr James Morgan; and Mrs Wendy Licence (Clerk).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

All Members were present.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were declared.

3. PLANNING APPLICATION

Ref: 20/501475/FULL

Address: Land Rear of Eden Meadow High Street Newington ME9 7JH

Proposal: Erection of 40 No. residential dwellings including affordable housing and associated car parking, hardstanding, landscaping and open spaces, infrastructure including SuDs and earthworks accessed from the existing junction serving Eden Meadow from the A2 High Street

Councillors considered the application and were mindful of residents' comments made at the public meeting on 14 January and also of the comments already lodged on the Planning Portal. Cllr Harvey **PROPOSED** that the Parish Council responds to the application; **SECONDED** by Cllr Palmer: **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**.

Cllr Harvey **PROPOSED** that the Parish Council objects to the proposal; **SECONDED** by Cllr Haigh: **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**.

Cllr Harvey informed Members that officers have said, that unless refused by them, the application will go to Swale Borough Council Planning Committee in the autumn. There is a lot of technical information with the application and it would be beneficial to seek comments from Professor Stephen Peckham, there may be a cost for this.

Cllr Palmer said it needs to be ascertained whether free advice would be available and if not how much it would cost. SBCllr Tim Valentine, Swale Borough Council Cabinet Member for the Environment, may also be able to recommend an expert.

ACTION: Cllr Palmer to contact SBCllr Valentine.

Cllr Harvey said that expert advice may not be able to be drawn up before the deadline for comments, the Parish Council does have an extension of time for comment but there could also be a rider in the response that further comments will be submitted.

Cllr Palmer **PROPOSED** that the costs and timescale for expert advice be obtained; **SECONDED** by Cllr Harvey: **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**.

Cllr Harvey said that key concerns are that there would be an adverse impact on the air quality in Newington and that this was one of the two reasons why the Pond Farm appeal was refused after the Planning Inquiry. There will be loss of visual amenity as the site would be visible from the Boyces Hill Public Right of Way ZR67 and Public Right of Way ZR65 Cranbrook Lane to Cranbrook Woods. The site is Grade 1 agricultural land. It is outside the built-up area and in a Strategic Countryside Gap. The site is in Swale Borough Council's Landscape Sensitivity Assessment. It is an incursion into the open, rural landscape and countryside to the south of the High Street and would significantly erode the open, rural character of the area. It is contrary to the Local Plan. The application suggests that traffic would go to Rainham rather than turn right against heavy traffic; that there would be greater use of electric cars and artificial trees which would counter increased pollution but this is unlikely.

Cllr Haigh said that residents have said there is insufficient parking for the current nine houses and this shows that the developer's statistical modelling is wrong. There will be air quality issues caused by further development. Eden Meadow is single track and the entrance cannot take more than one vehicle at a time, there needs to be regular passing spaces. The volume of vehicles will cast doubt on the statistics. The built-up boundary ends at 152 High Street so the site is not adjacent as stated in the Planning Statement, it is two properties away. Swale Borough Council has 4.6 years housing supply and is three hundred and ten houses short, Newington already has had more than three hundred houses and has had its fair share. Swale's Policy DM31: Agricultural Land, states that development on agricultural land will only be permitted when there is an overriding need that cannot be met on land within the built-up areas. This would cause a significant loss of a large area of best and most versatile agricultural land and render rest of the site as unviable for agricultural use.

Cllr Harvey said the developer has publicly said they will seek to expand further.

Cllr Palmer said that parking standards need to be looked at.

Cllr Harvey said that the Parish Council needs to submit a response as soon as possible. Swale Borough Council sent letters to residents last Friday and Monday and there is a concern that some residents are will not be informed as COVID-19 restrictions mean they will not receive a hard copy of Village Voice, may not see lamp post notices and will not pick up news through general conversations in the village.

Cllr Harvey thanked the developer for sending paper copies of the plans to the Parish Council. Cllr Godmon said the application states there are two trains an hour to London but this is only in peak time.

Cllr Haigh said that Swale Borough Council had asked Rural Planning Ltd for a report and this focusses on DM31 and the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land. Is there an opportunity for the Borough Council to expand the answer and look at the accumulated loss of best and most versatile land? Grade 1 agricultural land was lost by the Persimmon development and also with the nine current houses in Eden Meadow.

Cllr Harvey said that supplementary comments would be submitted.

Cllr Haigh said the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is very misleading because the marker of where the site will be is on the skyline and there is no appreciation as to the impact of the forty houses. The Parish Council could challenge this and submit photos.

ACTION: Cllr Morgan agreed to provide photos.

Cllr Haigh reported that when she has driven to the station at 6.30am it is very busy and this needs to be challenged in the statistics submitted.

Cllr Harvey said The Times has reported that pollution will have a greater impact on people who have had COVID-19 as the virus affects the lungs.

Cllr Palmer said the development will also affect Keycol Hill and Bobbing Parish Council needs to be informed of this application.

Cllr Morgan said that he is concerned about the impact the development will have on the environment.

ACTION: Cllr Morgan to draft comments on the relevant documents

Cllr Harvey thanked Members for attending and for their comments. A draft response will be circulated for comment.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.45pm

Signed as a true record of the meeting:

Chairman
28 April 2020