
PLANNING WORKING GROUP

MINUTES of the Meeting held at the site listed below on Monday, 25 November 2019 from 10.00am - 10.53am.

PRESENT: Councillors Cameron Beart, Mike Dendor (Substitute for Councillor Roger Clark), Tim Gibson (Chairman), James Hall, James Hunt, Elliott Jayes, Peter Marchington, Paul Stephen, Eddie Thomas and Tony Winckless.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Philippa Davies, Alun Millard and Jim Wilson.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Roger Clark, Simon Clark, David Simmons and Tim Valentine.

372 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No interests were declared.

373 **LAND AT BELGRAVE ROAD, HALFWAY ME12 3EE**

The Chairman welcomed Members, officers, the agent, applicants and members of the public to the meeting.

The Major Projects Officer introduced the application which was for the erection of 153 dwellings, including open space, together with associated access, parking, infrastructure, landscaping and earthworks. He explained that the site measured 5.3 hectares, and the majority of the dwellings would be two storey, with eight being 2.5 storey, and they would be a mix of 2, 3 and 4 bedroom housing. The Major Projects Officer explained that the site was allocated for housing in the 2017 Local Plan, and Policy A13 in the Local Plan required a minimum of 140 dwellings on the site, emphasising that 140 was the minimum number of dwellings likely to be acceptable. He reported that none of the technical consultees had raised objection to the application, subject to appropriate planning conditions and developer contributions to mitigate the impact of the development. Queenborough Town Council and Minster Parish Council objected to the application, along with 31 local residents, and the comments were noted in the 7 November 2019 Planning Committee report. The Major Projects Officer reported that the scheme was considered to be appropriate, with a good mix of housing types and density. It was not considered to have unacceptable impacts and was in accordance with the adopted Local Plan.

The Agent added that the development would provide much needed housing and he outlined the developer contributions.

Although the proposed development was not situated within Minster Parish it was suggested that it could have an impact on Minster residents, and a representative of Minster Parish Council spoke against the application and raised concern with the impact on the infrastructure as a result of the development.

Local residents raised objections which included the following:

- Where did the demand for 'much needed housing' come from?;
- the ground near the site was unstable;
- the local sewers were not fit for purpose and already could not cope, without the addition of 153 houses;
- the development would be detrimental to existing local housing, particularly nearby bungalows and there would be overlooking and overshadowing;
- the highway mitigation measures did not resolve the highway issues;
- there would be additional vehicles as a result of the development which would cause congestion issues;
- the corner of Belgrave Road/Queenborough Road was dangerous;
- there were already issues with traffic in the area, this would get worse;
- traffic lights at Halfway would worsen traffic issues;
- if the development was going to go ahead, better access was needed onto the A249;
- insurance would go up and there would be increased flood risk;
- impact on other roads, such as The Rise;
- there would be a lot of noise during construction of the development;
- a lot of residents moved to the area because of the peace and quiet and this would be lost;
- the roads could not cope with increased traffic;
- there was a lack of services, such as medical and educational;
- there was not enough open space provision for families;
- mix of elderly and children could raise safety issues;
- the road needed to be improved;
- infrastructure on the Isle of Sheppey as a whole needed to be improved;
- there were already flooding issues on the site, and this would get worse;
- the development should be built somewhere else;
- the tallest dwellings were being built next to the existing bungalows; and
- the ground was unstable and waterlogged.

In response, the Agent explained that open space was provided on the site and this included the provision of toddler play equipment, with a link to the existing local open space to encourage use of that facility. In terms of the mix of housing, he considered there to be a good mix of units, and 10% of the dwellings would be affordable housing units, with shared ownership. The Agent added that demand for housing came from the Local Plan process, and the resulting housing target for the Borough. He considered that suitable access could be delivered by using Belgrave Road, and explained that Kent County Council (KCC) Highways and Transportation and Highways England had not objected to the application.

The Applicant's Transport Planner explained that they had worked closely with KCC Highways and Transportation and had looked at the accessibility of the local roads which had complied with national standards.

It was confirmed by the applicant that construction traffic would not use Belgrave Road, but would access the application site via a farm track. Southern Water would

be reinforcing the sewer so that it was fit for purpose. Work would also be carried out underground with a network of pipes, and water would be stored underground.

The Major Projects Officer concluded by stating that the Planning Committee report (7 November 2019) gave full details of the application and provided a thorough explanation of the issues and the mitigation measures. He added that there was a need for additional housing in the Borough, as advised by the Council's Housing officers, and this was the right type of housing for the site with a good mix of unit sizes.

The Senior Development Planner (KCC Highways, Transportation and Waste) responded to questions from Members and confirmed that the grass verges along Belgrave Road would generally remain, following widening of the road, but they would be narrower than at present. He also confirmed that the highway improvements proposed were considered to be an appropriate level of mitigation, and that the reconfigured Halfway traffic signals would have more capacity than at present.

The Major Projects Officer agreed to seek clarification on the access route for construction traffic in time for the Planning Committee meeting on 5 December 2019.

Chairman

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All Minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel