
PLANNING WORKING GROUP

MINUTES of the Meeting held at the site listed below on Tuesday, 9 August 2022 from 10.00 am - 11.17 am.

PRESENT: Councillors Cameron Beart, Richard Darby, Mike Dendor (Substitute for Councillor James Hunt), Tim Gibson (Chair), James Hall, Carole Jackson, Elliott Jayes (Vice-Chair), Peter Marchington, Ken Rowles and Tony Winckless.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Andrew Lainton, Kellie MacKenzie and Jim Wilson.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Oliver Eakin, James Hunt, Ben J Martin, David Simmons, Paul Stephen and Tim Valentine.

230 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No interests were declared.

231 **LAND TO THE NORTH OF ELM LANE, MINSTER-ON-SEA, SHEERNESS, KENT, ME12 3RZ**

The Chair welcomed the Agent, the applicant, local residents, representatives of Minster Parish Council and Members to the meeting.

The Council's Planning Consultant introduced the application which was for the development of up to 44 dwellings (outline planning application with all matters reserved apart from means of access off Drake Avenue) on two hectares of land to The North of Elm Lane, Minster-on-Sea. One existing bungalow 67 Drake Avenue would be demolished to allow access. The site was elevated at the northern boundary due to the redundant railway track of the former station and the Planning Consultant stated that it could not be considered a Heritage Asset as not much of the former line had been lost. The Planning Consultant explained that the site was used as paddocks and under planning law was classified as a brownfield site (previously developed). There would be a 10.24% increase in biodiversity from improvements to the open space of the site. The Planning Consultant advised that independent landscape advisors had said that the Council would not be able to win any appeal on the grounds of impact to the local landscape. He said that the application complied with Policy ST3 (The Swale settlement strategy) and because the Council did not have a 5-year housing supply the 'tilted balance' applied which made it difficult to uphold grounds of refusal at any future appeal, and the risk of an award of costs.

The Chair invited representatives from Minster Parish Council to speak. They spoke against the application and raised the following points:

- The site was outside the built-up area of Minster;
- the site was in an unsustainable location;
- the site was greenfield land, not brownfield;
- the development would have an adverse impact on the local highway network;

- the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was a developers charter which the Council would challenge if it was not in the best interests of local residents;
- this would lead to the fragmentation of the village of Minster;
- Parish and local residents strongly opposed the development;
- the 'cumulative' impact of other large developments in the area on local infrastructure meant that this development was unacceptable on highway grounds;
- noted that Highways England (HE) [now National Highways] had imposed conditions on larger planning applications in Swale until the improvements on the M2 junction 5 and the A249 Grovehurst Road junction had been completed;
- would exacerbate existing problems with surface-water flooding in Nelson Avenue and Drake Avenue, Minster;
- who paid for the independent transport assessments?;
- any future development east of Cowstead Corner was unacceptable;
- single plots had been refused permission due to impact on the local road network, so this major development should be refused;
- loss of open countryside;
- would lead to an adverse impact on the views from Minster Abbey; and
- the water supply for the Isle of Sheppey was already at capacity.

In response, the Planning Consultant advised that HE could not impose restrictions on such small-scale developments in Swale.

The Chair invited local residents to speak. They spoke in objection and raised points which included:

- Why was some of the Section 106 Agreement money from the development going to Queenborough?;
- 67 Drake Avenue should not be demolished;
- this would lead to increased vehicle pollution;
- if Drake Avenue was not kept clear there would be nowhere for vehicles from the development to park;
- this was unsustainable location;
- existing drainage issues needed to be resolved;
- there was a very limited bus service on Scocles Road, Minster;
- there were no shops near the site;
- inappropriate location;
- there were many elderly and disabled residents who could not use public transport in the area;
- had video footage that proved bats were roosting on the site;
- emergency vehicles could not currently access Elm Lane;
- there were not enough GP surgeries to accommodate anymore residents;
- this would have a significant negative impact on the local area;
- loss of local views;
- needed to consider the impact that adjacent developments were already having on the local area;

- should not add more dwellings when Southern Water were already struggling to provide water;
- residents were the experts on the local road network so should be listened to and speeding traffic was an issue;
- concerned about access to the site;
- did not agree that the site was brownfield;
- the traffic assessments were carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic when the roads were quieter so should be carried out again;
- when there were accidents on the Lower Road, Elm Lane was used as a cut-through;
- needed to ensure adequate sightlines were provided to any access;
- the current bus service was unreliable;
- should not build more houses on the Isle of Sheppey due to lack of employment;
- loss of wildlife habitat;
- felt like it was a “done deal” to approve the application;
- dust and noise from the development would cause health issues;
- the proposal would not support the Isle of Sheppey as a tourist destination;
- would local residents have to pay for the upkeep of the catchment pond?;
- where would the access for construction lorries be?;
- insufficient parking on-site; and
- the existing drainage system was not adequate.

The Chair invited the Agent, Mr Andrew Street to speak. Mr Street stated that the site was a two-hectare brownfield site on the edge of Minster. Access to the village of Minster was within walking distance. The surface water issues had been addressed and there were no traffic issues.

The Agent, Mr Steven Naish from Provectus Developments said that over the last three years they had worked with the Council’s planning officers to ensure that the application complied with local and national planning policies before they had submitted the application 18 months ago. They had employed professional traffic consultants who raised no objection to the application. He said that it was a good site for the type of development proposed and was well screened.

In response to a question from a resident, Mr Naish advised that they would need to submit a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) which would include details of the access for construction vehicles. He was unsure where this was likely to be at this stage.

A local Ward Member asked how Members could make a decision on the application without viewing the CEMP? The Planning Consultant advised that both the CEMP and Construction Logistics Management Plan were requested under the proposed conditions as set out in the report.

At this point, a Member explained that one of the ward members, Councillor Pete Neal, had hoped to attend the meeting as ward member but was unable to.

Members viewed the application site from Drake Avenue and were shown the issues along the Avenue raised by local residents.

Chair

Copies of this document are available on the Council website <http://www.swale.gov.uk/dso/>. If you would like hard copies or alternative versions (i.e. large print, audio, different language) we will do our best to accommodate your request please contact Swale Borough Council at Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT or telephone the Customer Service Centre 01795 417850.

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