
PLANNING WORKING GROUP

MINUTES of the Meeting held at the sites listed below on Tuesday, 13 June 2023 from 10.00 am - 12.48 pm.

87 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

88 22/505618/FULL, LAND AT SCHOOL LANE, NEWINGTON, ME9 7JU

PRESENT: Councillors Mike Baldock (Chair), Kieran Golding, Angie Valls and Tony Winckless.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Billy Attaway, Matt Duigan, Megan Harris and Carly Stoddart.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Chris Palmer and Richard Palmer.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Andy Booth, James Hunt, Elliott Jayes, Peter Marchington and Karen Watson.

The Chair welcomed the Applicant, members of the public, Members and officers to the meeting.

The Council's Planning Consultant introduced the application which was for 25 residential dwellings with enhanced renewable energy features and the provision of a 20-space staff car park and 20 space pupil pick-up/drop-off area for Newington C of E Primary School, together with associated access, landscaping, drainage and infrastructure works. The Planning Consultant added that an air quality assessment had been undertaken and there had been an update to the biodiversity net gain calculations. She advised that the conditions had been reviewed, updated and would be set out in the update report for the Planning Committee meeting scheduled for 22 June 2023.

The Applicant spoke in support of the application. He outlined the benefits of the development which included:

- The pick-up/drop-off area would benefit the school;
- a footpath would be created for school children to access the school;
- Kent County Council (KCC) Education and Highways and Transport departments were in fully support of the application;
- that the original application had provided 50% of the homes with solar panels but the applicant was now proposing that every home be provided with solar panels; and
- landscaping, drainage and infrastructure work designs had been developed to minimise the impact of the site on the countryside.

Parish Councillor Stephen Harvey representing Newington Parish Council, objected to the application and raised the following points:

- The previous application was refused on the grounds of the unjustified, unnecessary and urbanising impact development had on the countryside, and this application did not do enough to prove that it would impact the countryside less;
- Newington Parish Council had independent reports from Railton and University of Kent related to traffic and air quality in respect to this development and reiterated that the reports had not been considered and addressed in the officer's report;
- nearby roads were not suitable for increased traffic flow;
- the development would impact Newington's already poor Air Quality and would affect the Air Quality Management on the A2;
- the development would destroy the best and most versatile agricultural land;
- the designated school pick-up/drop-off was not necessarily needed because the nearby church provided car parking for parents;
- KCC had stated that the school cannot extend due to the impact on Church Lane, Newington;
- the Parish Council's view was that the current situation of the land being sub-let to the school was the best situation for the area; and
- hoped that Members listened to the residents' concerns on the traffic problems the development would cause.

A visiting Ward Member raised a concern that the school was overfull, there were no spaces in the local GP surgery and that the bus service was not reliable.

Local residents spoke against the application and raised points which included:

- The increased cars the development would cause was not an issue, the problems the cars would have with the traffic flow of Church Lane, Newington were an issue;
- Traffic was at its worse at afternoon pick-up time at the school;
- parents often left their vehicles idling outside the school causing pollution problems;
- residents felt trapped in their homes during the peak hours of traffic;
- the railway bridge at Church Lane was not high enough for construction traffic to pass through;
- there would be a large volume of accident hedging removed;
- the site was located on grade one agricultural land and would be disappointed to see it be built on;
- the nearby rural roads were for single car traffic only and this development would increase the number of traffic accidents in the rural lanes;
- parents ignored the double yellow lines and other parking restrictions when collecting children from the school;
- there would be increased traffic on the A2 creating tailbacks;
- concerned that with the proposed pond and tarmac would increase the flooding in the rural lanes;
- thought that Church Lane was already at breaking point; and
- there was a real concern for the school children safety.

The Planning Consultant wanted to clarify with Members that the KCC Highways and Transport department were responsible for determining whether or not the

highway mitigations proposed were suitable for the development and that they had commented to confirm they were happy with the current mitigations. She added that officers had to consider the five-year housing land supply set by the government as well as the, impact of the countryside in determining the sustainability of the development. The officers felt that the landscape led proposal provided enough mitigation to result in a sustainable development despite the location within the countryside.

Members toured the site with officers and the applicant.

89 22/500007/FULL SHEERNESS BUS STATION, BRIDGE ROAD, SHEERNESS, ME12 1RH

PRESENT: Councillors Mike Baldock (Chair), Kieran Golding and Tony Winckless.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Simon Algar, Andy Byrne, Megan Harris, and Kellie MacKenzie.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Dolley White.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Andy Booth, James Hunt, Elliott Jayes, Peter Marchington and Karen Watson.

The Chair welcomed the members of the public, Members and officers to the meeting.

The Planning Officer introduced the application which was for a change of use of the former bus depot (Sui Generis use) to vehicle servicing and repair business (Class B2 use) and construction of additional workshop unit at Sheerness Bus Station, Bridge Road, Sheerness. She drew attention to the palisade fencing around the front of the boundary of the site, which, as erected, required planning permission and was unacceptable. The Graduate Planner said that this application proposed to relocate the fencing two metres back into the site.

The Planning Officer reported that KCC Highways and Transportation and the Council's Design & Conservation Manager had raised no objection to the application. She referred to minor changes to conditions (1), (5) and (6) as set-out in the update to the report which had been tabled at the Planning Committee meeting.

A Ward Member raised the following concerns:

- A lot of public money had been secured for the area via the levelling-up Fund;
- disappointed about the loss of the bus shelter;
- the palisade fencing was detrimental to the visual amenity of the local area and the first thing visitors would see on leaving the station;
- closeboarded fencing would be more suitable;
- would like the fencing to be moved back 6 metres rather than 2 metres to allow the installation of a new bus shelter.

A representative of Kent Community Rail Partnership said she understood that Sheerness Town Council were willing to fund the reinstatement of the bus shelter and that when replacement bus services were required when trains did not run, the coaches would now need to park on Bridge Road interrupting the flow of traffic.

A member of Sheerness Town Council said the access to the site was dangerous and the site negatively detracted from the local heritage assets.

At this point the applicants joined the meeting. The applicant said that the owner of the land was unlikely to agree to setting the fence back 6 metres. He said that they leased the land and as such had to consider public safety for which they were liable.

The Area Planning Officer advised that a fence of up to 2 metres in height could normally be erected around a site under permitted development. However, if adjacent to the highway, the height of the fence was limited to 1 metre. The term “adjacent” did not refer to a specific distance, but as a general rule of thumb in most instances a 2 metre set back from the highway would not be “adjacent”. In this instance the applicant proposed to move the fence back to two metres and this would be likely to be considered as permitted development. As such the applicant could do this without any form of planning permission. He also explained that both KCC and Swale Borough Council’s Parking Team had been consulted on the potential for reinstatement of the bus shelter. The land on which the former shelter stood was private land and not public. There was not sufficient reason to require a bus shelter in this location, and no funding was available for this in any case.

The Ward Member and Town Councillor suggested that funding could be available for the Town Council to erect and maintain a bus shelter. The applicant stated that the landlord could be willing to agree to lease land for this at a peppercorn rent. The Area Planning Officer stated that whilst this was not necessary to make the scheme acceptable, the Town Council could pursue this with the applicant outside of the application process, and a small area to the front of the site subject to the proposed landscaping strip could be utilised for this.

The Design & Conservation Manager said that the impact of the fence was quite harmful visually to the local area, however soft landscaping would help mitigate this.

Chair

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