

## **TABLED UPDATE FOR PLANNING WORKING GROUP ITEM 1**

22/505618/FULL - Land at School Lane Newington

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. This application was initially reported to Planning Committee on 9 March 2023 with a recommendation for approval. The item was deferred for members of the Planning Committee to undertake a site visit.
2. The site visit was subsequently held on 13 June 2023. The minutes from the site visit are attached as Appendix 1 of this tabled update.

### **FURTHER REPRESENTATIONS**

3. Newington History Group circulated a note at the site meeting. The note advises:
  - the route (known as Mill Hill or Bricklands) is identified as an important pre-Roman road;
  - the route and the area forms part of Swale's heritage landscape due to brickearth extraction in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries;
  - the route is bordered on either side by old hedgerows which support a range of flora and fauna and that there is deep concern with the hedgerows already removed;
  - the area is the former location of the village stocks; and
  - any change will destroy key features of historic and heritage significance.

### **POST SITE VISIT RESPONSE**

4. To address the reasons for the deferral and concerns raised at the site visit and to provide a briefing note to new Members of the Planning Committee, the applicant has submitted further information comprising:
  - An email providing summary responses to the queries raised at the 9 March 2023 Planning Committee and by Newington Parish Council (Appendix 2)
  - Members Briefing Note (Appendix 3)
  - Wire line drawings (Appendix 4)
  - Response to Newington Parish Council comments on air quality (Appendix 5)
  - Response to Newington Parish Council comments on highways (Appendix 6)
5. The email and attachments have been circulated directly to Members of the Planning Committee but are attached also to this update as appendices.

### **OFFICER RESPONSE**

6. Impact on the Landscape and Wire Lines

7. The submitted wire line images demonstrate how the development sits within the context of the wider countryside. This has already been assessed within the Committee report of 9 March 2023.
8. Air Quality
9. The applicant has provided a response to the concern raised by Newington Parish Council that the previous Committee Report had not fully considered the independent assessment they commissioned and had carried out by the University of Kent. The University of Kent concluded that the results of Air Quality Assessment submitted with the application are not representative.
10. Lustre, the company who produced the Air Quality Assessment submitted with the application and GEM Air Quality have reviewed the comments from the University of Kent and the Air Quality Assessment against the most up-to-date technical guidance. The outcome is that the modelling and Air Quality Assessment undertaken is robust.
11. A list of mitigation measures in relation to air quality has been provided which includes:
  - Electrical vehicle charging points for every dwelling;
  - The use of air source heat pumps in place of traditional boilers;
  - Welcome packs for new residents, to encourage car sharing and to provide information on public transport;
  - A contribution of £13,000 has been agreed in the Section 106. This can be used by SBC towards various measures to mitigate the impact on air quality, including strategic measures alongside Medway Council, or matters such as subsidised public transport journeys
  - A contribution of £5,000 for the delivery of e-bikes or similar (to contribute to a total pot of £15,000)
12. The Council's Environmental Protection officer has reviewed the submitted information and has reiterated the need for the mitigation measures to be secured by s106 or condition. The tabled update given at the 9 March Committee included air quality mitigation as one of the heads of terms for the s106. The air quality mitigation measures will therefore be secured by the s106.
13. Having considered the submitted additional information, there is no objection to the proposal in terms of air quality and therefore the recommendation for approval remains.
14. Carbon Reduction and Energy Efficiency
15. Since the 9 March 2023 Planning Committee, the applicant has also confirmed the use of photovoltaic cells along with the air source heat pumps for all units as part of the package of measures to address carbon reduction and energy efficiency in design.
16. There use of photovoltaic cells and air source heat pumps are a welcome addition. There is no objection in this regard.

## 17. Highways

18. The applicant has provided a response to concerns raised by Newington Parish Council that the previous Committee Report had not fully considered the independent assessment they commissioned and had carried out by Railton. The Railton assessment was submitted as part of the previous application (21/504028/FULL) which is currently going through the appeal process. Railton made the following points to which DHA Transport and Planning have responded in detail.

- The site has very poor access to bus services.
  - The site is accessible to bus stops and Newington train station which are within 10-11 minutes walk. There are also local facilities and services within walking distance to meet local need.
- The assessment of highway safety records is out of date and needs to be revised.
  - The response by DHA includes details of crash data within a 5 year period 1 October 2017 to 30 September 2022. The data shows that the majority result in 'slight' injuries and all were caused by individual error rather than the layout or condition of the highway network.
- The proposal will generate car trips using Church Lane and passing the school on School Lane in the peak hours and during school drop-off and pickup periods.
- The parking area for school staff and parents will make it more likely for more cars to drive past the school.
- Church Lane is sensitive to changes in traffic levels due to on-street parking, narrow or absent footways and its function as the main access to the school for those on foot.
- It is likely that increased vehicle queuing and delays resulting from additional traffic using Church Lane will have an adverse impact in terms of highway safety on the A2 and at the A2/Church Lane junction.
  - The existing car park is on short term lease and is well used. KCC Children, Young People and Education Directorate has said since the temporary areas has been available, the school has reported a significant improvement in traffic flow outside the school in peak hours, reducing idling cars and therefore improving air quality around the school and increased pedestrian safety. Parents are already driving passed the school. Without the car park there would be increased parking in the surrounding residential areas/on School Lane. Double yellow lines will be extended to the north along the school.
  - DHA Transport provide information on the number of trips generated by the development at certain times and traffic levels at the A2/Church Lane junction. They reference that there are

adequate passing points along Church Lane, the pedestrian footway is to be extended and the speed limit will be extended 50m to the north along School Lane and KCC Highways are in agreement with this.

- Air Quality
  - See response to the University of Kent's assessment above.
- The proposals will have a significant adverse impact on the landscape of Bricklands and School Lane, designated as rural lanes.
  - The trips generated by the housing element and the road improvements along School Lane will not have a tangible impact on the landscape or tranquility of the rural lanes.
- It is unlikely that the proposed earthworks on the western side of School Lane in the vicinity of the school could be implemented while maintain a footway of a width that meets relevant standards.
  - This footway will be 1.5min width with a double height kerb as agreed by KCC Highways to deter parking along School Lane.
- No assessment has been made of the cumulative impact of the proposal in the contexts of numerous other developments in the local area.
  - KCC Highways will be aware of the committed and proposed schemes within the area.
- The effectiveness of the proposed Travel Plan and associated measures have been exaggerated and are unlikely to lead to any measureable change in travel behaviour of the residents of the proposed development
  - The approaches set out in the transport Statement to bring about travel behaviour change are realistic given the accessibility of the site. However, regardless of this, the trip generation figures did not take account of modal shift and have been considered acceptable.

19. The additional information has been submitted to specifically address the Railton report. It highlights that these issues have already been addressed and covered in the original Committee Report. KCC Highways do not object to the proposal and therefore the recommendation for approval remains.

20. The submitted information does not raise anything that would result in a change in the recommendation for approval as stated in the original Committee report. An update report (14 June 2023) includes reworded and renumbered conditions. Subject to those conditions and the completion of a s106 to secure the heads of terms as set out in the original Committee Report and the tabled update of 9 March 2023 there is no objection to the proposal and the recommendation for approval remains.

**Recommendation: Grant subject to conditions and Section 106 agreement with**

**delegated authority to amend the wording of the s106 agreement and conditions as may reasonably be required.**