

Swilland and Witnesham Grouped Parish Council

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MINUTES

Planning Committee Meeting

Friday 22nd April 2022 at 7.30pm

The Chapel, Witnesham Baptist Church

1. **Present:** Dr Nicol, Mrs Shaw, Mr Burrows and Mr Hindle (Chair).
Apologies for absence: Mr Collings and Mr Barlow
In Attendance: Land owner's agent and 13 members of the public.
Chair welcomed all to the meeting and for the benefit of members of the public present, gave an overview of the structure of the meeting and process.
2. **Councillors' declarations of interest:** None
3. Minutes of the meeting of 12th April 2022 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.
4. **ESC decisions received since the meeting of 12th April 2022:** None
5. **Planning Applications for Consideration** Application: DC//22/0998/FUL
Land East Of B1077 Mow Hill Witnesham Residential development of 32 dwellings, together with areas of new public open space and the provision of a new access to the site from the B1077

Chair gave an overview of the site, and it's recent planning history. In 2016 an application for 11 bungalows was withdrawn. In 2017 a similar application with Public Open Space, supported by the Parish Council, was refused and lost at appeal. In 2018 the landowner submitted a proposal for 20 dwellings to be allocated on two thirds of the site in the revised Local Plan. The District Council extended this for approx. 30 dwellings in the Draft Local Plan to which the PC strongly objected on the basis that Witnesham had been reclassified as a "Small Village" and the allocation did not fit with Policy SCLP5.2 for Small Villages that only: "A small group of dwellings of a scale appropriate to the size, location and character of the village". The PC objected that the development was not needed, there was already allocations or permissions for over 40 dwellings in the village and over 3500 more dwellings proposed in Ipswich Garden Suburb, only 3 miles away, there was a lack of local services, particularly space at the local school and the development was on agricultural land when an alternative brownfield site was more appropriate. All these factors remain. The PC objections were rejected by the District Council and also dismissed by the Inspector at the Public Enquiry.

Chair then reminded the meeting of Policy SCLP12.70 which applied to the Mow Hill site.

1.5ha of land at Mow Hill, Witnesham, as shown on the Policies Map, is identified for the development of approximately 30 dwellings.

Development will be expected to accord with the following criteria:

- a) Provision of affordable housing on site;*
 - b) Retention of the hedgerow which borders Mow Hill, except where removal is required for access;*
 - c) Provision of a pedestrian connectivity southwards on Mow Hill;*
 - d) Design and layout to be sympathetic to the setting of the nearby Grade II Listed Buildings;*
 - e) Provision of landscaping to create a 'soft' edge to the eastern and northern boundaries of the site;*
- and*
- f) A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment will be required, and any necessary mitigation provided.*
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Chair gave the view that affordable housing was proposed but more could be provided. It was suggested that a possible pedestrian access in the North-West corner could be considered, there was a lack of landscaping on the East side which was very exposed, he felt that the spur in the road to the East should be resisted, the surface water drainage proposals were not tested and it was questioned whether the 0.25Ha of new Public Open Space was usable as it was largely provided as a dug out drainage basin.

The applicant's agent was given the opportunity to address the meeting and agreed to take the points raised away to the developer. It was explained that revised Building Regulations air source heat pumps were to be included and high insulation levels for each home.

Chair opened the public comments/questions part of the meeting. Comments and concerns raised included the scale, density and need of the development, parking concerns and safety of pedestrians, particularly children, exiting the access heading south and having to make a road crossing to get to the pavement, removal of roadside hedging for sight lines, street lighting and major disruption during construction.

Chair then referred to the Committee to comment and form a view. Points raised included that the village needs affordable housing but that within a development of this design it would change the face of the whole village. The access through the development via the new road was viewed as provocative and the public open space was questioned as being "a hole in the ground". A new public open space allocated on the eastern edge would make it clear that that this would avoid the threat of further development. The Committee agreed to endorse the Chair's previous points raised.

The following Parish Council response to the application was agreed.

1) The Parish Council objects in principle to this proposed development of 32 dwellings as being too large and out of character and scale for the village. It maintains its objection to the allocation of this site in the Local Plan. The development is contrary to "SCLP Policy 5.2; Housing Development in Small Villages" where development should be "a small group of dwellings, of a scale appropriate to the size, location and character of the village". There is no

justified need for this development in the village as there are already substantial allocations or permissions for dwellings in the village and over 3500 more dwellings proposed in Ipswich Garden Suburb, only 3 miles away. There was a lack of local services, particularly space at the local school and the development was on agricultural land when an alternative brownfield site was more appropriate. It comes at a time when consideration is also being given to the application for 20 dwellings at nearby Street Farm. The prospect of both developments going ahead, potentially at the same time in close proximity, is alarming for the village.

2) If development is to be agreed despite the Parish Council's primary objection, the Parish Council in addition, objects to the development as it does not accord with the criteria a) d) e) and f) given in Policy SCLP12.7; Mow Hill Witnessham. If development is to be permitted, the Parish Council requires that these criteria are met in full and enhanced as follows;

a) Provision of affordable housing on site; The development provides for 10 affordable dwellings out of the 32 proposed dwellings. Policy SCLP5.10 Affordable Housing on Residential Developments; expects 1 in 3 units to be affordable dwellings. Therefore, the minimum requirement for developing 32 dwellings should be 11 affordable units. Witnessham is very short and in real need of affordable housing stock. The majority of consultations returned from the public in support of the development, are because it provides some affordable housing. The Parish Council requests greater provision of affordable housing from this very large development and for it to go beyond the policy minimum level of 11 units. It would like to see a minimum of 15 affordable units, and include bungalows to meet Policy SCLP5.10 in providing "needs for affordable housing for older people". The Parish Council asks that priority is given to people connected to the village, in allocating the affordable housing.

b) Retention of the hedgerow which borders Mow Hill, except where removal is required for access. The Parish Council considers it imperative that the existing trees and hedging bordering Mow Hill and the site are retained with removal only allowed for the surfaced road access splay. There should be no removal for access sightlines. The Parish Council wishes to be assured that the on site tree and hedge planting along the western boundary as shown on the Planning Layout and Landscape Strategy Plan is provided.

c) Provision of pedestrian connectivity southwards on Mow Hill. The Parish Council wishes to be assured that there is safe pedestrian connectivity from the access entrance, across the B1077 and to the pavement on the west side.

In addition the Parish Council asks for increased pedestrian connectivity with provision of a surfaced footpath link from the north west corner of the site, through to crossing the B1077, opposite the former woodyard. This would link to the roadside pavement opposite, giving better access to the northern part of the village, including to the school, shop, village hall and church and to Public Footpath 22 and the excellent network of public paths to the west of the B1077. It also asks for a short surfaced public footpath link from the

corner of the internal access road, where it turns north, across the northern edge of the Public Open Space to join off site, with Footpath 26. This would provide a direct foot access from the new housing to Footpath 26 and connecting footpath network.

e) Provision of landscaping to create a soft edge to the eastern and northern boundaries of the site. The site is very exposed from the higher ground to the east, public footpath 26 and the nearby Grade 11 Listed Buildings to the south (criteria d). To meet these criteria and to ameliorate the impacts identified in the Landscape Assessment, a much more substantive landscaped tree belt is required, off site if necessary, along the eastern and south eastern boundary of the site.

The Parish Council requests a 5-10 metre tree belt along the eastern boundary and a small tree copse planted in the triangle of land, which will be difficult to farm, between plots 5,6 and the farm track/Foot Path 26. The council also requests that an area of Public Open Space be provided by the landowner to the community, along the eastern side, beyond the development boundary.

The Parish Council objects to the provision of the spur access road and pavements to the eastern boundary and the gap this makes. The Parish Council sees no need for this spur. Any expansion of development to the east of the current proposal should be resisted and means of facilitating this should be removed from the current proposal. An alternative layout for plots 26,27, and 28 and their access road is required.

f) A site specific Flood Risk Assessment will be required and any mitigation provided. The Parish Council, like Suffolk County Council Flood Authority, objects to the current surface water drainage proposals as these have not been tested.

The Parish Council needs complete assurance that there is adequate provision, both on site and with connection to the culverted water course for surface water drainage and that there is no risk of flooding to neighbouring properties south of the site. Please see later the Parish Council concerns over the joint use and safety of the attenuation basin and Public Open Space proposed for the southern part of the site.

The Parish Council asks if the "natural attenuation pond" located off site, but in the nearby "ravine", which is connected to the same culverted watercourse, could be used with modification, instead of providing the proposed attenuation basin in the Public Open Space?

The Parish Council seeks clarity on who will be responsible for the future management and maintenance of the drainage system, including the culverted watercourse?

3) Public Open Space (POS); The Parish Council welcomes the idea of providing POS, indeed it was the Parish Council who suggested an area of POS in a previous application. It would like to see a POS provided that is attractive, accessible and safe; an area that can be enjoyed all year round by villagers and is not just a carved out drainage basin with little area that can be properly considered as usable POS, as is proposed. The current POS proposal is unacceptable.

The Parish Council welcomes discussion and consideration on the provision of the POS; usable space, landscaping, paths, equipment and management, and the attenuation basin; size, slopes, gabions, safety and an alternative location as mentioned in 2 (f) above.

4) Internal site landscaping; The Parish Council seeks improved internal site landscaping including the provision of a lot more roadside and swaleside trees and the planting of roadside and swaleside daffodils. (The Parish Council has a programme for roadside daffodil planting)

5) Sustainability; The Parish Council seeks assurance that measures, beyond the minimum regulations, are being taken to provide sustainable dwellings and reduce energy use, including provision of electric car charging points for each dwelling.

The Parish Council requests that no street lighting is provided.

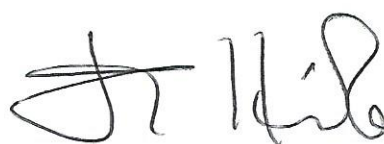
6) Construction disruption; The Parish Council seeks assurances and consultation on measures to be taken to minimise the major disruption that would be caused by such a large development to services, the B1077 and the village.

6. Matters to be brought to the attention of the Planning Committee.

None

Meeting closed at 8:56 p.m.

25/1/22

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. H. H.' or similar, written in a cursive style.