

Aylesford Parish Council

Planning Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 15th February 2022 at Capel Morris Centre, Aylesford

Present: Councillors Smith (Chairman), Balcombe, Beadle, Ms Dorrington, Mrs Eves, Gledhill, Ludlow, Mrs Ogun, Rillie, Sharp, Shelley, Sullivan, and Winnett

In Attendance: Melanie Randall (Clerk)

Apologies: Councillors, Fuller, Mrs Gadd, Ms Oyewusi and Walker

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies of Absence from Councillors Fuller, Mrs Gadd, Ms Oyewusi and Walker were received and the reason for absence agreed.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest additional to those contained in the Register of Members Interests.

3. Minutes of the last meeting held on 1st February 2022

It was **Agreed** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 1st February 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed.

4. Planning Applications

4.1 KCC/TM/0011/2022 – St Peters Church of England Primary School, Mount Pleasant, Aylesford

Construction of a single storey extension to St Peter's lodge building to provide extended teaching space

It was **Agreed** to raise **No Objection**

4.2 TM/22/00153/RD - Valley Invicta Primary School Teapot Lane, Aylesford South

Details of condition 3 (Watching brief) pursuant to planning permission TM/21/00879/FL (Single storey extension and canopy over entrance doors)

It was **Agreed** to raise **No Objection**

4.3 TM/22/00163/TPOC - Land Adjacent To 56 Tunbury Avenue Walderslade

T1 Elder leaning towards fence - fell to ground (to avoid damage to property)
T2 and T3 Douglas fir tree - fell (the proximity of both trees is too close to residential property)
T4 Douglas fir tree - crown lift canopy to allow 2m roof clearance (trees standing in Area A1 of Tree Preservation Order)

It was **Agreed** to raise **No Objection**

4.4 TM22/00140/FL – Cherry Bungalow 351 Pratling Street Aylesford North

First floor extension following expiry of previously approved application TM/18/01649/FL

It was **Agreed** to raise **No Objection**

4.5 TM/22/00074/RM - Land South of London Road and East of Hermitage Lane, Aylesford South

Reserved Matters application pursuant to outline application ref: TM/17/01595/OAEA: Detailed design of link road (first section)

It was **Agreed** to raise **No Objection**

4.6 TM/22/00075/RM - Land South of London Road and East of Hermitage Lane, Aylesford South

Reserved Matters application pursuant to outline application ref: TM/17/01595/OAEA: Detailed design of link road (second section)

It was **Agreed** to raise **No Objection**

4.7 TM/22/00076/RM - Land South of London Road and East of Hermitage Lane, Aylesford South

Reserved Matters application pursuant to outline application ref: TM/17/01595/OAEA: 243 dwellings, including detailed design of layout, scale and appearance

It was **Agreed** to raise **No Objection**

4.8 TM22/00113/OAEA - Development Site Land at Eccles (Bushey Wood) Phase 1 Bull Lane, Eccles

Residential development of up to 950 dwellings, provision of a mixed-use local centre (including Class E, F and C3 with potential for retirement homes) provision of land to accommodate a new primary school, replacement sports pitches with changing facilities; associated green infrastructure including landscaping, public open space, allotments, sustainable urban drainage systems, biodiversity enhancements; new accesses from Bull Lane; new access and road/cycleway/footpath link to New Court Road.

It was **Agreed** to submit the report as attached in **Appendix. A**

5. Any Other Correspondence

5.1 TMBC's New Senior Development Obligations Officer

The Clerk informed members that she had received an email from the new member of staff and has invited her to come along to the Parish office to meet her and a few other local Clerks to explain the role and how she can help Clerks and their Councils. This is due to take place at the end of the month.

6. Duration of Meeting

7.30pm to 8.15pm

Development Site Bushey Wood Phase 1 Bull Lane Eccles - TM/22/00113/OAEA -

Residential development of up to 950 dwellings, provision of a mixed-use local centre (including Class E, F and C3 with potential for retirement homes) provision of land to accommodate a new primary school, replacement sports pitches with changing facilities; associated green infrastructure including landscaping, public open space, allotments, sustainable urban drainage systems, biodiversity enhancements; new accesses from Bull Lane; new access and road/cycleway/footpath link to New Court Road | Development Site Bushey Wood Phase 1 Bull Lane Eccles Aylesford Kent

Comment **Agreed** at the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 15 February 2022

Bushey Wood Development Proposals – Response to Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council

The Parish Council is aware of the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework in instances where the Local Plan is out-of-date, and a five-year housing land supply cannot be demonstrated and the need to permit this scheme unless there are very good reasons that over-ride the benefits. The Parish Council is also aware that the site in question has been allocated for development in the post-2021 period over a long period. Thus, whilst the Parish Council has no objection to the proposal in principle, although it believes this should be restricted to the area identified as the Area of Opportunity in policy CP16 of the current adopted development plan, it is duty-bound to obtain the best possible outcome for its residents.

That said, Members of the Aylesford Parish Council have reviewed the significant quantity of information submitted in support of this planning application, and were actively involved in the pre-application consultation process, being aware of the high level of concern on the part of the local residents. The Borough Council is therefore requested to consider those representations, insofar as they are material planning considerations and either refuse to grant planning permission or attach suitable conditions to any permission or planning agreement, to protect local interests and the area generally.

Set out below are our comments in respect of key issues / areas of concern.

Research online suggests that the village of Eccles currently accommodates approximately 750 homes, thus the proposal relates to an increase of around 125%, and it is the potential impact of that increase that has been borne in mind when considering the need for the following safeguards and new / additional community infrastructure provision.

Affordable housing

Policy CP17 contained within the adopted Development Plan requires the provision of affordable housing at a level of 40% in such locations, 70% of these being social rented accommodation and the remaining 30% 'intermediate housing'. Whilst, as set out in the Borough Council's Affordable Housing Protocol (2021), this is the starting point for negotiation, if the developer is minded to offer no affordable units (as suggested by the submitted application form) or a reduced level of provision, a financial viability assessment should be prepared and submitted to the LPA for consideration, in order that the provision of

much-needed affordable homes can be provided in the locality, offering a mix of family homes, smaller starter homes and homes for the elderly to reflect latest research relating to local need.

Highways & transport, parking, etc.

The Design and Access Statement contains a stated objective as being “to minimise the impact of traffic generated by the new development on the local highway network, particularly through the existing village of Eccles.

The Parish Council welcomes the access proposal in general, including the proposed restricted use of the northern part of Bull Lane to its junction with Pilgrims Way. However, consideration should be given to diverting the proposed spine road around the edge of the new development, to reduce the impact of through traffic on the new residents and, regardless of the final alignment, appropriate speed and traffic calming measures should be imposed at the outset.

Insofar as the school / sports hub site is concerned, care should be taken when developing the details to ensure adequate parking, circulation and pick-up / drop-off provision for all users. Despite being a ‘local’ facility, it should not be assumed that all users will be local, or that they would access the site on foot / bicycle and safeguards are required to avoid future parking issues that are detrimental to highway safety and to the quiet enjoyment of their homes by local residents.

There is an assumption that, as appears to be the case with Peter’s Village, that many of the new residents will commute and without good quality, affordable and regular alternatives, the car will become the preferred mode of travel for accessing local railway stations. The local bus service is irregular and not dependable and requires improvement if it is to be a viable option. It is also understood that the enhanced service to Snodland Station, linked to Peter’s Village, has not yet been put in place. Furthermore, Parish Councillors would wish to see the option of an alternative, more direct pedestrian / cycle river crossing being provided to enable access to New Hythe Station, potentially utilising the existing pipe bridge, which is believed to be disused, or at least its’ foundations.

In addition to these local concerns the impact of further traffic upon Bluebell Hill has been recognised as a problem area and Highways England’s decision to exclude it as a variant to the Lower Thames Crossing project is likely to exacerbate the problem. This is an obvious link for motorists heading towards North Kent or to destinations to the east along the M2 and the resultant exacerbation of existing problems should be carefully considered and addressed.

Education

Provision for the new primary school is welcomed, enabling the relocation of existing pupils to improved facilities with room for expansion to cater for the incoming population. However, safeguards should be put in place to avoid a scenario where places are taken up by pupils from outside the area ahead of new residents arising, requiring them to seek provision out of the area as has happened in other parts of the borough in the past.

Medical Facilities

The Parish Council is concerned that the more than doubling of the existing population of Eccles will put undue strain on the already inadequate and overburdened local medical centre and would ask that funding is sought from the developer to enable the provision to be proportionately enhanced. The contents of representations from the Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group are noted and the request for a contribution of £820,800 from the developer is supported.

Community Facilities

The provision of flexible space within the Local Centre is to be welcomed and consideration should be given to ensuring that part is turned over to a flexible-use village / community hall, with costs for hire being affordable and with some provision (perhaps via a sinking fund) for its ongoing maintenance.

To ensure the most appropriate uses with maximum demand are included, the developer should engage with the Parish Council and local residents as the scheme is further developed.

Sporting Facilities

Whilst enhanced replacement pitches are proposed, they are also for use by the school and access by the wider community needs to be ensured at an affordable cost. There needs to be assurance that the turf pitches will be delivered to an equal or better quality than those they replace, and safeguards put in place to ensure any necessary remedial works are carried out, at the developer's cost for, say, a period of five years, or however long the LPA deems appropriate.

Furthermore, these facilities do not represent a proportionate increase in provision, the developer relying upon potential surplus capacity nearby and, if necessary, financial contributions. The availability and quality of nearby provision needs to be carefully investigated and safeguards put in place to ensure adequate local provision.

A further concern is that the new pavilion to support the new pitches, etc. **may** be provided, not that they will, but that parking provision allied to this will be provided. It is hoped that this is merely a drafting error on the part of the applicants but, as this is to replace the existing facility, its provision and affordable access to all needs to be assured.

Allotments

The Parish Council welcomes the fact that the developers have listened to the concerns of current allotment users and that the relocation of some / increased numbers (albeit not proportionate to the increase in household numbers) is confirmed as part of the scheme. However, the Parish Council strongly believes that the existing provision should be maintained *in situ*, with new provision proposed being available to address the demands of the incoming population. As the implementation of any scheme moves forward, the quality of the new provision need to be ensured as being equal to, or better than, those that currently exist.

Open Space & Landscaping

Safeguards need to be put in place to ensure the early provision of a scheme of landscaping, to be approved by the LPA, and its implementation and maintenance in a form reflecting the aspirations contained within the submission document.

Whilst development of this scale will clearly impact upon views into and out of the existing village, the proposals for screening, buffer planting are generally supported but early (up front?) delivery should be ensured. Furthermore, Policy CP16 contained within the Core Strategy (2007) requires the identity and character of Eccles village to be protected and the provision of greater separation between the current and proposed development should be required to secure this.

Every effort should be made to safeguard those trees subject of Tree Preservation Orders through the careful consideration of details pursuant submissions, including the 2 commemorative trees within the grounds of the existing school.

The Parish Council notes the contents of the report submitted by the Kent Downs AONB unit, dated 10 February 2022 and fully supports the points made.

Noise

The Parish Council supports the proposed hours of working put forward by the developer and would request that these are included as a planning condition.

Flood / Contamination Risk

Whilst the focus of any flooding risks is likely to be on the development site itself, care should be taken to ensure that the impacts of the development and any flooding mitigation do not result in direct or indirect impacts upon the existing village. Particular attention should be paid to drainage and sewage handling, in view of the plans of South East Water to draw 20 million litres of water per day from bore holes in the former Aylesford Newsprint site, which are known to be fed by rain water falling on the area which includes the proposed housing development.

Conditions proposed by the Environment Agency in their consultation response are fully supported.

Visual and other impacts

Conditions should be imposed to ensure adequate and appropriate lighting solutions within the development site and where it abuts the existing settlement, ensuring that light pollution is minimised as far as possible.

In the event that Outline Planning Permission is granted it is considered essential, and would be of assistance to the developer, to engage with the Parish Council and local residents to ensure that the best outcome can be achieved for all.

General

The proposal includes significant areas of public open space and other community facilities that will require ongoing maintenance. It is important that appropriate management and maintenance structures are put in place and up-front funding provided. Furthermore, such mechanisms should be monitored, and, in the event of failure, funding secured to offset the costs to any alternative body or public authority expected to assume responsibility. The Parish Council would wish to be involved in any discussions relating to this matter.