

Minutes of the Meeting of Planning and Transport held in Rickards Hall on 11 November 2024 at 6:00 pm

Present: Cllrs. Jon Aldridge (*Chairman*), Alan Layland, Stuart McGregor, Vince Parker, Michael Stockdale, Bob Todd

In attendance: The Town Clerk, Cllr. Compton, the Planning Officer, the Responsible Finance Officer, twenty five members of the public and no members of the press.

The Meeting started at 18.00.

1 To Receive Apologies for Absence

The Chairman welcomed everyone and provided an overview on committee meetings and procedures.

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs. A Baker, B Cummings, M Gemmel-Smith, M McArthur, A Read and J Streets.

2 Declaration of Interests or Predetermination, including interests not already registered

Cllrs. Aldridge, Layland and Stockdale declared a personal but non-pecuniary interest as being members of the New Edenbridge Residents Association (NEDRA)

3 Public Questions and Statements

18:03 The meeting was closed for Public Questions.

The Developer made a presentation at the start of the Public Questions.

Eleven members of the public spoke on Agenda item 6.1 planning application 24/02765/OUT.

The opening representation, spoke about the size of this development which would have an adverse effect on the infrastructure, flooding, climate change causing excess flooding or droughts, and that the amount of development was too much for the town. They said that it was not nimbyism but the amount of development being asked for was excessive.

A resident spoke about correspondence NEDRA had received from Kent County Council (KCC) Education, stating that KCC would expect to see 1,475 new homes as a minimum for a four-form entry (4FE) school, and 2,225 for a 6FE. They went to say that the Town Council had supported the school and the site for development in the emerging Local Plan, and asked if the Town Council still supported it with 1,475 new homes development in Edenbridge and the loss of the Green Belt.

Another resident from NEDRA, said that they believed that sustainability had been overstated, and that they also did not believe that sufficient funding was being offered. Reference was made to the £1m to Network Rail noting that half of this was being allocated to the crossing at Mowshurst, that the railway tracks were antiquated, railway bridges were too low and narrow, and questioned if the town station warranted such investment as there were not enough trains running through it. The KCC Transport Strategy Plan does not include a commitment to Edenbridge. They added, what was being to address these issues.

Reference was made about the increased traffic that would be generated to and from the site which would add to traffic problems, noting low railway bridges in the town, particularly the one on Four Elms Road (which was single road through, and traffic light operated).

Another resident stated that the ecology would not achieve a 10% net gain in biodiversity on the site as stipulated by the Biodiversity Regulations. The developer's proposal was to achieve biodiversity offsite, and this was not acceptable, including using other sites elsewhere owned by the developer. This site was already rich in trees, water courses, and wildlife. The resident suggested the additional land proposed for housing could instead be used to ensure biodiversity and not increasing the housing numbers; and

Edenbridge could apply to have an area dedicated to utilising biodiversity units helping to enhance the biodiversity. They pointed out that information on biodiversity units and enhancements was available online.

One resident noted that the Town Council was enthusiastic about the school, and had in the past supported the proposals for a secondary school. They questioned how was the £30-40m needed to build the school going to be secured, as well as securing the site in perpetuity. They added that the whole pretext of the proposed application in 2020 was around permission of the school, and that this must be secured.

Other representations included: The whole precept of the proposal seemed to be dumbing down the position of the school. The lack of infrastructure improvements for example, the medical services would need to be increased, noting the proposed site alone would add a potential 1,500 people. Concerns raised about the school and the scout building would not get built. Emphasis was made about development on the flood plain next to the stream and ditch behind the medical centre and Bray Road which already floods, so additional building would worsen this issue. There were also questions about the housing being built before the school, and without the land secured in perpetuity

Referring again to biodiversity on the site, one resident said that that the application referenced five ponds on the site, but there were twelve ponds and three streams. They stated that Wetlands are covered in water for most of the year and support the biodiversity. The wastewater would not be able to cope with additional housing and there was no provision for improvements to the infrastructure. Another resident said that there was wide range of different birds, and it was an important site for environmental and avian species, which cannot be replaced with offsite biodiversity, and it takes generations to develop such populations.

18:43 The meeting reopened. Fifteen Members of the public left the meeting.

4 To Receive, Adopt and Sign the Minutes of The Planning Committee Meeting Held on 21st October 2024 pg2023/069/1-3

Resolved: the minutes of the meeting on 21st October 2024 be duly signed by the Committee Chairman as a true and accurate record of the meeting pages 0203/069/01-03.

5 Matters Arising Not Covered Elsewhere

None.

6 Planning Applications to Be Considered

6.1 24/02765/OUT - Land North Of Town Station Cottages Forge Croft TN8 5LR

Recommendation: *Members objected to this application on the grounds that:*

- They could not recommend the proposal whilst they had no confidence around the delivery of the school.
- There are questions around the time frames that the site would be available for a school, and the same with the other community sites (scout and youth buildings) and request that a much longer time frame should be secured (ideally in perpetuity).
- It was felt that not enough was being done to mitigate flooding risks, noting the increase of dwellings from the already approved plan of 340 to 450 was expanding further into the flood zone area.
- Further development of the site would cause an increased flood risk in the town, especially given the extent of recent (e.g. the Bellway estate and at Spitals Cross), and proposed development in the emerging Local Plan along St Brelade's Stream

- There would be a further adverse impact on the town's infrastructure, with school traffic queues liable to extend onto Four Elms Road and at the railway bridge; and the application does not go far enough to address these issues.
- The site did not accommodate sufficiently the biodiversity net gain, and further expansion on the site would exacerbate this having a higher detrimental impact on the site and area. Considerations should be given to accommodating biodiversity on site and/or another dedicate site in Edenbridge close by.
- Members noted that it would take generations to recreate wetlands and biodiversity.
- The emerging Local Plan needs to include the already approved site for 340 dwellings as a policy in the emerging Local Plan, and any potential changes to this site for transparency and inclusion in the proposed housing numbers.

6.2 24/02705/FUL - Four Oaks Swan Lane TN8 6BA

Recommendation: *Members supported this application on condition that the bat survey is resolved.*

6.3 24/02782/CONVAR - Hilders Farm Hilders Lane TN8 6LE

Recommendation: *Members supported this application.*

6.4 24/02808/HOUSE - Freeways Stick Hill TN8 5NL

Recommendation: *Members supported this application.*

7 For Information

7.1 24/02044/FUL - 35 High Street TN8 5AD

Noted.

7.2 24/02746/DETAIL - Jewson Ltd Town Station Coal Yard Station Approach TN8 5LP

Noted

7.3 23/03649/HYB - And Surrey Golf And Country Club Crouch House Road TN8 5LQ

Noted.

7.4 24/02782/CONVAR - Hilders Farm Hilders Lane TN8 6LE

Noted.

8 SDC Planning Decisions

8.1 24/02073/HOUSE - Little Marlpit Pit Lane TN8 6BD

Noted.

8.2 24/02278/HOUSE - Wayfarings Swan Lane TN8 6AL

Noted.

8.3 24/01741/FUL - Cherry Bryn Stick Hill TN8 5NJ

Noted.

9 Planning Applications Considered Outside of A Meeting

9.1 **23/03649/HYB - Kent And Surrey Golf And Country Club Crouch House Road TN8 5LQ**
Noted.

10 **Consultations**
None.

11 **Other Planning Business**

11.1 **24/00113/NEWDEV - Southon House Station Approach TN8 5LP**
Noted.

12 **Press Release**
None.

13 **Date of Next Meeting 2nd December 2024**

The Meeting ended at 19.14.