

**Minutes of the Meeting of Planning and Transport Committee held in Rickards Hall on 2 December 2024 at 7:30 pm.**

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Present: Cllrs. Alan Layland, Angela Read (*Vice-Chairwoman*), Michael Stockdale, Bob Todd  
In attendance: The Planning Officer, nineteen members of the public and no members of the press.  
*The meeting started at 19.30.*

**1 To Receive Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs. J Aldridge A Baker, M Gemmel-Smith, M McArthur, S McGregor and V Parker.

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

None.

**3 Public Questions and Statements**

*The meeting was closed for public questions at 19.32.*

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

The opening representation from a member of NEW EDENBRIDGE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION (NEDRA) , stated that the water pressure testing for the proposed development showed that the current network cannot accommodate additional demand without substantial reinforcement. They raised concerns in ensuring sufficient pressure for everyday use and essential services like firefighting. They said that, combined with the need for a £2.6M electrical infrastructure upgrade, these findings highlighted infrastructure gaps, the asked what timelines and funding, were in place to address these issues before developments proceeded.

A second resident and member of NEDRA said the drainage system for this development relied on a mix of natural and artificial methods; a system that slows down water flow during storms, by holding water and releasing it at a controlled rate. However, multiple basins that collect the water, are predicted to overflow during heavy rainfall events, and the design assumes little to no natural infiltration into the ground. Does this reliance on artificial solutions suggest the site isn't suitable for building due to issues like poor drainage and flood risks? What if these systems failed or required expensive maintenance? They also said there was no NPPF Sequential Test document on the Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) planning portal. even though areas of the site fall within Flood Zones 2 and 3 should need one, and there was no proposal to demonstrate that no suitable alternative sites are available in areas of lower flood risk. They asked If the Sequential Test had failed, could the Exception Test be fulfilled by providing evidence that the development offers wider sustainability benefits that outweigh the flood risk and that it will be safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere as required by the Exception Test.

Another member of public stated that the site had been called 'poorly performing greenbelt' which they felt was not correct information and that the Arup Reports on greenbelt describes only 5.5% of the area as being poorly performing. 94.5 of the site seemed to be strongly performing greenbelt. The Developer's proposal for the off site provision of the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) are not inline with the NPPF.

Another member of the public said that that there was recent flooding on the field behind the site, on Skinners Farm and said that according the the Flood Survey and that it had flooded 17 times in 2024, which is more than previous years.

A further member of the public said that the increase in house numbers would increase the population of Edenbridge by 1,500 but asked had the Developer considered that the houses would be unsellable due to flooding.

Another member of the public spoke about the fact that the site had wetlands which were a very unique habitat and very different to any other kind of biodiversity which cannot be replaced for many years.

The destruction of habitats and the BNG were mentioned by another member of the public who also said that streams were being diverted and some had disappeared from the Developer's documents. Some of the land is owned by Kent County Council (KCC) who had replied to two FOIs saying that the land should never have been built on and should be protected in perpetuity they added that the Environment Agency had objected to the application.

The next member of the public showed a photograph of flooding in the field adjacent to the site during the week before the meeting and showed a drawing indicating how the River Eden floods, particularly in the top north east corner of the site.

The final member of the public to speak mentioned again the fact that the school has to be built by 2040 which was not viable, and that Edenbridge could not support a four form entry.

*The meeting was re-opened at 19.56.*

**4 To Receive, Adopt and Sign the Minutes of The Planning Committee Meeting Held on 11th November 2024 p2023/073/1-4**

**Resolved:** the minutes of the meeting on 11th November 2024 be duly signed by the Committee Chairman as a true and accurate record of the meeting pages 0203/073/01-03.

**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 and commented:*

Members maintained their objection, as submitted 20 November 2024.

Members noted the additional two reports:

**Biodiversity Metric, Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, Ecological Impact Assessment Report.** The report still does not provide sufficient onsite, or an alternative site close by in Edenbridge, to ensure it meets the Net gain biodiversity enhancements. This site is already a site of ecological and biodiversity benefits with natural ecosystems. The additional housing proposed puts this area at great risk with no viable proposals to protect it.

Other concerns remain around flooding and proposals to mitigate risks. The additional housing is in the flood zone, an area of wetlands and along St Brelades stream.

**The transport Assessment,** there were no further comments other than to maintain concerns regarding increased traffic at the railway bridge.

**6.2 24/02995/CONVAR - 4 Ridge Way TN8 6AR**

**Recommendation:** *Members supported this application.*

**6.3 24/02921/MMA - Park Field Hilders Lane TN8 6LD**

**Recommendation:** *Members supported this application.*

**7 For Information**

**7.1 24/02973/WTPO - Willow Trees Crouch House Road TN8 5EH**

Noted.

**8 SDC Planning Decisions**

Noted.

**8.1 24/02132/HOUSE - Skeynes Park Lingfield Road TN8 5HN**

Noted.

**8.2 24/02133/LBCALT - Skeynes Park Lingfield Road TN8 5HN**

Noted.

**8.3 24/02044/FUL - 35 High Street TN8 5AD**

Noted.

**8.4 24/02527/HOUSE - Long Tilings Cottage Hever Lane Hever TN8 7ET**

Noted.

**9 Planning Applications Considered Outside of A Meeting**

None.

**10 Consultations**

None.

**11 Other Planning Business**

None.

**11.1 Your Station Your Community Improvement Fund 2025/26**

**Resolved:** Members agreed that the Planning Officer would draft the application and discuss with Cllr Layland and Cllr Read before submitting to the Community Improvement Fund.

**11.2 To ratify the installation of a white gate at the entrance to Crouch House Road**

Members received an update on the proposed white gate, and

**Ratified:** the installation of a white gate at the entrance to Crouch House Road near the railway bridge entrance to the town.

**12 Press Release**

None.

**13 Date of Next Meeting 16th December 2024**

*The meeting ended at 20.06.*