



P45.

Before the Meeting commenced, the Chairman reminded everybody that their microphones must remain muted unless they are invited to speak, and members of the public are not permitted to participate in the meeting.

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL (PLANNING) MEETING 16 JUNE 2020

PRESENT

Councillor (Miss) J Murphy (In the Chair)

Councillors: (Mrs) K Barber
A Bishop
(Mrs) J H Bishop
G Evans
N Gardiner
P Newton-Smith
G Olley
(Mrs) M Penny
K Smith
K Saunders
S Weisinger
R Williams
S Wolfensohn

Town Clerk: Mr D C Lane

Zoom Host: Ms Deanne Rose

IN ATTENDANCE

22 Members of the Public and one Member of the Press

APOLOGIES

126. Councillors (Mrs) L Vardy (Mrs Vardy passed on her thanks for the Councillors kind wishes)



Highworth is a Fair Trade Town



Twinned with Wassenberg



Twinned with Pontorson

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

127. Councillor S Wolfensohn declared an interest as the owner of a parcel of land in Shrivenham Road.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

128. Letter received from a member of the public regarding the Outline Planning Application for 250 houses in Shrivenham Road. Councillors confirmed, even should the applicant reduce the number of houses proposed for the site, that this would not deter them from opposing the application.

MINUTES OF MEETINGS

129. **RESOLVED THAT THE MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL (PLANNING) MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 3 MARCH 2020 BE ADOPTED AND SIGNED.** (The Minutes were duly signed).

CORRESPONDENCE

130. a. The Town Clerk has received numerous items of correspondence regarding Cycle Paths.
- b. Email received from Custom Land advising a consultation leaflet is to be posted to the properties within the vicinity of the land on 12 June 2020 with a view of developing 75-85 houses on a site adjacent to the newly constructed houses at Wrag View. Due to COVID-19 crisis a public exhibition to enquire the views of residents is not possible. Councillors unanimously agreed any development in Shrivenham Road goes against the Neighbourhood Plan and Highworth's status as a Hill-Top Town. A formal response is to be submitted once an application has been submitted to Swindon Borough Council (SBC).
- c. Email from a resident: This was a question carried over from "Questions from the Public". He asked if the Council request SBC Planning Department to consider all applications for major developments collectively when considering their impact on infrastructure and transport in the Town. Councillors agreed to put this to the Planning Department.

CYCLE PATHS

131. Cycle Paths are to be an Agenda item on the next Full Council Meeting on 18 August 2020. The discussion will need to be structured and be given sufficient time to debate this fully.

PLANNING PERMISSIONS AND REFUSALS

PERMISSIONS

132. a. S/HOU/20/0428CHHO. Erection of a single storey front extension, conversion of a garage into habitable space and new pitched roof. 10 Shrivenham Road, Highworth.
- b. S/HOU/20/0440PEKO. Erection of a single storey side extension. 11 Skye Close, Highworth.
- c. S/HOU/20/0432CHHI. Erection of a single storey rear in-fill extension. 2 Roman Way, Highworth.

REFUSALS

133. None.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

134. a. [S/OUT/20/0422 SASM](#) – Outline Planning Application for 250 dwellings (including 30% affordable housing) with public open space, landscaping and sustainable drainage system (SuDS) and vehicular access point from Shrivenham Road. All matters reserved except for means of access. Land at Shrivenham Road, Highworth. **Councillors strongly recommend refusal on the following grounds:**

The Highworth Neighbourhood Plan (HNP) excluded Shrivenham Road as being suitable for development during site selection and this was supported by the Inspector when passing the Plan. The HNP was based on the retention of Highworth as a Hilltop Town and this application, if accepted, would destroy that concept. The proposed site is also outside the Settlement Boundary and any development here would have a detrimental effect on the Town and its current status as a Hilltop Town, This is supported in the Conservation Officer's report where she states that the Proposed Development would be contrary to the NPPF and Policies DE1, EN5 and EN10 of the Swindon Local Plan. Overall, she recommended that the development would cause harm sufficient to advise a Heritage Objection.

The infrastructure of the Town would need serious investment to cope with this and any future developments.

Councillors have serious concerns over both Traffic Surveys undertaken. The Traffic Survey carried out on behalf of Gladman was carried out in September and October last year (2019). The outcome of that Survey is questionable in terms of its results as it does not pick up capacity issues and highway safety. The SBC Highways Consultee, Gerry Prodohl, did his assessment during COVID-19 crisis when schools were not operating stating "I tried to calculate capacities at the bottleneck". **Councillors recommend a Holding Objection be registered pending a new Traffic Survey based on actual recorded data of both peak traffic and Schools traffic in Shrivenham Road.**

Councillors are already concerned about the traffic safety of Shrivenham Road and the additional traffic caused by this development will result in an even more dangerous situation, particularly as there are two schools there. Finally, the additional vehicles generated will throw a huge burden on car parking in the Town where there is already insufficient capacity for the Town's needs. There is a wider issue with additional traffic to the Town as a whole. At peak times there are various bottlenecks around the Town which this additional traffic will exacerbate.

Sufficient recognition has not been taken of the effect the traffic generated by this site and the impact it will have on the village of Sevenhampton. The quickest route into Swindon for potential residents is through Sevenhampton, the villagers of which are already experiencing heavy increases in the traffic using the village as a "rat run", to the extent that they formed a huge delegation at a Town Council meeting demanding that something be done about it. The additional traffic generated by this site, if it is allowed to go ahead, will make life in the village even more dangerous and even more intolerable.

The Councillors have Highway Safety concerns regarding school children walking to and from school on Shrivenham Road. There is both a Junior School and a Secondary School on Shrivenham Road. The Highways report requires a crossing to be included in any plans to allow children, walking to school, to safely cross over from the proposed new development to the pavement on the opposite side of the road. However, no thought has been given to how the children can cross safely back onto the school side when they get to that point. Councillors believe that a second crossing would be required for the children to cross back over to the schools. In addition, LA19 (f) of the Local Plan Review requires highway improvements to secure school safety and capacity.

The Highways Officer recommends in his report as part of Planning Conditions, s106 is to be attributed to a cycle path from Highworth to Swindon but there is no mention of a cycle path along Shrivenham Road only for cyclist to use the road. S106 monies is to mitigate the detrimental impact of a development in the Town and it is therefore concerning that the cycle path would not link to the schools. SBC Local Plan review LA19 (g) identifies that there is a requirement for pedestrian and cycle links to the schools and has concerns over safety of children cycling on this road.

The additional vehicles joining the already long queues at peak times will increase exhaust emissions, becoming a serious environmental issue. The Travel Plan, "Routes into Town", claims that a reduction in CO2 emissions will be achieved within 5 years by people using Public Transport, walking and cycling. This claim is based on theory and cannot be taken seriously. It would appear to have been put forward as an attempt to take attention away from the harm that this increase in emissions will do to the environment. The claim cannot be justified by wishful thinking and cannot be sustained; and no strategy has been put forward to show how this 10% reduction will be achieved.

The report by the Drainage Engineer from the Lead Local Flood Agency recommends "Not Approved" requiring much additional information. The applicant has not demonstrated that enough consideration has been given to this important aspect. This goes against policy EN6 of the Local Plan.

The Ecological Officer at SBC was wholly dissatisfied with the developer's supporting report and noted that the Survey of ground nesting birds and, essentially, bat populations were carried out at the wrong time of year. The Ecology Officer also notes the site is too large for an Ecological Assessment. Other aspects were not carried out in the proscribed manner and the report in support of the application cannot be accepted. RA1 of the Local Plan seeks to prevent significant and adverse environmental impacts.

The SBC Landscape Officer's report is equally at odds with the supporting Landscape document. He disputes much of the claims made in the developer appraisal and disagrees with the suitability of the site for development. He states he is familiar with the site and the surrounding area and reviewed the site as part of the SHEELA process in October 2019. At that time, he considered development of any part of the field would be very harmful to the Town and **should be avoided**.

The SBC Archaeological Consultant stated that the proposed area of development is in an area of archaeological potential. She had advised on the need for an evaluation prior to determination, but this has not been undertaken. She advised that she maintains an objection, as no evaluation has been undertaken. This contravenes EN10 of the Local Plan.

Councillors requested that, should the Officer be minded to recommend acceptance, the application be called in for consideration by the Planning Committee. In this event there will be Town Councillor attendance at the Committee meeting.

Neighbourhood Plan Working Party (NPWP). Councillors agreed that the NPWP be permitted to submit its separate objection based on a strategic view of development in the Town. The NPWP should seek to obtain agreement from SBC that this application and future applications for large developments in the Town be considered together, rather than separately and in isolation.

Section 106 Contributions. Councillors asked that the question of S106 contributions be taken up with the Planning Officer immediately in case the application is approved. They demand that the bulk of the contributions must be allocated to the Town, not to Swindon. They also wish the matter of the Traffic Officer's request that £50,000 be allocated to SBC's cost of planning, designing and delivering improvements to the cycle route network between Highworth and Swindon Centre be challenged. The grounds for this are:

that there is no promise of there being a complete route into Swindon from Highworth and no expectation that this money will be spent on this. The suspicion is that the money will be allocated to improving the cycle route network at the Swindon

The local plan review LA19 (g) required pedestrian and cycle links within the town to the school and the Town Centre. Within the review there was a proposal for a link from Swindon to Highworth, but this was not related, in any way to this or any other development. S106 contributions are there to mitigate the detrimental impact caused by a development. The heaviest impact of a development, such as this one, is the effect of all the additional motor vehicles impacting the town and on the route into Highworth. This is where the contribution is required to improve cycle routes and footpaths and Rights of Ways connecting the centre of Highworth with its outlying areas. Similarly, the £25,000 pounds mentioned in the Traffic Officer's report should, likewise, be allocated to be spent by Highworth.

d. [S/HOU/20/0538 PEKO](#) – Erection of an extension to existing balcony. The Annexe, Windyridge, Westrop, Highworth SN6 7HJ. **Councillors recommend refusal. This application would be an overdevelopment of the site and intrusive to the neighbouring properties.**

e. [S/HOU/20/0586 EMMI](#) – Erection of a single storey rear extension. 30 Cherry Orchard, Highworth SN6 7AU. **Councillors recommend acceptance.**

MEMBERS' BUSINESS

135. a. Councillor R Williams: Apologised for the misunderstanding on Social Media and thanked the Councillors for their help with re-opening the Market.
- b. Councillor S Wolfensohn: Assurance from SBC is to be sought on the number of additional houses required to fulfil the 5-year housing land supply set out by the Government.
- c. Councillor K Smith: A General Purpose & Finance Meeting is to be scheduled for Tuesday 30 June 2020 at 7:00pm.
- d. Councillor (Mrs) K Barber: The Terms of Reference for the Neighbourhood Working Party is to be circulated to all Councillors.
- e. Councillor (Mrs) M Penny:
- It was previously reported the traffic lights are to be replaced. This was a misunderstanding, the pedestrian lights along Lechlade Road are to be renewed and amendments are to be made to the sequencing of the traffic lights. A right arrow for vehicles turning into Lechlade Road is planned to be painted on the road.
 - **(Standing Orders were Suspended)** The Clerk is to write to the three cafes and the three public houses in the High Street to extend an offer for seating on the Podium for use of their take-away customers. The offer comes with conditions, that the businesses supply the tables and be responsible for their security, be responsible for clearing the litter caused by their customers and that the offer is confined to non-alcoholic beverages and food. Councillor (Mrs) Penny has agreed to assist HTC in obtaining the necessary license.
 - Highworth Neighbourhood Plan is being reviewed in line with the SBC Local Plan.

- f. Councillor N Gardiner: An agenda item is to be put on the next General Purpose & Finance Meeting 30 June 2020 to debate a Face Book page for HTC.

Meeting closed 9.01pm

Action Points: -

Planning recommendations to be sent to Swindon Borough Council Planning.
Letter to Forward Planning confirming current figures in relation to the 5 Year Supply.
Terms of Reference for the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party to be re-circulated to Councillors.
The Clerk is to write to the café and pub owners in the High Street.
Face Book is to be an agenda item on the next GP&F Meeting.