

**MINUTES** of the meeting of the **PLANNING COMMITTEE** held virtually via Zoom at 7.30pm on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

**PRESENT:** Councillor Phillips (Chair)  
Councillors Coll, Davison, Inwood, Leggett, Perry, FJ Smith and P Smith

**In attendance:** Town Clerk  
Town Councillors Bylett and Harrison  
County Councillor Hill and District Councillor Green  
19 Members of the Public

The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting and informed those present that the meeting was being recorded.

A one minute silence was held for HRH the Duke of Edinburgh.

#### **204/21 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

Members of the public spoke to object to the planning application for the Land off Barkway Road. Communication with residents by the company had been poor and many residents had already submitted objections. It was pointed out that this was a speculative application for a green field site outside the existing settlement boundary. The applicant has not engaged with the local planning authority, their illustrative design is at odds with design guidelines and they have not provided an environmental impact assessment. The applicant states the land is of low agricultural value but Defra rate it a grade 2/3a. The site is inaccessible and contrary to sustainable principles. The distance and gradient up to the site mean car-borne access will be the only option for the 700 residents. The applicants have not shown grounds for why this unallocated site should be chosen over any other white land within the A505. They have consulted with the Highways Authority but not used the recommended methodology. Two significant stretches of the Barkway Road will be reduced to single-way traffic with an informal give-way system. They are underestimating the impact on traffic congestion during and following the development. Their ecological report was done in October but should have been done in summer to get an accurate picture of the protected species. Prime agricultural land will be lost as well as habitats and amenity to the public with no suggestions of mitigation. The application is flawed and contrary to national and emerging plan policy.

The Chairman thanked the members of the public for their very informed contributions.

#### **205/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

Apologies were received from Councillors Squire-Smith and Stanier.

#### **206/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS:**

Members were advised to declare any interests at the commencement of the relevant item on the agenda. No requests for dispensations were received.

#### **207/21 APPROVAL OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES:**

Members **RESOLVED** to approve as a correct record the minutes of the Committee meeting held on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021 (minutes 173/21 to 180/21).

#### **208/21 PLANNING APPLICATIONS:**

a) 21/00765/OP – Land off Barkway Road, North of Flint Hall, Royston, Herts.

The Chairman began by acknowledging the many letters of objection received on the NHDC website which she had read.

Members raised a **STRONG OBJECTION** to this application on the following grounds:

### **Local Plan**

The application site is not allocated for development in either the current or the emerging Local Plan and lies within the countryside, beyond defined settlement boundaries.

Councillors were very disappointed to even have to discuss this application, as there is good reason why this is not included in any Local Plan. NHDC must not agree to this application.

If this aggressive type of application from developers was to be allowed it would set a precedent for further inappropriate development threats. It shows how important it is for our emerging local plan to be finalised and it is regrettable that this has been so delayed.

The COVID pandemic has had a huge effect on our town centre and it is probable that retail and office space will be increasingly used for housing, as we are already seeing in the town. There is no further need for additional dwellings on this site.

### **Traffic**

Traffic surveys were carried out during lockdown when many people were working from home or furloughed. The data in the application therefore cannot be valid.

This development could potentially add five hundred extra cars. This is an unacceptable increase in traffic to the narrow and busy pinch-point on Barkway Road where permanently parked cars make the road into an already dangerous single carriageway.

There would be further congestion on the town's one-way system, which regularly becomes gridlocked. Queuing will cause further pollution for nearby houses.

The proposed development has no provision for sustainable travel measures in order to achieve a significant switch to walking, cycling and public transport. We must avoid a car-centric development on the edge of town.

### **Walking and cycling**

The proposed development has no provision for sustainable travel measures in order to achieve a significant switch to walking, cycling and public transport.

Facilities such as the town centre, schools and medical centres would realistically be too far to walk to – this will further impact on traffic levels.

The indicated walk circles, in the Design and Access statement, do not take into consideration walking with small children or the elderly, or the fact that it is uphill from Royston.

Cycling along Barkway Road would be dangerous, especially for school children.

### **Environment**

The proposed development would have a negative impact on the character of the area, the natural geography and the skyline.

The proposed development would be a destruction of good arable land and local wildlife habitats; it would lead to the inevitable destruction of more trees.

Busy internal roads would cut through the existing bridleway and footpath.

The UK needs to be more self-sufficient and produce more food locally; this proposal would result in the permanent loss of agricultural land. Once there are bricks and mortar on our countryside it will be lost forever.

The additional footfall would also increase the harm to the nearby and already fragile Therfield Heath, which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Existing residents will be subjected to a lengthy period of construction noise and inconvenience, especially those on the north boundary of the land.

### **Drainage**

We have already seen the consequences of building on steeply sloping chalk land in Royston, which caused flooding issues for neighbouring properties.

## Infrastructure

There is insufficient infrastructure in the town. Doctors, dentists and schools are already under pressure from numerous recent developments.

In conclusion, the negative impacts of the development would significantly outweigh the benefits in the area.

Councillor Coll joined the meeting at 8.04pm.

- b) 21/00566/FP – Upton House, Baldock Street, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 5AY.  
Members raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.
- c) 21/00580/FPH – 24 Lilburn Avenue, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 7FH.  
Members raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.
- d) 21/00607/FPH – 43 Melbourn Road, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 7DF.  
Members raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.
- e) 21/00619/FPH – 16 Mallard Road, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 5DG.  
Members raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.
- f) 21/00652/FPH – 45 Green Street, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 7BB.  
Members raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.
- g) 21/00561/FPH – 7 Aintree Road, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 9JE.  
Members raised an **OBJECTION** to this application on the grounds of inadequate plans which do not show the final layout of the property and it is not possible to ascertain the space between the dwellings. Improved plans are required so that an informed decision can be made.
- h) 21/00663/FPH – 49 King James Way, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 7EF.  
Members raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.
- i) 21/00701/FP – Former 40-42 High Street, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 9AN.  
Members raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application providing that provision of bins is sufficient for the extra 10 flats.

Councillor FJ Smith left the meeting at 8.20pm.

- j) 21/00708/FPH – 16 The Brambles, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 9NQ.  
Members raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.
- k) 21/00711/FPH – 1 Ascot Road, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 9JD.  
Members raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.
- l) 21/00713/FPH – 9 Ivy Lane, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 9DQ.  
Members raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.
- m) 21/00775/FPH – 8 Tannery Close, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 5DH.  
Members raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.
- n) 21/00830/FPH – 10 Turpins ride, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 9EF.  
Members raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.
- o) 21/00881/FPH – 6 Aintree road, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 9JE.  
Members raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.
- p) 21/00891/FPH – 21 Lime Grove, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 7DJ.  
Members raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.
- q) 21/00848/FPH – 11 Keats Close, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 5AU.  
Members raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.
- r) 21/00805/LBC – 10 Stamford Yard, Kneesworth St, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 5AN.  
Members raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.

- s) 21/00963/FPH – 16 Mallow Walk, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 9NF.  
Members raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.

**209/21 UPDATED LIST OF PLANNING DECISIONS:**

Members noted the updated list of planning decisions.

Councillor Davison left the meeting at 8.34pm.

Date of next meeting: 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.38pm.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Chairman