

MINUTES of the meeting of the **PLANNING COMMITTEE** held in Room 11 at the Town Hall, at 7.30pm on Monday 1st August 2022.

PRESENT: Councillor Beardwell (Chair)
Councillors Antony, Inwood, Langdon, Rees and Squire-Smith
In attendance: Town Clerk
County Councillor Hill, District Councillors Green and Hunter
1 Member of the Public

The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting and reminded those present to be mindful of the Climate and Biodiversity Emergency declared by the Royston Town Council when making decisions on behalf of the council. The Chair notified everyone that the meeting was being recorded.

125/23 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

There was none.

126/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies were received from Councillors Adams and Jani.

127/23 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.

128/23 APPROVAL OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES:

Members **RESOLVED** to approve as a correct record the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on Monday 4th July (minutes 94/23 to 99/23).
The minutes were signed by the Chairman.

129/23 PLANNING APPLICATIONS:

- a) 21/00765/OP – Land off Barkway Road and North of Flint Hall, Barkway Road, Royston, Hertfordshire
Members raised a **STRONG OBJECTION** to this application.
Members were pleased that the Highways Authority has now objected to the application due to the problems that it would cause on the Barkway Road corridor and A10 gyratory. Members noted that the new masterplan showed no significant variation from the original submission.
Therefore Royston Town Council continues to **OBJECT** to the 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 finalized 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 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 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.

- b) 22/01723/FP – 31A Market Hill, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 9JT
Members raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.
- c) 22/01724/LBC – 31A Market Hill, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 9JT
Members raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.
- d) 22/00681/HYA – 46 Kneesworth Street, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 5AQ
Members raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.
- e) 22/01855/S73 – Blakett Ord Court, Stamford Avenue, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 7EB
Members raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.
- f) 22/01840/FP – The Sycamores, 43 Kneesworth Street, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 5AB
Members raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.
- g) 22/01850/PNMA – Royston Manor House Yard, Melbourn Street, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 7BZ
Members raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.
- h) 22/01228/FPH – 35 Priory Lane, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 9DX
Members raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.
- i) 22/01838/FPH – 2 Willowside Way, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 5ET
Members raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.
- j) 22/01746/LBC – 49 Upper King Street, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 9AZ
Members raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.

130/23 UPDATED LIST OF PLANNING DECISIONS:

Members noted the updated list of planning decisions.

Date of next meeting: 5th September 2022.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.02pm.

Signed: _____

Date _____