

MINUTES of the meeting of the **PLANNING COMMITTEE** held in Room 11 at the Town Hall, at 9.08pm on Monday 15th May 2023.

PRESENT: Councillor Beardwell
Councillors Adams, Freeman, Haugh, Jani, Langdon, Lockett, Rees and Squire-Smith

In attendance: Town Clerk
Town Councillors Brown and Harrison
3 members of the public

49/24 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN:

Members noted the appointment of Councillor Beardwell as Chairman and Councillor Rees as Vice-Chairman of the committee for the ensuing year.

50/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies were received from Councillor Birch.

51/24 DELEGATION OF POWERS AND DUTIES:

Members noted the powers and duties delegated to the Planning Committee in the Full Council Meeting -

That the powers and duties of the Council in regard to matters under the Town and Country Planning Acts be delegated to the Planning Committee; and that the Committee shall appoint Sub-Committees and Working Parties as appropriate. That the Chairman and Vice Chairman and the Clerk be delegated to give a response to planning applications if there is a time constraint on the response required.

52/24 COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE:

Members noted the terms of reference as approved in the Full Council Meeting.

53/24 APPROVAL OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES:

It was **RESOLVED** to approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Planning committee held on 3rd April 2023 (minutes 379/23 to 384/23). The minutes were signed by the Chairman.

54/24 PLANNING APPLICATIONS:

- a) 23/00750/FP - Land Between Durham Way and York Way, Royston, Herts, SG8 5GX
Members raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.

- b) 23/00805/FP - Land Adjacent to 19, Shaftesbury Way, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 9DE
Members raised a **STRONG OBJECTION** to this application for the following reasons:
 - It is an inappropriate overdevelopment of the site.
 - The development will affect the neighbours and there will be a loss of light to their properties.
 - There will be a loss of amenity space and mature trees will be cut down and they should be protected.
 - There is no parking provision and car parking is already an issue in this area.
 - The main sewer for the estate is under the site.
 - The fencing on the boundary of the site would make the pathway to Grange Bottom very secluded.
 - The development would have a negative effect on the street scene.

- c) 23/00830/FP - 38 Heathfield, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 5BN
Members raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.
- d) 21/00765/OP – Land off Barkway Road and North of Flint Hall, Barkway Road, Royston
Members discussed the amended masterplan document. They noted that little had changed since the original submission. There were still serious concerns over the proposed development and the points raised in the previous submission raising an objection all still stood. They noted that there was now a proposed cycleway from the corner of the development which would cross Town Council owned land at Green Walk Plantation and join with Shrubbery Grove.
Members **RESOLVED** to raise a **STRONG OBJECTION** to the proposal 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 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 little 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 little 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.

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

Members agreed that, in the event that planning permission were to be granted, they would be minded to co-operate with the delivery of the cycle route link crossing Green Walk Plantation. To this end, they would grant permission for the applicant's consultants to access Green Walk Plantation and undertake ecology survey work. This does not prejudice the Town Council's position and their fundamental objection to any development on this land.

55/24 APPEALS:

Members noted the following appeals:

APP/X1925/W/22/3312947 – Telecommunication Masts Near, Priory Lane, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 9JT

56/24 REPORT TO MEMBERS THE DECISIONS MADE BY THE CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN ON BEHALF OF ROYSTON TOWN COUNCIL, ON THE FOLLOWING APPLICATIONS:

- a) 23/00702/FPH – 8 Harvester Close, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 7FF
Members of Royston Town Council raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.
- b) 23/00712/FPH – 1C Serby Avenue, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 5EH
Members of Royston Town Council raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.
- c) 23/00763/FPH – Edgely, Grange Bottom, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 9UQ
Members of Royston Town Council raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.
- d) 23/00785/FPH – 14 Browning Close, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 7EY

Members of Royston Town Council raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.

- e) 23/00933/FPH – 3 Tavern Close, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 9GE
Members of Royston Town Council raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.
- f) 23/00935/FPH – 56 Poplar Drive, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 7EP
Members of Royston Town Council raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.
- g) 23/00916/FPH – 72 Tennyson Close, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 5SZ
Members of Royston Town Council raised **NO OBJECTION** to this application.

The date of the next meeting will be Monday 5th June 2023.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.33pm.

Signed: _____
Chairman

Date _____

DRAFT