

Whatton in the Vale Parish Council

Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday June 6 2017, at the Jubilee Hall, Whatton in the Vale at 7.30pm

Coun. Chris Grocock (Chairman)

Ray Evans Carole Key Chris Edwardson Jane Morris

Gwyn Owen Suzy Sagoo

Also present the Mr Gregg Redford acting as clerk, Rushcliffe Borough Council member Coun. Maureen Stockwood, Notts County Council member Coun. Francis Purdue Horan and 106 residents.

1 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MAY 23, 2017 were accepted as circulated and signed by the chairman.

2. OPEN SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The meeting was told that Cllr Stockwood had applied for Tree Preservation Orders to be applied to the trees on Old Grantham Road but the Rushcliffe Borough Council said this was not appropriate as they were owned by Notts County Council.

The Borough council had also advised that trees in a Conservation Area needed six weeks' notice being given before felling could take place.

Cllr Purdue-Horan said Tree Officers from Notts County Council were looking into what they can do regarding protection.

3. PLANNING MATTERS

17/00943/ful. Phillip Bentley, The Threshing Barn, Church Street. New detached residential dwelling with associated outbuilding. Object. - location unsuitable, building on greenfield, outside of existing built-up area. Access dangerous.

17/00969/OUT. Hallam Land Management Ltd, outline planning application with all matters reserved other than success for the residential development of up to 90 dwellings and associated infrastructure. Object. .

LOCAL PLAN: The application is in absolute conflict with the Rushcliffe Local Plan - Part 1 (Core Strategy) in particular 3.1. The plan has been extensively consulted upon both with neighbouring authorities and residents and has been examined by the Planning Inspectorate in 2014 and considered 'sound'. The Application is also in direct conflict with Part 2 of the Local Plan that proposes explicitly that Whatton (and Aslockton) should not be exposed to this type of application.

The Parish Council is aware that the Applicant seeks to negate the Local Plan by citing the shortfall in the five-year housing supply. The shortfall in their (the Applicant's) view means that Policy 3 is 'out-of-date' and little or no weight can be applied to the Policy. Whatton-in-the-Vale Parish Council disagrees with this view: a long-term spatial strategy developed after considerable research, negotiation and consultation cannot be derailed by a short-term situation which the Borough Council are doing all in their power to resolve.

One of the 'Core principles' of the National Planning Policy (NPPF) is that application should 'be genuinely plan led...' This application is Land-owner led and attempts to totally disregard the plan and therefore fails to meet that principle.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SIZE: The proposed development would increase the number of dwellings in the parish by approximately 23% and the population by an equal or greater amount. The Parish Council believes that a development of this size is wholly inappropriate for a small rural settlement.

An extract from another of the 'Core principles' of the NPPF states '...recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside...' Further the NPPF states that 'actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable.

This application falls substantially short of meeting any of those requirements.

TRAFFIC and SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT: The Traffic Assessment included with the Application is at best cursory and out of date (the Villager V2 service - the principal bus service will cease in July 2017). Ninety dwellings will generate at least ninety additional motor cars and at least an additional one-hundred and eighty additional traffic movements per day. Typically, all journeys to and from the main employment areas (Nottingham, Newark, Grantham and to a lesser extent Bingham) will be by motor car there being no viable public transport alternative. Food shopping likewise would be usually accessed by private motor car, small and medium sized supermarkets in Bingham (3 miles) and major supermarkets are at least 13 miles distant.

The Traffic Assessment also cites monitoring a majority of traffic turning left (East) onto the A52 at the junction at the end of Old Grantham Road. The Parish Council believes this to be erroneous. An analysis of distances to places of interest and local services demonstrates that the majority of education, health, leisure and retail facilities are accessed in Bingham and Nottingham, with Whatton residents turning right out of the junction (West).

Residents of Whatton are overwhelmingly registered with Belvoir Health Group, which operates from centres in Bingham, Cropwell Bishop, and Cotgrave – all to the west of Whatton.

Archbishop Cranmer Primary School, the principal primary school for Whatton residents in nearby Aslockton is a feeder school for Toot Hill Secondary Academy in Bingham.

The nearest Swimming Pool, artificial sports pitches, and Leisure Centre are located in Bingham.

Bingham also contains numerous retail, commercial facilities and places of employment, accessed by residents of Whatton.

The fact that Whatton and Bingham are in the same County, Nottinghamshire means that little to no residents of Whatton travel east into Leicestershire and Lincolnshire for education, health or public leisure facilities. Bottesford to the east is a large village in Leicestershire, less than half the size than the town of Bingham, lacks any significant leisure or retail facilities, and is over 1 mile further away (4.7m compared to 3.5 miles).

Grantham, population approx. 43,000 is 11.7 miles to the East and in Lincolnshire. In terms of a location for retail, employment, and leisure activity, it is dwarfed by the Nottingham conurbation to the West, population over 700,000 and slightly closer at 11.4 miles (Whatton to West Bridgford). Nottingham also provides all hospital facilities for Whatton residents. Newark, 15.9 miles away, in Nottinghamshire, and a similar size to Grantham is also a significant local centre, which is accessed by travel west from Whatton on the A52 to the junction with the A46.

The additional traffic movements created by this proposal will place severe pressure on the local road network and more importantly on what is considered (by local users) the already dangerous Grantham Road/A52 junction.

There is also the possibility of traffic using Dark Lane, Abbey Lane (Aslockton) to New Lane to access the A52 at the safer New Lane/A52 junction. This will give rise to considerable congestion and safety issues with the new development (75 houses) on Abbey Lane and the fact that Abbey Lane provides access to Archbishop Cranmer Primary School.

The increase in traffic movements will also increase CO2 emissions and effect air quality.

The NPPF recognises the important of developments being located in areas of adequate public transport: 'contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution....' the Core Principals goes on to state:

'...to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling...'

Point 95 of the NPPF in part states 'plan for new developments in locations and ways which reduce greenhouse gas emissions.'

In the view of the Parish Council this application fails to meet the NPPF criteria and further in all probability will increase pollution through the additional traffic movements.

CONSERVATION and ECOLOGY:

- a. The Old Grantham Road 'Avenue of Trees' is within the Conservation Area and provide views both to and from it. The impact of a creating a junction in the 'iconic' area would in our view cause severe harm in terms of damage to the trees and the tree roots.
- b. Given that the access road will be 'driven' through three hedgerows the impact on wildlife and the natural habitat would in our view be severe.
- c. The Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust(NWT) comments in this area exemplifies the cursory nature of the Ecology Report. The Parish Council wholly concurs with and endorses the comments made by the NWT.

Given the impact of the proposed access road, it is the Parish Councils view that the application fails to meet NPPF core principles:

'contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment...'
'conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance...'

Additionally, looking at the development as a whole, Point 109 of the NPPF states that the planning system (and thus any development subject to it) should 'contribute to and enhance the local and natural environment'. In particular:-

- ' - protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soil:
- recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services;
- minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt overall decline in biodiversity, including establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.....'

The development fails in respect of all of these policies.

SUSTAINABILITY: Rushcliffe Borough Council in the emerging Local Plan Part 2 acknowledges that Whatton (and Aslockton) are not considered sustainable.

The Parish Council concurs with that view in that:

- There is no sustainable transport in Whatton. Existing bus and train services (in nearby Aslockton) cannot be considered sustainable due to their infrequency and secession for large periods of the day, particularly evenings. The impact of this on residents dependent on these services severely impacts on their daily lives. Therefore:
- There are little or no employment opportunities accessible by sustainable transport options.
- There are no essential services (health etc.) accessible by sustainable transport options.
- Food shopping is not accessible by sustainable transport options.
- There are few amenities in the parish and those available in Aslockton are of little value.
- The lack of adequate public transport systems would require that access to essential services and facilities is only possible by motor car.
- The inclusion of a significant proportion (30%) of affordable housing within the application is not feasible due to the lack of sustainable transport to access places of employment and key services, as outlined above.

The NPPF 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' CANNOT apply to this application as it is clearly not sustainable.

ACCESS ROAD: The impact of the Access road has been addressed in part in 4 above. Additionally, the 'Old Road' cited as Dark Lane in the application, is used extensively by residents in particular children and disabled residents as a SAFE and CAR-FREE route to and from Dark Lane and Aslockton (the location of the Primary School and limited local facilities). It is a safer alternative route to the Old Grantham Road, where traffic frequently exceeds the speed limit. The proposed Access Road will bisect the Old Road, eliminating a significant portion of the hedgerows and natural undergrowth. It will turn what is a quiet 'country lane' into something quite different and showing no regard for the intrinsic value of this portion of the Parish.

USE OF AGRICULTURAL LAND: NPPF Point 112 is quite clear about the use of good quality agricultural land:

'Local planning authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality.'

In the view of the Parish Council the Applicant has not made a coherent or valid case for the necessity of developing the proposed site, which is Grade 2 agricultural land.

GENERAL: In the Planning Statement the applicant asserts that Whatton-in-the-Vale and Aslockton function as one settlement and cites 'Sustainable Locations for Growth Study (2010)' and the 'Rushcliffe Additional Background Paper (2017)' in justification for the assertion. A thorough reading of both documents demonstrates the opposite. For the avoidance of doubt Whatton-in-the-Vale and Aslockton are separate and distinct Civil Parishes with separate precepts, Parish Councils and distinctive characters. The Parish Council believe that such a misleading statement should not go unchallenged and is anxious to preserve the distinctive character of Whatton-in-the-Vale.

CONCLUSION: a) The Application should be REFUSED as it contravenes Policy 3.1 of the Local Plan Part 1.
b) Even if 3.1 is found to be out-of-date - the 'presumption in favour' cannot be invoked as the development is clearly and demonstratively UNSUSTAINABLE and should be REFUSED.
c) The impact on the Ecology is severe and therefore contrary to the principals of the NPPF.
d) Severe harm to the Conservation Area contrary to the principals of the NPPF.
e) The use of agricultural land for an unnecessary development contrary to the principals of the NPPF.
f) The Application is opportunist and land-owner benefit centric without any regard to the wider Rushcliffe/Nottinghamshire spatial vision and with total disregard to the impact on the local community.

- 5 ITEMS FOR AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING JUNE 27
Nothing was oput forward.