

HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held on Monday 14 January 2019 at 7.30pm in the Parish Centre, Adastra Park, Hassocks

Attendees: Parish Councillors: Jane Baker, Bill Hatton, Leslie Campbell, Judith Foot, Mark Higgins, Nick Owens (Chair) and Victoria Standfast.

In Attendance:

Deputy Clerk: Tracy Forte

Parish Councillors: Georgia Cheshire
Frances Gaudencio
Peter Gibbons
Sue Hatton
Ian Weir
Emma Wood

Four members of Public.

P18/125 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE. There were no apologies for absence.

P18/126 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST. There were no declarations of interest.

P18/127 MINUTES.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 10 January 2019, be signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

P18/128 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION. Three members of the Public spoke against application DM/18/4979 Land North of Clayton Mills.

i. Mrs Rosemary Hayhurst, Hawthorn Cottage, Ockley Lane, Hassocks.

'We live in the property most affected by the access proposal for 500 houses and a school in the field to the rear of us.

We have Full Right and Liberty over piece of land, our private driveway, adjoining our property to the south of us. During the last 35 years we have had unfettered, unhindered and unchallenged use. An historic hedge crosses the front of the paddock to be used for access. We are also in close proximity to the heritage complex of Ockley Manor and Ockley Manor Farm and form part of the linear development of cottages associated with the farm and manor. This type of landscape is becoming increasingly rare.

We have met with the developer during the years since the neighbourhood plan. In every case we have stated our PRIME concern was for a SAFE ACCESS at this site, culminating in a meeting in June when we believed they would work on an alternative access to our property so reducing the conflict between our drive and their junction.

Instead of coming to a resolution they have applied for an outline planning which does not meet the essential for SAFETY, LEAST HARM, or being REASONABLE.

In making a four way junction onto Ockley Lane they have ADDED HARM and REDUCED SAFETY. Ockley Lane will still be a narrow, weight (corrected to

width) restricted country lane. Reducing the speed limit is a good idea but when cars have ended up in our garden, hedge or the ditch opposite speed has not been the main issue.

Also they are encouraging pedestrians to cross at this point, another hazard and they have added a bus shelter which restricts/ obstructs visibility for The Old Malthouse.

Taking our drive out of this mix will reduce harm and risk. What the developer is proposing is UNSAFE and it has to be said, a most unusual junction for 500 houses and a school.

In addition-

To quote Historic England-

"Significant adverse affects should be avoided altogether and alternatives sought to reduce or mitigate unavoidable impacts on heritage sites." Current work is revealing Ockley's history and some subtlety should have been shown to retain the street scene, instead an historic hedge is to be removed with no softening or alternative (such as a hedged border to their bell mouth).'

ii. Mr George Hayhurst, Hawthorn Cottage, Ockley Lane, Hassocks. 'I just want to say something about the distance between a drop kerb and a junction. WSCC dropped kerb guidance is very clear: *"If the location of the proposed crossing is closer than 10m to a road junction it would create a serious hazard and the application will be refused. This dimension may be increased to 15m on major roads or near busy junctions."*

This will be a busy junction, however, according to WSCC, it would appear that it is okay and less hazardous to build a junction serving 500 houses over our driveway, crossing it by approximately 7m (measured at the edge of the road). Highway mentioned that there is a road safety audit, Stage 1, carried out but the plan used does not reflect the true shape and location of the adjoining piece of land, our driveway, as shown in our registered title plan.

At the very beginning, in their master plan, vision and poster display at the Adastra Hall the developer removed our garage and driveway giving the impression that there is room for the junction. Post the mitigation meeting, on 20th June 2018, they have reinstated our driveway and garage in their latest master plan, however the width of our driveway appears to have shrunk!'

iii. Mr John Kelly of Park Avenue, Hassocks raised concerns about the impact on Lodge Lane of increased traffic from the proposed development. Lodge Lane already experiences a high level of traffic which travels at speed, making it dangerous for those exiting Dale Avenue and Park Avenue onto this road. Furthermore, there is no footway running south from Park Avenue to the Campsite which makes this already very unsafe for pedestrians. The proposed 500 houses will result in further additional traffic using Lodge Lane and therefore increased safety issues.

Mr Kelly also asked whether there would be any clarity on the level of spend for the Community Infrastructure Levy and when details would be available on this.

The Chairman informed those present that the application would be considered and discussed by all Councillors present. However, any final decisions could only be taken and agreed by Members of the Planning Committee.

DM/18/4979 Land North Of Clayton Mills Ockley Lane Hassocks West Sussex

Outline planning application with all matters reserved except for access for up to 500 residential dwellings and land for a two-form entry primary school and community building, land for a bridleway link between Hassocks and Burgess Hill, associated infrastructure including informal open space, hard and soft landscaping, sustainable drainage features and a new site access onto Ockley Lane, and provision of improved pedestrian access across the railway line.

Cllr Sue Hatton informed Members that she had earlier in the day attended a meeting regarding application DM/18/4979, along with the other District Cllrs, Gordon Marples and Michelle Binks, with Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) Officers. Cllr Sue Hatton reported that amongst various matters, one item which came to light was that the application included references to the ridge heights of the proposed properties. This information is contained in the Parameters Plan. Cllr Sue Hatton wanted to draw Members' attention to this as it was not referred to in the application description and therefore was not clearly apparent. This was noted by Members to be included in the consideration.

The Chairman then proposed discussing each non-reserved matter individually listed in the application description. This was agreed by all present.

1. Provision of Improved Pedestrian Access across the railway line

In Policy DP11 of the District Plan, it clearly states that the development in this location will

'Assess the implications of the development on pedestrian and cycle railway crossings and ensure there is an agreed approach towards ensuring the provision of safe crossings;'

It was generally considered by the Committee that insufficient detail was provided in this application regarding the provision of a footbridge. It is implied by Gleasons' documentation that it would be the responsibility of Network Rail to formally address this provision. However, Members felt that the provision of the footbridge was an integral part of the access aspects that the committee is required to consider in order to determine whether this present application should or should not proceed. Therefore, further clarity and confirmation about how this access is going to be provided is required before this application's access proposals could be recommended for approval.

2. Achieving safe access to and from Ockley Lane

Members unanimously agreed that the proposed T-junction access was inadequate and dangerous for the following reasons:

i. The proposed T-junction is considered unsafe by HPC. Ockley Lane is a busy road with cars travelling at speed in both directions. It is also subject to low lying mist and ice in cold conditions. It is understood that the traffic studies carried out on behalf of

Gleasons and also that undertaken by West Sussex County Council (WSSCC), consider that a simple T Junction would be sufficient for the level of traffic generated by the development. This is disputed by Hassocks Parish Council (HPC). It was noted by the Committee that when the 250 properties in Clayton Mills were built, a mini roundabout was installed by the developers at the T junction from Mackie Avenue onto Grand Avenue, to alleviate traffic concerns. Cllr Peter Gibbons therefore questioned how this proposed development of 500 properties feeding onto the more heavily used Ockley Lane, could be considered as not requiring at least the same level of traffic management. The residents of Hawthorn Cottage are also not afforded safe and unfettered access to their own property.

ii. Traffic Flow. It is very apparent throughout the village that traffic flow at peak times causes considerable tail-backs at key junctions. The proposed location of the new school site is close to the access junction, and is at the furthest point from the village. The school will also most likely attract pupils from Burgess Hill, as well as Hassocks, all of whom will primarily attend by car. This will result in a substantial build-up of traffic both entering and exiting the development at school run times, which poses safety concerns as well as potential traffic flow issues. Members unanimously agreed that the traffic studies undertaken for this site are inaccurate and do not reflect the current flow of traffic, nor do they reflect the level and flow of traffic which will be generated by the new development. All Members felt strongly that these studies needed to be reviewed. Cllr Sue Hatton informed Members that they had echoed the concerns raised by all three District Councillors about the safety of the proposed junction and the associated traffic studies around this development. As a consequence a meeting is to be arranged between the District Councillors, MSDC and WSSCC Highways Officers to discuss this.

iii. Unresolved Boundary Dispute. Members were concerned by reports from Mr and Mrs Hayhurst, owners of the property Hawthorn Cottage adjacent to and overlapping with the proposed access, that the maps provided by the developer are inaccurate in that they do not correctly reflect land ownership boundaries as registered with the Land Registry, and fail to show their garage which is on their own property. The Committee was advised by Mr & Mrs Hayhurst that there is insufficient space to deliver the proposed access without encroaching on the land and buildings owned by Mr & Mrs Hayhurst. It was agreed that the resolution of this matter was essential prior to any continuation of the application.

iv. Ockley Lane. Members were keen to emphasise that Ockley Lane is an unclassified road and is a lane with a width restriction of 6'6". It was noted that there is a dangerous double bend near the proposed access that restricts sight lines. Ockley Lane therefore would need to be upgraded as part of the infrastructure works associated with this development.

3. Bus Shelter

The proposal to locate a bus Shelter to the south of the site and on the Eastern side of Ockley Lane was a cause for concern amongst the Committee. There is no pedestrian access and furthermore, it is understood that the Bus Shelter appears to have been sited on private land without permission. Therefore, it was considered essential that its location is resolved before the application can proceed. Cllr Sue

Hatton informed Members that this had been brought to the attention of MSDC Officers and was being followed up.

4. Wider Infrastructure Impact

A development of 500 properties will impose significant additional traffic throughout the village. Members considered that this will render unsafe a number of junctions and routes, specifically the junction at Lodge Lane onto the B2112, the junction between the B2112 and Brighton Road (Clayton Hill), Grand Avenue onto Keymer Road and the volume of traffic travelling along Ockley Lane and Lodge Lane. The Committee discussed these concerns in more detail, and it was agreed that the issues raised need to be fully mitigated by s106 / agreed infrastructure works before the question of access for the 500 homes can be agreed:

i. Lodge Lane/B2112, and B2112/ Brighton Road. Both of these junctions are already notably difficult junctions especially at peak times. Traffic leaving the proposed development heading towards Brighton is highly likely to use Lodge Lane/B2112 rather than travel through the village. This is the route that Gleeson's Transport study by I-Transport stipulates will be the preferred route, and is the route thus used by them to show in their calculations that it mitigates against possible additional emissions on the AGMA at Stonepound. This will have a significant impact on safety and traffic flow in Ockley Lane, Lodge Lane and the B2112. Furthermore, concerns were raised about the lack of pedestrian access along Lodge Lane towards the South Downs. By reason of its rail link, Hassocks is known as the 'Gateway to the South Downs', and yet there is no safe pedestrian and cycle route to cross the B2112 and proceed towards Clayton and the Downs. Cllr Ian Weir informed Members that the WSCC infrastructure programme has already identified the need for a safe cycle and pedestrian route to the Downs and that the junction from Lodge Lane onto the B2112 is being monitored due to the high number of non-injury incidents which are not normally recorded in KSI statistics.

ii. Ockley Lane. There are two very sharp bends in Ockley Lane south of the proposed access, making it difficult and dangerous for pedestrians wishing to cross Ockley Lane to access/exit Mill Lane. The increased traffic generated by the additional 500 dwellings will only serve to add to the risk.

It was agreed that WSCC would be requested to revisit the traffic management studies in the light of concerns raised by District and Parish Councillors and obtain appropriate s106 commitments to resolve these concerns. It was also agreed that this would be brought to the attention of County Councillor Kirsty Lord.

5. Bridleway link

All Members were fully supportive of the provision of a bridleway/cycle route link between Burgess Hill and Hassocks. Some discussion took place around the width of the Public Right of Way and it was understood that this would be 3 metres wide. It was felt by the Committee that this was sufficient and noted that it was important to ensure that strategies were put in place to prevent vehicular access. Members expressed the need for assurances that the proposed bridleway would extend the full length of the route between Hassocks (Woodland Road) and Burgess Hill.

6. Speed Restriction.

It was noted that the proposed speed restriction within the new development was for 30mph. Cllr Bill Hatton drew Members' attention to the emerging Regulation 14 Draft Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan which supports the introduction of 20mph zones (Chap 8 Transport 8.21). It was agreed that this should be requested for the proposed new development. It was noted that speed restrictions within private roads are not set by the local authority, however the Committee understood that the new development was to be built to adoptable standards, which it fully supported. It was therefore agreed that WSCC should be required to adopt the development – this would be fairer for the residents and would allow the implementation of a 20mph speed limit.

7. School and Community Building

It was noted that the developers will not be building a school, only providing the land for a school site. Any school which is built will be an academy and as such will be able to set its own admissions policy. The Committee was fully supportive of the proposal to provide land for a school.

The general feeling amongst the Committee was that the proposed location of the school was not acceptable for two reasons:

- i. The current location will result in a build up of traffic very close to the access point onto Ockley Lane.
- ii. Both WSCC and HPC requested that the school was located as near to the south western corner of the development because this location would best serve the majority of the village, and allow more pupils to walk to school. Instead the current proposed location is on the furthest outskirts of the village which is entirely unsatisfactory.

It was also noted that the illustrative plans do not appear to provide any parking for the community building. The Committee fully agreed that sufficient parking must be provided for any buildings of this nature.

8. Drainage. It was noted that there are private sewage outlets from the houses on Ockley Lane backing onto the proposed development site which the developer needs to take account of. Furthermore, the water flow from the raised railway embankment onto the western area of the development would need addressing.

9. Informal Open Space and Landscaping.

Cllr Bill Hatton drew the Committee's attention to a report submitted by David Withycombe (Appendix A), and in particular to his concluding response to the illustrative layout provided:

'Overall I feel that this does not provide Councillors with a comprehensive assessment of the anticipated landscape and visual effects associated with the proposal. It does not provide an adequate basis for Councillors to draw conclusions and make judgements as to the landscape and visual impacts and effects of the proposals.'

Members fully agreed with this observation.

Furthermore, Members also supported the following comments in the report under Landscape Character

'At 6.8 they (the developers) refer to the site as 'peri urban' i.e. there is an urban influence on the character and appearance of the landscape. This is a green field, rural site – the influence of the settlement edge on character is negligible.'

Members were agreed that the development is to be part of a village, therefore an aspiration to achieve an 'urban feel' is not welcomed.

The rural view from the train arriving into Hassocks from London, towards the South Downs and across the fields is familiar and much loved sight. Therefore, Members emphasised the importance the inclusion of landscaping to respect these views. Members also discussed the importance of maintaining the existing hedgerows on the site.

10. Scale Parameter Plan. Cllr Sue Hatton drew Members' attention to the Scale Parameter Plan which provides an illustration of the distribution of properties up to two storeys and properties up to three storeys. Members were very concerned to see the proposed level of properties up to three storeys and felt that this should be reduced and replaced with more two storey properties of a smaller size.

On conclusion of the consideration of the application. Members of the Planning Committee fully agreed the following response to MSDC to Recommend Refusal to planning application DM/18/4979 Land to the North of Clayton Mills.

Response:

Hassocks Parish Council RECOMMENDS REFUSAL for the following reasons:

1. Pedestrian Access. The provision of improved pedestrian access across the railway line has been separated from the application, yet it is integral to the access to this site. Further information and clarity is therefore required as part of this application with a commitment to deliver this pedestrian access before the new homes may be occupied.

2. Vehicle Access. It is considered that the proposed access of a T junction to the new development is inadequate. Safety does not appear to have been considered nor addressed, and the traffic modelling used is deemed as inaccurate by HPC. Hassocks Parish Council would therefore request that the junction is redesigned and that the width restriction in Ockley Lane is taken into account. Traffic calming measures are also required. It is considered by HPC that the vehicle access is likely to need redesign to resolve the encroachment onto private land that the present proposed design entails (see below).

3. Land Ownership. Assurances are sought over land ownership for both the access to the development and the location of a bus shelter. MSDC should refer to Land Registry official records. The Council understands that there is currently an unresolved dispute on both of these matters.

4. Road Infrastructure throughout the village. The additional traffic flows to and from the 500 houses will place a significant additional burden and safety concerns on existing junctions and roads in the village, in particular on:

- The junction of the B2112 with Lodge Lane
- Ockley Lane, both in terms of the width and capacity of the road currently and sight-lines around the double bend south of Ockley Manor
- The junction of the B2112 with Brighton Road
- The junction of Grand Avenue with Keymer Road

It is considered that the existing transport assessments provided are inaccurate and do not realistically reflect the current situation, or the future impact of increased traffic around the village. This therefore requires further additional traffic management studies and significant financial contributions to address these burdens. WSCC is responsible for highways and traffic management, and has currently approved the proposed traffic management studies.

HPC therefore requests that WSCC revisits the existing traffic assessments in the light of concerns raised by both Parish and District Councillors who are familiar with the locality first hand. A new comprehensive traffic management study is required by WSCC to provide detailed analysis of areas which will be impacted by the increased traffic, and a clear strategy of mitigating this impact. This will enable WSCC to provide the developer with a comprehensive report of the level of financial contribution required to support the implementation of the highways infrastructure required as a direct result of the development.

5. Speed restrictions. The emerging Regulation 14 Draft Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan supports the introduction of 20mph zones (Chap 8 Transport 8.21). It is therefore requested that the proposed 30mph speed restriction for roads within the proposed new development is reduced to 20mph.

6. School and Community Building. HPC strongly welcomes the provision of land for a school site, however it considers that the location as proposed is not optimal. The village would be better served by locating a school as close to the south west corner of the development site. This would make best use to the existing pedestrian access and would substantially reduce the traffic burden created by school traffic. It is also considered that the Community Building should be placed close to the school in this preferred location. It is of concern that there appears to be no, or very little, parking provision for the proposed Community Building. The HPC Planning Committee request that sufficient car parking must be provided for any buildings of this nature.

7. Informal Open Space and Landscaping. The illustrative layout provided does not provide a comprehensive assessment of the anticipated landscape and visual effects associated with the proposal. Therefore, this is not an adequate basis for HPC to draw conclusions and make judgements as to the landscape and visual impacts and effects of the proposals. Furthermore, in Technical Appendix E: Landscape and Visual, point 6.8 refers to the site as 'peri urban', inferring an urban influence on the character and appearance of the landscape. The development is to be part of a village therefore an aspiration to achieve an 'urban feel' is not welcomed by HPC.

8. Scale Parameter Plan. HPC is concerned to see from the Scale Parameter Plan that the proposal is for a significant level of properties to be up to three storeys. It is recommended that this should be reduced and replaced with more two storey properties of a smaller size, both to render this edge of settlement site less 'urban', and to better match supply with demand.

General Comments

In addition to the above reasons for recommending refusal, Hassocks Parish Council would like to make the following comments.

i. Hassocks Parish Council very much welcomes the addition of a bridle/cycleway extending from Hassocks to Burgess Hill and would like to seek assurances that this will extend the entire length of the route between the two localities.

ii. With regard to drainage, the developers are requested to take account of the private sewage outlets from the houses on Ockley Lane backing onto the proposed development site; and (as a separate matter) to ensure that the water flow from the raised railway embankment onto the western area of the development is addressed.

iii. It is understood that the development will be built to an adoptable standard, and therefore HPC would wish to recommend that WSCC proceeds to adopt the roads.

iv. It is recommended that the historic view across the eastern area of Hassocks from the trains on entering the station is respected and maintained through site design and landscaping, and that the rich green heritage of the development site is preserved.

P18/130 **RESOLVED** that the observations on the planning issues as agreed above be submitted to the relevant Planning Authority for consideration.

P18/131 **DECISION NOTICES.** There were no decision notices.

P18/132 **URGENT MATTERS at the discretion of the Chairman for noting and/or inclusion on a future agenda.** There were no urgent matters.

P18/134 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING.** Monday 4 February 2019

There being no other business the Chair closed the meeting at 9.30 pm

Signed.....

Date.....