

FRAMFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Planning Committee Meeting held on Monday, 11 November 2019, at 7 pm in the Memorial Hall, Framfield

Present: Committee Members: Keith Brandon (Chairman), Bob Bather, Peter Friend, Tony Hall, Maria Naylor and Sam Sharples.
In attendance: Ann Newton (Parish Clerk).
Public: Approximately 120.

At the meeting, the order of the items on the agenda may be varied in line with public speaking. However, the minutes are detailed in the order of the agenda.

Councillor Ann Newton (WDC) briefly explained the planning process and the progress of the Wealden District Council Local Plan. She also declared a personal, prejudicial interest in the proposals for land at the Old Nursery House and stated that she would not be taking part in any dialogue over the application. A WDC colleague would be asked to fill that role if necessary.

1. Apologies.

Keith Brandon proposed that Councillor Bob Bather join the Committee for one meeting. This was seconded by Tony Hall and Maria Naylor and agreed by all present.

2. Declarations of Interest.

Councillors to give notice of declarations of personal, prejudicial and pecuniary interests in respect of items on the agenda. There were none.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting for Approval.

It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2019 having been circulated, be approved, adopted and signed as a correct record. (TH/KB).

4. Planning applications for consideration

The order of the applications may be changed in line with those with public speakers but the minutes are detailed in the order of the agenda.

- **WD/2019/2149/MAO – Outline application (all matters reserved aside from principal means of access) for up to 88 new homes (including 35% affordable housing), new access road, open space, soft landscaping.**

LAND AT OLD NURSERY HOUSE, THE STREET, FRAMFIELD, TN22 5PN

Six residents, representing the rest, spoke strongly against the application – the majority of the residents present were in attendance against the proposals.

The Parish Council strongly objects to the application for the reasons stated below. They also wish to note that as part of a planning proposal of this type, a consultation process should be followed. Normally the applicant would have pre-application advice with Wealden to gauge whether the proposals are roughly within planning policy. They should then consult more wider with the Parish Council and local residents. None of this has been done.

The Council also notes that within the applicant's own Design and Access Statement items are detailed which are outside the remit of an Outline application.

This is a 'hostile' application, ie not one in any conformity with the local planning authority's policies on future growth in the District and should be treated as such by Wealden District Council.

The emerging Wealden Local Plan states that Framfield as an unsustainable settlement should only have up to 20 dwellings for the duration of the Plan, up to 2028. Previous policies within the Wealden Core Strategy advocated none. The village only has a school, church and pub – with no retail amenities or even the ability to buy a pint of milk, so with the lack of a regular bus service with only financial support from the Parish Council to keep the Saturday service running at all, residents are reliant on the car. Cycling to Uckfield for shopping let alone bringing it back is unrealistic nonsense. Within the application a previous appeal decision is cited to support that the village is sustainable but this alleged comparable application was only for 49 houses!

Most importantly, the site was submitted in the early stages of the Wealden Local Plan as part of the SHELAA exercise. The site is deemed as unsuitable - "This is a substantial site in the context of the existing size of the village in an area of attractive landscape with some sensitivity to change. The site is isolated and remote from local services and facilities. Housing development would be unsuitable in this location and out of keeping with the generally rural character and appearance of the countryside".

Local Plan Policy RAS 1 states that development will only be permitted within and adjoining Core Areas up to the settlement capacity identified for each Core Area, in this case 20 dwellings. The settlement capacity may only be exceeded if on Brownfield sites. The land within this application is agricultural land so this does not apply. Contrary to what is detailed in the application, the nursery land was on land now under separate ownership next door. Developments within Framfield must also follow Policy WLP7 – to accommodate small individual housing developments of up to 2 dwellings of 1 or 2 bedrooms. Permission will be subject to design policies, policies that protect the environment and the prevention of coalescence of new development within and around the Core Area. 88 houses do not meet these criteria.

88 new dwellings in one grouping would be a new settlement not an integrated extension of the current one. The footprint of the proposed site is approximately 50% of the Core Area of Framfield at the moment which is an unacceptable increase in such a rural landscape. The applicant's own assessment of landscape sensitivity does very little to support the application.

The suggestion within the proposals that future occupants could use the twittens into Becketts Way to access the village is not practical or ideal, and would not help integrate those people into the village – suddenly having the occupants of 88 houses using barely viable pathways and with certainly no access for the infirm or disabled. As for the reference to cycle links? Where are they?

To focus on the access from the development into Framfield Lane!! Framfield Lane does not exist - the B2102 in this area is known as Blackboys Road. The Parish Council considers that the access will not meet any safety tests particularly for the number of houses within this application - 88 dwellings with a single access onto a 90 degree blind bend. The speed survey proved that the speed of vehicles around the bend is some 10 mph above the 30mph speed limit, although no acknowledgement of this is mentioned in the transport assessment. What is an 'informal pedestrian crossing' also mentioned in the assessment? The safety of pedestrians using the pavements and footpaths including Church Path – would be at risk. The same would apply to the safety of the residents already living in the two houses along the path.

The suggestion is made that the development will generate 44 two-way vehicle trips in the morning and 39 in the afternoon during peak hours – a very odd statistic for 88 houses! The traffic generated will also have a negative impact on the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC.

- **WD/836/CM - TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2015 – Wood recycling operations.**
Holley Woodshavings Squires Farm, Industrial Estate, Office 1
Palehouse Common, Framfield, TN22 5RB
Three residents spoke against the application and Chris Lawson, agent for Holleys, spoke in favour.

The Parish Council strongly objects to this application.

Squires Farm Industrial Estate is situated in a rural setting surrounded by open countryside, with several small holdings and farmsteads, many of which have heritage backgrounds supported by Listed Building status. The industrial estate seems to have grown over many decades and has not been without its negative impacts on local residents but also several enforcement issues. The applicant's site is currently under an enforcement notice from ESCC for breach of condition against a previous application.

It is concerning that 2.5 of their planning statement quotes "The site does not fall within any landscape, conservation or heritage designations", but makes no reference to the surrounding listed buildings as there is no heritage report submitted with this application. The Parish Council

considers that this should have been done and any impact on the local historic environment must be preserved.

By their own admission, there is currently circa 1,000 tonnes of waste on site that should have been removed under enforcement, over a two-year period which expired in March 2018. It is disappointing that there is a current enforcement notice in place that has not only been partially ignored by the applicant, but also un-acted on by ESCC.

The crux of this revised application is about the noise impact. One of the PC's previous objections was that there was no noise impact survey included. This has now been addressed.

The machine to be used for the wood recycling operation, which is already in use – is a specialist mobile wood shredder and includes magnets that remove any metal such as nails etc. The opening statement mentions that waste wood is their single waste stream – a contradiction already. This shredder is to be placed at the far southern end of the application site and will be occasionally re orientated or positioned to minimise noise and dust impacts in response to changing weather conditions. The confusion for the Council lays in the fact that their biggest mitigation (other than weather conditions) is a large 5.4m high, 21.6m long, with 4.2m returns c-shaped wall to provide acoustic screening and contain dust. Screening from who? Presumably one of the adjacent neighbours. The wall is fixed and the machinery is mobile. Neighbours surround the site 360 degrees and there is no containment. The wall has the potential to increase noise levels in the reflected direction.

Within the planning statement it shows a mock set up, using bales of chippings, a fan and hosepipe to represent the proposal. A completely inappropriate and incomparable mock up.

It is unacceptable to expect neighbours to live with this 6 days a week, 11 hours during the week and 5 on a Saturday. There will be no Sunday or bank holiday working except in emergencies! How can you get to the point of a waste wood being an emergency?! It references that there will be no shredding between 7am and 8am Mon – Fri nor on a Saturday.

The noise report states that the site will generate noise levels between low and adverse. The main mitigation is classed as a wall enclosure – in the Council's view it is just a wall, as it is not enclosed.

The Council welcomes the comments about the retention of site waters. Currently there is a large bore pipe running out of the site into the local Ridgewood Stream tributary of the River Ouse. The Council hopes that this current situation is under investigation by the appropriate authorities?

There is reference to a 2m high bund made out of wood chip and soils being placed along the northern boundary. The Council is not sure what this will do as the machine itself is taller?

The Planning Statement is completely dismissive of environmental issues, ie the reference to ancient woodland, impact on protected species, various listed buildings, conservation areas – all mainly ignored because the industrial estate exists already. The applicant clearly has no regard to the local area.

The dust suppression being used is of no effect and the Council is aware of local residents who are subjected to films of dust across their properties and land. By increasing the usage to full time operating – it will only exacerbate the current issues.

They have now incorporated a flag to monitor wind direction and strength. The Council suggests with the possibility of respiratory issues and even carcinogenic dust particles it needs something more technical in place than a flag, fan and hose.

In summary, the dust management plan is not fit for purpose based on the type, scale and mass of the operations. It is insufficient in technical detail and the Council does not believe that the applicant is completely cognisant of the dangerous effects of dust pollution.

In regards to the noise impact assessment – in the opening executive summary it states that the proposal of a 5m wall and not working at weekends is enough mitigation to support planning permission. It also mentions that providing they can mitigate the noise to a minimum – it should also be approved, suggesting that even if it is adverse but they have done all they can, it is acceptable.

They record the site as predominantly rural simply because they have other industrial neighbours. They have failed to look outside of the industrial estate perimeter as they would see that is as rural as you can achieve.

It refers to the fact that the site has operated there for many years and therefore a precedent has been set in terms of ambient and industrial noise. However, the type, manner and conditions of the usage has changed and at times been idle for years. Either way a precedent is not an acceptable criteria to base noise levels on – two wrongs don't make a right.

The Council cannot fathom the summary of background noise, as levels were recorded between 37 and 43dB with 37dB being the representative background noise level. However, they have chosen to use 40dB as it is an industrial estate. Whether it is or not, the representative background noise is what it is so why use additional calculations to manipulate the recorded levels?

The report talks about noise levels that were recorded over a period of time when using all of the machinery. It does mention various grades of wood was used in the shredding machine which will produce higher or lower noise levels, but it does not mention at what power the machines was operating i.e. full power or half power as the main unit they refer to has a variable engine output.

Using a model, they have calculated that with the wall in place, the sound levels will actually decrease to 39dB at the receptor. The wall will be amazing if it actually reduces the 115dB noise level of the machinery to a point that it records an ambient noise level lower than what it currently is.

It is interesting that the noise levels measured are classified as adverse to the houses within the industrial estate itself, yet have mitigated this by saying that they knew it would be noisy before building them and WDC did not object – in other words they are saying it is acceptable for them to have significant noise levels.

Despite calculations and formulas, looking at the noise survey results the Council is concerned that noise levels of between 50 and 90dB were recorded for a significant amount of time. There are not only the machinery engines making the noises but also plant moving around the site, digger buckets scraping on the floor etc. There is no doubt, despite how the report is 'dressed up', it will have a significant impact on local residents, as it already is.

The Council cannot give the noise management plan any more credit than they did before. It has the most ridiculous mitigations to support the application, a couple being:

1. Close the doors of empty vehicles before driving off.
2. No use of a vehicle horn

There would be an unacceptable increase in HGV movements along Palehouse Common – some 2,100.

Finally ESCC should re-evaluate the suitability of the entire site for such businesses. The Council is deeply saddened and concerned for the local residents and the wider community. Residents do have a right to be able to enjoy their own residential amenity and not have it effected to such an extent by noise/dust. This business is having a negative impact across the Parish and is looking to only make it worse.

- **WD/2019/1954/F - Replacement of double decker bus used for residential purposes with timber mobile home. QUICKEN WOOD, LEWES ROAD, BLACKBOYS, TN22 5HG.**

The Parish Council strongly objects to this application. Although the Council understands that the planning history for this site is extensive between WDC and the Planning Inspectorate, this latest application must be looked at in the context of what is now proposed.

Coming forward to today, the applicant now wants to bring in a five bedroomed 'mobile home' onto the site which although classified as mobile, by its sheer size will mean that it cannot possibly be easily transported. It is a permanent home for the applicant.

The site is in the middle of woodland in the AONB. If approved it sets an extremely poor precedent, and developers and applicants always refer to previous cases when justifying their own. This will be one of those. The

Parish Council objected to this originally and continues to do so, especially now that the aspirations of the applicant have increased so significantly.

5. Any Other Planning matters for reporting at the Discretion of the Chair.

To include any other planning applications which may arrive after the agenda has been published at the discretion of the Chairman in line with the terms of reference of the Committee. There were none.

7. Next Planning Committee Meeting – 26 November 2019, pm, Village Hall, Blackboys.

Additional meetings will be called during the intervening period if the Chairman believes they are required otherwise comments are passed to the Planning Authority under the Parish Council's delegated procedure policy – available on the website, noticeboards and Parish Magazine.

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm.

AEN/12.11.2019

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