

**BARHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT SUFFOLK ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (SALC) OFFICES, HILL VIEW BUSINESS PARK, CLAYDON ON WEDNESDAY 6<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2018**

**PRESENT:** S. Carr, G. Musson, J. Lea, D. Milward and District Councillor J. Whitehead and County Councillor J. Field

**1.6E QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

There were no members of the public present. Simon Butler-Finbow from Pigeon Development was present.

**2.6E APOLOGIES:** A. Deveney, N. Cooper, W. Allan and District Councillor J. Caston

**3.6E DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST APPROPRIATE TO ANY ITEM ON THE AGENDA**

There were no declarations given.

**4.6E MINUTES** as this was an extraordinary meeting there were no minutes presented.

**5.6E PLANNING APPLICATION 1856/17**

Councillors questioned Simon Butler-Finbow for 90 minutes covering various elements of the revised plans and also challenged each other as to appropriate responses.

Councillors agreed to instruct a third party to challenge the Traffic Assessment carried out by the developers.

When discussion was concluded the Chair asked Simon Butler-Finbow to leave the meeting. Councillors then agreed the key bullet points they wanted to raise in their objection and requested that the Clerk and Chair pull these together in a formal response to Mid Suffolk. Copy of report attached.

**6.6E URGENT MATTERS**

There were no urgent matters raised.

Chairman .....

Date .....

## Planning Application 1856/17 – Land off Norwich Road Barham and Claydon

### Barham Parish Council

The Parish Council still objects to this planning application for the following reasons: -

#### Roads and Traffic

Our own advice from a professional qualified traffic consultant suggests the following:-

I set out below my preliminary review of the work undertaken by TPA and hope that my brief comments may be of help to your considerations.

From my quick review of the document a few points that jump out at me are as follows:

I expect that TPA will argue that their approach has been agreed through a scoping process with the Highway Authority. Whilst that gives their client some comfort, it doesn't mean that their approach is correct nor that they haven't made errors.

- First key point. Reference paragraph 3.65 in their TA. Their traffic counts were carried out in July. Several points flow from that statement. The first is that July is not a neutral month (i.e. it is a non-typical month) in which to collect traffic data. Traffic flows are generally lower, particularly in the commuting peak hours in July. The potential consequences are that if the traffic analyses which are then presented are based on July traffic volumes, queue lengths and levels of junction operation could be underestimated.

If the development has also been accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment it could well be the case that the EIA components (noise air quality etc.) are also therefore underestimated. Not only does that affect the results, it also potentially means that the average person in the street has not been given accurate information upon which to form a view through consultation on the planning application and its likely impacts.

Both the quantum of the results and the potentially flawed consultations could be points for objection.

- The second key point which I note is in the assessment of primary school trips. Some primary school trips (table 5.7) are described as linked i.e. they are made by persons who are already driving on the network i.e. going to work and that is standard and reasonable. There are also external primary school trips forecast which amount to 168. The point to make here is that when development trips are amalgamated as in their table 5.9 those primary school trips have been applied as occurring across the hour 08:00-09:00.

In fact, primary school drop off trips will occur in a much shorter time period, typically peaking around 15 minutes before the commencement of the school. The consequence is that the more peaked concentration of primary school trips, will lead to impacts being more significant than presented in the modeling.

Proof of this is even perhaps unwittingly confirmed by TPA themselves. In paragraph 8.2 when assessing existing conditions, they state that the maximum ratio of flow to capacity (RFC) is 0.84 and occurs only for one 15-minute period of the peak hour. They "this short spike is likely due to the arrivals and departures associated with the dropping off children at the school which is accessed from Claydon Church Lane". In other words, within existing traffic conditions, school drop off is stated by them to significantly impact in 1 peak quadrant yet they have chosen to model the new primary school trips as being spread across the hour.

- The third point to note is junction performance itself. Again, with reference to paragraph 8.2 they note that the ratio of flow to capacity is 0.84. Surprisingly they state this as "nearing capacity". In fact, there is still 16 percent spare capacity, but it's interesting to note how they believe 0.84 is "nearing capacity", particularly when their development takes the junction so far "over capacity". We discussed previously how even values over 1.0 are now regularly

accepted by Planning Inspectors on the basis that the key test is found in paragraph 32 of the NPPF i.e. not to refuse applications on transport grounds unless cumulative residual impact of development is “severe”.

From our initial analysis no definition of severe has been set. “Reasonable” Peak hour congestion is generally not considered to be a point of “severity” although queues stretching back to create safety issues or other road safety concerns have been found to constitute “severe”.

In any event, table 8.6 shows the future year modeling results for the year 2022 in the “base” case and “with development”. That shows that without development, the ratio of flow to capacity would be 1.04 with a queue of 11, but with development it would increase to 1.29 with a queue of 24. The right turn from Claydon Church Lane similarly increases from 1.02 to 1.26.

There are 3 potential points to consider here, first is whether or not the applicant is proposing mitigation as required by NPPF paragraph 32. It would appear that mitigation has not been proposed.

The second point to consider then is whether an RFC of 1.29 is acceptable. It is actually a significant increase over the base situation and will lead to a queue extending from 11 vehicles to 24. That is clearly a significant increase and depending on where a queue length of 24 vehicles stretches back to, could even create safety issues particularly in an area where primary school children may be walking to school.

The third point, as an aside, is paragraph 10.7 of the Conclusion which states “it has been demonstrated that the development will have a negligible impact on the operation of the surrounding network”. That is certainly not true. An RFC of 1.29 and a more than doubling of a queue to 24 vehicles is not negligible.

A further point to potentially take exception to, is paragraph 8.2.3 which states that “*once an RFC value exceeds a value of 1, there is a disproportional increase in queue lengths compared to increasing RFC and vehicle movements. This means that the queue lengths shown for the future forecast scenario is unlikely to occur.*” That statement is incorrect. Modelling software provides queue length forecasts for what is known as MMQ, Mean, Maximum Queue. That means that in every cycle of the model when a queue is predicted, the maximum length is recorded and then over the 15-minute period for which results available, the average of those maximum queues is the level reported as MMQ.

In simple terms the MMQ length reported is the AVERAGE of each maximum queue so in fact, that reported queue length will be exceeded by typically half of all maximum queue occurrences in the modelled period. It is not true to say that queues will be longer than reported for half of the time because queues wax and wane, but it is true to say that the Mean Max, Queue levels will certainly be exceeded. It is certainly not the case, as TPA have stated, that the queue lengths shown are unlikely to occur.

The final point to make on the assessment results is that if the previous criticisms of July counts and Primary School peaked arrival profile were rectified, the reported results would be worse. That again means that the supporting information which the public had before them could be materially flawed. Referring back again to paragraph the TA 8.23, the TPA comment that once an RFC value exceeds the value of 1 there is a disproportionate increase in queue length, is actually correct. That is because when one tries to force more traffic through a junction than the actual capacity of the junction, those vehicles cannot in fact pass through it and instead add to the back of the queue. Consequently, if higher base flows and higher peak period primary school arrivals were input into the model, the results would disproportionately increase beyond those already over capacity and potentially severe results which have been presented by TPA

#### Other objections

In addition to the above The Parish Council has concerns that the planned expansion of Claydon Primary School by 25% (larger intake commences in September 2019) has not been factored in to

any of the calculations. The expansion of the school is for existing housing development in the catchment area.

No measures appear to be in the submissions to enforce the weight limit on Norwich Road. Currently many HGV drivers use Thornhill Road or Kirby Rise to avoid this weight limit and we would expect the new development to stop access to these roads via the use of weight limit signage.

#### Provision of a school site

The Parish Council is concerned that this maybe a Trojan Horse to enable further housing development in the area. The expansion of the primary school mentioned above already has planning permission for a further increase of 25% in pupil numbers and the inclusion of a school site which has sufficient space for the creation of a school of similar size to the existing Claydon Primary School can only imply that the County Council expects further development to utilise this school site. The County Council needs to give a fuller explanation as to the reasoning behind their proposal. It must also be born in the mind that the immediate area has already experienced false promises in regard to a new primary school in Great Blakenham.

#### Provision of a doctor's surgery site

We are very concerned the provision of the site by the developer could be misinterpreted by both the general public and councillors in planning committee to indicate the likely actual provision of a new surgery facility whereas all the indications we have heard is that this is most unlikely to happen in reality.

#### Parish Boundary

The Parish Council has concerns that as this development is outside the natural built up area boundary of the village and the road layout allows for further development to the north of the site. This and future development will impact upon the sustainability of the area.

#### Ecological Appraisal

The Parish Council fully supports the recommendations set out in section 4.5 of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal document. In addition to this many local residents have expressed their concerns over the impact this development will have on local wildlife and its habitat.

#### Sewerage

The Parish Council recognises that the current sewer infrastructure has issues with current volumes, which recently resulted in major repairs to 100 metre section. We believe that significant investment will be required to the mains sewer going through the village if this development is to take place. Without this investment the planned development should be rejected.

If councillors go against the wishes of the Parish Council, the Parish Council would expect the following conditions to be a prerequisite of planning permission.

#### Highways

We would expect the new development to stop access to HGV's trying to avoid the weight limit on Norwich Road by extending the weight limit to all through roads going south off the spine road. Also, restriction should be placed on York Crescent, Claydon.

The Parish Council firmly believes that the main spine road that bypasses Church Lane, Barham should be completed and useable by the public at a very early stage of the development.

#### Housing

We would expect conditions to be placed on the development that enforce their height of buildings so as not to impact the view of the church.

#### Sewerage

Any improvement to the sewerage system should be undertaken before commencement of any building on the site.