

DISS TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the **Planning Sub-Committee** held online on **Wednesday 19th January 2022** at **7.15pm**.

Present: Councillors: M. Gingell
K. Murphy
S. Olander (ex-officio)
R. Peaty
E. Taylor (ex-officio) (Chair)
S. Warren
J. Welch

In attendance: J. Wooddissee
J. Robertson
S. Kiddie
D. Collins
C. Valori

Sarah Richards, Town Clerk
County / District Councillor Kiddie
13 members of the public
1 member of the press

PL0122/01 **APOLOGIES**

There were none.

PL0122/02 **NOMINATION OF SUBSTITUTE REPRESENTATIVES**

There were none.

PL0122/03 **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

There were none.

PL0122/04 **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

Members confirmed that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 12th January 2022 will be approved at the next meeting of this committee.

PL0122/05 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were 13 members of the public in attendance. County and District councillor Kiddie was observing only.

The Chair explained that the committee is considering an outline application and as such some areas and specifications may have not yet been finalised. If a full application is submitted, all these areas will be fully covered, and comments from the public can also be sent directly to the planning authority.

Three members of the public spoke on their concerns regarding the development proposals. The area of land being gifted to the Town Council for the Cemetery extension has been reduced to accommodate the development. It was noted that the developer is under no obligation to provide the land given that it will not be used until after 2038 and outside of the Local Plan period but that the compromise provides more than 60 years of overall Cemetery capacity.

There were concerns regarding the safety of the Shelfanger Road junction as it is approached by a blind junction, the increased traffic using the link road through the estate from the A140 through Burston and streetlighting. Norfolk County Council Highways has been working with the developer and their comments on this would be considered.

Another resident had concerns regarding the increase in vehicular traffic to the north of Diss opting to use narrow lanes like Walcot Green to avoid going through Diss. Members heard that the preferred choice for the link road was along the Public Right of Way to the north of the estate, but it wasn't possible due to the unsatisfactory visibility splays and land ownership issues albeit the PROW will remain, which will please nature lovers and dog walkers. It is hoped that some of the traffic using Sunnyside currently would use the alternative proposed link road.

A third resident was keen for the developer to take the opportunity for maximising the green space and reflecting the character and history of the area. It was noted that the proposed development would accommodate 23 dwellings per hectare, a lower housing density than required by the Diss & District Neighbourhood Plan (DDNP) and 9 less per hectare than the newest Orchard Close development in Diss. It was noted that the developer has been very cooperative in discussions to date and would be invited to respond to comments.

The Chair summarised the comments received prior to the meeting from residents unable to attend the virtual meeting.

Mr Underwood proposed German style Passivhaus housing like those in Norwich, which mimic the old Victorian back-to-back terraced houses. They are for social rent and are very energy efficient. They have tiny gardens (instead of a yard) and most of the landscaping is hard. They also encourage public transport as there is little parking. It was noted that this style of specialist housing is not suitable for a rural location, would have the potential for a much higher density than traditional dwellings and would need to be written into the policy documents at the time of allocation.

Mr Harris raised issues such as archaeology, a conservation study, energy efficiency and the moving of one of the attenuation basins to run alongside Shelfanger Road, all matters that would be addressed fully with a full application and it was noted that the attenuation basins have been positioned to suit the natural fall of the land.

Jane Hutton was concerned that the housing is too close to the cemetery with consequent loss of wildlife habitat, increased vehicles causing pinch points for traffic on Heywood Road, Walcot Road and Uplands Way, which will compete with students walking or cycling to the high school and the walking distance to the infant school. A map showing the distance from the development to amenities including schools was shared and it was noted that the commonly used figures in the Joint Core Strategy show it is a 10-minute walk to the high school and around 15 minutes to the junior and infant schools.

Another member of the public raised concerns regarding building on farmland, which is needed for growing crops. It was noted that this land had been put forward in the Greater Norwich Local Plan call for sites and was one of two top scoring sites assessed by GNLP (Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment) and the DDNP Steering Group's consultants AECOM. This is the only site from a green area, which has been included in the DDNP from a total of more than 500 properties over next 17 years with priority given to former industrial land.

The representative from Scott Properties responded to the questions raised regarding the gift of the Cemetery land through a S106 agreement, the suitability of the site and the requirement for ecological / archaeological surveys as a standard condition. He also addressed highways concerns, confirming that the estate road linking Heywood and Shelfanger Roads is a 6.5m width 30mph carriageway and not a relief road although it will have a wider benefit of increasing permeability east to west and that they have been liaising with the highway's authority, Norfolk County Council, regarding highways matters including the agreed crossing points.

The lighting and landscaping will be part of the detailed design and the developer is open to discussion although it was noted that streetlighting requirements would be determined based on safety by Norfolk County Council who would adopt the highway.

The 5 attenuation basins are situated at the lowest point and are therefore more sustainable as they will be gravity fed negating the requirement for a pump. The farmland is rated as grade 3 which is not the best agricultural land, and the developer will be securing a net gain with heating likely to be electric via heat source pumps over gas.

The developer has visited the site many times, has a good understanding of the land, is undertaking thorough archaeological and ecological surveys to present a robust proposal, which they encourage the public to examine so that their comments can be fed into the process to enhance the proposal.

The Chairman summarised the proposal referencing the three figures. It was noted that there are no formal plans for the additional Cemetery area currently, but it could be a wildflower area for a quiet place of reflection connected through to the existing Cemetery until required and that this development would offer the lowest density of housing of any development in Diss.

There was discussion regarding the LEAP, Locally Equipped Area of Play. It was noted that this is a play area appropriate for a neighbourhood of this size equivalent to that on Scholars Way with low railing fencing, several pieces of apparatus such as a swing, slide, and the developer will aim for a naturalistic

area of play. There was a suggestion to move the play area towards the centre of the development on the green area north of the road. It was noted the location was originally determined given the proximity to the other town play areas to the west of the town and as there must be a 20m open area to minimise noise impact.

The Chair also enquired whether consideration could be given to the installation of a mini roundabout at the junction of the new road through the estate and the road that leads onto Heywood Road to aid traffic flow and slow traffic. The developer agreed to consider both options presented. In addition, he asked the developer to discuss the Shelfanger Road junction /possibly roundabout with highways and the need for some lighting at this junction because of safety concerns.

There was discussion regarding the infrastructure to support the development such as doctors and dentists and it was explained that development would need to be on a considerable scale to support significant infrastructure. The Town Council doesn't have any control over this, the District Council has limited powers and it is a difficult situation that Councils across the country are faced with.

A member asked whether there would be a maintenance contribution towards the open space management, requested that the doors in the homes are made wide enough for wheelchairs, and queried the criteria for the allocation of affordable housing. The financial contribution towards ongoing maintenance would be managed through a charge to residents. A third of the development is offering affordable housing, which is calculated as a percentage of the open market value.

Another member requested whether the new 3m cycle path could be classed as a new Public Right of Way restricted to non-motorised vehicles to link with the existing restricted byway crossing north to south allowing for greater accessibility.

PL0122/06 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

PL0122/07 NEW PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROL MATTERS

Councillors received and commented on planning applications and other development control matters.

Overall, the scheme offers the town 3 major plus points with land for a Cemetery extension being gifted to the Town Council which would provide over 60 years capacity, an east west road linking Burston/Heywood Roads to Shelfanger Road and an extensive cycleway connecting Shelfanger Road with Heywood Road.

However, the development has still got to be built to acceptable standards on its own merits and meet Local Planning Authority standards.

Having looked at the drawings and the LPA policies the site appears to satisfy the policies for:

- DM1.3 for sustainable location
- DM3.1 for meeting housing requirement and also JCS for mix of housing, tenure and size
- DM3.8 Design principles meets both LPA and NP standards
- DM3.11 Road safety and free flow of traffic has been approved by highways after extensive negotiations.
- DM4.2 Sustainable drainage and water management.

App. No	Type	Applicant	Address	Proposal	Response
2021/2782	Outline	Mr Richard Martin	Land East of Shelfanger Road and West of Heywood Road, Diss	The erection of up to 179 dwellings, 0.64ha of land for the future extension of Diss Cemetery, a new road linking Shelfanger Road and Heywood Road/Burston Road, public open space and associated infrastructure and landscaping.	<p>RECOMMEND APPROVAL</p> <p>That we delegate to Officer with a recommendation for approval. We strongly recommend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mini roundabout at the junction of the new road through the estate and the road that leads onto Heywood Road. It would aid traffic flow and slow traffic down which the developer is amenable to discussing with NCC highways. • Improvements to the junction with Shelfanger Road and the estate road should be discussed with highways and also the need for lighting at this junction.

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DDNP Reg 14 Pre-Submission document for this site DDNP01, recommends that a development of this scale should support delivery of low carbon infrastructure (e.g., A ground source heat network; or solar panels with battery storage) and high standards of sustainable design and construction. This should be pursued on this development. • The footpath from the estate exit onto Heywood Road should be extended to the cemetery and a crossing point added on Heywood Road in the vicinity of the cycle path exit as this will be a main route to schools. • Due regard should also be given to the DDNP Design Guide information in the standards and layout of the dwellings.
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PL0122/08

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members noted that Planning meetings will precede scheduled meeting dates, should applications require committee consideration.

Meeting closed at 9.08pm.

Councillor E. Taylor
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN