

DISS TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the **Planning Sub-Committee** held in the **Council Chamber** at **Diss Corn Hall** on **Wednesday 10th January 2024** at 6pm.

Present: Councillors: M. Gingell, S. Olander (Ex-officio) R. Peaty (Vice-Chair), E. Taylor (Chair), J. Welch

In attendance: Sarah Villafuerte-Richards, Chief Executive Officer
Councillor Sinfield
7 members of the public

PL0124/01 **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies received.

PL0124/02 **NOMINATION OF SUBSTITUTE REPRESENTATIVES**

There were none.

PL0124/03 **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

There were none.

PL0124/04 **MINUTES**

It was

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 6th December 2023 were a true record and were signed by the Chairman.

(Action: Town Clerk/CEO: immediately)

PL0124/05 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were 7 members of the public present.

PL0124/06 **ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

There were none.

PL1223/07 **NEW PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROL MATTERS**

Members received and commented on planning applications.

Application **2023/3587** relates to the erection of nine new dwellings and car ports, creation of new riverside walk link, ecology enhancement land and amenity land. The site forms part of the local plan allocation DIS2 which has now been superseded by policy DDNP14 from the DDNP. The site is south of Park Road A1066 behind policy DIS7 (site of former Feather Factory).

It was noted that in attendance were representatives from the Diss & District Neighbourhood Plan given the green space and riverside walk is a facility, likely to be used for leisure by the whole DDNP community. The landowner and agent, representatives from the Ling family and the District Council's Planning Officer were invited but not able to attend due to prior engagement / ill health.

Following the pre-application submitted in March 2021 and the Planning Authority's response that they would not support the delivery of any residential scheme in isolation and as such the application must include the delivery of open space and the riverside walk, the application has been amended as follows:

1. The original DIS2 site (now DDNP14) is 4.6 Ha and the developer is proposing to retain the land behind the sub-station (1.1 Ha) and release other land at the southwest end of the site amounting to 0.4 Ha. Net land now 3.9 Ha. It would appear that the reasons for this is that the land behind the sub-station is required for connecting possible solar farms in Palgrave, Roydon and Bressingham. The extra land to the southwest of the site will allow connectivity to Denmark Bridge with a river crossing which would otherwise not be possible.
2. The application currently shows 9 dwellings and takes account of concerns raised by highways in terms of numbers using the existing access road to the electricity sub-station. These are high end dwellings and consist of 3 x 3-bed single storey bungalows, 4 x 3/4-bed 1.5 storey dwellings plus 2 x 4/5-bed also 1.5 storeys. All dwellings have a double carport and driveway parking space.

3. The access to the site is a private macadamed road owned by the electricity board which in the application says it will be about two cars wide with kerbs and passing bays and have a turning head constructed suitable for fire engines and refuse vehicles. Diss Town Council is surprised with the NCC Highway decision to allow this road to be used for access as there is no room for a pedestrian and cycle pathway on what is an already narrow road.
4. The private drive roads will be constructed in permeable materials.
5. The open space, green space and riverside walk connection are shown as policy with a connection to Denmark bridge. The open green space will be between the river and the proposed dwellings. It is also proposed to provide a footpath between the parking area and the riverside walk.
6. The developer is proposing to enter into an agreement with the Waveney and Little Ouse Landscape recovery project for the maintenance and creation of this space.

It was noted that the land behind the electricity sub station is in flood zone 3 so the land lost is not too much of a problem. The Chair of the committee commented that generally the proposed scheme goes a long way to meeting both the original DIS2 policy and also DDNP 14 which superseded DIS2.

However, the following concerns still need addressing.

1. The proposed development has moved further south than we envisaged due to the crescent shaped housing layout and the large footprint of the homes necessitating a large green space in front of the homes. We agree with the Housing Enabling Officer that some affordable housing should be included, possibly 3 dwellings. This would also possibly reduce the land lost at the rear of the homes, give more green space and ensure the build is in flood plain 1. It would free up even more green space had the homes being proposed were built in a linear form rather than around a crescent shaped road.
2. The site access does not have the required 3m wide pedestrian/cycle path. Both are essential for safety and ease of access. As provision must be made for access through DIS7, is it the intention to extend the 3m path running past the proposed Aldi onto the DDNP14 site to the vehicle parking area? This pathway would be necessary for residents and also those making use of the green space and riverside walk. A major aspiration of the DDNP is to increase the use of pedestrian and cycleways and reduce the use of motor vehicles.
3. Cycle parking provision required where cycles can be parked and secured.
4. At the last flooding event the river height was almost level with the Denmark bridge arched opening and the new crossing needs to be robust and take account of this.
5. As the dwellings are quite large 29 beds across 9 homes it is unlikely that there would be enough off-street parking for visitors and service vehicles without blocking up the private road which gives access to the dwellings. Suggest we need a layby that would take at least 3 vehicles.
6. Action must be taken to mitigate any noise emitted from the sub-station affecting residents.
7. The site management plan will be for what duration and is it the intention to eventually pass ownership to Diss Town Council?

Responses to each have been received in writing from the applicant / agent who is willing to meet post meeting with representatives of the Diss Town Council the DDNP & Ling family to further discuss any comments. They advise that the new positioning of the proposed development is to mitigate flood issues. They have agreed to consider providing cycle storage (3), will be submitting further details of the new crossing to the Planning Officer to ensure it is not affected by the height of river (4) and will consider improving parking provision and access (5). The developer is proposing to enter into an agreement with the Waveney and Little Ouse Landscape recovery project for the maintenance and creation of this space (7).

Members of the public spoke on several issues. It is felt that the access for service and residential vehicles remains inadequate particularly in the context of the proposed Aldi development with considerable impact on Park Road. Previous concerns regarding extent of environmental report and request for the arboricultural survey continues to be the case.

The Chair of the DDNP stated that the proposed development is compliant with DDNP14 policy however he has two primary concerns. There is no alternative access for the new dwellings to the riverside walk other than via the access road at the north of the site. A pedestrian / cycle link would be a preferred access. Car park (18 spaces) on access to riverside walk will be accessed down the private road owned by the electricity board. The only other access to this green space would be from the - Denmark bridge access for those walking. There is also undeveloped land within the site ownership (to the south & west) outside of the green space / walk, which may compromise the value of the green space if it were developed to any marked extent in the future.

Concern about future flooding, possible defences & the impact of such on other parts of the river were discussed particularly given part of the development is in flood zone 3, there have been three flooding incidents in the area recorded in less than two years and the impact of the repositioning of the houses nearer the river.

Roydon Parish Council representatives echoed this concern and suggested that the crescent shape of dwellings could be flipped 180° which would avoid the open space north / south divide. They would also like to see the cycle access improved from the supermarkets to Fair Green to improve safety. It was noted that the County Council did agree to consider including cycle lanes along the frontage of Park Road albeit the tree roots may require a compromise on the 3m width and that this has been raised with the Planning Officer.

There was discussion regarding the opportunity to ensure a cohesive plan for the whole of the area rather than piecemeal developments particularly given ownership of much of it by the District Council. This should be achieved by developers talking to each other to improve developments.

There were further comments made regarding the use of soakaways as opposed to main drainage, the requirement of 1.5m clearance when overtaking in the recently revised highway code and future maintenance responsibility for the car park with potential Section 106 maintenance contributions to the Town Council. It was noted that Aldi is hesitant to allow third party access.

In conclusion it was agreed to update the points of concern in the recommendation with the additional comments raised at the meeting. It was noted that this is the first application to be received since the adoption of the DDNP, that the principle of development on the site is supported but that there are significant areas of serious concern that need to be addressed for further consideration. The Chair commented that this application is not yet at determination stage with further consultation to take place.

Regarding application reference 2023/3574, it was noted that Diss Town Council's response could be justifiably different & straightforward from the DDNP as the development is outside of Diss with a connect in Diss. A greater response will be put forward on behalf of the other parishes to the full application by the DDNP. It is accepted there is an infrastructure requirement, but the routing of the cabling will cause significant disruption to Diss, and it is requested that alternative less disruptive routes are considered to avoid Park Road and Denmark St such as the rear of bowling green and across green land.

Given the previous application proposal discussed and other developments coming forward, it was also requested that developers talk to each other to ensure all necessary works can be undertaken as a complete project once to minimise disruption to the town.

There was discussion regarding responses to planning applications being holding objections where there are concerns going forwards rather than acceptance subject to matters being addressed to support a more cohesive approach to development.

App. No	Applicant	Address	Proposal	Response
2023/3574		Electricity Sub-Station, Park Road, Diss, IP22 4AU	Installation of a solar farm comprising ground mounted solar panels.	Recommend Refusal Members rejected this application due to the significant disruption the cabling installation will have on Diss both during the project and for the lifetime of the project and requested that alternative routes are considered particularly to Denmark Street and Park Road.

2023/3587		Land South of Park Road, Diss	Erection of nine new dwellings and -carports, creation of new riverside walk link, ecology enhancement land and amenity land	<p>Recommend Refusal</p> <p>Members supported the principle of development on the site but have significant serious concerns including those listed 1 - 11 below that need to be discussed and addressed before further consideration.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Impact of repositioning of the proposed development further south in a crescent shape on flooding risk and separation and reduction of open space. 2. Inclusion of affordable housing suggested by the Housing Enabling Officer (possibly 3 dwellings). 3. A 3m wide pedestrian/cycle access path to improve ease of access to site for both residents and access/egress to the - open space / riverside walk and safety through DIS7. A major aspiration of the DDNP is to increase the use of pedestrian and cycleways and reduce the use of motor vehicles. 4. Secured cycle parking provision to be provided. 5. A new clear span bridge crossing that would offer no restriction in the flow of the river and - withstand increased river water levels. 6. Improved parking for resident, visitor, and service vehicles 7. Noise mitigation measures from the sub-station affecting residents. 8. Understanding of any future maintenance responsibilities for Diss Town Council regarding the car park. 9. Lack of environmental report and arboricultural survey. 10. Lack of information regarding the future use of the undeveloped land within the site ownership. 11. We are concerned that both fluvial flood risk and pluvial surface water drainage may be inadequate- <p>Members and public present would like to exploit this opportunity to ensure a cohesive plan for the whole of the south of Park Road area to avoid piecemeal developments particularly given ownership of much of it by the District Council.</p> <p>Diss Town Council is keen to meet with the planning officer and the developer to discuss these points further.</p>
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PL1223/09

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

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

Meeting closed at: 19:15.

Councillor E. Taylor
Committee Chairman