

Environment Committee Meeting on Thursday 13 April 2017 at St John's School, Provender Way, Grove Green.

Councillors present: Mrs Wendy Hinder (Chairman), Mr Ivor Davies, Mr Bob Hinder together with the Clerk and 39 members of the public.

Apologies and absences: Cllrs Dengate and Holland. Absent Cllrs Clarke and Radcliffe-Godfrey

Cllr Wendy Hinder explained to the members of the public present that due to the importance of the planning application the meeting had been rescheduled for a local venue and that due to the deadline for a response and the consultation time falling over Easter there was limited scope for flexibility as to when members could meet. She and the councillors present would listen to the members of the public and the Clerk would arrange for a response to be submitted, ratified at the next meeting, but as the meeting was not quorate it could not proceed as set out in the agenda.

Members of the public were informed that the parish council had attempted to get a representative of the applicant to the meeting but had been unsuccessful. The parish council had not received an invitation to the public exhibition although two parish councillors did manage to attend.

Cllr Wendy Hinder notified councillors that only planning applications and the response to the MBC Local Plan would be considered tonight.

Notes of discussions and guidance.

PLANNING

17/501471/FULL. Erection of a three storey secondary school with associated access, car parking and landscaping. Land at Valley Park School New Cut Road Maidstone Kent ME14 5SL.

Issues highlighted by the members of the public included:

- Not enough parking for staff and visitors on site.
- Parking for visitors, especially on open evenings/afternoons and during any event at the school would use Grove Green as there is no alternative provided by the school.
- Need for a new local school not proved, why bring more children into the area?
- Safety issue with increased traffic.
- Too much traffic already area can't take any more.
- Concern over traffic during construction.
- Access opposite Grovewood Drive South, dangerous, unacceptable impact on the second of only 2 ways into and off of Grove Green.
- Alternative access points rather than off of New Cut Road opposite Grovewood Drive South.
- Students from the adjacent schools already Park on Grovewood Drive South.
- The catchment area of the school shows that it is not targeted at local children.
- Residents spoke of littering and some vandalism from students going to from the current schools and fear an increase in this antisocial behaviour.
- If yellow lines are placed on Grovewood Drive South and parking would be forced into the local roads and closes.
- Environmental impact on the trees, loss of trees and landscaping.
- Loss of community facilities as the playing fields are being built on.
- Noise and light pollution would be suffered by local residents.
- Lack of notification about the planning application and also the public exhibition.
- Support for quality schools.

Residents were encouraged to submit individual letters of objection to the planning application. Residents were also encouraged to include any conditions that might mitigate the impact of the development should it be permitted.

Clarification on some of the issues raised concerning the catchment area, possible number of staff and the car parking provision at the school was supplied.

Having discussed the situation with residents' members gave guidance to the Clerk on the issues that they considered should be highlighted in the response. The Clerk was asked to draft a response for members to consider.

Guidance supplied included/identified that:

Members welcome the provision of a STEM school in Maidstone but the proposed site is unacceptable and so the parish council wishes to see the development refused and requests that the application is reported to the planning committee.

Reasons for objection.

Highways issues. The validity of the data used to reach the conclusion in the Transport Assessment Document (TAD) was questioned. The baseline for calculations on which the sustainability of the school, with regards to vehicle journeys, was incorrectly identified as being comparable to Valley Park Community School, a comprehensive, when Invicta Grammar School would be a closer match to the proposed school as both schools offer a specialised education and thus take the students from a wider catchment area.

The TAD contains several contradictions which again affect the data. In certain sections it identifies the proposed school as a local school and yet in other sections it recognises that students will come from Sutton Road, East Maidstone, Detling and South Maidstone. The travel calculations do include allocations for students coming from these areas.

The proposed school should be providing 172 bike spaces but the application shows that only 32 are being provided as "*cycle trips are not considered to form a significant part of total movements*".

104 parking spaces will be provided on site for visitors and staff so any open day/evening or school event will result in a significant number of cars parking in Grove Green. With 100 full time equivalent staff it is questionable whether the spaces provided on site will be sufficient for the demand leading to offsite parking.

The TAD (Local Conditions 2.6.1) states that vehicles parked on Grovewood Drive South did not impede other vehicles. This is contrary to evidence collected by the parish council and residents and failed to identify that Maidstone Borough Council has also assessed the situation and has written to Kent County Council asking it to intervene as it considers there are now safety issues for pedestrians and other road users. Parents will use Grovewood Drive South at school drop off and pick up times.

The Committed Development section is incomplete as it fails to properly take into account Waitrose and the planned hotel at Eclipse Park, the KIMS development site assessment for traffic may now be out of date as advertising for the site does not now present it as a medical campus but as A1, B1, C2 and D1 Use Classes, planning permission is being sought for 48 dwellings on land West of Eclipse Park

The cumulative impact of all these additional traffic movements makes the new school unsustainable.

Noise, light and air pollution.

Landscaping. The loss of some very prominent trees, which due to their contribution to the landscape and street amenity are covered by Tree Protection Orders, is regrettable. Replacement trees and landscaping should be indigenous and of a high standard.

Vinters Valley Nature Reserve, which is adjacent to the proposed school, will be susceptible to impact due to increased usage.

Cumulative Effect of additional traffic and off site car parking unacceptable.

Conditions.

If planning permission is approved the following conditions were identified as required.

Section 106 provision for single yellow line with a one hour parking restriction along Grovewood Drive South and in the adjacent roads and closes to be in place prior to commencement of development. The yellow line design proposal to be subject to consultation with the parish council and community. The provision of Road Traffic Orders banning parking on verges to be placed along Grovewood Drive South.

During development no construction vehicles are to be permitted to park in or drive through Grove Green and provision of sufficient on-site car parking for contractors vehicles must be provided prior to the main construction work commencing.

Indigenous trees should be used in the landscaping proposals.

Guidance on possible responses to the following planning applications obtained from Councillors.

17/501077/TPO application -1no. Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) – Cut back growth to boundary or appropriate pruning points by approximate 2m, to final length of approximately 4m and remove lowest branch with open wound. 1no. Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) - Cut back growth to boundary or appropriate pruning points by approximate 2m, to final length of approximately 3m and remove

lowest small branch. 1no. Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) - Fell to near ground level. 6 Forestdale Road Walderslade ME5 9NB Deadline. 17 April 2017

Do not wish to object defer to the views of the Landscape Officer.

17/500936/FULL Demolition of existing garage and erection of a two storey side extension. (Revised scheme to approved application 16/503769/FULL). 14 Threshers Drive Weaving Kent ME14 5UA

Do not wish to object.

17/501451/TPO. Common beech - Reduce large lateral limb 4m to the west. Remove all major deadwood and minor deadwood longer than 1m. Common beech - Section fell to near ground level. Land At New Cut Road Maidstone Kent ME14 5NZ.

Do not wish to object defer to the views of the Landscape Officer

17/501620/TPO Application. Proposed works:

1. Remove broken branch stub at 14m to N - to be reduced back to first available fork.
2. Reduce adjacent 'twin' branch (with decay/wound) back to upright side branch.
3. Lightly thin eastern canopy (mainly upper canopy to NE and lower canopy to SE), to achieve equal canopy density through eastern canopy, to be achieved through the removal of branches <100mm dia., focusing on damaged and suppressed branches.
4. Lightly thin/formative prune the younger northern and western canopy, to be achieved through the removal of branches <75mm dia., focusing on damaged and suppressed branches - 1 no. Beech.95 Lombardy Drive Maidstone ME14 5TB. D

Do not wish to object, defer to the views of the Landscape Officer.

17/501540/FULL Block of stables for private use at Stone House Sandy Lane Maidstone Kent ME14 3DJ. Members raised concern that the use of the site would impact even further on the condition of Sandy Lane.

Do not wish to object but a condition should be imposed so that the stables can only be used for the owner's horses and not developed into a business.

The parish council having improved the lane outside the entrance to the allotments are concerned about the potential impact of large horse boxes and feed/hay delivery vehicles on the condition of the road. Members would like to see a section 106 contribution road improvements.

17/501304/TPO Application to fell Ash tree. 7 Spenlow Drive Boxley Kent ME5 9JT.
Defer to the views of the landscape office but there is grave concern about the felling of an Ash tree.

17/501411/FULL Erection of a wooden double garage. 3 Bakery Cottages Chatham Road Sandling Maidstone.
Do not wish to object.

17/501530/TPO application for 2 no. Hornbeam trees (within 2 The Covert) - Cut back overhanging branches by 4 metres. 2 The Covert Boxley Chatham Kent ME5 9JJ. *Do not wish to object defer to the views of the Landscape Officer.*

17/501719/TPO application for - Common Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) - Fell to near ground level. Fair vitality, weak stem union, minor deadwood, overhanging adjacent land. Land Rear Of 16 Podkin Wood Walderslade Kent ME5 9LY.
Defer to the views of the landscape office but there is grave concern about the felling of an Ash trees.

17/501778/FULL The development of the land to accommodate 48 dwellings (7 x 1 bed flat, 8 x 2 bed flats, 6 x 2 bed houses, 17 x 3 bed houses, and 10 x 4 bed houses) together with associated new access road, car parking, landscaping and open space. Land West Of Eclipse Park Sittingbourne Road Maidstone Kent ME14 3EN.
Clerk to liaison with members concerning the response.

17/501772/LBC Listed Building Consent for re-tiling of roof (Works Completed). Barn Cottage Boxley Road Boxley Maidstone Kent. Deadline 3 May 2017.
Cllrs Bob and Wendy Hinder declared that they knew the applicant and had been lobbied.
Do not wish to object.

Maidstone Borough Local Plan Proposed Main Modifications.

Guidance on the response was received from Councillors.

Response. The Main Modifications made and the Sustainability Appraisals appear to meet the requirement that they are sound and make the Local Plan sound.