

BURSTOW PARISH COUNCIL

Planning Committee

Minutes of the Planning Meeting of Burstow Planning Committee on Tuesday 12th July 2022 at the Centenary Hall, Wheelers Lane, Smallfield

Open Forum – No members of the public attended

Attendance: Committee Chairman Cllr Hale, Cllrs Locke, Bolton, Herwig, Lord and Dodman

- 1 Apologies received from Cllr Wates for reasons noted and accepted by Committee
- 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – None
- 3 DISPENSATIONS (If required) NONE
- 4 The MINUTES of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 14th June 2022 were signed and accepted by Committee as a true record of the meeting
- 5 MATTERS ARISING from the minutes
None
- 6 PLANNING APPLICATIONS for consideration
2022/738/EIA – Land north of Carey's Wood, Chapel Road

The Parish Council requests that this application is referred to the Tandridge Planning Committee for determination.

This application is made up of three separate areas and, for the purpose of this comment, the Parish Council will refer to the areas as Parcel's A, B and C as described in the applicant's scoping report.

Rydon Homes are proposing to build a new primary school and circa 330 dwellings on Parcel A, retail units, with residential flats above on Parcel B and housing for older people on Parcel C.

Parcel A

This is located north of Smallfield, with the east boundary bordering Chapel Road, immediately to the north of Careys Wood. The applicant states they intend to apply for planning consent later in 2022, seeking approval to build a new 2-form entry primary school and 330c new dwellings, with up to 3 storeys.

The historic use of this site has been agricultural, both as grazing land for sheep and cattle and for the production of crops. Though it is also known locally as a site that becomes very wet during rainy periods, especially as it is one of the first pieces of land at the bottom of Rookery Hill and so water run-off from Outwood collects there.

Green Belt

The site is located within the Green Belt and a key issue is whether the proposal would constitute appropriate development within the Green Belt and if not, whether there are any special circumstances to outweigh the harm by inappropriateness and any other identified harm, including harm to openness. It would also have to consider any harm to the character or appearance not only of the site, but also to the wider locality. Furthermore, the proposal would have to demonstrate that these very special

circumstances are unique to this site and could not be replicated elsewhere, thus rendering them no longer 'very special'. In addition, the proposal would give rise to great harm to the Green Belt's openness by reason of its built form, its density, layout and domestic curtilage. In our opinion the proposal fails to demonstrate any evidence to demonstrate that very special circumstances apply in this case that would outweigh the substantial harm caused.

The Government, through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), attached great importance to Green Belts and states the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The NPPF regards any development in the Green Belt as inappropriate and p147 states '*Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances*'

There are five purposes to Green Belt policy

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

The Tandridge DC Landscape Capacity and Sensitivity Study, Smallfield 2016, states that this site is particularly visible as the open and rural setting along the northern approach to Smallfield, along Chapel Road and that any development would have a **major** impact. The study also considered the landscape capacity and states

Site SMA013 has substantial sensitivity due to its inconsistency with the existing settlement form/pattern, its contribution to the setting of the surrounding landscape, and its visual sensitivity. Combined with moderate value, the site has low capacity for housing development. Development in this area would have a significant detrimental effect on visual amenity and the character of the landscape

Burstow Primary School currently has children from Horley, Crawley, Pound Hill and other areas on its register as there are more places available than children from the Parish. In our opinion, there are other viable alternative locations should a new school be needed.

The proposal would give rise to great harm to the Green Belt's openness by reason of its built form, its density, layout and domestic curtilage. Any proposal would have to demonstrate that this and only this site could be used to provide a new school and 330c dwellings. Tandridge DC has excluded this site from its draft Local Plan, whilst also identifying other areas within the Parish and so it is clear that there are no 'very special circumstance' that outweigh the harm.

Transport & Sustainability

NPPF 104 states that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan making and development proposals so that

- (a) the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed;
- (b) opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated;
- (c) opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued;
- (d) the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains; and
- (e) patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality place

Furthermore, NPPF 105 then goes on to say;

The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.

Chapel Road is an unclassified/minor road in Smallfield, designed to link smaller towns and villages. It is a relatively narrow, two lane road, with a narrow pavement along the eastern side. Due to the dwellings located along the east of Chapel Road there is no capacity to increase the width of the pavement to the minimum 1200mm recommended in the Disability Discrimination Act. The west boundary of Chapel Road is predominantly grass verge, with regular culverts cut into it. Whilst there is scope to create a new pavement on this side bordering Parcel A, this capability does not extend passed the site's southern boundary. There is insufficient width on the road to allow some be repurposed as pavement. Children attending the school would have to walk along a narrow pavement and then cross Chapel Road to enter the proposed school and pedestrians living in the proposed dwellings likewise. Rydon plans show a staff only car park and so parents and carers needing to take their children to school by vehicle would have no option but to stop on Chapel Road blocking one side of the highway or to park in one of the few side streets a short distance away and traverse the narrow pavement/walk on the road to reach the school.

There is a very limited bus service to and from Smallfield and Chapel Road is served by the cruiser 315 service, operating between Dormansland and Redhill. There are 2 buses from Dormansland to Smallfield, Mon- Fri only, that would enable children to arrive at school before 9am and none coming from the Redhill direction. The nearest train station is in Horley; which is 2.7miles or a 50-minute walk away. It is reasonable to assume that school staff, students and residents of the proposed development would be reliant on private vehicle for transport.

The proposal to provide a new school and 330 new dwellings does not correlate with either 104 or 105 of the NPPF

When considering development proposals regard should be given to NPPF 110 where it states specific applications should ensure

- (a) appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location;
- (b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users;

NPPF 112 states

- (a) give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use;
- (b) address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport;

It is clear from the lack of public transport, the unsuitable pavements and no off-road parking for 'school run' travelling that Rydon does not meet these requirements.

Character and Appearance

Whilst no details of dwelling appearance are included within the scoping report, Rydon state their intention to provide 'up to 3-storey dwellings'. At present Smallfield does not have any buildings greater than 2-storey. Parcel A is overlooked by low density dwellings on the opposite side of Chapel Road. The majority are detached dwellings, either bungalows or two-storey, each sitting within a relatively large plot of land. The NPPF and Tandridge DP7 – 'General Policy for New Development' requires any new development to be in keeping with and contribute to the distinctive character, appearance and amenity of the area in which it is located. SMA013 at Chapel road is proposing to create 370+ dwellings, plus a 2-form primary school on Parcel A. Any new development of this nature would be in direct contravention of DP7 as well as DP10. To the north of the site lies an historical building, Burstow Manor. Development of this site will cause harm to the Manor.

Many residents in Carey's Wood, The Cravens, Charlotte Grove and Hayes Walk moved into their homes some time ago. Part of the reason they choose their home was because of the quiet, rural nature of the area. To build a 2-form school, with potential for a third form, immediately beside their homes will take away the amenity/green space feeling of their homes. They did not choose to live beside a school (with all the noise, parking and disruption schools bring) and therefore should not have a school imposed upon them. When Rydon attended a briefing meeting with the Parish Council this point, along with others was made and the parish council suggested the school be placed toward the northern end of the field. This, along with other suggestions was ignored.

Flooding

Smallfield is low lying on predominantly clay ground. Water drains west towards the River Mole but is impeded by the M23 where water is culverted and must be piped from one side of the motorway to the other. The most recent severe flooding episode was in 2013/14 where, despite having no large water courses, over £10m of damage occurred. The NPPF aims to direct development away from areas that are known to flood to other low risk areas. P160 states a cumulative risk assessment approach should be followed, taking in to account cumulative impacts in or affecting local areas

susceptible to flooding. P162 then looks to direct new development away from flood risk areas. The majority of the flood remediation works identified in 2014 remain outstanding, including a flood remediation program.

P167 places responsibility on planning authorities to ensure that a flood risk is not increased anywhere else if they grant consent for development. The southern boundary of Parcel A is known to regularly be under water and the bridle path in the south west corner is frequently under water during winter months as water runs off Parcel A.

Smallfield has a combined waste/storm water system, a throwback to when water was nationalised. No improvements to or increase in capacity to drains has been carried out in at least the 60+ years. Residents living in Orchard Road, Plough Road, Wheelers Lane and Redehall Road find themselves unable to use a toilet, take a shower, wash clothes during periods of heavy or prolonged rainfall. There simply is no capacity left in the system to cope and, rather than have their homes flooded with sewage, they chose not to generate any waste water themselves. Thames Water engineers, during site visits, have told residents that the pumps are simply not powerful enough to cope with the demands and that a new larger main is needed.

Parcel B

This site is located in the very centre of Smallfield currently sharing boundaries to Weatherhill Road, Redehall Road and Wheelers Lane. This is within the larger rural settlement and so considered suitable for development. Most of the boundary is made up of older traditional hedgerow that is home to many birds and insects. The applicant looks to demolish the existing school buildings and replace with combined retail and residential space, open space and a public car park. The junction of Wheelers Lane/Redehall road/Plough Road is a staggered crossroad that is quite unsafe. There has been and continues to be either vehicle collisions or near misses on a daily/weekly frequency. Before any development takes place, a full road improvement scheme should be implemented to help mitigate the danger. The developer has proposed building a new car park that would sit along the western boundary of the site. We do not consider this to be a suitable location as there is already a car park there and what is really needed is a car park closer to the existing shops and businesses. Smallfield is very lucky to have retained a number of small local shops, such as a butcher, post office, florist, greengrocer. Many of the owners are very worried that a larger, on-stop supermarket/minimarket will drive their business away and they will be forced to close. There does not seem to be an economic demand for more retail spaces in the village.

There is no detail provided over what type of residential accommodation may be offered but, in our opinion, it is essential to avoid development of greater than 2-storeys to retain the rural nature of the area.

Parcel C

This site is Burstow School's playing field. It is located immediately south to the centre of Smallfield, within the Green Belt. The Parish Council has been granted planning consent to create a new car park on the eastern side where it meets Redehall Road. The Dept for Education has also given consent for change of use from playing field to parking. The Parish Council has every intention of continuing the project. The NPPF and all of Tandridge Green Belt policies clearly state no development should take place within the Green Belt unless the harm generated by the development is significantly less than the very special circumstances that exist. The NPPF comments on specialist housing for older people saying that it is up to the plan-making body to decide

whether to allocate sites for specialist housing. As far as we are aware, Surrey County Council is focusing it's efforts on ensuring people can remain in their own home and the County Council's plan sets out how people will be supported to this end.

If consent is given for development of this site the car park, built by the parish council for the local community, will be forced to close

Recommend: Refuse

7 Agenda items Councillors would like listed for the next meeting

None

The meeting closed at 19.05. The next scheduled meeting is Tuesday 26th July 2022. The time will be confirmed when the agenda is produced.

Signed..... Dated.....