

BURSTOW PARISH COUNCIL

Planning Committee

Minutes of the meeting of Burstow Parish Council Planning Committee held at 6.30pm on Tuesday 28th January 2025, at the Centenary Hall, Smallfield

Open Forum

Six members of the public attended. One asked to address council regarding his concerns/objections to 2024/1219 – Silver Birches, Effingham Road. He objects to the proposal for the following reasons:

- Significant change of use
- Overdevelopment within the Green Belt
- Changes to vehicular access
- Siting of temporary buildings/containers too close to the boundary
- Currently people are living onsite, using a bus as accommodation.

Present –Cllrs Debbie Hall, Bob Locke, Ashleigh Bolton, Alison Lewis, Eddie Lord, Linda Herwig and Nick Bush.

- 1 Apologies received from Cllr Dodman for reasons accepted by Committee. The Clerk was also absent due to illness.
- 2 No declarations of interest and no dispensations required.
- 3 The minutes of Tuesday 14th January 2025 were approved. The minutes will be signed when the Clerk returns to work.
- 4 No Matters arising
- 5 Planning application for consideration

2024/1256 – Land on West side of Dowlands Lane, Opposite Kerlyn Farm, Dowlands Lane, Copthorne

Change of use of land for the siting of 6 static residential caravans occupied by Gipsies and Travellers plus 6 touring caravans and 3 detached day room buildings, the laying of a driveway and hardstanding (Retrospective)

The Parish Council strongly objects to this retrospective application in the Green Belt for the following reasons

- Inappropriate Development in the Green Belt
- Not a sustainable location
- Does not use 'Grey Belt' land
- Very few local/walkable amenities

- Does not comply with the PPTS directing development away from open countryside
- Detrimental impact on the visual amenity
- Out of character with the area
- Unsuitable road
- Far from education
- No Biodiversity Net Gain
- Flooding concerns
- Concerns that the caravans are for commercial rent rather than the G&T community

Inappropriate Development and 'Grey Belt'

Inappropriate development is, by definition harmful to the Green Belt. The Tandridge Local Plan Part 2 – DP10 states that any inappropriate development in the Green Belt will usually be refused. The NPPF, Paragraphs 154 and 155 define what types of development would not be inappropriate. The proposed development would not fall within the remit of and types of development listed in Para 154. Para 155 of the NPPF does set out a number of circumstances where traveller sites in the Green Belt would not be inappropriate. Paragraph 13 of the PPTS also sets out that development should be directed towards sustainable locations.

These are

- i) It would use 'Grey Belt' land and not fundamentally undermine the remaining Green Belt
- ii) There is a clear unmet need for traveller sites, over a 5-year period
- iii) That the proposed site is in a 'sustainable' location.

Tandridge fully acknowledges that it does not have a 5-year land supply for G&T pitches in the District and the Parish Council does not challenge this.

However, it is the Parish Council's considered opinion that the proposed site does not constitute Grey Belt. For over sixty years the site was a meadow and used for the grazing of horses at times. Immediately prior to the current owner (the site changed hands between 2020 and 2021) The entire field was grassed and had a number of trees growing in the field.



Google Earth Pro 2020



Google earth Pro 2021

The new owner carried out some clearance work. The trees in the middle of the field were removed, some fencing and a small strip of plantings laid along the roadside strip of the field. Other than that, the field remained as an agriculture/horse grazing piece of land. 'Grey Belt' is defined in the NPPF as land within the Green Belt which is previously developed and/or does not strongly contribute to purposes a), b) or d) of the Green Belt. The application site is not previously developed land. It is a large field that sits alongside another field to the south. It could be argued that it does not strongly contribute to the Green Belt as there is a large airport parking site along its western and northern boundaries. Immediately south it borders another field. The opposite side of Dowlands Lane comprises of a small number of dwellings and some open field. The Parish Council would argue that the field makes a significant contribution to the Green Belt, helping to separate the countryside from the airport parking facility and the removal of the field would have a huge negative impact on the sense of open countryside for the residents living along Dowlands Lane.

The proposal would undermine the aim of safeguarding the countryside from encroachment because it is/was undeveloped. This application would undermine the purpose of safeguarding the countryside from encroachment (Purpose C)

Sustainable Location/Local Amenities

Paragraph 110 of the NPPF aims to manage growth patterns to support the main objective of Para 109 – to consider whether the development will be in a sustainable location. The Framework does allow for differences in urban and rural areas however that does not mean that all rural areas should be considered equally. Some rural locations are more suited than others. Para 115 states that sustainable transport modes should be prioritized when assessing applications and seeks to direct development to more built-up areas, depending on accessibility to facilities by suitable travel modes. Policy CSP1 identifies locations for development through CSP1. However, CSP9(f) allows for preference to be given to G&T sites which are accessible by non-car modes of transport. The PPTS also does support sites outside of settlements provided they are not in open countryside.

There are no facilities in the proposed application location. There are a few dwellings, both brick and caravan, along with open fields and farms. Dowlands Lane is an unlit, single-track lane that leads to Effingham Road (B2037) to the south. There is no bus stop along Effingham Road and residents would need to walk 1.3km west along the B2037, to Keepers

Corner, before reaching a bus stop. The bus service at Keepers Corner has a limited weekday service offering an hourly bus service to Smallfield and Copthorne. There is a pavement running along the south side of the B2037 but it is narrow and both volume and speed of passing traffic means it is unsafe to regularly walk. The distance to the bus stop is also significantly above the 800m as described in the National Design Guide. There are two pubs along the B2037, one close to the junction with Dowlands Lane but no other services, shops, playgrounds, available. Given the traffic speed and volume, it is unlikely that people would be willing to cycle, if it was even considered safe to do so.

The government allows for free school transport provided the following apply

- The school is the nearest suitable school
- The school is more than 2 miles away and the child is under 8
- The school is more than 3 miles away and the child is 8 or over
- There's no safe walking route between the school and the child's home
- The child cannot walk to school because of their special needs

All the above reasons would apply to any children living in the proposed application site. Therefore, Council believes that development, including G&T pitches should be directed to locations where there will not be a requirement on the local authority to provide free transport to school.

Detrimental Impact on Amenity and Character of the Area

Dowlands Lane is a small, almost single-track lane that runs north-to-south between Effingham Road at the southern end and Plough Road at the northern. Along the eastern side, close to the application site, there is a small amount of ribbon development on the eastern boundary.

This development consists of predominantly individual dwellings, spaced well apart, most with hedging, fencing at the roadside. There are two small sites with static caravans. Longbranch has one pitch and is occupied by Travelling Showmen, and Ivy Hatch, comprising of three pitches, with all residents being members of the same family. This proposal would result in an additional 6 static caravan pitches, 6 touring caravans, multiple dayrooms and several vehicles. All of this, including the associated domestic paraphernalia entailed with residential living, would have a huge urbanising effect on rural open countryside. The impact would be such as to meaningfully and permanently harm the character and appearance of the countryside. For the residents living on the opposite side of Dowlands Lane, there would also be a significant loss of visual amenity they currently enjoy. This proposal does not comply with CSP21 and DP7.

Unsuitable Road

Council does not presume to comment on visibility splays and whether they meet the minimum requirements as Council is not a highway expert. That being said, the safety of all road users is of concern. As said previously, Dowlands Lane is a small, almost single-track road, with no streetlighting, bordered on at least one side with open ditches. It is unsafe for regular walking and most locals avoid driving along it because of its narrow dark, twisty nature. Council estimates that there would be approximately 30 – 50 additional vehicle movements daily with a proposal of this size and scope.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Earlier in this comment, Council included two ariel shots, taken from Google Earth Pro in 2020 and 2021. Both clearly show abundant growth offering a habitat to a variety of creatures. Compared to then, large scale clearance has been undertaken and much of the site is now covered in hardcore. Policy CSP17 requires proposals to provide for the enhancement of biodiversity and to not actively destroy habitats. The applicant does not address this destruction, does not offer a clear landscaping plan for BNG and there is no provision to ensure, and landscaping will be protected in perpetuity. Any 'off-setting' would also not address the fact that the application does not comply with landscaping and character policies in the Framework, In Tandridge Council's policies and the requirement of the PPTS

Flooding

Dowlands Lane slopes/falls from south to north at the application site. During and after rain there is running and standing water on the road. Since the applicant has raised the level of the field by heaping it with hardcore there is an increase in the amount of surface water along the road. There is no provision within the application that details how they will capture, contain and manage the surface water and it appears as though they are content to allow neighbouring areas to simply flood.

Occupation/Residing

Council has been told by residents that the applicant has no intention of living in these caravans and that they will not be for members of the G & T community. Instead, they will be rented out to anyone. Council is already aware that of the two recent plots that have been granted approval, only one of them is occupied. The second stands empty while the owner lives in his home on the South Coast. Applicants should not be permitted to take advantage of policies enabling development for the G & T community when they have no intention of the G&T community living there. If planning was granted, not only should there be conditions prohibiting non-G&T occupants, but there should also be a strong and regular inspection and audit process that will allow for automatic withdrawal of consent if it is found those living on the site are not from the G&T community.

Recommend: Refuse

2024/1219 – Silver Birches, Effingham Road, Burstow

Demolition of existing barn, stables and shed and erection of 5-bedroom dwelling and associated works

Green Belt – Inappropriate development in the Green Belt, is, by definition harmful to the Green Belt. Policy DP10 of the Tandridge Local Plan Part 2 states that planning permission for any inappropriate development in the Green Belt will normally be refused, unless the applicant can demonstrate very special circumstance that outweigh the harm caused by the development. No such demonstration has been made.

The equestrian facilities received consent based on the premiss they were for personal and not business use. Equestrian facilities are commensurate with countryside living and recreation and therefore, in the Parish Council's opinion, do not meet the test for previously developed land (Grey Belt)

Council is not convinced that the applicant has demonstrated sufficiently that safe access and egress can be achieved.

Council is most concerned that people may be living in inadequate, and possibly dangerous, living accommodation and ask the Tandridge Housing Team arrange an immediate visit and inspection.

Recommend: Refuse

2024/1154 – Woodlands Garage, Chapel Road, Smallfield

Demolition of existing buildings and the erection of 6 no. 3 bed dwellings and 3 no. 4 bed dwellings with associated parking and landscaping.

The Parish Council previously supported application ref: 2017/2311 to demolish the existing garage and buildings and replace with 6 dwellings and a block of 4 flats. This application was approved in September 2018 but never enacted, so has since lapsed.

Council would support a similar proposal again. However, the Parish Council has grave concerns about the current proposal. The revised plan is for 9 dwellings, including 3 townhouses. The 4-bed houses are not in keeping with the appearance and character of the street scene and look disproportionately tall against their width, creating a sense they are being squeezed in to generate further revenue. Some of the drawings refer to flats and there are none in this proposal and the built form drawings showing the roof lines/elevations seem to not correlate with the other drawings. The overall sense is one of intensification of the site.

The parking provision is way below the minimum parking standards as set by Tandridge Council. There should be, at a minimum, an additional 4.5 parking bays. We also note that much of the parking offered is for 'tandem' spaces. Experience has shown that many residents dislike this form of parking and quickly abandon it. We fear a combination of insufficient and tandem parking will lead to significant on-street parking along Chapel Road and not address the current problem of on-street parking by the businesses currently operating at the site. There are frequent complaints from residents regarding this.

Council is also concerned that the roadway between the terraced and 4-bed dwellings is very narrow and could lead to access problems for refuse collection and emergency services.

Recommend: Refuse

6. Decisions and Appeal

2024/1171 – Hollybush, Shipley Bridge Lane, Shipley Bridge, Horley

Certificate of Lawfulness under Section 191 for the siting and use of a static caravan occupied independently of the main dwellinghouse

7 No Agenda items Councillors would like listed for the next meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 19.00. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 11th February 2025. The time will be confirmed nearer to the date. Any Councillors attending via Zoom do not vote.

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