



Minutes

Present: Councillors;

A Fleming, P Dutton (Chair), K Greenberg, D Thomas, M Took

In Attendance: N Rees (Town Clerk), Cllr R Lewis, 41 members of the public.

The Chair explained that this Planning Committee meeting had been convened to consider the two identical applications for 160 houses off Hill Farm Rd and there would be an opportunity for members of the public to make comments before the Committee made a decision.

1. **Apologies:** Cllr Payne, Cllr Wollweber
2. **Declarations of interest:** There were no declarations of interest.
3. **Minutes:** The minutes of the meeting held on the 4th January, 2017 were accepted as a true record.
4. **Matters arising from the minutes.** It was noted that there had been no response from WDC regarding the questions raised over the application for the hand car wash in the Angel, the Clerk would chase again.

Planning Applications:

The Chair, Cllr Dutton, then opened the meeting to receive comments from the members of public:

The following is a summary of the points made by members of the public. It was noted during this part of the meeting that some of the residents attending had sent in more detailed comments to WDC. Many residents made similar comments and these have been bundled together.

1. A resident drew attention to the road widths at the two access points, one at 5.1m and one at 5.4m these were less than the legal minimum for road widths which was 6.0m. There was also a minimum 3m width required for emergency vehicles and this could not be maintained due to the on street parking on Hill Farm Road.
2. Another resident explained that the Traffic Assessment appeared to be based on inaccurate figures in the model, a resident explained that the number of cars would be much higher than predicted in the assessment document. The number of vehicles per household (noted as 1.1) was also challenged as this was likely to be much higher in reality.
3. Several residents commented that the application appeared to promote the idea of cycling but there was no provision to connect existing cycleways to the development. It was generally accepted that cycling along Holton Rd was too dangerous.
4. The Traffic Assessment did not consider that the bottleneck at the Railway Bridge along Holton Rd was an issue but the increase in the number of cars would certainly make this situation considerably worse. It appears the Traffic Assessment grossly underestimate the

created by the railway bridge and the line of cars parked along the road reducing traffic to single file.

5. Another resident pointed out that the existing Hill Farm Rd was already in need of repair and the heavy plant and lorries entering the site could cause further damage to the surface and possibly the main drains.
6. There was no mention of compensation for the reduction in Solar panel efficiency from site dust or for any other inconveniences.
7. Many residents were concerned about the pressure that the population increase (approximately 10%), from the 160 new homes, would have on the town's infrastructure, in particular; the primary schools which are already at capacity; health facilities, already a 3 – 4 week wait to see a GP; dentists, currently not accepting new patients; parking and traffic. This was the major concern of most residents present particularly with the expected housing developments on the Dairy Farm site and possibly the old Tesco site.
8. Two other residents raised the problem of surface water and the threat from flooding which had been unrealistically calculated on a 1 in 100 year event. The existing houses in Holton Rd already have issues with surface water from the hillside running off into their gardens. It was also noted that the existing drains already overflowed after a storm.
9. Another resident expressed concerns over encroachment from the development on the Strategic Gap between and Halesworth and Holton.
10. It was noted by another resident that there was no bus service along Holton Rd and so residents would have to walk, cycle (unsuitable as noted earlier) or use the car adding to traffic congestion (as noted earlier). Walking would be too far for the elderly and mothers with small children.

The Chair then thanked everyone for their comments and closed the meeting in order for the committee to make a decision. At this point most of the residents left the meeting.

The Clerk explained that the Developer had made two identical applications, this tactic was used by developers to enable an early appeal to be made on one of the applications, if a decision had not been made by WDC within the 13 week period. The other application could continue through the process but if it was turned down at a later date by the District Council, the appeal could be heard earlier than it would have if there was only one application.

The Committee then discussed most of the points raised by the members of public. The Chair reminded the Committee that they were only considering the access in detail and the general outline application for 160 houses. All other matters were reserved and detailed applications would follow over a period of time, if WDC approved the applications or if an appeal was successful. Any decision made by this Planning Committee meeting would need to be approved by the full Town Council in accordance with the Planning Committee's Terms of Reference, due to the size of the proposed development.

The Committee discussed the impact that 160 houses were likely to have on the town's infrastructure, it was noted that this would represent, approximately, a 10% increase in the population. It was also acknowledged that the Government were exerting pressure on District Councils and Developers to build more houses and at the same time weakening the planning controls. It was noted that there were currently 40 people registered as waiting for homes in Halesworth and the Council had recognised the need for new houses in Halesworth, particularly for smaller homes and affordable units.

The Committee were however concerned primarily with the size of the development and also that the supporting information had not been based on relevant facts or had used inaccurate data and it was on these points that it was proposed and RESOLVED that the Committee recommended that both applications were refused.

It was noted that the Clerk had obtained an extension to the 7th February and this would allow the application to be decided at the next monthly meeting (6th February) or to hold an Extraordinary meeting during this period.

1. DC/16/5410/OUT Outline Application (with all matters other than means of access reserved) for residential development of up to 160 dwellings with the provision of a new meadow, additional site wide open space and landscaping, land to enable an extension to the existing cemetery and vehicular accesses off Hill Farm Road Land North And East Of Hill Farm Road Halesworth Suffolk – RESOLVED that the Committee recommended that this application is refused
 2. DC/16/5411/OUT Outline Application (with all matters other than means of access reserved) for residential development of up to 160 dwellings with the provision of a new meadow, additional site wide open space and landscaping, land to enable an extension to the existing cemetery and vehicular accesses off Hill Farm Road Land North And East Of Hill Farm Road Halesworth Suffolk - RESOLVED that the Committee recommended that this application is refused
5. **Correspondence** – There was no correspondence to consider.

The meeting was closed 8.10pm