

WEST WITTERING PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

held on Thursday 21st March 2024, 11.00am, in the Pavilion,
Rookwood Road, West Wittering, P020 8LT.

PRESENT: MR B HUTTON (CHAIRMAN), MRS B WRIGHT (VICE-CHAIRMAN), MR B BUCKLAND, MRS N PIKE, MRS L HANDFORD, MR K MARTIN, MR S DEBEGER AND AND 28 MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

28/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: - Apologies were received from Mr I Western and Mr Patel.

29/24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT: - Cllr Debeger declared an interest as the Director of Sandpiper Walk Management Committee which abuts the development site.

30/24. The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed all present. The Parish Council had called an Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council in order to respond formally, within the timeframe, to planning application WW/24/00266/REM reserved matters application 70 dwellings – Church Road West Wittering. The Chairman informed those present that a holding objection had already been uploaded onto the Chichester District Council (CDC) portal portal.

Documents from the CDC Planning Portal were displayed onto the screen and areas of concern were raised and discussed before expanding on each theme in the holding objection, ensuring that all of the relevant points could be included in the final document. There was a serious concern about the developer using out of date flood data and that the potential owners of the properties will experience flooding issues and may not be aware of this. The Parish Councillors and residents asked that future potential owners are made aware of the flood risk.

There was also a lot of concern about floor levels and drainage flow with no clarity on the surrounding area and where the water will go but the field will not drain as it does now as it will no longer be porous,

On a proposal by Cllr Martin and seconded by Cllr Debeger it was **RESOLVED** to object to WW/24/00266/REM on the grounds outlined below:-

West Wittering Parish Council objects to this application. It is aware that the principle of building 70 dwellings on the site is established, subject to compliance with conditions, nevertheless it wishes to object to the reserved matters on grounds of:

(References to policies prefaced with “WW” are policies contained in West Wittering Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2029 which was made in November 2023 and is part of the current Development Plan. It should therefore be accorded considerable weight in the decision-making process of the District Council as Local Planning Authority).

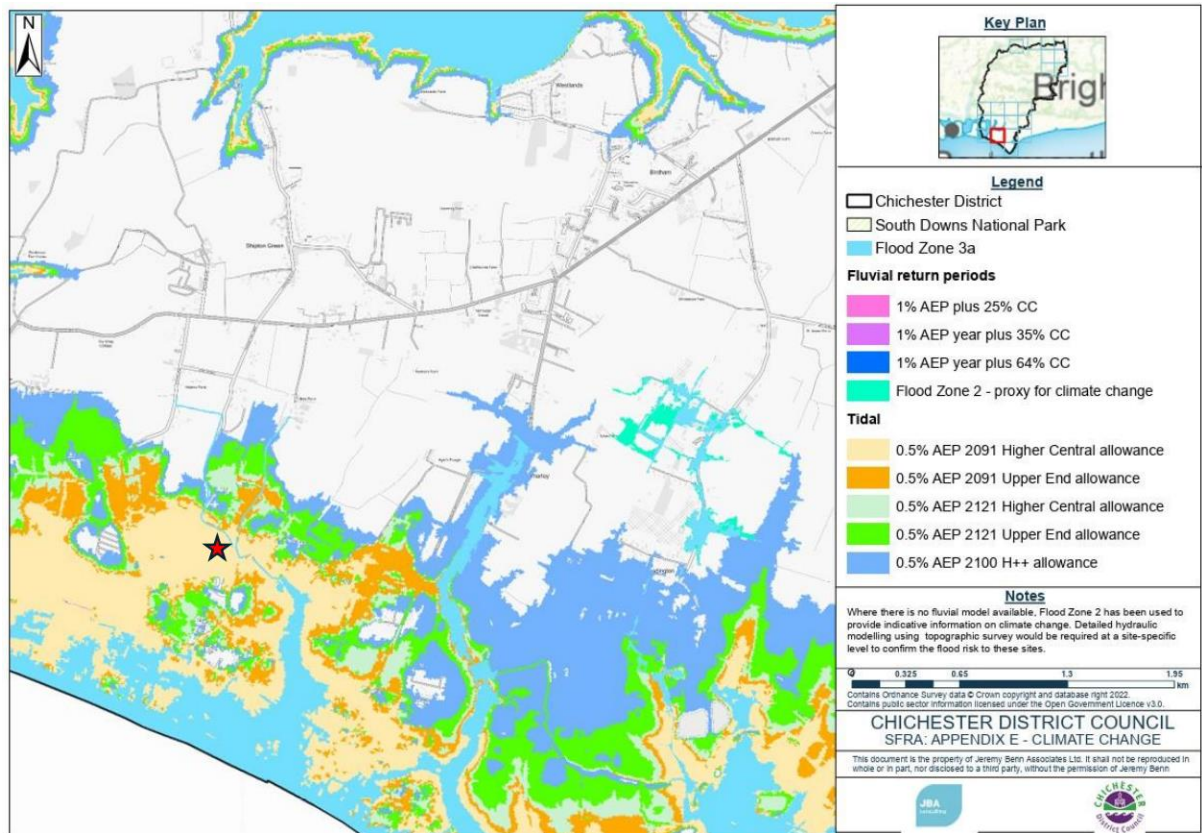
1. Flood Risk - Changes to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) maps in 2022, part of the Council’s Local Plan background documents, now show that the site is at risk of tidal flooding. At the time of the Public Inquiry, this was not the case. (see para 87 of decision letter). Previous potential developers have not proceeded with this site because of these changes and

none of the drainage solutions provided by the applicant consider, or even refer to the future tidal flood risk map. This map shows that the site will suffer from tidal flooding well within its lifetime. At the moment it indicates flooding by 2091, based on 2018 climate change data. A copy of the current SFRA map is attached showing the site location. Now, because of the SFRA, the site needs a tidal flood mitigation scheme to ensure that future residents are safe and can obtain house insurance in the future.

2. The lead flood authority, WSCC, has now submitted an objection and is concerned about the inadequate nature of the scheme submitted. The applicant's drainage consultant wrote to CDC yesterday commenting on the Parish Council's holding objection stating that its proposals complied with the situation at the time of the decision letter. Climate change and flooding are dynamic and what has happened since the planning inquiry cannot be ignored. Legally the current flood risk maps must be taken into account when designing a mitigation scheme. The approach of the applicant is fatally flawed. The Parish Council is not satisfied that the measures being considered are able to protect the site from future flooding. It is essential that whoever signs off on this drainage and flood mitigation scheme is prepared to underwrite the future safety of the site. Nobody wants to add to the housing in the village that is already suffering flooding from groundwater and sewerage on a regular basis.
3. Risk to future purchasers – This is particularly important as the future residents of the houses may not be made aware of the flood risk if they only carry out the usual EA flood zone risk searches. They must be able to rely on a regulatory system that protects them from purchasing a house under a false premise that there is no risk of flooding.
4. The Environment Agency have raised no objection to the proposals. It is unclear whether they are aware of the updated SFRA maps. There was much confusion about the status of the site in terms of flooding during the planning Inquiry. The EA must be asked to categorically state whether it is satisfied that this site will not be subject to flooding for the next 100 years based on the updated SFRA map. We understand that the EA is carrying out a review nationally of all the flood zones is this going to affect the site in the future? It is noted that WSCC have added a statement at the end of their objection letter asking to be advised if the LPA are minded to grant planning permission so that they can record the stance taken by CDC if there is future flooding on the site. This statement is extremely worrying for the residents and indicates the serious concerns of WSCC about the proposal as it stands. It is shifting the blame onto the LPA's officers should they ignore the advice of WSCC.
5. Drainage – The layouts submitted are confusing it would seem that the scheme is relying heavily on existing ditches to take the water away. This includes ditches into the surrounding area and Sandpiper Walk, which is already struggling to cope with the drainage system on its estate. The heavy rain this winter has already put a huge strain on the ditches in the area. Houses have been flooded and water is lying in places as never seen before. The existing ditches do not always run the same way. Much more assessment is required of the existing ditch network and its ability to always cope with this new development. Critically, who is responsible for keeping all the ditches maintained? Not the developer. Climate change must be taken into account. It would be negligent to grant planning permission without potential flooding being fully mitigated and the lead authorities being satisfied to this effect. Policy WW1 requires the new development to have appropriate drainage to help combat and mitigate the impacts of climate change. We do not believe this requirement has been addressed. Policy WW3 also requires that the development proposals should identify the necessary infrastructure to support the development (in this case risk of flooding) and the way in which it will be delivered. The documents relating to drainage and flooding are silent on the matter of the SFRA updated maps showing the risk of tidal flooding at the site.
6. Pumping - The drainage system suggests two pumping stations, please can the LPA ensure that these are not going to be a noise nuisance to any residents. The applicant also needs to satisfy the LPA of the arrangements for maintaining the pumps in perpetuity.

7. Consistent approach from regulators - There is concern from our residents that not all current development sites are being treated equally/fairly. This site was not subjected to a sequential test before planning permission was granted. Other sites in the area seem to be attracting more concern than this one despite there being very little difference in the height of the land or the flooding/drainage issues. We believe that this site would fail the sequential test and is not suitable for development as the risk to the future life of the houses is in question and cannot be properly mitigated. Climate change is uncertain and difficult to plan for. As such the precautionary principle should be applied and if there is doubt about the mitigation offered then the reserved matters must be refused.
8. Design - Policy WW1 requires design to be of high quality and to reflect the attractive and unique landscape, seascape and townscape of the village. The proposed layout is a typical generic housing estate with absolutely no effort being made to capture any of the design elements required by WW1. Absolutely no effort has been made to make this development anything more than a pedestrian new estate that can be found anywhere in the UK. There is no indication of solar panels, electrical car charging points or heat pumps to help make the site more sustainable.
9. Boundary Treatment -The proposed boundary treatments of close board fences throughout and a trivial amount of proposed soft planting are shameful. The proposal is urban and out of keeping with the requirements of WW1 and the Village Design Statement (VDS) (Appendix 2) which require an increase in soft planting, trees and hedges in the outlying areas in which this site sits. It is also on an approach to the village requiring the preservation of trees and hedgerows augmented with further indigenous planting according to Planning Guideline 4 of the VDS. A strong condition and enforcement if necessary is highly desirable.
10. Lack of small open market units -The housing mix is not acceptable and does not reflect the needs of the village. There are insufficient small open market units (1 and 2 bed) for young people, who are forced to leave the village to find suitable accommodation and lower rents. Condition 17 requires 10% open market dwellings to be bungalows.
11. WW3 requires that this development should produce at least 30% affordable housing which is held in perpetuity as affordable housing for local people. This proposal does not offer sufficient affordable housing for rent and does not comply with the existing S106 agreement.
12. The layout plan shows a footpath which stops at the edge of the adjacent Sandpiper Walk estate. Connectivity by walking and cycling is required by WW3. However, before such connectivity can only come to fruition with an agreement with the adjacent landowners. To date no approach has been made to Sandpiper Walk Management company
13. The Principal Residence Requirement- policy WW5, is designed to reduce the significant risk of these houses being sold as second homes further damaging the village community. It is essential that this policy is adhered to and all residences are used as primary residences. It is for the LPA to ensure that a suitable condition is imposed on these dwellings to ensure they are all used as primary residences. It is a significant harm to the village to add to the 22.3% of houses in the village already used as second homes. This restriction needs to be entered onto the Land Charge to ensure that future purchasers are aware of the requirement to only use the house as a primary residence.
14. There is little information relating to biodiversity net gain. WW11 requires all development in the village provides a biodiversity net gain of at least 10%. This site is open greenfield with a significant hedge running along the boundary where the access is proposed. The PC requires that all the habitat loss is replaced and that the landscape areas are enhanced not only for visual amenity but also for biodiversity.
15. Lighting on the site must comply with the requirements of WW13. It should be kept to a minimum and recognise the close proximity of the National Landscape (formerly AONB) and its countryside location.

West Wittering Parish Council has fully considered this application and would be pleased if the Local Planning Authority would give considerable weight to the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan and the objections set out above and refuse these reserved matters application.



There being no further business for discussion the meeting closed at 12.15pm.

Signed:
Chairman

Date:

THESE MINUTES ARE IN DRAFT FORM UNTIL APPROVED BY THE COUNCIL AT THE NEXT MEETING, AND MAY BE AMENDED BY RESOLUTION. COPIES OF ALL UNAPPROVED MINUTES, AND AGENDAS AND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT WEST WITTERING PARISH COUNCIL CAN BE FOUND ON THE PARISH COUNCIL’S WEB SITE: www.westwitteringparishcouncil.gov.uk