

Keswick and Intwood Parish Council Special Meeting on 4th May 2016 to consider Planning Application 2016/0674. Minutes of the Meeting held at the Reading Room, Keswick at 19.00.

Present: Kevin Hanner (KH) Chair; Tim Love (TL); Marguerite Russell (MR); Janet Hill (JH); Theresa O’Leary Jones (TJ); and Phillip Brooks (Clerk).

50 plus members of the public were in attendance including: Christopher Kemp (Councillor Cringleford Ward) (CK); Garry Wheatley (Councillor Cringleford Ward) (GW); and Judith Virgo (County Councillor Humbleyard) (JV) Representatives from MAHB Capital (the Applicant development company) also attended.

1. To consider apologies for absence: it was resolved to accept apologies from: Linda Thursby (LT) and Ruth Ripman (RR).

2. Declarations of Interest: a) in accordance with s.31 of the Localism Act 2011, Members to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on this Agenda; and b) the Clerk to report any written requests for dispensation in respect of items on this Agenda: there were none.

3. Public Participation: Resolution to adjourn the meeting for public participations: KH welcomed everyone to the meeting called to gather resident’s views and help the Parish Council to formulate its response to Planning Application 2016/0764 - Land West of Ipswich Road Keswick Norfolk. Proposal: Outline Application for proposed employment development consisting of B1, B2 and B8 uses, associated access and landscaping. He added that the Parish Council had engaged the services of a Planning Consultant to help with preparation of the response.

The Developer began with a brief summary of the Proposal explaining that outline planning permission was being sought for a development encompassing a range of employment facilities including offices, research and development, light industrial, industrial and storage and distribution. The forecast demand is expected to be from office occupiers for new modern light industrial units. The site had been chosen because the southern side of Norwich provided a good range of locations now that other business parks are (it was said) fully developed.

Discussion and questions from members of the public were wide ranging and covered specifically the following topics:

- unanimous agreement was displayed in criticism that only the statutory time of 21 days for individuals to respond to an Application of this size and complexity was given thus not allowing time to properly consider the scope and extent of documents submitted. GW and CK said that the period could be extended with the Developer’s agreement. The Developer said he was not aware that such a time had been imposed and was agreeable for the deadline to be extended to the end of the month. The Clerk said he had already obtained an extension for the Parish Council until 12th May and agreed to contact the Planning Officer to extend the 5th May date to the end of the month. **(Action PB);**
- many residents were disappointed that there had been no active engagement between the Developer and community over the past year to assist in understanding the extent and implications of the proposal. A Question and Answer sheet promised for

distribution to every household setting out the issues had not materialised before the meeting had taken place thus leading to a dearth of information about what was intended;

- there was concern that the Application was contrary to the South Norfolk Plan (which had been approved by the Inspector in his Report dated September 2015) and approved KES 2 as a 10 acre site restricted to B1 development within the Norwich Southern Bypass Landscape Protection Zone. The Developer explained that extending the area to 28 acres and including development classes B2 and B8 was necessary to make the proposal viable and meet the infrastructure costs associated with the development. This extension would include 10 acres of landscape buffer zone although there were no guarantees about its future protection. Beyond this there were no further plans for any development at Harford Bridge. A further concern was the number of jobs created by the enlarged development had increased from 400 to 1,000 thus inevitably placing further demands on the local infrastructure;
- traffic volumes and speed together with pedestrian safety along Low Road have already been described as dangerous by highways professional. This is an ongoing issue for the Parish Council and was the focus of its response to the South Norfolk Local Plan Examination: Reference: Question 218. KES 2: land west of Ipswich Road (B1). *Will the effect on local road network be satisfactory?* The statistics in the Traffic Assessment and Plan citing that increases on Low Road would be in the order of just 8 two-way movements in the AM peak hour and 12 two-way movements in the PM peak hour were considered to lack confidence and integrity and probably based on out of date information. Moreover, it's believed the figures do not allow for possible traffic movements from the planned development of 1,300 houses to be built in Cringleford where workers at the intended development might reasonably be expected to live and to use Low Road for their work journey. Furthermore, no consideration is apparently given in the Assessment to increased traffic connected with the newly created village green and associated pedestrian safety issues. Clarification of the statistics by the Highways Engineer at Norfolk County Council in relation to all figures included in the Assessment (including the A140 and B1113 assumptions) was considered essential. If proved correct, the need for a junction and access to the proposed site from the B1113 appears questionable;
- some considered that the allocation of parking spaces is significantly understated which will lead to overspill, an unsightly environment and safety issues. The Developer responded that traffic distribution and consequent parking needs had been agreed with the Norfolk County Council. If the figures are found to be wanting the parking arrangements will be reconsidered;
- responding to questions about occupancy of the site the Developer said that at this stage he had no idea what the distribution of activity might be. It would be a matter of waiting to see who applied, although there had been interest shown from potential occupiers engaged in activities across the range of intended planning classes. Therefore, it was impossible to be specific about the type and mix of buildings to be erected but the intention was to maintain a rural setting through the careful use of appropriate building materials and architecture. Once there was clarity about occupancy and building needs further planning applications would be submitted; and
- one member of the public attending expressed his support for the project on the grounds that it would bring employment to the area and stimulate business in the locality.

After extensive discussion Councillors voted unanimously to object to the Application for the following reasons:

- contrary to the Local Plan, the bulk of the site has not been allocated for development and is located within the Landscape Protection Zone;
- the Planning Act requires decisions to be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations suggest otherwise. The Parish Council has not seen in the Application documents sufficient justification to depart from the Local Plan;
- the developer has suggested that the allocated scheme KES 2 (limited to a B1 development) was not viable, but there has been no evidence provided to justify that;
- traffic predictions for Low Road are unrealistic and require clarification. If correct, the Parish Council does not see the need for a junction and access road from the B1113;
- grave concerns exist about access and landscaping, and assuring long term protection of the buffer zones included in the plans;
- the inclusion of Planning Classes B2 and B8 is objectionable on the grounds of possible round the clock heavy lorry movements as part of any storage and distribution activity; and possible noise from the B2 development; and
- there is no apparent rational assessment in the documents submitted for the additional commercial floor space now being sought over and above the Joint Core Strategy for Norwich and Norfolk. The case for additional floor space should be made in the new Local Plan.

Finally the Parish Council concluded that it would not object to the allocated site set out in the original policy (KES 2). Should such an Application be submitted the Council would be supportive of it providing the traffic issues contained in South Norfolk Local Plan Examination (Reference: Question 218. KES 2: land west of Ipswich Road (B1). *Will the effect on local road network be satisfactory?* referred to above) are addressed and the landscaping is protected for the future.

The meeting closed at 21.10.

Phillip Brooks
Parish Clerk
9th May 2016