

Minutes of a Meeting of the Planning, Highways and Climate Change Committee held on Tuesday 20th July 2021 at 19.00 in the Roden Suite, Edinburgh House, New Street Wem

Present:- Councillor P Broomhall (Mayor), Councillors, R Dodd, R Drummond, A Everett, P Glover, C Granger, D Hill, P Johnson, M Meakin, E Towers, G Soul, D Parry.

2 members of the public present

1 To receive apologies and reasons for absence.

None

Absent K Edge, M Hoffmann

2 Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests

a) To receive any disclosure of pecuniary interest - Members are reminded that they must not participate in the discussion or voting on any matter in which they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and should leave the room prior to the commencement of the debate.

Councillor	Item	Dispensation
Cllrs Towers and Broomhall	Twin-hatted members declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the Town Council's relationship with Shropshire Council	Dispensations to allow participation and voting on all matters relating to Shropshire Council
Cllr Granger	Bias interest 21/03091/FUL as she knows residents near the proposed development.	

b) To consider any applications for Dispensations under s33 of the Localism Act 2011. None received.

3 Public Participation Time - a period of 15 minutes will be set aside for residents of Wem Town to speak (this may be extended at the discretion of the mayor).

A member of Wem Area Climate Forum outlined the Forum's plans for the use of Randford Way public open space.

4 Minutes - to approve the minutes of the Planning, Highways and Climate Change Committee meeting held on 7.6.21.

RESOLVED:- that the minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 7.6.21 be approved as a correct record and they were duly signed by the Committee chairman.

5 Planning applications for consideration

a) 21/02768/OUT Outline planning application for Residential development (Use Class C3) and associated access, public open space, drainage, infrastructure,

earthworks and ancillary enabling works. All matters except for access reserved.
(Revised scheme) (amended description) - Land West Lowe Hill Road Wem
Shropshire

A discussion took place on this item and Councillors expressed the view that very little had changed about the application. It was therefore

RESOLVED:- to submit the following comments

Wem Town Council objects to planning application 21/02768/OUT

The western section of the land in the proposed development site is outside of the site allocation Wem003 and falls outside of the town's development boundary. Therefore the land in this section of the proposed application should not be permitted as it is contrary to the local plan.

The Town Council objected to the development of this site in its 2013 response to the Local Plan the Town Council due to

Concerns around the impact that the development would have on the town's infrastructure especially the road network

The suitability of the site for a development of this size as this area is prone to flooding.

Since this correspondence in 2013 the Town Council's position on the suitability of this site for development has not changed.

Currently there is no development on the western side of Lowe Hill Road. Lowe Hill Road provides a natural, environmental boundary to the town. The proposed development will lead to urban sprawl and have a negative impact on the setting of the town from the west contrary to policies CS6 and CS17 of Shropshire's adopted Core Strategy.

The site is already prone to severe flooding - as photographs will attest. The site therefore fails the sequential test set out in PPS25 and is therefore unsuitable for development in accordance with CS18 of the Core Strategy. Other sites in Wem which have flooding issues which have had swales etc. constructed which residents are having to pay for through high service charges, in addition to Council Tax they must pay. This is an unfair tax and development should not be allowed on such sites in the first place. The flooding issues on the Lowe Hill site will have to be dealt with but why should residents be penalised with service charges?

The Town's infrastructure is already under severe strain as a result of development since the 1980s making it unsustainable in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF. It would also be contrary to policy CS8 of the Core Strategy. The Town Council has taken a consistent line that no further development should take place until the infrastructure of previous development has been addressed in the town - we cannot continue to build our way out of the problems.

With specific reference to the proposed access from the development the Town Council considers that the simple priority T junction shown on the plan in 2

locations is completely inadequate for the safe effective operation of all the traffic movements in this area at peak times regardless of where it is located along Lowe Hill Road for the following reasons;

1. Lowe Hill Road is an important local artery between rural farming community of Whixall and Wem and indeed the county road network generally. Apart from serving the agricultural activities it is a route used by local small industrial enterprises Browns Buildings and P G Skips.
2. Thomas Adams School buses in pupils from a wide area who arrive and leave on 14 different buses. The school is currently at capacity, but the potential is there for expansion so this number may increase. The proposed junction for this estate is badly sited, being between Pyms Road exit (which is dangerous) and the school entrance and shows no awareness of the potential conflicts of full size coaches with commuter traffic and agricultural vehicles and parked parents cars at school opening and closing times. Also there is no recognition apparent of the pedestrian pupil movements in this facility. The raised platform added is no more than a gesture.
3. The junction of Lowe Hill Road with Ellesmere Road has long been a site of concern regarding the limited visibility to the right when exiting Lowe Hill Road due to the brick boundary wall and curve of Ellesmere Road to the north. An increase in traffic flow will put greater pressure on this poor junction particularly at peak traffic times.
4. Access to the town and all routes south, except to Ellesmere will be via Maunds Corner and the town centre: these are narrow roads that are already overloaded and unsuitable for goods vehicles. A vital consideration is that there is no prospect of a relief road being built to remove through traffic as all roads into Wem are B roads. This lack of a relief road is a huge constraint on the ability of Wem to expand as it simply cannot take any more vehicles.

Taking all points raised in mind it should be evident that a far more imaginative approach to the access arrangement is required before this application is progressed and prior to making any decision on this application further consultations must take place at the very least with Wem Town Council, Wem Rural Parish Council, Wem Economic Forum, Arriva re 511 service, Thomas Adams School and businesses who use the road for access.

Other matters of concern

It is mentioned in 4.3 of the Transport Assessment that the site was within walking distance of the town. This does not take into account the age or infirmity of many residents. It also fails to mention that the route involves walking round Maunds Corner (mentioned later) described by one pedestrian as 'the most dangerous footpath in Europe'. The map (4.1) fails to show the actual route that would have to be taken from this site to the town supermarket. The actual distance by pavement is 1000 metres (200 over the stated desirable maximum)

The rail accessibility figures in the report are untrue. On weekdays off-peak, there is one train every 2 hours, not every 1 hour as stated. The trains are operated by Transport for Wales, not Arriva Trains Wales.

This is a sensitive and controversial development for the town and given this,

despite being an allocated site, the application should be considered by the Planning Committee and not under the scheme of delegation.

b) 21/02883/FUL Erection of a 2 storey dwelling and single storey garage following demolition of existing single storey dwelling and garage - Wor-Yam Fir Tree Lane Wem SY4 5EU

RESOLVED:- to support the application

c) 21/03091/FUL Erection of a single storey dwelling and provision of parking - Proposed Dwelling To The East Of New Street Wem Shropshire

Cllr Granger declared a bias interest and left the room.

RESOLVED:- to support the application.

Cllr Granger returned to the meeting

6 Extension of Conservation Area – for update

Cllr Broomhall gave a verbal report from a meeting held with Andy Wigley, Cllr Broomhall and Cllr Everett to discuss a possible extension of the conservation area. It was reported that officers had stated that Shropshire Council would not support the extension of the conservation area into the Millfields Land.

RESOLVED:- to note the report of the meeting and not pursue this matter further.

7 Highways Meeting – to receive a verbal report on meeting held with Shropshire Council on 20.7.21

Cllr Broomhall gave a verbal report from this meeting. He explained that Shropshire Council had agreed to provide the resources of a lead officer to work with the Town Council to scope various highways projects aimed at alleviating traffic problems in the town. It was hoped that an initial meeting would be held in September once an officer had been allocated this project.

RESOLVED:- to note the report of meeting.

8 Wem Area Climate Forum – to consider proposal received for Ranford Way

RESOLVED:- to support the proposal of Wem Area Climate Forum to develop Ranford Way Green Space into a pocket orchard and wildlife garden.

Meeting ended at 19.25

Chairman.....