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## Planning Working Group

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**MINUTES** of the Meeting held at the locations listed below on Friday, 10 January 2025 from 9.30 am - 12.32 pm.

531 **Declarations of Interest**

No interests were declared.

532 **23/505678/FULL Land West of Warden Road, Eastchurch, Kent ME12 4EJ**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Ann Cavanagh (Substitute for Councillor Kieran Golding), Elliott Jayes (Vice-Chair), Terry Thompson and Tony Winckless.

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Billy Attaway, Simon Greenwood and Carly Stoddart.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillor Tara Noe.

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Mike Baldock, Simon Clark, Kieran Golding, Paul Stephen and Richard Palmer.

The Vice-Chair in-the-Chair welcomed the applicant, the applicant's planning agent, representatives from Eastchurch Parish Council, members of the public and members of the Planning Committee to the meeting.

The Planning Consultant introduced the application which sought permission for the erection of 32no. dwellings with associated parking, access and landscaping, as set out in the report. He reminded Members that highway safety concerns were identified at the committee meeting and these related to the proposed access to the site which was located at the foot of a hill.

The Vice-Chair in-the-Chair invited the applicant's Planning Agent to give a presentation.

The Planning Agent outlined the proposed development and explained that the applicant had worked with the relevant consultees to propose a development which complied with applicable planning and technical requirements. The agent explained that the 30-mph speed limit zone into Eastchurch would be extended in order that vehicles approached the access at an appropriate speed, as recommended by Kent County Council (KCC) Highways & Transportation. The agent added that there would be 12 dwellings built to achieve Building Regulations Part M4(2) standards (accessible and adaptable dwellings) in order that they could be adapted to meet the future needs of occupants. The proposed materials of the development would ensure that it complimented the local area.

The representatives from Eastchurch Parish Council raised the following points:

- A similar development on the neighboring land had recently been refused on the grounds of encroachment of development and presence of built form in the open countryside and could not see how this proposal was any different;
- the location of the site had serious traffic issues;
- Warden Road was the only road serving 27 different caravan sites;
- the public transport available was insufficient;
- there were no bus stops nearby to serve the development;

- concerned that there were no measures in place to prevent the applicant from selling the proposed housing on the open market rather than delivering social housing;
- no guarantee the homes would be for local people, why could the homes not be offered to Isle of Sheppey residents only?;
- the development was not in a sustainable location;
- there were insufficient services in the area;
- the three-storey flats being proposed were not in-keeping with the local area;
- insufficient parking was being proposed;
- the developer had not consulted the Parish Council to understand the views of the local residents prior to submission of the application; and
- Eastchurch was often busier in the summer season and an additional development would make the traffic situation worse.

Local residents raised points which included:

- The roads were often congested with vehicles travelling to the caravan sites and refuse and emergency services vehicles had difficulties accessing the road;
- the country roads were not suitable for construction traffic;
- the footway along Warden Road was not wide enough for wheelchairs forcing users onto the road;
- the site was not a suitable location for social housing;
- the applicant had not identified a clear need for the development;
- the development would increase the number of homes in Eastchurch by 10%;
- there would be an increase of 25% social housing in Eastchurch which was already over the national average;
- more social housing was needed in other areas on the Isle of Sheppey such as Minster and Halfway;
- there was significant wildlife in the locality and the proposal did not adequately mitigate its ecological impact; and
- the local school did not have sufficient places for the children of Eastchurch so would not be able to accommodate further children.

A Ward Member raised the following points:

- The proposed access to the development would not provide adequate visibility due to the presence of trees and its location at the foot of a hill;
- vehicles often speed down Warden Road and there had been several accidents at the junction leading into the proposed site; and
- the Committee needed to consider that Eastchurch was subject to seasonal pressures so would be busier in the summer months and additional housing would affect both visitors and resident's enjoyment of the area.

The Planning Consultant clarified that the proposed social housing would be offered to those people that lived in the borough of Swale.

Members then toured the site with officers and viewed the location of the access from Warden Road with officers.

533 **22/504274/FULL Land at Sittingbourne Mill, Mill Way, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 2GZ**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Mike Baldock (Chair), Ann Cavanagh (Substitute for Councillor Kieran Golding), Elliott Jayes (Vice-Chair), Paul Stephen, Terry Thompson and Tony Winckless.

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Andrew Gambrill, Philippa Richardson and Joanna Russell.

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Simon Clark, Kieran Golding, James Hunt, Richard Palmer, Julien Speed and Karen Watson.

The Chair welcomed the Applicant, Agent, representatives from Sittingbourne and Kemsley Light Railway (SKLR) and the Retail Park, the KCC Councillor, members of the public and members of the Planning Committee to the meeting.

The Planning Officer introduced the application as set out in the report. The application was for the erection of 187no. residential units (Use Class C3), 260Sqm of commercial floorspace (Use Class E), 104sqm of community floorspace (Use Class F2) and associated infrastructure, car and cycle parking, landscaping, public realm and access. She explained that the main reason that the application had been deferred for a site meeting was because of concerns relating to access to the site. The Planning Officer added that KCC and National Highways had raised no objection to the application, subject to the imposition of conditions.

The Applicant spoke on the application and explained that the Retail Park owned part of the access to the site, but that there were rights of way in perpetuity over the land. He indicated where the pedestrian and cycle access would be and explained that there would be safe passage via a purpose-built walkway. The Applicant advised that the current flyover would be demolished.

A Member asked about pedestrian access, especially with regard to the different gradients to the site. The Applicant said access would be dealt with by condition and the pedestrian access would be step-free.

The meeting moved to the flyover part of the site.

A representative from SKLR raised concern with the status of some of the land which belonged to the SKLR. The Applicant explained that they owned a structure on the land (the flyover) which would be removed and explained that the levels would be brought down to ground level.

A representative from the Retail Park said the access road was used as a service road where lorries came in and turned throughout the day, often blocking the road.

The meeting moved to the skate park part of the site.

A representative from the Retail Park said that the access gate could be moved at any time by the owners of the Retail Park. There was discussion about the location of the access and whether it was shown correctly on the plans. The officer clarified that it was correct as shown on the proposed plans and as situated on site currently.

A Member asked if measures would be taken to protect users of the skatepark, such as the construction of a wall.

The meeting moved to the waterfront part of the site.

The Planning Officer indicated where the development would be built in relation to the Dolphin Sailing Barge Museum and other landmarks.

#### Chair

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All minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel