

MINUTES of the **EXTRAORDINARY MEETING** held at Epping Hall, St. Johns Road, Epping on **Wednesday, 17th July 2024 at 7.30pm.**

PRESENT: Cllr N Avey (Chairman)
Cllr L Burrows
Cllr C McCredie (Mayor - *ex officio*)
Cllr H Pegrum
Cllr G Scruton
Cllr R Sharif
Cllr M Wright (Vice Chairman)

IN ATTENDANCE: 49 members of the public were present. One member of the press was present.

OFFICERS: Geraldine Vallis (Planning & Events Officer)
Martin Small (Planning Consultant)

113 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr C Burgess, Cllr J Duffell, Cllr Janet Whitehouse (Deputy Town Mayor) with apologies for lateness from Cllr R Sharif.

114 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**Item 7 Planning Applications (Non-Pecuniary)**

There were no declarations of interest.

Cllr R Sharif requested an entry to be made in the minutes, to make it clear, that as a member of both the Town and District Councils, she will reconsider all matters at District level taking into account all relevant evidence and representations at the District tier. Therefore, she cannot be bound in any way by any view expressed in the parish tier or by the decisions of this Committee.

115 DISPENSATIONS

There were no dispensations.

116 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTION TIME

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and made introductions of councillors and officers attending the meeting. The Mayor confirmed that the purpose of the meeting was to invite public comments and responses in relation to South Epping Masterplan consultation on the agenda. The Mayor stated that individuals will be permitted a maximum of three minutes each to make their points. The Mayor handed the chairing of the meeting over to Key Member, Cllr Nigel Avey.

117 SOUTH EPPING MASTERPLAN CONSULTATION

Statutory basis: Town and Country Planning Act 1990, s1, para 8

Key Member: Cllr N Avey

Cllr Avey invited members of the public to speak about the South Epping Masterplan Area consultation and stated that they had three minutes to make their comments.

Tim V-H: The proposed MasterPlan has some interesting ideas, but it does not have the necessary infrastructure in place to benefit the area. He said that the Epping Neighbourhood Plan for anyone who has not read it says that if it is developed, it should be in keeping with the area. He said that in particular Policy 5 regarding South Epping states that there should be a health hub, GP, shops with a distance of 1.2km for less mobile people to get there. He said that there is a lack of bridge between Brook Road and Bridge Hill; no bus route on site for safe use of public transport. He said there is cycle parking but objects to the lack of infrastructure which is established in the Epping Neighbourhood Plan.

Trudy C: She said she hates the idea of this MasterPlan as it is so close to the motorway. She questioned if the 40% of affordable housing will be for existing residents. She asked when will the development happen and how long will the construction take, and will there be anything done about the pavements. She said that there is the Ivy Chimneys Primary School to consider. She said that the run of houses on the plans have no green spaces and what will happen to the rear of existing houses that the development affects.

Heather J: These 450 houses will cause the erosion of the Green Belt. She said that the Ivy Chimneys Primary School is included and where is there provision for secondary school.

Peter C: He said that he agrees that the development has not met the details of the Epping Neighbourhood Plan. He said that the timing of this is broader with the King's Speech with a large part of the Green Belt turning grey. He said that the land around Epping will have an enormous number of planning applications over the next five years. He said that this should form the view of Epping Town Council with the broader developments not this particular development.

Nick A: He said he has lived in Epping since the 1970s and had worked with London Transport and Transport for London. He said that he would be looking for adequate transport strategy in the medium and long term when the plans are in place. He said that the Central Line is being upgraded with the fleet but not the most reliable trains because of this overhaul. He said that there is a capacity issue with people coming to Epping to travel to London from outside areas such as Theydon Bois. He asked if contact had been made with Transport for London to see what they can offer the people of Epping. He said that the buses have inadequate services which go near the site with 15-17 seater vehicles running every two hours which would not be attractive to people to use. He said that there are congestion points around Bower Hill and Station Road. He said that while they encourage cycling and walking, there should be a

bridge over Station Road with the proposal. He said that there needs to be a transport assessment.

Charlie G (Epping Society): He said that the transport had a random red line around the site showing a road but questioned should this not exist before the development. He said that from the cycling and walking aspect, there are a lot of green arrows with out of the site bus stops not close and would be difficult for people using push bikes up Bower Hill. He said that there should be a bridge over the railway station extending to walk and also parking for cycles. He said that number 68 with the assessment of movement strategy offsite mitigation strategy bus and cycle enhance it but questions how it will work. He said that the secondary document of 200 pages of the design has the word 'Must' in there 300 times. He asked if this going to happen or is it a Wish List.

Alison L: She said that the MasterPlan emphasises a lack of transport from the site and Green Belt area. She said that the 450 houses will all rely on cars with two or more cars per house. She said that the High Street is busy always describing it as a 'car park' morning and evening. She said that it will only get worse if this development goes through.

Scott: He has concerns about the traffic and if there are up to 500 dwellings with 2.5 people per house, there would be 1,200 people on this development. He said that Bower Hill serves two schools, a golf course, two industrial estates which gets grid-locked and is as bad as the High Street. He is concerned about the Green Belt and the Brook Road playing fields and refers to the documents where it says that the building is sympathetic to the area. He spoke to someone from one of the consultation meetings who said that there will be a block of flats built on the playing fields and doesn't understand how this can be part of the scheme and would ruin the area. He said he feels very strongly about this.

Colin P: He said that he spoke at the Ivy Chimneys School meeting and is worried that not all issues are considered. He said that there should be a road over the bridge with the number of houses between Brook Road and Ivy Chimneys being proposed. He said that there needs to be capacity for doctors. He asked if EFDC has spoken yet to the CQC (Care Quality Commission) as it seems that they are not able to speak to the doctor's surgery. He said that the Central Line in the Local Plan has capacity to increase signalling upgrades which needs to happen, or things will get worse. He said that the construction traffic routes need to be looked at. He asked would it be Brook Road by the railway bridge or Fiddlers Hamlet. He asked with the school pick up times where the traffic was going to go.

Roger L: He said that there have been a lot of issues raised and he is concerned about the continuous disengagement process. He said that in 2019, the development showed shuttle buses, small retail shops, other facilities such as a community hub and school. He said that each was reiterated for 2020 in the Local Plan. He said that these facilities now seem to have vanished and we are left with a green, a school and coffee kiosk! He said that the school is not fully agreed in consultation with Essex County Council. He said that on the map, there is mopping up of drainage with the blue bits which would attract scooters, kids falling in and antisocial behaviour. He said that a

traffic assessment needs to be done on Brook Road. He said that this consultation is rubbish. He said that Epping Town Council needs to see the raw data for the number of responses for each block. He said that the village green will just be a round green area to enhance the development but won't have the facilities. He asked everyone to respond to this South Epping MasterPlan consultation.

Jennifer: She is concerned with the proposed construction vehicles on Brook Road and Bower Hill. She said that she is concerned about the 70 tonne trucks carrying the materials on these roads and said that the questionnaire is one-sided in their favour. She is concerned about the roads to the facilities and the promise of GPs. She said that she has lived in Epping for two years and can't get in to see a Dentist! She said that there is no secondary school on the plans and not enough thought has gone into this.

Cllr Nigel Avey summarised so far what had been said:

- Lack of traffic
- Lack of medical facilities
- Already Qualis developments with the Limes failing dismally so need a full surgery
- The walk uphill to the hospital or Limes to be addressed
- Non-infrastructure
- SUDS (Sustainable drainage systems) issues
- Pavements need to be permeable
- Dreadful survey with a need for raw data of responses
- Construction – lorries would be using limited road network and infrastructure with years and years of heavy goods vehicles on site plan

Cllr Nigel Avey asked if there were any more comments for residents.

Joan C: She said that she works at Ivy Chimneys School and the development would be opposite. She wondered about the small rectangular area, and would there be any buffer land as otherwise the existing houses would be looking onto the development. She said that the lorries would be coming in and out of a building site and would be across the road. She said that the lorries at the moment across the road shakes the road doing on average 35 miles per hour. She asked about a traffic survey. She said that there are children at her school in wheelchairs and the pavements are not suitable as the lorries go on the pavement. She said that there are no facilities for SEN (Special Educational Needs) children. She said that there is secondary school provision in the borough for SEN children but not primary school. She said that she has lived in Epping for two years and haven't been able to have an appointment at the Limes Doctor's Surgery. She said that she has to use a private GP and moved from the inner city where there was excellent medical GPs.

Cllr Nigel Avey stated that the Masterplan should be addressing the whole of Epping and how it copes with more housing.

Peter: There is a lot of land owned by developers who have options. He said that South Epping won't be the last development and the Town Council needs to resist the increase in size as there are areas where developments like this have happened where the houses are built and then the developer leaves the area.

Diana: She said that there are two doctor's practices in Epping and one of them will be getting two new doctors in summer.

Cllr Nigel Avey said that just to recap that there would be no secondary school provision and there would need to be buses to other schools in Essex. He said that Essex County Council has a big problem to deal with.

David: He said that the infrastructure is very important, and we shouldn't sadly accept more houses when plans are submitted frequently. He said that St John's Secondary School was built before the houses. He said he was concerned about the developers building houses and walking away and then it goes down to for example 30 percent social housing to 10 percent social housing.

Chris B: The infrastructure on the High Street is rammed all day. She said that if there are problems on the M25, people use the High Street and there are always works going on with drainage and temporary works that it takes 10 minutes to get to St Margaret's Hospital from the High Street. She said that traffic from Thornwood and other places also come into Epping.

Jason: He said that he has friends who work in development and knows of another development in the area which is industrialised which is sold off for development the other side of the road. He said that there are not many parks on development sites with building materials left on ground with lots not happening.

Richard: He said he had lived in Epping for 15 years. He doesn't like the wording on the plan and it says a minimum of 450 homes but what questioned what the maximum number would be.

He said that he coaches with Epping Youth football group which are amazing for the Community. He said that there is a lack of pitch space. He said that there are 35 teams but the pitch is not sufficient for the teams for training. He said that Brook Road Playing Field won't be there as the 450 homes will have nowhere to play sport if get rid of it. He said that his child didn't get into Ivy Chimneys School and is in Theydon school which is difficult to drive to. He said that anyone driving to do a school pick has the teachers directing traffic. He said that he is concerned about the lack of markings at the junction of Bower Hill walkway and Fluxs Lane.

He also said that to drive from Stewards Green Road, it is blind to cars coming out of Fluxs Lane and turn left, there have been accidents on Brook Road.

Roger: I have a few more things. The affordable percentage of 40%. Will it happen like the Qualis developments that the developer will go back to Epping Forest District Council as they say that they can't afford to have the number of these types of homes available on their development. He questioned if this would happen with South Epping.

He said that the new homes on the South Epping development is supposed to be environmentally friendly with heat pumps, solar panels, etc but what will happen to the grey water from the development.

He said that the earth on the bank on the top of the fence or bund will have a height of 8 metres on the map.

A previous speaker said that the Ivy Chimneys development have caused water pipe issues with the work. He said that the person who owns the land said that the weight of the lorries keeps damaging the pipes and questioned if there is an increase in lorries, how will the roads cope.

Andrew: He said that he agrees with the points raised about the development. He said that the drainage on Ivy Chimneys Road and Stewards Green Road should have been unearthed over five or ten years ago. He said that among extra traffic, there would need to be a demand for drainage systems. He said that Stewards Green Road leading up to the motorway has more and more burst pipes as well as Brook Road and Ivy Chimneys Road. He said that developers want to make a profit and questioned if the 40 percent social housing gets diminished bit by bit. He said that things are not in writing and if not, the provision of the primary school won't happen.

Charlie G.: He showed on the map the bund to the motorway which they are putting in bare bones until the development and won't diminish the noise and pollution. He said that the bridge proposed is not a proper bridge but a secondary bridge and a car won't be able to use it. He said that it goes out onto Brook Road off-site. He suggests asking for a proper bridge for cars which would have lesser impact on the roads. He also said that the red link on the map needs to be challenged. He asked how long the site would be constructed, and it was confirmed seven years of a timescale. He said that we need to make allowances for Ivy Chimneys Road which is an old narrow country road.

A resident questioned would the damage to buildings be compensated and put right.

Cllr Nigel Avey said that we can ask about their liabilities.

Ron: He asked why the plan was not for the other side of Epping so the construction vehicles can leave to get to the motorway on them roads. He said that the development was not thought through and it would not be protecting people from the environment as putting a housing estate in the wrong place. He said that it could all come in the main road taking in the motorways.

Cllr Nigel Avey said that there is also an effect on Epping Forest to consider and the Town Council had received information about this from the Heritage Trust.

A resident asked if any councillor would like to comment.

Cllr Jon Whitehouse said that we have lived with this proposed housing on this site since 2015. He agreed with the vast majority of points made and it had been reduced from 2,000 homes in 2021 to this number and its suitability was looked at as it is the bottom of a hill. It was reduced down in the Local Plan and this is what it is in the MasterPlan at the moment. He said that the council needs to work with developers to not make the area worse. He said that there is no transport strategy and this would need to come forward in the planning. He said that in September there will be a detailed transport strategy on Brook Road which would need to be looked at. He said that there needs to be outline planning for schools and health. He said that the

formula with the primary and secondary school or find money to extend Epping St John's School. He said that the health side is so much more difficult as it is not clear what is expected. He said that there is a desperate need for more GPs staff to work there with so few community facilities. He said that there is only the Scout Hall, Ivy Chimneys School, Institute Hall (now closed) so there is a lack of facilities. He said that everyone should have a say and if they don't want to do the survey, please send an email on the website with your top 10 concerns.

Another resident asked if there would be enough parking on the South Epping site for the new residents and visitors which were sufficient for people's cars. She was concerned that if there was not enough resident and visitor parking, that they would be parking on the roads outside the development.

118 **NEXT STEPS**

Statutory basis: Town and Country Planning Act 1990, s1, para 8

Key Member: Cllr N Avey

Cllr Nigel Avey said that we would look at, discuss and collate the response from the Town Council before the deadline (25th July). He said that the Town Council would try to incorporate everyone's thoughts on the big topics and lock in with some detail. He said that we would see in September with the next stages. He said that there was a lot of work in one consultation. He said that would need to keep on meeting and doing what we can to ensure that this development as well as future challenges on other sites incorporating a Keep Epping Green approach.

Cllr Nigel Avey thanked everyone for attending and participating and asked if anything was missed to email Epping Town Council. He said that the Town Council would put in an official response to the development.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.31pm.

Signature of Chairman

Date