MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF AYLSHAM TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN AYLSHAM TOWN HALL,
ON WEDNESDAY 1ST FEBRUARY 2023 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT:

Trevor Bennett Chairman	Mr J Gibbons
Mr D Anderson	Mr B Lancaster
Mrs J Bennett	Mrs A Overton
Mr D Curtis	Mr P Prekopp
Mrs M Evans	Ms S Westwood

Sue Lake - Town Clerk
Approx 50 members of the public

1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES
Apologies were received from Lauren Canon and Lloyd Mills

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS
None made

3. MINUTES
Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 4th January 2023 had previously been circulated and were confirmed and signed by the chairman.

4. INFORMATION ON MATTERS ARISING NOT ON THE AGENDA
These will be covered at the meeting scheduled for February 9th

5. INTRODUCTION FROM CHAIRMAN
The chairman introduced the meeting advising that this meeting will run differently to a usual Town Council Meeting. The meeting will cover one topic, a planning application, and the various aspects of the application will be discussed in turn. Members of the public would be invited to speak after each section to make comments, ask questions or seek clarification.

6 INTRODUCTION TO PLANNING APPLICATION 20222089
The application is for:

Erection of 255 dwellings, 90-unit extra care/independent living scheme, land for community sustainable transport hub, vehicular accesses, landscaping, public open space and associated infrastructure.

The Town Clerk detailed the planning process for members and the public. The details of the plan and comments from public and stakeholders will be gathered checked and confirmed by the planning officer. She will then prepare her opinion

and the Planning Committee will determine the application. The date for the committee is unknown but unlikely to be before April.

7. BACKGROUND TO NEW DEVELOPMENT IN AYLSHAM

The Town Clerk detailed the timeline of the current Greater Norwich Local Plan stating from the call for sites in 2016. The draft plan was consulted on in the winter of 2019 as part of the Regulation 18 process in local plan legislation. At that time one development was identified for Aylsham with three possible sites. The preferred site from the district was the Burgh Road site and the Norwich Road site was considered a reasonable alternative.

In January 2021 the Regulation 19 consultation took place indicating two sites with no ability to challenge this other than through the process of how the plan was made. The additional site was added as a reaction to a government White Paper on housing need and changes to the method of creating local plans. The Town Council challenged the lawfulness of the plan process and presented their argument to the Planning Inspectorate in January 2022. The Planning Inspectorate has still to come to a conclusion on this matter.

The chairman then referred to a change of Government policy and the withdrawal of the White Paper which could strengthen our argument with the Planning Inspectorate.

8. TO CONSIDER DETAILED ASPECTS OF THE APPLICATION

Numbers of Properties

The GNLP states a requirement for 550 homes in Aylsham. 250 of these are proposed for Burgh Road leaving 300 for the Norwich Road site. The application is for 345. However, the 90 unit facility in this instance is only counting as 45 homes. It is thought this is a manipulation of figures.

Affordable Housing

Broadland Planning Policy states that 33% of new homes should be affordable. This development will have 24 houses and the 90 units at the care unit as affordable housing. The care units are for over 55's only. This does not appear to satisfy the need for affordable houses in the town. In this instance the care unit is counted as 90 whereas previously it counted as 45. This needs questioning.

The houses that are affordable are in two blocks which is against current thinking in that properties should be 'tenure blind'.

Extra Care Unit

This is a three-storey building at the front of the estate and would be a dominant feature at the entrance to the town.

Details of how the affordable element will be assessed are not available but the Older Peoples Option Scheme indicates that it would be for first time buyers or those

who used to own homes or are currently in shared ownership. The units will not be available for residents who wish to downsize.

Design
The planning documents include various plans of the anticipated designs. These were thought to be quite dull and not in-keeping with other buildings in the town.
The density seems greater than the surrounding areas.
The Extra Care Unit is particularly out of character.
Some of the requirements of the Aylsham Neighbourhood Plan do not appear to be incorporated such as garage blocks, bin provision and dementia friendly aspects.
Placement of houses alongside existing bungalows is poor planning.

Transport
The area set aside for the Transport Hub is far too small to be of effective use. The pedestrian exit onto Buxton Road is not suitable as the paths along Buxton Road are poor or non-existent.
The route to the High School was not considered safe.
The impact on Norwich Road was questioned as it is already considered too busy without the additional housing adding to it.
It was unclear from the maps provided what the plans are for the road opposite the site.

Open Spaces
The attenuation pond is at the rear of the site which is usually very wet anyway. This is next to the open space and across the road from the planned children's play area.
There is no indication of what fencing, if any, will be installed.
The open space is designated to have wildflowers which is very welcome but there is no where to kick a football or wield a cricket bat!
There is no green corridor through the site. There is a lack of small green spaces which are welcomed by residents of other estates in the town.
The degree of buffering from the noise of the A140 is unclear. The police are opposed to fencing to counteract this.
There was no reference to wildlife on the site yet a neighbour advised that they have newts in their garden.

Water and Waste Issues
There were many reports of issues with sewage and this needs to be investigated further before the development is occupied. The effect on existing properties should not be negative. The Aylsham Neighbourhood Plan states that a final permanent sewage solution should be in place before occupation.

Archaeological Assessment
The report was written on the basis that outline planning would be sought allowing further investigations to take place. This has not happened. The desktop survey indicates no evidence of archaeological finds but the area is surrounded by areas of interest. More investigation is thought desirable.

Climate Issues

There is no indication of what climate measures are likely to be introduced into the buildings. The proximity of the proposed site to Diggens Farm will cause environmental damage to a wildlife pond and the wildlife in that area, e.g. bats and newts

There will be severe damage to the environment through the cumulative impact of two developments in addition to the work Vattenfall etc will be undertaking. There will be a significant impact on air, noise and light pollution.

9. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

People were very concerned on the pressure on the water recycling centre and the possible impact on the Bure. This is a chalk stream and also part of the feed to the Broads.

Concern over fencing between the proposed Transport Hub and the neighbouring properties.

10. TO RECEIVE ADDITIONAL COMMENTS FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Sue Catchpole advised that the mitigation for the Nutrient Neutrality issue is possibly nearing competition but has not been accepted yet by Natural England.

Steve Riley, although not able to attend, had advised he intended to challenge Broadland planning , as he did not believe the planning application for the Norwich Rd site should go before a planning committee until after the GNLP inspectors' final report.

It is possible for the Broadland planning committee to agree windfall sites even if not in the site allocation plan! The planning officers could recommend this application to the planning committee who may then approve the application, only then to find out after the report is published that the inspector did not agree and therefore may be considered a windfall site and go ahead.

11. TO AGREE DRAFT RESPONSE FROM AYLSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

It was proposed and **AGREED** that the Town Council objects to this application using the points detailed previously.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

This was confirmed as **Thursday February 9th 2023** at 7.00pm

CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.35p.m.

Minutes Agreed…… 9th February 2023