

Response from Aylsham Town Council re Planning Application 2023/3003

Aylsham Town Council is of the opinion that the proposed plan for the development at Burgh Road should be rejected until the following matters are resolved:

Water and waste

- This is the most fundamental concern in regard to the Burgh Road Site for both surface water and flooding and also foul water. These issues reflect the problems that are there with open spaces, nature and climate change
- The flood assessment report from Rossi Long points out that the flood risk is at level 1. However, the assessment highlights a number of issues that need addressing. In regard to surface water that flows from the west and the south it is thought that changes are needed to the gardens and the properties that are near this movement of water. In respect of surface water other reports highlight this issue. The properties at Aegel Gardens have suffered from surface water issues with water running through their gardens. The Community and Environmental Services at County Hall highlight that the use of SUDS are well explained, but there is a lack of information to ensure that the system will work effectively. There is concern that the impermeable layers will create flooding issues unless more effective measures are taken. The report highlights 7 areas where more information is needed and until these questions are answered the plan cannot go ahead. There is concern throughout the community of Aylsham that the **surface water will not be contained within SuDS** and will drain into the waste water pipes.
- This Autumn has highlighted the problems of flooding in Norfolk following new developments. As yet the planning application does not meet the needs of the changing climate.
- The residents of Aylsham are very concerned that the Anglian Water Treatment works in Aylsham will not cope with the increase in waste water. At present there are numerous properties in Aylsham near to Burgh Road that suffer from sewage bubbling up through the toilets and at times coming up through the man hole covers in roads. Burgh and Tuttington Parish Council highlight the number of discharges into the River Bure and from this into the Broads National Park. **Aylsham Town Council consider that Anglian Water need to increase the capacity** before any building is started to ensure that it can cope with the existing homes in Aylsham. At present it fails to do this. Strong pressure should be placed on Anglian Water to fill their legal responsibilities before any houses are occupied.
- At present there is no effective measure to deal with nutrient neutrality and it is important that no planning permission can be given until this is resolved.

Affordable housing:

- There are a number of issues regarding affordable housing that have been raised by the housing enabling officer and the residents of the Town that mean that changes are needed to the Plan before it can go ahead.
- The Housing Enabling Officer points out that the number of affordable housing has to be 80 rather than 79. She also points out a number of changes to the different properties that are affordable. These changes will have to be made if the plan is to be passed. The issues that are raised also highlight that the 3 storey flats are not suitable for many of the

residents who will need affordable housing. The 3 storey buildings are not a feature of the housing landscape and it would certainly be advantageous for the plan to go through if the 3 storey flats were changed to 2 storey buildings.

Design:

- Residents of Aylsham have been concerned from the information provided regarding the design of the homes.
- 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.
- The information provided in regard to design is disappointing. The mix of homes has concerned many residents in that there are no private homes that are bungalows and there is a significant demand in the Town and its catchment area. The pictures provided for the different homes do not appear to match the quality of design in the Hopkings development at St Michaels. There is concern that the design does not reflect this area of Norfolk, there appears to be a lack of imagination and in the terms of the previous White Paper, '**beauty**'.
- The energy report highlights the different energy sources that were considered for the development. The decision to go forward with **air sourced heat pumps** does meet Government policy in regard to climate change. However, there is concern at the accumulative noise of 242 air sourced heat pumps. Will these be screened in anyway?
- The residents of Aylsham were also very concerned that **solar panels** were not planned as this appears to contradict the need for environmental forms of energy and the declaration of the Town Council of a climate emergency. Whilst acknowledging that not all homes will be the correct orientation for solar panels it is disappointing they are not even considered. The Aylsham Climate emergency group (ACE) is very concerned at this decision, when it appears it must have been taken on cost rather than consideration of the climate. There will be demand for homes in Aylsham and the increased cost of providing solar panels would not be a cause of a lack of demand.
- There should be triple glazing at the very least, but preferably acoustic glazing on all properties bordering the A140. The Environmental Quality Team at the district council emphasises the problem of the homes built near the A140 as does the acoustic report. There is a strong argument from the viewpoint of the climate emergency that all the properties have triple glazing.
- The design of the site does mean many properties and open spaces are near the A140 and Burgh Road. In addition to the levels of **noise pollution** there would be significant air pollution and it is vital that there is a significant increase in the planting of trees and bushes. This is proposed by many reports put forward including ecology, habitats and environment. Many residents of Aylsham are also concerned that the design of the site will have a detrimental impact on air, noise and habitat pollution. This is in conflict with the climate emergency passed by both Aylsham Town Council and Broadland District Council.
- There is significant concern that at present there is likely to be damage to the habitat of reptiles, birds, badgers and bats. At present the mitigation is not satisfactory. There has also not been any thought to providing swift boxes, or at least no evidence of this.

Open Spaces

- The very large attenuation ponds should not be considered as part of the open space as these do not appear to be useable by the public.
- The play area is very near the attenuation ponds, there was no indication what safety measures would be available.
- There should be more trees and bushes especially along the A140 boundary as trees are considered one of the best methods of reducing noise and brings benefits to the habitats.
- The CPRE is opposed to the development, partly due to the loss of a greenfield site and though there is in theory a reasonable amount of open space, much of it is taken up with attenuation ponds.

Transport including footpaths and roads

- The development would have to provide a 'safe' crossing of the A140. The current proposal is for this to be light controlled. **This should be provided at an early stage of development.**
- There is also a comment in the Transport report on the need for **improvements to the west end of Burgh Road**. This would fit in with the adopted Transport strategy of the Town Council. This should form part of the planning application and will have support of the highways department.
- It was also felt that 4.8m was too narrow for roads and these should be extended and it was also felt there should be a requirement for a fire truck assessment for the complete estate.
- There is limited visitor parking available throughout the site
- The gate to Rippingall Road is **not required** and could lead to issues with school traffic in the future and should therefore be removed.
- The footpath alongside Aegel Gardens leads to Burgh Road, but once there the footpath to walk into town is the other side of the road. The validity of this was questioned unless dropped kerbs to assist with road crossing are installed
- To assist with residents of the estate having more opportunities to use public transport consideration should be made of installing bus laybys on the A140 to allow additional services (that do not currently go through or stop near the town) to be accessed.

Historical Environment

- There has been a desk based assessment of the areas of potential archaeological interest, but as the Norfolk archaeological and environment team have highlighted that there should be further investigation. It is important that their concerns are not just noted, but acted upon before planning is passed.
- Given the fact that this site is near to the Aylsham Community Roman dig and Brampton site, as well as the importance of Aylsham's late medieval history, this site should be fully explored.

Other aspect of site investigation

- The geotechnical engineering report highlights issues that need exploring, as well as archaeology.
- There is the possibility that there was chalk extraction in the past and this needs fully exploring.
- There may be possible contamination from car boot sales
- There is a raised foul sewer running South

- They state that a number of investigations/actions are considered necessary and the Town Council fully supports their suggestions.

Infrastructure of the Town

- 242 new homes will cause a significant strain on the infrastructure of the Town. The provision of land for a new primary school is to be welcomed. However, the parking proposed would appear inadequate. If the school is not constructed during the development building phase it should be protected for future school use.
- The improvements in transport can also be welcomed, but only if the problem of the western end of Burgh Road is overcome by the introduction of the Traffic Management Group plans.
- The NHS Trust rejects the plan unless more finance is available to meet the needs of the expanding population. The Town Council does not regard money as the only answer, there needs to be pressure on the North Norfolk Primary Health Care to hand over the Aylsham Medical Centre to the Market Surgery in Aylsham, so that the Centre can be fully used to meet the expanding population. This development and the second development on Norwich Road will, undoubtedly, place strain on medical services.

In conclusion the main issue centres around the inability to process waste water from the new development. As there are significant drainage problems already it is essential that Anglian Water gives a firm commitment of their intention to deal with this matter and to increase the capacity to process the waste water from the site. This commitment should include timings. Local rivers and waterways have to be protected from further pollution.

Other issues are outlined in the document and these include the flooding risk from surface water and how the possible flooding of property can be avoided with certainty.

A date needs to be agreed for the construction of a safe crossing for the A140. It is necessary for Highways to provide some clarity and more information regarding this matter.

It has to be acknowledged that the growth in population will put an extra strain on the existing infrastructure of the town. There is growing concern regarding the provision of health care and the inability of local GP practices to expand their premises. Again, this need to be resolved before residents move into their new homes.

The issues outlined in this conclusion are urgent but there are many other concerns mentioned in the document that need to be taken into consideration.