

## MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE B** held at the Council Offices, Needham Market on Wednesday 25 January 2017 at 09:30 am

**PRESENT:** Councillor Kathie Guthrie – Chairman – Conservative and Independent Group  
Councillor Roy Barker – Vice-Chairman – Conservative and Independent Group

### **Conservative and Independent Group**

Councillor: Julie Flatman  
Jessica Fleming  
Barry Humphreys MBE  
John Levantis  
Dave Muller  
Jane Storey

### **Green Group**

Councillor: Keith Welham

### **Liberal Democrat Group**

Councillor:

### **Denotes substitute \***

**In attendance:** Senior Development Management Planning Officer (JPG)  
Senior Planning Officer (IW)  
Development Management Planning Officer (SB)  
Governance Support Officers (VL/HH)

### **SA127 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/SUBSTITUTIONS**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mike Norris.

### **SA128 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY/NON-PECUNIARY INTEREST**

Councillors Roy Barker, Julie Flatman, Kathie Guthrie, Barry Humphreys MBE and Dave Muller declared a non-pecuniary interest in application 2691/16 as visitors to the museum.

### **SA129 DECLARATIONS OF LOBBYING**

There were no declarations of lobbying.

### **SA130 DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL SITE VISITS**

There were no declarations of personal site visits.

## SA131 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 December 2016 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

## SA132 TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF PETITIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COUNCIL'S PETITION SCHEME

None received.

## SA133 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

## SA134 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

None received.

## SA126 SCHEDULE OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Application Number	Representations from
2691/16	Mrs Daley (Objector) Sarah Hucklesby (Agent)
3172/16	Phil Cobbold (Agent)

### Item 1

Application	2691/16
Proposal	Re-laying of existing standard gauge track on existing track bed and erection of new 'Wilby Halt'
Site Location	<b>WETHERINGSETT CUM BROCKFORD</b> – Mid Suffolk Light Railway, Hall Lane, IP14 5PW
Applicant	Mid Suffolk Light Railway

The Senior Planning Officer made Members aware that the application was based on a maximum of 30 event days a year and one locomotive and no more than three carriages. It was noted that an additional objection had been received but not logged on the website which meant the total number of objections was two, not one as stated in the report. The additional objection was included in the addendum.

Clarification was given regarding 'photography days', the pre-paid fee included membership and allowed members to attend and take photographs on days when the stock was moved. It was established that the photography members received a special invite, attending on days when the railway was not open to public.

Members raised questions regarding the acoustic fence and the Senior Development Planning Officer stated that the boarding was to be of acoustic material. .. It was also established that the colour of the proposed Halt was likely to be the same as Wilby Halt ie standard white. .

Mrs Daley, an Objector, pointed to the previous similar application in 1996/97 which had been refused due to smoke travelling 200m and the adverse impact this would have on her property. Mrs Daley's also drew Members' attention to the Noise Assessment Report by Sharps Redmore (SRAC), which concluded that the noise was above the accepted levels. She requested that if the application was approved conditions be put in place as suggested in the Noise Assessment Report and also that the materials for the acoustic boarding be detailed. She said the Museum was open every weekend throughout the summer which impacted on her family's enjoyment of their home and that there was a history of not complying with the existing conditions.

Sarah Hucklesby, the Agent, informed Members that the Mid Suffolk Light Railway was run by 80 volunteers, was self-funded, fully accredited and was the main tourist attraction in the area. Visitor numbers had remained static and return visitors were essential to help with funding. Research had shown that the extended running time of the train to 7 minutes each way, with a stopover at the new Halt would bring more visitors to the attraction and more return visits. The Railway had educational, historical and entertainment value and its decline or closure would mean the loss of an important part of local heritage and would adversely affect tourism and the local economy.

Councillor Glen Horn, Ward Member, said the value of museums throughout Suffolk should not be underestimated but it was important to balance the aims of achieving growth against the potential impact on the surrounding area. He said the application was the result of a collaborative approach between the Museum, Officers, Parish Council and residents and all had made compromises. He confirmed that the Parish Council had held three meetings to enable everyone to voice their opinions, but unfortunately it had not been possible to get everyone together at the same time. He confirmed that the final response was a recommendation for refusal but believed that the Parish Council had not had sight of the applicant's noise assessment at the time it submitted its final response.

During the ensuing debate Members considered the length of the new track and its value in increasing the customer experience, the reduced noise level that resulted by the push and pull action of the train and value of the Museum as a tourist attraction. Confirmation was given that the train whistle would not be used. It was considered that the proposed mitigation measures were satisfactory and that there would be little impact on neighbouring properties. The Museum was of historic value, a tourist attraction which boosted the local economy and engaged with the training of young engineers.

Councillor Barry Humphreys MBE proposed the recommendation and Councillor Dave Muller seconded the motion.

By 8 votes to 0 with 1 abstention

**Decision** – That Full Planning Permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

1. Standard time limit
2. List of approved documents

3. The additional section of track hereby approved only to be traversed by a locomotive on designated 'event' days and not at any other time
4. All event traffic using the hereby approved section of track in accordance with condition 3 (above) shall be hauled by a single locomotive and no more than two carriages only, attached to the western (Brockford end) of the rolling stock, and not in any other configuration
5. Prior to the extended section of track hereby approved being brought into use details of sound attenuation measures to be installed shall be agreed in writing with the local planning authority. The agreed details shall be fully installed prior to use and thereafter retained as approved
6. Biodiversity mitigation measures to be implemented as set out in submitted report

## Item 2

Application	3172/16
Proposal	Demolition of derelict buildings and erection of detached dwelling
Site Location	<b>STONHAM PARVA</b> – Barns at Four Elms Farm, Norwich Road
Applicant	Mr P Watson

The Planning Officer advised that on page 27, the planning history for application 3172/16 should not read refused as this was in fact the application for consideration today.

The Chairman, Councillor Kathie Guthrie advised Members that if the Committee was minded to approve the application against the Officer recommendation, she would refer it to the Planning Referrals Committee for decision in line with guidance.

Phill Cobbold, the Agent, explained that the site was adjacent and with easy access to the A140, and that it was derelict, vandalised and in poor repair. A previous application for conversion of the buildings to office use had been approved but never completed. The Council's lack of a five year land supply meant that if the development was sustainable it should be approved. He believed it to be sustainable both economically and socially and that the site should not be described as isolated as it sat within a group of dwellings. Although future occupants would be likely to use a car for work etc it would not generate any additional vehicular movements to the offices already approved. It would also visually improve an untidy site.

Councillor Suzie Morley, Ward Member, said that although she would not usually go against Officer recommendation she felt that small parishes could benefit from developments such as this application. The buildings to be demolished were originally used in connection with the farm house and no additional vehicle movements would arise than from that use. A neighbouring barn had already been converted to residential use. On balance she supported the application.

Members debated the proposal and representations made at length. Opinion was divided with some considering the site an eyesore and dangerous and that the proposed development would be an environmental improvement. It was considered sustainable as it was on a bus route, the A140 was an access route to major conurbations and there were other dwellings and a public house in the vicinity. A nearby barn had also been converted for residential use.

Others, while having sympathy with this opinion, felt that the proposal was against policy as it did not meet the criteria for a barn conversion and the NPPF precluded development on agricultural land, and it should therefore be refused.

A motion for approval was proposed by Councillor Jessica Fleming and seconded by Councillor Barry Humphreys MBE.

The Chairman advised the Committee that if the decision was against Officer recommendation and Council policy, she would have no option but to refer the application to the Planning Referrals Committee for decision.

By 6 votes to 3

The Chair, using the discretionary powers available, then resolved to refer the application to the Planning Referrals Committee for determination.

**Decision** – Refer to Planning Referrals Committee

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Chairman