

IWADE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Tuesday 26th July 2016

Present: Cllr. M. Gale – Chair
Cllr. S. Cheeseman
Cllr. P. Horner
Cllr. J. White
Lynda Fisher, Clerk
5 Members of the public

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting; apologies were received Cllrs. Plumb, Mitchell, Rook, Langham and Hyde.

2. Declarations of Interest and – None

3. Visitors/Public Time – No comments.

4. Swale Borough Council Local Plan

The Chair outlined what was discussed at the Working Party meeting, where both residents and Parish Councillors worked together to agree a response in respect of the Plan's impact on Iwade. The main crux of the response is around the Grovehurst Interchange and the impact that the proposed development will have on this highway, which cannot cope with the present levels of traffic. It looks as though improvements to the Interchange won't be until 2023 and that £37 million is the figure required to undertake this work; if this is not delivered then it cannot be expected to put forward more housing for Iwade. Key Street Roundabout only needs half a million for improvement and in light of this North West Sittingbourne and Newington will be easier to develop. There is a lot in the document around the provision of cycle ways and walk ways around the new Grovehurst Interchange which link in with employment but this has not helped Iwade as regards access to Ridham Dock where the only feasible way to reach this area from the village is by car. Of concern is that various developments have been included under the umbrella of SW123 (SW116, SW117 and SW183); this includes Pond Farm and land North of the Village. Pond Farm has been refused twice and developers do not want to build on land to the North of the village. In order to take these out of the picture we had to look at other areas of Swale, referencing in the Grovehurst Interchange and the Key Street Roundabout. With regards to SW123; there was not any other area in Swale that we could put forward as a decent argument against it being in Iwade.

There is provision in the new document for the Medical Centre to be expanded into the Persimmon development; this will be offset against land given under SW123. The new primary school in Grovehurst will take intake in 2023 and the new secondary school in 2027; so we cannot argue that there are not enough school places. Unfortunately, we are not allowed to comment that we have had enough development here and don't want any more; we have to give good reasons why not.

The Chair wanted to record a vote of thanks to the resident volunteers who assisted in the formulation of a response.

It was proposed by Cllr. Horner and seconded by Cllr. Cheeseman; all agreed, that the following response to the consultation be given:

Iwade Parish Council refers to the Bearing Fruits 2031 – The Swale Borough Local Plan – Proposed Main Modifications June 2016 and wishes to respond to the consultation as follows:

Modification 158

The parish council doesn't feel that enough consideration has been given to the allocations of sites in Iwade. The modification states that Iwade has been recognised for its location near to the strategic road

network but we feel that this hasn't been considered enough when looking at the timescales of deliverability and what impact additional housing in Iwade will have on the NW Sittingbourne development due to funding for the Grovehurst Interchange not yet having been sought. NW Sittingbourne is the major allocation for Sittingbourne and we don't feel enough has been done to show that development in Iwade won't impact that.

6.5.86

(1) We recognise that the site allocation to the East of Iwade brings benefits with the open space provision but the best way to maintain the separation is to not build in the first place. This view has been taken at Bobbing, to the South of Iwade, with land allocations not coming forward and that strategy should be the same for Iwade.

(3) This shows the difficulty as Iwade as an allocation and how important the area is. With a SSSI site and Ramsar site within the parish more needs to be done to protect these important areas, which don't exist at other allocations which haven't come forward. The presence of Great Crested Newts is mentioned but finite details isn't and should be included. GCNs are all over the village but it hasn't been possible to monitor them due to ponds being privately owned or under option to developers who haven't allowed surveys to take place. There is a metapopulation which if all ponds are surveyed together rather than isolation it may be possible to apply for SSSI status further in to the village from where the designation currently is.

Whilst GCNs are mentioned the modification fails to mention the many other species in Iwade including the highly endangered Noble Chafer Beetle which is present in the orchards. The Noble Chafer is not only highly protected but also at high risk of extinction in the UK. Iwade is the only orchard where they are to be found in the South East of England and they were previously thought to be extinct from the area. <https://ptes.org/noble-chafer-beetles/>

(4) When looking at other Rural Service Centres at Newington and Teynham the parish council argues whether Iwade should be included as an RSC. The employment allocation of Iwade is at Ridham Dock which is split by the A249. Because of this Iwade isn't a sustainable community as the other centres are. There are only 5 shops and further retail units haven't come forward even though the housing development to support them is near completion. Any employment at Ridham will need residents to drive. It is too dangerous to walk/cycle and as is noted public transport is not as well developed as other areas and certainly doesn't go to the employment areas. Whilst additional services can be brought in for a time the long term viability of these needs to be questioned as services are already being cut now. If they don't go to the right areas, there is no point having them.

(5) Some residents know all too well the risk of flooding in the village having had the centre of the village under water a number of times. Whilst improvements to the Iwade stream have been done in recent years further development needs serious consideration when looking at the flood risk in the village.

(6) We are pleased that the capacity of the Grovehurst Interchange has been recognised and this shows the problems that it brings. The concern for the parish council is the funding of the work. This part of the document refers to 'financial contributions' but it must be noted that when looking at the Implementation and Delivery Schedule £37m is needed to bring this forward. Funding has not yet been sought and the delivery of housing on Iwade is relying on this happening which it may not. The timing needs to be looked at here as the Grovehurst Interchange was already a concern for the NW allocation without adding Iwade to the mix. We feel not enough has been done to look at what impact any Iwade development will have on NW Sittingbourne with regards to the timescales. Could development in both areas have to be halted because funding hasn't come forward? This is a major consideration for no further development in the Village.

Work to the Key Street roundabout, which will cost £500,000 is looking to commence in 2018 and funding has already been sought for Junction 5 of the M2 with the consultation starting in September. Because of superior transport links development in South-West Sittingbourne/ Newington are logistically better places and links in more appropriately with delivery schedule and dates than the projects needed over Iwade which may not be possible due to costs.

6.5.87

We believe that Swale Council has taken the right approach by allocating to the East over other allocations and that this is a better option than SW216 which involves land less accessible to village facilities and the transport network and involves land with more significant to major adverse landscape and visual impacts and substantial adverse impact upon heritage assets.

6.5.88, 6.5.89, 6.5.90 6.5.91

Whilst the separate allocations are recognised here we feel that the wrong strategy has been used to allocate these sites. When making the decision to allocate these sites the basis was taken on all sites coming together as one as shown in the Sustainability Appraisal. In our view each site has its own complications and should have been appraised separately.

SW116 - The Parish Council objects to this site as it is on the edge of the SSSI; is of high landscape value and pushes outside of the village 'boundary'.

SW117 – This originally didn't even make step 1 of the SHLAA and the proper process to assess this land hasn't been done. Developers have already told the parish council personally that they no longer want to build there because of the quality of the land (bog like) and the work needed to make building possible would make the development unviable.

SW183 – The Parish Council objects to this site as it increases the village boundary and includes a historic orchard which hasn't been touched for years and supports a large range of wildlife, which includes protected/endangered species such as the Noble Chafer Beetles which is found in orchards elsewhere in the village.

If the housing proposed under SW116, SW117 and SW183 is not included in Iwade the Parish Council need to comment that the 42 houses at the Floplast site in Bobbing – 14/506167/OUT do not appear in the Local Plan although it was approved at a Swale Council planning committee and this would offset some of the numbers removed from Iwade. Furthermore, two planning applications for Newington (put forward for approval by the Officers but refused by the Planning Committee), 15/509664/OUT would give 26 dwellings and 15/510595/OUT would give 126 dwellings which would more than offset the numbers if the above sites are removed from Iwade. These would be logical sites to include housing proposed for Iwade because of the reasons given above and because Newington is a Rural Service Centre with less stress on infrastructure and any work needed to the Key Street junction is more deliverable than Grovehurst.

We recognise that SW123 is a more viable allocation because of all the benefits it brings to the village over SW126 which as stated above is outside the village boundary and does not bring the benefits. This is on the proviso that the Grovehurst Interchange improvement goes ahead.

6.5.98

Again whilst it is recognising that there are concerns with the Grovehurst Interchange the plan is relying on further consultation to see what the impact will be. This should have been done before allocating land at Iwade. The parish council welcomes the pedestrian crossing of the trunk road.

6.5.101

Whilst a new community space is mentioned as likely to be required this is a must and the village is in much need of a new village hall.

6.5.102

A masterplan is essential and if development comes forward the parish council are happy to work with landowners/developers to ensure any development work for the residents already living there. We do question whether this is possible though due to the number of landowners and with some having not already been involved with speaking to the parish council. Again are the developers even on-board or are landowners submitting land in hope that developers will come forward? The linking up to produce a master plan may not be possible and even if it is produced together it may not even be deliverable.

6.5.117

We are pleased to see that the orchard at Pond Farm has now been recognised as a UK BAP priority habitat and that whilst the plan says that this needs to be retained as far as possible it is important that the orchard is retained in its entirety. At the moment the map shows some development within the orchard. The parish council also believe that the orchard is under different ownership to Pond Farm and this hasn't been taken in to account.

Modification 159

For the reasons given above if it is found that Iwade allocations should be changed or not included this policy shouldn't be included in the plan.

If policy AX5 is implemented, then we would like it stated that any masterplan should be developed with the inclusion of input from the parish council.

Modification 106 - 5.2.10

The Parish Council is pleased with the cycle and walkway proposals over the Grovehurst Interchange; however, we wish to point out that there are no links to employment at Ridham Docks.

Modification 292 - 8.1.14

We are pleased that the issue with the impact on timing has been recognised here and it enforces the issues with the Grovehurst Interchange that the parish council has spoken about in modification 158. Whilst it has been recognised we feel not enough has been done to look at the detail of the impact.

Modification 46 - 4.3.4

We agree with the comments relating to Iwade; which reinforces our comments in Modification 158. As regards Newington, we do not agree that the only opportunities are limited to the brown field sites or the East of the village because of the sites we have already mentioned in modification 158.

Modification 56 - 4.3.15

The parish council feel it is wrong to include all of these sites (572 dwellings) together and they should be split into individual developments as is Iwade Fruit and Produce and Village Centre. The reasons given in our comments in modification 158.

Modification 65 - 4.3.27

We agree with the comments contained within; we do need the links for walking and cycling. It would be better if links to employment at Ridham Dock had been included to assist people going to this employment area. Further detail in our comments on modification 159.

Modification 106 - 5.2.10

Same comments as above.

Modification 295

This reinforces our comments regarding development in South-West Sittingbourne, in particular Newington over Iwade and the dates shown here against the delivery of the Grovehurst Interchange should be carefully considered.

Modification 296

Again this reinforces our past comments regarding the Grovehurst Interchange. Noted land reserved for Grovehurst development but is not being done quickly enough. Is just having land available in the next 5 years enough?

Modification 297 - 8.1.18

We can see that the Council are accepting that there are uncertainties with the delivery of the infrastructure at Grovehurst interchange but we don't think the strategy the council is using is right because it appears that they are just hoping that the funding comes forward for Grovehurst with no clear evidence it will. It seems that Iwade has been added on to the end of the wording that was already in the plan in the hope that that it is achievable.

Modification 301 - 8.1.37

(2) This reinforces our comments and the Parish Council agrees with this. As we have said elsewhere in our comments not enough has been done to look at the phasing of sites and the impact the Grovehurst Interchange will have on the deliverability of development in Iwade and NW Sittingbourne.

Modification 306

8.1.36

Whilst more detail has been added saying that there are risks the first part of this paragraph should be changed. By adding additional housing to Iwade there may need to be funding within the first 5 years – there has been no studies to find out. This first statement was fine before but not now.

8.1.37

We are now seeing the risks involved but these should have been looked at before allocating sites at Iwade. Again as mentioned elsewhere the parish council don't believe the right strategy has been used.

8.1.39

Looking at the evidence the parish council has given in comments to all other modifications we do not agree that enough has been done to ensure funding is possible to implement the works to the Grovehurst Interchange for development at Iwade to be delivered. As we have mentioned before there are other sites that could mitigate this risk.

5. SLCC Membership

Proposed by Cllr. Gale and seconded by Cllr. Cheeseman, agreed to pay one-third of the Membership fee for 2016/17 - £55.67p.

5. Any Other Matters Arising - None

6. Next Meeting(s)

The next monthly meeting will take place on Wednesday 14th September, 2016, commencing at 7.30 pm in Iwade Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.40 p.m.