

HOUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting
held on Tuesday 20th March 2023 at 19.00
at the Village Hall, Houghton

Present: Parish Councillors: A Young, (Chairman), L Adams (Vice Chairman), L Middleton, P Chant, A Dougall.
Planning Consultant - Steve Lees MRTPI

Members of the Public: 9
Minutes: Mrs C L Cotterell
The meeting started at 19.00

Item Minute

1. Chairman's Welcome

Chairman welcomed all to the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Battey and Coombes.

3. Declarations of Interest

To declare an interest in any items of business on this agenda – None.

4. Public Participation

(All requests to speak to be directed through the Chair. Each person is limited to 3 minutes, unless directed otherwise by the Chairman.)

None.

5. Planning

i) To propose a response to the following Planning Applications:

a) 23/00568/FULLS - Agricultural storage unit - North Houghton Manor, Houghton Road, North Houghton – **No Objection** – Proposed Cllr Dougall, seconded Cllr Adams, all agreed.

b) 23/00638/FULLS - Construction of detached three bay garage with roof space storage - Houghton Farm, Houghton – **No Objection** – Proposed Cllr Adams, seconded Cllr Dougall, all agreed.

ii) To agree the draft objection to 23/00557/OUTS (drafted by planning consultant) – Houghton House, Houghton.

Steve Lees introduced himself and went through the HPC draft submission in objection to application 23/00557/OUTS. Members of the public present were also invited to ask questions and clarify details about the application.

Amendments to the draft were discussed and Cllrs **resolved** to submit the draft with amendments (see Appendix for final submission document) – Proposed Cllr Dougall, seconded Cllr Middleton, all agreed.

Thanks were given to Steve for his expertise and for attending the meeting.

6. Finance

To approve payments – **Resolved** to pay £1,200.00 for planning consultation with Steve Lees – Proposed Cllr Adams, seconded Cllr Dougall.

7. Parish Assembly

To agree arrangements and approve expenditure for Parish Assembly on Tuesday 25th April 2023 – **Resolved** to continue with informal format as before and allow up to £60.00 for refreshments – Proposed Cllr Adams, seconded Cllr Young.

8. Next Meetings

Annual Council Meeting – Tuesday 16th May 2023 at 19.00 – Houghton Village Hall.

Meeting closed at 20.08

These Minutes were approved and signed at the meeting held on Tuesday 16th May 2023

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Appendix

Response of Houghton Parish Council to the, Proposed Development of Five dwellings ref 23/00557/OUTS, Houghton House, Houghton.

Steve Lees MRTPI - March 2023

Summary

The Parish Council objects to the proposed development at Houghton House ref 23/00557/OUTS, under Policy SD1, Policy COM2, Policy COM7, Policy E1, E5 and Policy E9 of the Borough Local Plan and Policy HTN1, HTN3, HTN4 and HTN5 of the Houghton Neighbourhood Plan

Introduction

- 1.This submission sets out the response of Houghton Parish Council to the proposed development of five dwellings at Houghton House.
2. The Parish Council may make additional representations in the response to the publication of additional material submitted by the applicant and responses of consultees.

Background

- 3.An application was submitted to TVBC and registered on the 1st March 2023 ref 23/00557/OUTS. It is an outline application for the demolition of an existing dwelling and erection of five dwellings with carports with all matters except access and layout to be determined at a later date. Access is via the existing track serving Houghton House which would be improved.
- 4.The starting point in the consideration of proposals for development is the Development Plan for the area. Applications should be determined in accordance with the it unless material considerations indicate otherwise ref section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 5.The Development Plan for the area is the Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan adopted in January 2016 and the Houghton Neighbourhood Plan made on the 19th May 2022. The Neighbourhood Plan is the most up to date part of the Development Plan and should be given significant weight in the decision-making process.
- 6.In terms of housing land supply, local planning authorities are required to have a five-year supply of housing land. As at the 1st April 2022 for the housing area within which the application site falls i.e.; Northern Test Valley it can demonstrate that it has 5.71 years supply.
- 7.The Parish Council's objections are presented with reference to the relevant Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan policy.

The Parish Council's Response

Sustainable Development

8.Policy SD1 of the Local Plan permits development that accords with policies in it and the Neighbourhood Plan. The key objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan relevant to the application are;

- **To protect, retain and improve community services and facilities** including open space and land and buildings used for sport and recreation and access to the countryside, to support health, social and cultural well-being.

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- **To help meet housing requirements** by encouraging a mix of type and size of properties in line with community needs.
- **To ensure that any future development takes account of the impact on the community** including infrastructure and amenities.
- **To conserve the rural character of the village and to preserve and enhance the things that are valued by the people of Houghton** such as its peace and tranquillity.
- **To ensure that any future development** is in keeping with the rural setting and meets the needs of the community.
- **To protect Houghton and Bossington Conservation Area, important buildings and open spaces.**

9.The policies of the Neighbourhood Plan are intended to deliver these objectives.

Policy HTN1 Sustainable development

Development proposals which contribute to the sustainable development of the Houghton Neighbourhood Area will be supported. In assessing the sustainability credentials of a development proposal, the achievement of the following objectives will be sought and balanced against each other, as relevant to the proposal:

- *meeting the needs of the community for housing, services and facilities;*

10.Policy HTN1 of the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to meet the needs of the community and Policy HTN3 seeks to achieve a more balanced stock of housing to meet the needs of the community. For the reasons set out below in regard to these two policies the Parish Council considers that the proposal for five large detached properties is not meeting the needs of the community.

The Parish Council objects under Policy SD1 of the Local Plan and Policy HTN1 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Principle of Development

11.The site is within the settlement policy boundary ref Policy COM2 of the Local plan, where the principle of development is accepted if appropriate to the other policies of the local plan. It should not be assumed that being located within the settlement boundary means that a permission would be granted as the other policies of the Development Plan which includes the Neighbourhood Plan need to be satisfied.

12.The Parish Council considers that the proposed development is in conflict with Policies COM7, E1, E5 E9 and T1 and therefore in conflict with Policy COM2.

The Parish Council objects under Policy COM2 of the Local Plan

Policy HTN3 Type of new housing

New housing development should provide dwellings of a type and size that meets the latest assessment of local needs. This includes providing dwellings with 2- and 3- bedrooms to meet the need for smaller properties. Larger dwellings will only be supported where there is up-to-date evidence of a local need for such homes. As part of providing a range of housing types, self and custom built dwellings will be supported subject to other Development Plan policies.

13.A summary of the supporting evidence for the policy is set out in paragraphs 5.6-5.15. The Test Valley Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2011-31 for the sub-area within which Houghton is located

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highlighted a requirement for smaller (1-3 bed homes) and the Village Housing Survey 2018 identified a need for smaller market housing. The response of the TVBC Housing officer of the 13th March 2023 identified a need for smaller dwellings.

14. The applicant makes several references to the adjoining development at Four Winds. Two of the four large houses have been built for some time but remain unsold which suggests that there is little demand for such properties in the village

15. Reviewing permissions for housing granted in the last 10 years shows that of the 23 permitted 17 were for 4/5 bed homes which is not supporting the re-balancing of the local stock of housing to meet the needs of the community. There is no justification within the current planning application for the proposed house types to support a departure from Policy HTN3.

16. The Parish Council in early 2023 carried out a survey of residents seeking views on village life. From the responses received many were concerned about the continuing pressure for new development. In particular there was opposition to any more large houses and if there was a need then they should be smaller and ones which would encourage people to stay in the village.

17. The proposed scheme is not considered to satisfy the type of housing identified to support the local community and is contrary to Policy HTN3.

The Parish Council objects under Policy HTN3 of the Neighbourhood Plan

Policy COM 7 Affordable Housing

18. The size of the application site justifies the provision of affordable housing when the policy and the guidance in TVBC's Affordable Housing supplementary planning document the application form states that the site is 0.49ha but in the Planning Statement ref paragraph 2.1 it is stated that the site is in fact figure 0.7ha. The applicant seeks to justify the lower figure for the purposes of Policy COM7 by excluding the access and vegetative margin. No evidence is submitted to justify the approach taken. The layout submitted show five very large houses in large plots.

19. The size of the site justifies the provision of affordable housing for which there is a need in the village. The Parish Council considers that the lack of any contribution to meeting the affordable housing needs should be addressed.

The Parish Council objects under Policy COM7 of the Local Plan.

Policy E1 High Quality Development

20. This Local Plan policy and the supporting text paras 7.7-7.16 provides a framework for considering the application in design terms. New development under Policy E1a) should complement the character of the area within which it is located and make efficient use of land whilst respecting the character of the area (ref Policy E1d). development will not be permitted if it is of poor design and fails to improve the character, function and quality of the area.

21. The Neighbourhood Plan includes a policy which seeks to protect and enhance the character of the village.

Policy E2 Protect Conserve and Enhance the landscape Character of the Borough

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22.The policy seeks to protect features such as trees and hedgerows. In respect of the trees on the site it was the Parish Council's understanding that they were protected by TPO TVBC.1213. A number of trees have recently been felled and the Parish Council would like the TVBC to clarify the position.

Policy HTN4 Village Design

Development proposals should protect and enhance the key characteristics of Houghton village as set out in Table 2 and have regard to the National Model Design Code and Guidance. In particular, proposals should:

- *maintain the overall dispersed and linear form of the village through the siting and orientation of development; and*
- *be in keeping with the character of properties in the locality, including as to scale, height, materials and detailing.*

23.The applicant's approach to the design of the scheme is a simplistic one. Their starting point is the development of four large dwellings on adjoining land, ref para 6.1 of the submitted planning statement. There is no reference to or analysis of the wider setting of the site and its character and its relationship with the conservation area.

24.The illustrative layout for the five dwellings is in effect copying the development on adjoining land formerly known as Four Winds. The scheme, if permitted, would result in-combination with the Four Winds development a cluster of nine large dwelling set back from the highway which would be contrary to the predominantly linear character of Houghton. That character has been seriously eroded as a result of a number of recent decisions by TVBC.

25. The Parish Council considers that the right approach is one which analyses the character of the village and the setting of the site in that context. The decision in respect of the Four Winds site was made a number of years ago and preceded the Neighbourhood Plan which provides the most up to date planning policies.

The Parish Council objects under Policy E1 of the Local Plan and Policy HTN4 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Biodiversity

26.Policy E5 of the Local Plan seeks to protect protected species and their habitats. The Parish Council notes the response of the Council's ecologist and supports their objection to the proposed development.

Heritage

27.Houghton has a conservation area and contains a number of listed buildings and buildings of local interest which have been identified in the neighbourhood Plan. Policy E9 of the Local Plan and HTN5 of the Neighbourhood Plan provide the framework for assessing the impact of development along with the NPPF.

Policy HTN5 Houghton and Bossington Conservation Area

28.Development proposals in or adjacent to the Houghton and Bossington Conservation Area should preserve or enhance its character or appearance, having regard to its significance and special interest as this is set out in the Conservation Area Policy document adopted by Test Valley Borough Council, including by:

- reflecting traditional building forms in terms of density, height, massing and scale; and
- using local or traditional materials, colours and detailing; and
- retaining and reinforcing local landscape features such as trees and hedgerows.

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29.The NPPF (2021) ref paragraphs 189-204 provide a framework for how the impact of development on historic environment should be assessed. Paragraph 194 advises local planning authorities to require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected and to the potential impact on them.

30.The submitted heritage statement makes no mention of the relevant local plan and neighbourhood plan policies or the advice in the NPPF and does no more than describe the proposals and the nearest listed building, Beam Cottage and makes reference to the use of the access drive.

31.There is no assessment of the impact of the proposed changes to the access to accommodate an increase in vehicle movements on the setting of the Beam Cottage. The submitted transport assessment refers two passing bays proposed along the section of the access from the highway to the entrance to the site. One of the bays is immediately adjacent to Beam Cottage which is a listed building.

32.The application site is located to the south of a group of three listed buildings on Church Lane, the Manor House, All Saints Church and the Old Rectory. The heritage statement does not assess the impact of the proposed development on their setting.

33.There is also no reference to the impact on the setting of the Houghton Conservation Area the boundary of which runs along the eastern and northern boundaries of the site. Indeed, the only mention of the Conservation area is the extracts from the pre-application advice provided by TVBC.

34.The NPPF ref paragraph 200 is quite clear in advising what the process should be when there is any harm to the significance or setting of designated assets i.e. that any harm should require clear and convincing justification.

35.The application site is located to the south of the property Church Stow which is identified in the Conservation Area as a building of local interest and in the Neighbourhood Plan as a non-designated heritage asset

36.The Parish Council considers that the heritage statement submitted has not been prepared in accordance with national guidance and no clear and convincing justification has been submitted by the applicant in support of their proposals.

The Parish Council objects under Policy E9 of the Local Plan and HTN5 of the Neighbourhood Plan

Access

37.The submitted transport assessment (TA) has assumed that the development would comprise five 2 and 3-bed detached dwellings ref para 4.1. The submitted planning statement however, clearly proposes five large detached dwellings of four plus bedrooms has assumed and lists the gross floor area of each ref paragraph.

38.The TA has estimated a net increase of 18 trips along the existing access serving Houghton House on which it has based the proposed improvements to the existing access. The Parish Council considers that the TA, in its current form, is not providing an accurate assessment of the likely increase in vehicle movements and the capacity of the access, as proposed to be improved, to serve the development.

39.The proposed improvements to the existing access between the entrance to Houghton House and the highway comprise two passing bays shown as accommodating two cars (Skoda Octavia). There is no drawing to show if a delivery vehicle larger than a Skoda Octavia and a car can pass safely using the two passing bays on the otherwise unimproved access. The Parish Council is concerned that a vehicle entering the site would have to reverse back onto the highway to allow a larger vehicle to exit the site.

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40.The TA makes no reference to the suitability of the existing access onto the highway in terms of forward visibility and whether it needs to be improved.

41.The TA refers to the provision of a bin collection point adjacent to the carriageway ref paragraph 4.7. The location of it is not shown on any drawings. The Parish Council is concerned that given the number of dwellings proposed and TVBC's proposed revised collection arrangements that there could be an issue of uncollected bins obstructing the footway. The residents of the proposed new properties would be expected to take their bins a significant distance to the roadside collection point which could be an issue for those who may have mobility issues.

42. The Parish Council considers that TA should be re-submitted based on the form of development for which permission is being sought to provide an accurate assessment of the transport implications

The Parish Council objects under Policy T1 of the Local Plan.