

APPENDIX 1
Dereham Town Council
Meeting for Plans at the Assembly Rooms on Tuesday 9th October 2018 at 7.00pm

Notes regarding planning application
October 2018

3PL/2015/1490/O

Residential development for a minimum of 291 dwellings, link roads, open space and recreational space. AMENDED PROPOSAL to include demolition of existing railway bridge at Westfield Lane and construction of a replacement two-way railway bridge (instead of traffic signalling works at the junction of South Green and Tavern Lane).
Land off Shipdham Road, Westfield Road and Westfield Lane

This application went to the Breckland Planning Committee on the 15th January 2018, where it was refused.

The approved minutes were:

DECISION: Members voted 7 x 4 not to accept the Officer's recommendation of approval.

REASONS:

- 1. The intrusion of built development into the open countryside and the creation of a hard edge to the Town of Dereham; and*
- 2. Significant visual impact and harm to the character and appearance of the site and surrounding landscape.*

DECISION:

- 1. Members voted 5 x 5 (plus one abstention) not to accept the Officer's recommendation of approval and refuse the application.*
- 2. The vote was tied 5 x 5. The Chairman was entitled to his casting vote and voted that the application be refused on the above stated two grounds together with a highway ground, including the impact of the junction on a 'C' Class road being used as an entrance/access point to the development.*
- 3. It was agreed that the final wording for the decision of refusal would be drafted by Officers in consultation with the Chairman.*

While the application was refused, this site is a proposed policy site in the emerging Breckland Local Plan, so will at some point come forward for development.

1. With regards to the visual intrusion into open countryside and the creation of a hard edge to the Town:

The revised application, although it is an outline application, the indicative layout will often be used as the basis for the detailed application.

The Town Council still objects to this application on the grounds that it would create a hard edge to the Town, impacting on the character and appearance of the site, it objects to the indicative layout on this basis. **if Breckland are minded to approve the application then, it should be done on the basis that the indicative layout is not acceptable and the detailed design should give considerable consideration to how the development would minimise the potential visual impact and harm to the character and appearance of the site and surrounding landscape.**

2. With regards highway's matters, including the impact the single track railway bridge.

In the applicants Addendum to the Planning Statement dated September 2018, the applicant places great emphasis on the fact that this site is allocated in the local plan and the Local Plan is at such an advanced stage that emerging policies should be considered. **In the applicant wishes for Local Plan policies to be used to judge this application than then all local the Local Plan policies should be applied, not just the policies that are favourable to the applicant.**

The Breckland Transport Study carried out by White Young Green (WYG) forms part of the evidence base for the Local Plan and is a material consideration for any application.

2.1 Westfield Road.

The WYG study stated at 8.6.5 that; “for developments in the south of Dereham no additional traffic should be placed on Westfield Road”. There are no measures in the indicative layout of the link road preventing additional traffic traveling along Westfield Road.

- **The indicative layout therefore is not compliant with the Local Plan evidence base, because there are no measures preventing vehicular access onto Westfield Road.**

2.2 Cycle Links.

The WYG Study at 12.4.2 also stated that for developments to the south of Dereham, there should be good cycle links. Good cycling links are also required as part of Local Plan Policies GEN 2 and TR01. The NPPF is very explicit on the need that sustainable transport is a real option, this is reflected in the Planning Practice Guidance's for Travel Plans and Transport Statements.

To meet the requirements of Breckland Policy GEN 02 and TRO1, the NPPF and PPGs, the developer should have:

1. identified desire lines for cyclists accessing specific destinations, from the development site, including the high schools and town centre
2. carried out a review using a standard methodology such as the Cycling level of Service tool kit
3. identified any factors which may make the routes unattractive to cyclists.
4. Proposed improvements to the network which would enable residents from the development site to safely and conveniently access services.

There is a particular issues in Dereham with traffic volumes and congestion (See LTN 2/08) many routes have critical factors that would make them unattractive to cyclists (see the Cycling Level of Service tool).

With regards to cyclists, highway safety is not simply a matter of reviewing the accident data and saying there have not been many accidents therefore the roads are safe for cyclists (as some applications have got away with). LTN 2/08 along with other guidance such as the Cycle Level of Service, are very clear that it is the perceptions of danger that deter people from cycling. This is especially true for female cyclists, a lot of research has identified perceptions of danger as the biggest single barrier to women cycling on a regular basis.

- **The application is not compliant with Breckland Policy GEN 02 and TRO1, the NPPF and PPGs with regard to sustainable transport. The Application should be refused until a clear review of cycling is carried out.**

It is well established that perceptions of danger is the biggest single barrier to women cycling on a regular basis. This is; therefore an equality issues for which Breckland Council have a duty to consider.

The application proposes a roundabout but does not include details of how the roundabout can be safely used by cyclists.

- **If a roundabout is to be included it must be designed to accommodate cyclists and follow Sustrans design guidance for roundabouts.**

2.3 Impact on the road network.

the Local Plan Policy 'Dereham Housing Allocation 2' stipulated that development on this site will be permitted 'subject to the development contributing towards required highways improvements in Dereham **having regard to the Dereham Transport Study**'. [emphasis added]

The Dereham Transport Study identified three road improvement schemes (listed below) that would be required to make the highway function effectively with the additional growth proposed in the Local Plan.

South Green / Tavern Lane Junction.

The Dereham Transport Study identified that this junction would soon be over capacity and a new signalised junction would be required. The Applicant recognised that a signalised junction would be required to mitigate the impact this development would have on the Highway. The applicant included such a scheme in its original application.

So a signalised junction at South Green was identified as being needed in the Dereham Transport Study and accepted as such by the applicant. The Planning Committee identified that the railway bridge at Westfield Lane also required improving, for the application to be acceptable.

The applicant is proposing construct the railway bridge on Westfield Lane rather than the signalised junction at South Green. Such a proposal is contrary to the Dereham Transport Study and the Local Plan.

- **Both a new railway bridge on Westfield Lane and a signalised junction at South Green are required to make the development acceptable.** Two schemes have been identified as being needed – two schemes should be delivered. **The application should be refused on the grounds that it will not mitigate its impact on the highway network.**

The proposed new railway bridge.

The proposed bridge is to be welcomed, given that we were previously told it was impossible.

- **To be acceptable the bridge needs to be wider to accommodate two footways and a cycle lane to link to potential cycle infrastructure on Yaxham Road. The bridge must also be able to accommodate bus services.**

Tavern Lane / Yaxham Road Junction.

The Dereham Transport Study (that forms the evidence for the Local Plan) identified that significant improvements would be required at this junction, to accommodate the projected traffic growth. These improvements were split into short term small scale improvements and improvements to take account of all the local plan growth.

The short term improvements were to change the timings of the lights and reconfigure the pedestrian crossing. These works have now been completed. The long term solution was a signalised roundabout at Tavern Lane, this will cost in excess of £3million, but Breckland Council have not secured any developer contribution towards this roundabout nor has Norfolk County Council allocated any funding towards it or even included it in any of its strategic road improvement plans. Both authorities endorsed the Dereham Transport Study, so its recommendations should not be ignored.

- **The signalised roundabout has been identified as being needed within the next 8 years – but neither authority have identified how it will be funded. No further development in Dereham should be approved until funding has been secured to deliver the road infrastructure identified by Breckland Council and Norfolk County Council as being needed.**

2.4 Link Road.

If the proposal is for a link road, then a link road should be constructed. The proposal in the outline application, is not configured as a link road, but as a residential estate road, designed to reduce vehicle speeds.

If a like road is needed then it should be designed as a link road, link roads only function as such if they are a quicker alternative route. If they are designed to be slow, as is the case here, then they do not function as a link road and little traffic is diverted.

- **If Breckland Council are minded to approve the application, then it must be subject to the indicative link road is unacceptable and the final link road being designed to maximise its effectiveness in moving traffic between Shipdham Road and Yaxham Road.**