

Melksham Town Council

Minutes of the Economic Development and Planning Committee meeting held on Thursday 9th January 2025

PRESENT: Councillor S Rabey (Chair)
Councillor A Griffin (Vice-Chair)
Councillor G Ellis
Councillor C Stokes
Councillor J Westbrook, (substituting for Councillor Oatley)

IN ATTENDANCE:

OFFICERS: Andrew Meacham Committee Clerk

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Two residents, three representatives of The Stantonbury Building and Development Company Ltd and two MWPC Councillors were present.

201/24 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Oatley, who was substituted by Councillor J Westbrook, and Councillor Alford.

Councillor Aves had sent apologies but this was not known during the meeting.

202/24 Declarations of Interest

The Deputy Town Mayor Councillor Rabey advised that in her day to day employment she supplied work vehicles to Stantonbury Building and Development Company Ltd.

203/24 Public Participation

Public Participant.

PL/2024/10345 Land North of the A3102.

While I am not fundamentally opposed to the development, I believe significant concerns must be addressed regarding access and infrastructure before approval is granted, and then enforceable assurances put in place to ensure compliance. Firstly, alignment of access routes is a critical issue. The current proposal relies on insufficiently designed routing via the emergency vehicle access to Redwing Road, and closed-off rights of way, such as the Melk103 footpath, which is overgrown and inaccessible. Integrating pedestrian access with this footpath without proper improvements creates confusion and safety risks for residents. Secondly, the vehicular access routes from the A3102 to the proposed estate present serious concerns. The junction near the Skylark Road entrance is already problematic,

with speeding vehicles and congestion issues. Without major improvements, including a well-designed access point, the safety of residents and road users will be at significant risk.

To ensure safe pedestrian access, crossings must be established on the A3102, particularly near the roundabout, to link the new development to schools and the Eastern Way pedestrian and cycle routes. These crossings are vital to provide children and families with safe, direct routes to Forest and Sandridge School and any future educational facilities.

Finally, the speed limits on the A3102 and Eastern Way must be reduced to 30mph to reflect the increased residential density and ensure safety for all road users. A consistent speed limit through the newly developed areas is essential to manage traffic flow and protect pedestrians.

In summary, without addressing these key issues—safe access routes, improved junction designs, pedestrian crossings, and reduced speed limits—the development risks creating significant safety and infrastructure challenges. I urge the committee to prioritise these concerns before granting approval.

204/24 Minutes

The minutes of 10th December 2024, having previously been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Deputy Town Mayor Councillor Rabey.

205/24 Land at Upside , Melksham

Presentation given on latest version of planning application PL/2022/06221, Land at Upside, Melksham.

Councillors asked questions and raised some concerns around EV Charging provision, pedestrian access to public transport, flooding, orientation of houses, commercial units and the possibility of allocating one of these to medical services. Members noted and concurred with the comments of Highways.

206/24 Planning Considerations

207/24 Planning Applications

208/24 PL/2022/06221

It was noted that this was a Brownfield site, there was a need for housing and the site had been unused for some years.

It was proposed by the Deputy Town Mayor Councillor Rabey, seconded by Councillor Stokes and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to support the application subject to the concerns raised by members during the presentation.

209/24 PL/2024/10702

This application had been considered at the previous meeting and did not need to be on the agenda.

210/24 PL/2024/11022

It was proposed by Councillor J Westbrook, seconded by Councillor Griffin and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to support the application.

211/24 PL/2024/10674

It was proposed by the Deputy Town Mayor Councillor Rabey, seconded by Councillor Ellis and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to suspend Standing Orders.

Councillor David Pafford of Melksham Without Parish Council confirmed that MWPC were considering the application next week. Introduction states JMNP and the WC Local Plan have no weight because they were at the pre-submission stage. Both those documents have now been submitted and we are in the consultation period, run by WC. They will then go to examination and referendum. Contrary to developers claims, both plans are well advanced. December changes to NPPF indicated the validity of the process. NHP Group would submit that there is great weight behind the plan. Comment on housing numbers is, in his view, an attempt to take advantage of WC difficulty in building land supply. Applications is opportunistic and speculative. Not plan led. Site does not appear in either JMNP 1 or 2, the core strategy or the WC Local Plan. Housing numbers proposed under JMNP and Local Plan exceed the number of houses required to be built in Melksham by 2038. Unsustainable development. A Green Field development remote from employment opportunities and amenities. Traffic on Woodrow Road, Forest Road and north to Lacock already dire. Lacock Council very concerned about the number of vehicles from Melksham going through the village. Route goes via a bridge that frequently floods, making the route impassable. Traffic going south would have to come down Forest Road which is already a nightmare, and ends up in the Town Centre via Lowbourne where there will be construction traffic once the development of the old library starts. Proposal is to develop about a third to a quarter of the site. This would be an example of "Trojan Horse" development. Permission is to build 70 houses in one corner and then developers come back with further proposals. Melksham needs plan led development. Both Councils and NHP Steering Group, with the support of WC, are very firm on this. Would ask MTC to oppose.

It was proposed by the Deputy Town Mayor Councillor Rabey, seconded by Councillor Westbrook and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to reinstate Standing Orders.

Members agreed with the comments of Councillor Pafford. Concerns were raised about increased traffic, lack of public transport and safe pedestrian routes to town and services. Members felt that the infrastructure was not in place to cope with this development and particularly noted comments from RUH Bath. Members noted and agreed with the comments of Highways.

It was proposed by Councillor Stokes, seconded by Councillor Griffin and **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to oppose the application.

212/24 PL/2024/10345

As with the other development concerns were raised about increased traffic, lack of public transport, safe pedestrian routes to town and services and inadequate infrastructure. Again members noted and agreed with the comments of Highways.

Standing Orders were suspended to allow Councillor Pafford to speak. He confirmed that this is a Strategic Site identified in the Local Plan and it was therefore likely that Wiltshire Council would be in favour, although not necessarily in favour of all the proposals. MTC & MWPC should be looking to agree the conditions, improvements and facilities they would like imposed on permission. MWPC have had pre-app meetings with developers. Have been understanding and prepared to listen and change plans.

Standing Orders were reinstated

Members felt that the application could be supported at the right time and with suitable conditions imposed.

Standing Orders were suspended to allow a member of the public to speak.

Public Participant

Accepts and supports the need for housing. Agrees with comments on infrastructure. Lived in area for 20 years and seen increase in flooding and traffic. Wanted clarification on the site and areas marked as not suitable for development. Councillor Ellis and Councillor Pafford offered to speak to the resident after the meeting.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

There was discussion on the way forward.

It was noted that MWPC would be considering the application on 13th January. It was agreed that the committee clerk would send a summary of the discussion to the MWOC clerk. Councillor Ellis would attend the meeting and report back. The chair Councillor Rabey and the committee clerk were delegated to meet after MWPC had considered the application and formulate a MTC response.

213/24 PL/2024/11449

It was proposed by Councillor J Westbrook, seconded by Councillor Elis and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to support the application.

214/24 PL/2024/11295

It was proposed by Councillor J Westbrook, seconded by the Deputy Town Mayor Councillor Rabey and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to support the application.

215/24 PL/2024/11435

It was proposed by Councillor Griffin, seconded by Councillor Stokes and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to support the application.

216/24 Planning Decisions

217/24 PL/2024/09935

The decision was noted.

218/24 PL/2024/09965

The decision was noted.

219/24 PL/2024/08989

The decision was noted.

220/24 PL/2024/06981

The decision was noted.

221/24 PL/2024/09775

The decision was noted.

222/24 PL/2024/09642

The decision was noted.

223/24 Church Street Car Park

Councillor J Westbrook spoke to the item.

It was agreed to put a request to LHFIG to re-instate no less than 4 parent and child spaces. Councillor J Westbrook agreed to complete an LHFIG request form.

224/24 Local Highways and Footpath Improvement Group (LHFIG) Issues

225/24 Roundpond Speed Limit Assessment

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

226/24 Melksham Oak Community School

It was noted that this was in the boundaries of Melksham Without Parish Council.

It was suggested that this matter be deferred until the Gompels planning application had been considered.

It was proposed by the Deputy Town Mayor Councillor Rabey, seconded by Councillor J Westbrook and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to suspend Standing Orders to allow Councillor Pafford to speak.

He noted that MWPC had recommended a roundabout when the school was being considered. Wiltshire Council had a Strategic Site allocated to the east of the school which would require an entrance point which could be a roundabout with an entrance to the school.

It was proposed by the Deputy Town Mayor Councillor Rabey, seconded by Councillor Stokes and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to reinstate Standing Orders.

Members felt they were unable to take this matter forward at this time for the reasons discussed.

227/24 Neighbourhood Plan

Councillor Ellis advised that an examiner was being chosen and a meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was being arranged.

The item was noted.

228/24 East Melksham Community Centre

The committee clerk advised that efforts had been made to find out what was happening with the gifting of the land and solicitors had been notified of the location. A chase up has been sent to the developers.

It was proposed by the Deputy Town Mayor Councillor Rabey, seconded by Councillor J Westbrook and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to suspend Standing Orders to allow Councillor Pafford to speak.

The Clerk of MWPC was trying to confirm a definite date when the three year period for construction commences or commenced. It had previously been indicated by Melksham Town Council that there should be two centres, one in the town and one in the parish. Current available sites were considered to be too small. It may be the way forward would be to find a new site to build one big centre jointly.

It was proposed by the Deputy Town Mayor Councillor Rabey, seconded by Councillor Griffin and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to reinstate Standing Orders.

229/24 Parish Steward

There were no specific requests other than the usual clearance of leaves and general tidying.

Meeting Closed at: 8.35 pm

Signed:

Dated: