

Report on the Council's Development Management Committee meeting on 29 October re: 195 homes at Sinah Lane

This meeting was called to discuss the Barratt Sinah Lane application, which has already gone for Government appeal. You can view the meeting video on www.saveourisland.org.uk

The meeting commenced with a detailed presentation from Planning Officers. Many questions were raised, and answers provided. This presentation was structured to give the DMC confidence to give an 'indicative' approval to the application prior to the Appeal, and to assure them that all outstanding issues would be resolved.

On the major issue of the A3023 capacity, DMC members were advised that the Transport Assessment had "certainly a more unusual route to its approval ... but it does represent an approved assessment by the Council." This view was not challenged by the Highways Authority and "on the basis that the Borough Council is satisfied with the findings ... that it considered the mitigation suitable."

We continue to fight for a flow/capacity analysis of the A3023/bridge as the only way to understand the impact of the housing programme on the key infrastructure.

The site itself has major unresolved issues. It is subject to tide-locking, and with rising tide levels, a real risk of uncontrolled surfacewater flooding exists.

Because of the site's low-lying position, wastewater (sewage) and surfacewater (rain) require separate pumping systems running 24/7. Heavy rainfall and failures/breakages may cause cross-pollution, affecting the site, the Sustainable Drainage System and Langstone Harbour. A scientific hydrogeology study is required before the risks are known.

It remains to be seen if a high-density development of 480 souls with cats and dogs sits comfortably with the quiet isolation of the mandated bird reserve adjoining the site.

The sole deputation in favour was, unusually, given by the HBC Planning Lead, seemingly indicating that inaccuracies were noted in the Transport Assessment, and "it was only an assessment anyway."

This was followed by traffic advice, including unattributed anecdotes and personal experience during the Pandemic. This was strange when all of the

factual data for the past 10 years is available from the permanent counter at the Bridge.

The DMC was then provided with a selection of “facts”. Key issues not mentioned include:

- Major pollution events are caused through network failures and when the wastewater network is overloaded due to heavy rain. The excess wastewater (screened but untreated) is discharged directly into the sea all over the Solent. Please note: On 14 November, there was another major pollution event at Budds Farm lasting 3 days.
- The development of an online application has become an urgent necessity to warn people when the sea waters are unsafe.
- Pollution across the Solent is the responsibility of Water Companies and Councils.

At the end of the meeting, the DMC was treated to a strident lecture by a DMC member, stating it was their duty to approve the application, and that they only need to listen to their own experts (HBC Officers), rendering the deputations irrelevant. A ‘no’ vote would mean that essential developer Contributions for Infrastructure would not be forthcoming, and ending with the threat that if the site wasn’t approved, the 5-year housing stock would not be achieved, risking a Government Planning takeover.

This advice is contrary to the statutory obligations placed on DMC and constitutes undue pressure – and should invalidate the 5/2 FOR decision made. The meeting should be reconvened with some sort of management oversight, which is clearly needed.