

NORTH FERRIBY PARISH COUNCIL

ST MODWEN DEVELOPMENTS – APPEAL STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

- My name is John Halmshaw
- I am the Vice Chairman of North Ferriby Parish Council and the Chairman of its Planning Committee. I have been a Parish Councillor for 7 years and have acted as Chairman of the Parish Council for four of those years and have served as the Chairman of the Planning Committee for 7 years.
- I have a postgraduate Diploma in Town Planning and a Diploma in Public Administration, both with Distinction. I am a retired member of the Royal Town Planning Institute, having retired in 2001.
- I am here in my role as a representative of North Ferriby Parish Council to represent its understanding of the views of the local community on this application.

PARISH COUNCIL CONSIDERATIONS

- Parish Plan consultations 2008 – 2010. Overall 40% response rate. Plan published in 2011.
- Extraordinary Meeting on 14th January 2013 considered the planning application for 510 dwellings. Over 100 people attended. Many points raised – no support for the application indicated.
- Letter dated 17th January 2013 to ERYC gave the Parish Council views as the outcome of this meeting.
- Annual Parish Meeting took place 2nd April 2013. Open meeting for the whole community. Only one topic of discussion - Melton Park issues.
- Extraordinary Meeting held on 18th July 2013 discussed the appeal notification and grounds and led to a letter of 20th August 2013 to the Planning Inspectorate giving a further explanation of the Parish Council's position.
- Following the second application for 390 dwellings the Parish Council reaffirmed its views and wrote a further letter on 16th October 2013 in response.
- On 20th January 2014 the Parish Council wrote two further letters to East Riding of Yorkshire Council and the Planning Inspectorate regarding the removal of reasons 4 and 5 in the ERYC's reasons for refusal of the application and to the East Riding of Yorkshire Council regarding the proposed section 106 obligations.
- These letters and correspondence set out the Parish Council's views on the proposals which are the subject of this Inquiry. Copies are appended to this statement.
- The Parish Council is also aware of the extensive interest expressed through Save Our Ferriby Action Group and it is evident that local views have, if anything hardened against the development. We are not aware of any support yet to have come forward. We are confident that the Parish Council's views are an accurate representation of the village's views as a whole concerning this development proposal.
- The Parish Council is also involved in discussions on the ERYC Draft Local Plan and we are concerned that our local views may not be fully carried forward in the Plan. But, we need to progress with these discussions which will be rendered redundant if the present plans are approved. Again, copies of relevant correspondence
- I would like to comment on major matters for the Inquiry set out in the Inspector's guidance notes of 14th April 2014.

- The applications are not, contrary to the appellant's opening statement, for the redevelopment of the site. It has never been developed. A small point, but misrepresentation. These applications are to develop open land in agricultural use.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND EMERGING POLICIES

- The Parish Council is clear that the application does not comply with any of the relevant Joint Structure Plan or Draft Local Plan policies in respect of the development of this site.
- The Joint Structure Plan for Hull and the East Riding has as its main objectives for housing development a change in emphasis to avoid the previous spread of development over many rural villages and instead concentrate development in Hull and the other main towns of the area. This is part of a strategy to support urban regeneration. Paragraphs 5.5 to 5.8 set out this approach and treat our village as a location where only minor development is needed. In objecting to this application we are not just concerned with our village but with the desperate need to lift our main city, Hull, out of its cycle of deprivation and vastly improve the quality of its services, to the benefit of the whole sub-region.
- The emerging economic policies and housing policies in the ERYC Draft Local Plan are based on calculations of need and of land supply which the Parish Council has no basis to challenge. However, they are clearly not supportive of this development.
- We are convinced that the implications of the proposals for our settlement character and function and that of Melton also constitute a major change which is not justified by any of these policies.
- A previous draft of the Local Plan defined our village as a 'Hinterland Village', which we supported as it reflected our relationship with Hull. The submitted Plan calls us a 'Primary Village'. In both versions the overall housing policies have changed so far as they concern our village, and requirements have increased. We have asked for more clarity about the basis for the allocations in the village.
- The appellants have, however, suggested that our village be redesignated a 'Town', with concomitant major increases in development land. The Parish Council is strongly opposed to this proposal, which we believe will constitute a change in the size, function and character of our village. But if such a change were to be accepted, other landowners' aspirations would need to be considered, east as well as, or perhaps instead of, west of the village. The Parish Council would expect a response to the needs identified in our Parish Plan. The adequacy of our community facilities would need to be reviewed. All this would need a Plan – an integrated set of proposals not for the whole of the East Riding but for our 'Town'. A masterplan approach would be something the Parish Council would want to promote in these circumstances – perhaps through a new Neighbourhood Plan.
- These applications do not allow for such an approach. The proposals would undermine and pre-empt even the 'Town' proposals the appellants purport to support. The implications of the proposed development for adjacent sites are instead for a progressive suburbanisation of the area between Brough and North Ferriby.
- The Parish Council feels the applications undermine the purpose of the Local Planning Framework by denying local communities the opportunity to be involved positively and on an equal basis. Local

Plans are expected to balance competing interests, but in this process we are being told we have no choice, no influence or involvement other than to respond to planning applications.

- This area is being expected to take a major share of growth in the East Riding, without a recent Local Plan and without a detailed action plan or masterplan in which we could all be involved at a local level. The expectation of local involvement is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Paragraphs 1, 17 and 196. The current ineffectiveness of the Local Plan system in our area to manage this process does not justify the overturning of the strategic and local objectives. The answer is to strengthen the Local Plan system, not to abandon it.

ECONOMY & INDUSTRY

- The previous Local Plan (BBLP) sought to promote development for business purposes in the Melton/Welton area, whilst maintaining the separation of Melton and North Ferriby by protecting the agricultural function of this site and the site to the south.
- East Riding of Yorkshire Council agreed to permit the development of this site for industry to respond to the special circumstances regarding the funding needed for the new access to the A63. The developer contributions required could not be secured fully without committing further business development on this site, but we are disappointed at the failure to protect a significant belt of open land alongside the village and consider that the proposed *buffer strip* in the permitted plan is inadequate and will perform no useful function.
- Nevertheless, we support the wider economic objectives and the need to grasp the opportunity provided by the Siemens decision to establish a centre for renewable energy in this area. We do consider that the employment needs of the Hull Travel to Work Area, in particular should be given a heavy preference over a strategically and locally damaging housing development.

HOUSING SUPPLY

- The Parish Council cannot add anything to the East Riding Council's or the objector's analysis of the overall position regarding housing needs and supply in the wider area.
- Our parish has accommodated substantial housing growth in the context of previous planning policies, which no longer apply. This has often been controversial in its impact on the conservation of the village fabric. We recognise there is little further capacity in our now substantially built up area.
- We consider a priority for our village should be to seek to provide a small amount of housing for the elderly and affordable housing to meet village needs within the village, with good access to local facilities on foot, and to minimise the need for motor transport for local journeys. This is consistent with the Joint Structure Plan Policy H7 and the emerging East Riding Draft Local Plan, and is reflected in our Parish Plan key priorities.
- We see no special circumstances here that would justify the loss of a valued open agricultural area for housing development. The arguments used for justifying the industrial site as a special case outside Local Plan provisions do not apply to this housing case, so the comparison should be with its existing use.
- NPPF Paragraph 112 requires that the best and most versatile agricultural land is protected, and that poorer quality land is used first. The north bank of the Humber has been regarded as a

valuable agricultural zone for food production, notably including early vegetables, because of its good soils, dry climate and southerly aspect. The site has long been used for agriculture and its loss for housing development is not supported by the local communities. We do not believe that the intentions of the NPPF Paragraph 112 have been followed in this case.

CHARACTER AND IDENTITY OF MELTON & NORTH FERRIBY

- The location and setting of the village is where the Wolds come down to the Humber. It is surrounded on three sides by active farmland, which provides a separation between the villages of North Ferriby, Welton and Melton and the town of Hessle.
- Our Parish Plan Household Questionnaire surveys indicated that the rural setting of the village is greatly valued. The village character is most important to residents and 81% of respondents felt it was vital to protect this. 59% felt the village is not too big at present and this is one of the best things about living here.
- There was no support for extending the village by new developments, and a large measure of opinion was against any new housing.
- We are concerned that our village is destined to become part of a suburbanised sprawl of development from North Ferriby to Brough. Development of this site will not just connect our villages here, but will inevitably lead to the development of the site to the south, right down to the Humber, as the appellant openly intends. The severance of the agriculture unit will render the southern site unviable.
- The Parish Council's view is that the right place to discuss the wider land use aspects is in the Local Plan context. Giving consent to this proposal now will change local character forever and will ignore local opinion and values.

RECREATION & OPEN SPACE

- The ERYC's surveys of Open Space & Playing Fields have recognised shortages of playing fields in our local villages. We also acknowledge that local teams in North Ferriby find it difficult to access pitches and travel throughout the county to do so. North Ferriby United runs more than 20 teams for young people of all ages and both sexes and provides a unique and much valued community resource. There is an urgent need to respond to this situation. It is the role of the Local Plan to address community needs, not just developer's commercial aspirations.
- Our view is that if the permitted development for businesses goes ahead there is ample room on the site to the south, if not also in an improved *buffer strip* for a mix of formal and informal open space and recreational uses.
- If the development of this site is inevitable, North Ferriby Parish Council would like to be involved in joint projects to create valuable public open space areas alongside Long Plantation, the Wolds Way and the Pennine Way and is prepared to work with landowners, Melton & Welton Parish Council, and the ERYC, as well as with our own village community to develop suitable projects. We do not consider that in principle there is any significant difference between the loss of this site to either business or housing so far as the opportunity to provide improved open space and playing field facilities is concerned. What is needed is a joint willingness to address the shortfall and to discuss the practical and management issues with the local community.

- The proposals of the appellant do provide for improved new playing field facilities, but for a much larger population. We repeat our concern that all these needs should be addressed as part of the Local Plan exercise so that local communities can be involved meaningfully in assessing needs and options for appropriate provision. That this is not happening is regrettable.

IMPACT ON NORTH FERRIBY VILLAGE & LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Traffic and Access to Facilities

- It is clear that the development will rely substantially on North Ferriby's facilities for primary school, religious worship and community activities as well as for occasional shopping trips. It will effectively be a 33% increase in village population for these activities but all or most of the movements involved are likely to be by car. Even with the lower figure of 23% attributable to 390 dwellings it will be a substantial increase in local traffic in the village. We have particular problems already with random and illegal parking, especially at school times and this will be exacerbated.
- Much of the increased traffic impact, however, will be on the A63 trunk road. It is unlikely that there will be a substantial use of North Ferriby's Station for rail journeys. Residents of the new estates travelling to Hull or Beverley for journeys to work will not leave their cars here, although they will come into North Ferriby to drop children off at school, and anyway there is no suitable railway station parking, other than on-street. Travellers to Leeds, York, London or Manchester are also likely to use private cars, which they will need to use the rail services from Brough Station. Access through Brough is increasingly congested because of new developments.
- So the likelihood is that use of the rail system by the residents of the proposed housing will be minimal, and the main impact will have to be taken by the existing road system. The Parish Council has found it difficult to persuade existing residents to increase their use of current and/or new bus services and there is little evidence that residents of the proposed development would do so in great numbers either.
- So we would conclude that the distance from facilities and reliance on the private car will mean that the development is not 'sustainable' in transport terms and will have negative effects on our village.

School Facilities

- North Ferriby residents are concerned about two aspects of the impact of this development on school facilities: the growth of the village school and potential loss of existing open space and playing field; and the implications of the development for secondary provision and the ability of village residents to continue to be served by South Hunsley School.
- For 390 or 510 new households relying on the village primary school it is likely that new classrooms will be needed. The village is fortunate that the school has substantial open space around it but the development of additional classrooms could mean the loss of playing fields, which are also used by the local community. This will accentuate the shortfall in provision of open space and playing fields already noted. That is why our Parish Plan identified the need to protect these rare open spaces within the village from development.
- The impact of indiscriminate and illegal parking around the school, including on pavements, verges and double yellow lines is likely to be greatly increased and is already often out of control.

- North Ferriby was part of a consortium of local villages in the Hunsley area for which the development of South Hunsley School was provided. The school is accessible by footpath and cycleway from the village. The rapid growth of development in Brough and Elloughton, as well as the continuing development of the surrounding villages, has led to massive growth of the school and to suggestions that our village may in future not be able to use South Hunsley School for secondary education. This possibility would be exacerbated by the proposed development. It would mean our children having to travel to Hessle or other schools further away to complete their education. Accessibility on foot or bicycle to Hessle along main roads and across busy junctions and a trunk road slip road is not as safe and there is a strong probability that a large proportion of these journeys would be by car. This would have a greater impact on the environment than exists now and does not therefore promote sustainability.
- There is a great need for further investment in schools in Hull. It is obvious where the priority should lie.

OTHER MATTERS

Affordable/Older People's Housing

- The proposed development is expected to deliver a substantial proportion of affordable housing. Our Parish Plan has suggested that affordable housing, and housing for the elderly, are the main elements of housing that our village needs. However, we have two concerns about these proposals; that the numbers involved are out of all proportion to local needs and are excessive; and that they are in the wrong place. The Parish Council believes that such provision should be part of our local village, with pedestrian access to village amenities and services. In particular, the provision of an isolated old people's unit would be dependent on motor transport and is clearly unsustainable. The impact of this dislocation is not, we believe, capable of resolution through conditions on a planning consent that address management issues.
- The Parish Council is to carry out a survey of local and affordable housing needs in the village, working with the Rural Housing Enabler Service and the East Riding of Yorkshire Council. We believe that this will identify the need for possibly two small developments, and that these could be accommodated within or immediately adjacent to the village. We hope to discuss this further in a Local Plan context. Approval of the current applications may render this local initiative superfluous. So much for localism then!

Impacts on the Humber Estuary Nature Conservation Sites

- The Parish Council raised the question of the need for an Environmental Impact Statement to assess these impacts. It has been indicated that in the case of these applications, such a statement is not required.
- We are concerned that environmental impacts may be cumulative. The progressive suburbanisation of the Ferriby to Brough area has not been co-ordinated through a Local Action Plan or Masterplan but delivered piecemeal through the development control process. We remain to be convinced that the full impacts of all the developments in this area are being assessed.
- It appears perverse that it can be declared that this extensive development, one of the most significant in the County, can be declared to have no impact on the estuary's nature conservation sites, without a full assessment being carried out. A full assessment would help to persuade local people that environmental protection is not just being paid 'lip service' but is being actively pursued.

- Once again it is the absence of an adequate action plan involving local communities which leaves us feeling ignored.

SUMMARY

- The Parish Council is against the proposed development for the reasons stated. We believe they undermine the Local Plan process; run counter to some of the key intentions of the NPPF; do not reflect local need and render localism and neighbourhood planning impossible and frustrating.
- Sir Terry Farrell said recently that *“The British don’t do proactive planning, they do development control”*. He also said *“We need to look holistically and say where a settlement should expand, rather than where the developers have bought the land”*. Yet our Local Planning Authority is having to divert more and more resources to fighting appeals, affecting directly its ability to staff adequately its Local Plan work.
- North Ferriby Parish Council hopes that the Inspector and the Secretary of State will reject these proposals and strengthen the Local Plan process and the resources devoted to it.

APPENDICES

Planning Applications Letters

17 th January 2013	Parish Council observations on application 12/04849/STOUT
20 th August 2013	Parish Council further observations to the Planning Inspectorate
16 th October 2013	Parish Council observations on application 13/02860/STOUT
20 th January 2014	Parish Council further observations on changes to reasons for refusal 4 & 5 and proposed S106 obligations
20 th January 2014	Parish Council letter to the Planning Inspectorate regarding the removal of reasons 4 & 5

Local Plan Letters

11 th May 2012	Parish Council letter to East Riding of Yorkshire Council regarding the revised Core Strategy
03 rd April 2013	Parish Council response to East Riding of Yorkshire Council Draft Local Plan consultation
10 th March 2014	Parish Council response to East Riding of Yorkshire Council proposed Local Plan Submission Documents

John Halmshaw

Vice Chairman

North Ferriby Parish Council

7 May 2014