

**APPLICATIONS SW/04/1453 – CONSTRUCTION OF A SINGLE CARRIAGEWAY ROAD AT LAND BETWEEN RIDHAM AVENUE, KEMSLEY AND CASTLE ROAD, SITTINGBOURNE.**

NOTES of a site visit held at Sittingbourne on Thursday 27 January 2005.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr J F London (Chairman), Mr F Wood-Brignall (Vice-Chairman), Mrs V J Dagger, Mr J B O Fullarton Mr A R Poole and Mr J H Tolputt. Mrs P M Stevens was present as the Local Member.

OFFICERS: Mrs L Owen and Mr J Crossley (Planning) and Mr J Walker (Legal and Secretariat).

THE APPLICANT: Mr Farmer

OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES: Swale Borough Council – Councillors Barnicott, Clarke, Gent, Stokes, Truelove and Whelan. Mr P Taylor (Development Control Manager)

ALSO PRESENT: There were nine residents present from the nearby housing development and two representatives from Jacobs Babbie

- (1) The Chairman opened the visit by explaining that its purpose was to enable Members to familiarise themselves with the application site and to gather the views of the Technical Officers present. He then invited Mrs Owen to outline the application.
- (2) Mrs Owen briefly described the planning issues involved. She stated that Members would be able to inspect three sites along the proposed route of the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Roads (SNRR) and reminded them that they were only considering the section from Ridham Avenue to Castle Road.
- (3) Mrs Owen explained that the road would be located within the Milton Creek Site of Nature Conservation Interest and two Local Landscape Areas. It would be adjacent to a Special Landscape Area and approximately 400 metres from the Swale Special Protection Area, Swale Site of Scientific Interest and Swale Ramsar Site. Public rights of way ZU1 and ZU2 ran alongside the Milton Creek.
- (4) Mrs Owen stated that the road would cross the Church Marshes Country Park, which was currently under construction, and would also cross Milton Creek, Sittingbourne and Kemsley Light Railway, Kemsley Drain and the Church Marshes closed Landfill site. The road would be 7.3 metres wide with one metre edge strips and would be kerbed. It would have a footway on the north side and a combined footway and cycleway on the south side. A 40mph speed limit would operate on the road and directional cut-off street lighting was proposed along the route. At the closest point the road would be sited approximately 34 metres from residential properties.

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## Appendix 1

- (5) Mrs Owen explained that the history of the SNRR could be considered as two elements; the Milton and Kemsley Distributor Road (MKDR) and a connection across Milton Creek to serve East Sittingbourne. Kent County Council first approved MKDR proposals in 1975 and a revised proposal was approved in 1995. Housing at Church Milton was constructed after the MKDR was first proposed and the extent of the development had been largely dictated by the alignment of this proposed route.
- (6) Mrs Stevens stated that whilst most residents were in support of the SNRR they were concerned with the impact its current alignment would have on local housing and wildlife, in particular the Church Marshes Country Park.
- (7) Mr Fullarton asked at what height the road would cross the Light Railway and what noise mitigation methods would be put into place? In response to this Mr Farmer explained that the road would cross the Light Railway at a height of four metres and that noise mitigation would be provided with a one and a half metres high bank and a one meter high noise reduction fence alongside the road.
- (8) Mr Whelan asked how high up the current flood bund the road level would be? In response to this a representative from Jacobs Babbie explained that at the lowest point it would be approximately one third of the way up the height of the bund.
- (9) Mr Stokes asked why the road could not be realigned further away from residential properties? In reply Mr Farmer stated that this route had been agreed as it impacted least upon the nearby nature reserve and other sensitive areas.
- (10) Local residents raised many points including; the route should be moved approximately 800 metres northwards, the Church Marshes Country Park should not be intruded upon and the road would require enforcement measures to ensure that speed restrictions were adhered to. Concerns were also raised in regard to traffic pollution and vehicle lights being intrusive on property windows. Residents also expressed their unhappiness that the proposed roads has allegedly not appeared on land searched carried out when their properties were purchased.
- (11) Mr Fullarton asked if there were any technical reasons why the road could not be realigned further from residential properties. In response to this a representative from Jacobs Babbie stated that there were no major technical difficulties that would preclude a possible realignment of the road but that additional costs and intrusions into sensitive land areas would need to be assessed.
- (12) In reply to a question Mr Farmer outlined the process that still needed to be progressed before construction began. He explained that if no objections were received, construction could commence as early as Spring or Summer 2006.
- (13) The Chairman thanked everyone for attending. The notes of this visit would be appended to the Committee report when the application came to be determined.