

## Transcript of Planning Committee South Meeting 16<sup>th</sup> July 2020 – WD/2016/2796/MAO Hesmonds Stud

Attending:

Chair	Councillor Susan Stedman
Deputy Chair	Councillor Angela Snell
Committee Clerk	Katie Maxwell
	Councillor Gavin Blake Coggins
	Councillor Geoffrey Draper
	Councillor Richard Grocock
	Councillor Johanna Howell
	Councillor Stephen Shing
	Councillor David Watts
	Councillor Phillip Lunn
	Councillor Redman
	Councillor Peter Roundell
	Councillor Neil Cleaver
Planning Officer	Mr Stacey Robins

Cllr Stedman	We have to sort this out before we proceed ... Councillor Howell.
Cllr Howell	Thank you. Sorry Madam Chairman. Yes, we had a similar issue at PCN last week and er... with the Councillor Waller and um ... he joined the meeting on the phone and I believe Councillor Shing you were offered that opportunity were you?
Cllr Stedman	We're actually just talking about the minutes Councillor Howell....
Cllr Howell	I just am talking about clarity Madam Chairman
Cllr Stedman	Okay thank you but this is something...now where was I... these are the minutes...this was the amendment that we have put forward and I have approved as Chair and I think if we want to discuss how they are written up that will have to be at the next meeting. Mrs Maxwell, before I proceed any further, could you confirm that you did email, or Mrs Newton May did email Councillor Shing with those alterations? It was my understanding that this was going to happen.
Katie Maxwell	So yes Chair...
Cllr Stedman	... you are live ..
Katie Maxwell	Sorry Chair I keep forgetting to put myself live. Yes so those amendments are in the minutes, you have agreed them. Of course they're not confirmed until the future meeting and as I said Councillor Shing can suggest an amendment at that time should he wish to do so, and.. um.. he has been advised of the changes. The minutes are now available on the website for the 9th of July so he can view them...under the 9th July meeting and as I say should he wish to put forward an amendment he can do so at the meeting on the 13th of August.
Cllr Stedman	Okay but my question was, did you email those alterations to myself and Councillor Shing?
Katie Maxwell	Yes Chair.
Cllr Stedman	Thank you. Um..Councillor Shing, can you confirm that you received that email please? Hold on, hold on... you'll be live in a moment. It seems seems to me the broadband is working very slow today. You are now live..
Cllr Shing	Ok yeah I haven't checked it. I don't know... I haven't checked and I haven't..... so far didn't see it so it doesn't mean it didn't happen... not been sent ... however I take your word for it. I will.. I still have opportunity to talk..to discuss next time, so I'm happy. Back to you Chair.
Cllr Stedman	Okay thank you. If you like to turn your microphone and camera off now thank you. Right well before we proceed Katie do we have an update on Councillor Redman, whether or not he's likely to be able to join the meeting either through teams or on his telephone in the way that Councillor Waller was able to join PCM as referenced just now by Councillor Howell?
Katie Maxwell	So yes Chair.. without returning my camera on Councillor Redman is having Internet connection issues and he is being shown how to dial into the meeting as soon as he's dialled in will of course permit into the meeting.
Cllr Stedman	He's not going to join by telephone then so we can see...
Katie Maxwell	.. as soon as he's dialled in we will permit him into the meeting but at this point in time I don't have any notification.

Cllr Stedman  
Katie Maxwell Okay right well...  
Sorry I've just had an update.. we think IT have just advised that we think it's working, so give me one more chance to give him a call in and we'll go from there... it may well just be that he has audio connection rather than video.

Cllr Stedman That has happened to him previously. Mr Robins do you want to speak while we wait for Councillor Redman. We're we're starting with a very important application and I don't think you will need any interruptions, so over to you while we wait for Councillor Redman.

Mr Robins Well I..I was just going to say Chairman, Members, if I'm live, my...my PowerPoint is frozen so I wonder if there are gremlins in the system overall, so I've got to restart my my PowerPoint in order to display the slides and share the screen through Teams, so that's going to take me, I don't know 30-40 seconds or so...

Cllr Stedman I was gonna say should we should we call our comfort break now before we start and um....  
Mr Robins ...just I just need a minute Chairman to restart PowerPoint.

Cllr Stedman Okay we will wait because obviously we can't go anywhere without you. My apologies to people watching. Um Katie ..I wonder if you could put up one of those BBC type intermissions..... maybe not... we are paused now for a couple of minutes while Mr Robins unfreezes his computer so that he can give us the presentation on Hesmonds Stud. We will be starting shortly on agenda item seven – WD/2016/2796/MAO which is on page nine of our agendas. This is at Hesmonds Stud, Waldron Road, East Hoathly.

Katie Maxwell So Chair, if you don't mind I'll leave the camera on you. We don't have anything to say, and, short of blanking the screen for those observing that's the alternative so..

Cllr Stedman There we are. I'll pretend I'm sitting for a portrait. So I do apologise for this but I understand that those using this particular platform, I believe is the word, do experience difficulties all over the place so it's not just us here in Wealden.  
(A short break with Cllr Stedman on screen)  
Mr Robins has re-appeared on our smaller screens so hopefully in a few moments he will um..appear live. When you're ready Mr Robins and you are now live... If you now could begin the presentation I have introduced the item but I will say it again.. agenda item seven, Hesmonds Stud, Waldron Road, East Hoathly. We will now have a relatively brief but informative presentation from Mr Robins.

Mr Robins Thank you and apologies for the er...PowerPoint issue I've got um.. small people competing with bandwidth in my house but I'm just going to um ..share the screen so that we can.....I beg your pardon, that's the wrong one...So Chairman and Members I hope you can see that now as you've introduced this is an outline major planning application for re-development of the Hesmonds Stud site in East Hoathly, which is on the north side of the London Road. Er the scheme is an up to outline scheme for up to 205 houses including 35% affordable housing, er.. access on the site and then landscaping and associated infrastructure. Of those matters the...it is the principle of development that is on the table together with access to the site and what you can see on the screen Chairman and Members is the red line of the application site and there it sits as a sort of technical drawing, the red line application drawing. The next slide chairman shows the.. well.. the lion's share of the site. Of course it goes off the screen on that map. And that map, as members will no doubt recognise comes from the 1998 local plan and the dark green line was the then development boundary for East hoathly and of course the site is outside the development boundary.... touches it in parts but nonetheless is wholly outside that development boundary in the 1998 plan but as the report explains chairman that development boundary was removed via policy WC S6 in the adopted core strategy. The committee will be familiar with that. That the core strategy retains some development boundaries and removed them from certain settlements and East Hoathly was a settlement that had its development boundary removed. As a result Chairman and Members, this site is outside the development boundary and it is contrary to the policies in regards to residential development outside of development and that is a major factor at the starting point in regard to the conflict with the saved local plan policies. Inside Chairman, does show the extent of the site in regard to the expanding East Hoathly area as explained in the report, it was it expanded in 2017, which does postdate the submission of the application but nonetheless the development bound er .. the site does now abut the conservation area and that is a further factor. And then in regard to other Heritage assets this slide shows the position of listed buildings in and around East Hoathly. Er..the red

squares that you can see here show the grade two listed buildings. Er.. purple is two star... there are no grade one listed buildings in and around the area, but nonetheless there are a number of listed buildings around the site and that is a further factor that needs to be taken into account as set out in the report and the update. This shows East Hoathly, having regard to the landscape constraints. It comes from the Wealden Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment which underpinned the submission local plan from last year but nonetheless this evidence held good, having regard to the character and qualities of the landscape. The key point there, Chairman is that the application site which I'm indicating generally here on the slide er.. although sensitive and abutting a sensitive urban edge and with rights of way crossing it and abutting ancient woodland is nonetheless outside of the protected landscape, and by that I mean the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The next few slides, chairman I will rattle through relatively quickly because I'm sure you will have seen them all. This shows the indicative site layout of the er...application site so up to 205 houses. Er..this is illustrative it merely shows how that number might be accommodated on the site. There are access points which are nonetheless as part of this outline application and these Chairman and Members, are the technical drawings of those access points really showing the proposed junction radii access and egress and how vehicles would turn into and out of the site. These are extracts Chairman and Members from the illustrative layout and how the subsequent configuration of housing might be accommodated on the site having regard to natural features, in particular er..pockets of woodland, woodland strips and boundaries through the site and also other landscape features... and the point here chairman is that the up to number is shown to be able to be accommodated on the site but with retention of those natural features. That's a wash out of the er... indicative layout but overlaid on the aerial photograph. Whilst that slide is on the screen, chairman there is a point made in objections and I'll come to objections in a second, but it's to do with the scale of the growth within this particular application. Objectors and commentators of the view that it is excessive having regard to the extent of existing built form and dwellings within the village. The last few slides, Chairman are shots from the landscape visual assessment which accompanies the planning application. Members will have seen these and will have seen them as part of the site inspection. I think the key pointer.. to really draw out here is, although this is an attractive landscape there's no doubt in that at all, it is quite visually well contained although extensive in..in area. Views... distant views that is into the wider landscape out of the village are foreshortened and by the extent of ancient woodland which sits and wraps across the northern boundaries of the site. The lower photograph there, Chairman is the extent of site visibility to the road. I'm looking the other way, back in towards the village so members will have an appreciation of the appearance of the site. I'd just like to go back to, well this side really chairman and members because the specific factor which is borne out in the report and also the update report er ..as members will have read yesterday, er.. we received additional representations but also legal representations having regard to the advice in the report and how members should consider the effect of the development on heritage assets which are in play in this particular er...planning application, not least members because of the proximity of the conservation area also to the listed buildings which principally abut the site on the opposite side of Waldron Rd them indicating here but then further up to the North West of the site. The allegation which has been raised and members will have read is that the report mis-directs the community on the legal and legislative tests. I'm not going to go on about that unless I need to as part of the debate but would draw members attention to the update report which really does um set out the tests and sets out the expert advice which the committee have in regard to heritage assets, that is both from historic England and the council zone Conservation Officer Mrs Tucker. Um.. so if members need more advice on that we can turn to that as part of the debate. The finer points Chairman are that we have had additional objections now totals, I think 931. That is a high number but I would remind the committee that the application has been lodged since er.. 2016..um... since 2016... I think I'm still there can you still hear me chairman?.. So 2016 so there have been long periods where this application has been under consideration um.. and revisions to the application and also other milestones, not least consultation on what was the issues and options plan then the submission of the plan and then the events around the examination in public and at various

instances people have submitted representations. Nonetheless there are 931 odd comments which members will have seen and is précised within the report at just sort of summarise chairman and members in terms of the issues that you've got to wrestle with as part of this application. It is outside the development boundary and it is contrary to the countryside policies and so as a starting point there is a conflict and a breach with the local plan. That's not a new issue for the committee or other members on at the northern area committee we've dealt with that on a number of occasions. Because we don't have an adopted plan that is up to date...I mean an up to date local plan and we don't have a five year supply of housing er...then that is a significant material consideration that needs to be taken into account. Er...also though Chairman, are the heritage assets and I hope the update reports when read as a whole, with the main agenda sets out the test that members must take into account. There is, the experts say, less than substantial harm to those heritage assets being the setting to the conservation area and the settings had listed buildings, but that having been said there is a special duty to consider and safeguard the setting to those heritage assets which must be pre-weighed as part of any planning balance but having done that and clear that great weight must be given to safeguarding those er...heritage assets, there are then other factors to be taken into account. And finally Chairman and Members in terms of any update from me those other factors which are set out in the report are of course a substantial contribution to housing land supply up to 205 units which could be delivered relatively quickly er....in a location which the highway authorities say can be accessed safely er and without causing a severe impact on the highway network there are other issues in terms of er....open market housing affordable housing custom and self build housing of which there is unmet need across the district and that is, I believe Chairman and Members a significant factor which must be taken into account. I hope that helps chairman, coming back to you.

Katie Maxwell  
Cllr Stedman

Chair.. your microphone is switched off.

Sorry um thank you very much Mr Robins and thank you for explaining what we must consider today in in such easy terms although it's... it's .. not going to be so easy. I will now turn to the local member who is Councillor Draper and he will have 5 minutes to make his statement. And I won't start timing obviously until you're live. You are now live Councillor Draper thank you.

Cllr Draper

Thank you Chair – where to start.... let's start with the title. It includes Ailies Lane and gives the post code etc Allies Lane which was withdrawn from this application over two years ago, yet the title remains the same and the planning application remained the same. I think that should be changed to avoid any doubt especially in the fact that I'm a resident of East...of Ailies Lane and therefore could have a personal issue here. I don't I live a mile away from where it was going to be in Ailies Lane but still, I think that sums up the confusion over the whole of this four year planning application. The proposal to build 205 homes within this historic village of 381 homes existing ..a 54% increase is a huge problem for this village the proposal is outside yes, of the development area it is within the conservation area and right outside of the development proposal there are not one, not two, not three but four listed buildings. Historic England and our own conservation officer in Wealden agree that significant harm will be caused by the development. Uum... the planning speak is well, in actual fact it is less than significant harm ... a less than substantial harm but if I told you that substantial means demolition of listed buildings, less than substantial and our own officer says we are at the upper end of less than substantial, believe me the harm to those four listed buildings will be huge and significant. We as officers of this planning committee south we have a duty, nay a statutory duty to preserve listed building heritage assets and we have a duty to prevent any application development which will do otherwise. This will do otherwise. But maybe we should time that otherwise by four because it isn't just one - there's four listed buildings going to be directly affected. The planning officer report says that this damage/harm can be mitigated by the benefits. Well social, economic, public benefits - what are they? I have said to this committee and to anyone that would like to listen and the officers themselves have said, when dealing with planning applications and appeals on other sites in East Hoathly that it is an unsustainable location with very poor and limited infrastructure. It is car dependant totally. Over 75% of the residents of East Hoathly at present, 75% plus travel to work by car because there are no local jobs. There are no

substantial shops – there's a village shop, there's a tea shop... that's it basically. There are no shops, employment, local employment, there's no leisure centre, no schools, further education, library, poor... there's a poor medical centre there's no cinema, no theatre.... the list goes on. Yes, you might say there is a school, there's a small primary school that's been full up for 10 years and there's a waiting list. It is not for anyone else coming into the village - they will not get a space. So you know, there's no bio.. biodiversity report on this application and that worries me. This is a local business... the stud is a local business it was of some national renown it is now come down to 8 employees there were many many many more. I've heard yesterday two cottages and residents of those cottages have been given notice that was the intention is to sell those cottages. Is this bill... is this stud going to be closed and put aside as soon as this development starts? A local business demise. My conclusion.. we're not in East Hoathly.....

Cllr Stedman Your 5 minutes are up Councillor Draper, your 5 minutes are up so it must be a short conclusion please.

Cllr Draper Let me finish.... we're not against development in this area. We've had 85 in the last 10 years. What we are against is anything that is not sustainable or sensible proportions. *[can't hear this part as interrupted by Cllr Stedman]*

Cllr Stedman Thank you, thank you again. Alright, thank you very much Councillor Draper well timed, but slightly over. *[laughs]* Thank you. I don't see that anybody has put in the chat yet so I will actually turn to Councillor.. to Mr Robins. Councillor Draper made quite a few statements. He did correct the one about the school, because obviously we've all facing that situation with small primary schools in our wards that are already full, so that's not exactly something new, but something obviously that we will have to take into consideration today. Um.. I think he said that the site was within the conservation area. I think that might have been a slip of the tongue. Could you confirm that it abuts it and.. um...think of anything, any other comments you wish to make and I will open this up and if nobody else will, I'll start after you finished. I'll type my name in the box but I am expecting people to comment on this please.

Mr Robins You're absolutely right that the umm... think there was a comment that the site was within and that isn't the case as members saw on the slides and have seen within the pack, it abuts in part on its eastern extremity as it abuts Waldron Rd so not within. And so I hope that point is cleared up. The matter of the description of the development, it is what it is, terrible phrase but that is as set out and as was lodged. But just to be clear, the Ailies Lane aspect of the proposal is withdrawn. The scheme is amended and the Ailies Lane component of the application when first lodged in 2016 is off the table. The point about confusion, well you know that's.. that's a point that's made. For me it is clear, the reports and I hope members are clear that aspect of the proposal is not before you and is no longer part of the application. Councillor Draper said that that the less than substantial could include demolition of a listed building.... there is no demolition of any listed buildings, just to be clear and for the avoidance of any doubt that the less than substantial harm is explained in full within Mrs Tucker's report, which was available on the website and a copy was appended to the update report. It's about loss of openness and greenfield incursion and the effect of that on the appreciation of the edge of the conservation area and then the setting of the listed buildings. I don't think I need to say any more than that at this stage. The final point that I'd like to just comment on was the matter of the appeal, the reference to the appeal and this is this came out in recent letters as set out in the update. There is a criticism that officers are being disingenuous and picking and choosing when we rely on policies and their case that's advanced in regards to those policies and it's the South Street based chairman and members that I refer to in the update report. So that site, the appeal with the decision that was late last year was very much of its time, in the leading to the examination in public where at that time as part of that strategy there was no growth envisaged in East Hoathly. It had a development boundary as proposed in the plan but there were no allocations, I mean and there were various reasons for that and so the application at that time was resisted and the case was advanced as part of a composite argument in regards to the then evolving strategy. All I need to say on that, chairman is that members know this because we debated it in May, in regards to the subsequent application on the site. But the inspector rejected the inspector rejected the argument that the village was unsustainable and should not accommodate any further growth. I put the quote in the update report so

members will have read it once again and so I hope that clears up the point about officers being sneaky with arguments. Hope that helps chairman. Coming back to you.

Cllr Stedman

Thank you Mr Robins. Well I see now I've got four people who wish to speak so I won't speak at this stage although I will come in when I choose later on. Um..I would ask other members if you wish to speak on this that you actually put your names in the chat box now so..um .. I don't want sort of people just coming in at the last minute I'd like to know who wants to speak at this stage please. I will start now with Councillor Snell, Councillor Watts then Councillor Blake-Coggins, um they're the first three and then if they have questions I will then turn to Mr Robins. Um currently I've only got Richard, Councillor Richard Grocock, who wishes to speak. I ask once more that you put your names in the chat box at this stage albeit, you may want to hear a couple more comments before you do so. But even so. Over to Councillor Snell.

Cllr Snell

Thank you Chair. I.. I do have two questions if that's permitted so...

Cllr Stedman

Of course.

Cllr Snell

... through you Chair. The first one is about sustainability of the site the local member has spoken very eloquently about the lack of facilities and on a site visit obviously it's clearly obvious that there's a pub like he said a tearoom and a small post office shop there but that's about it. Um.. on the issue of sustainability what will happen to the business of the stud farm? Will that continue or is that going to be encroached? So it's two questions really.. and the third question concerns the remark on page 32 of the report from the flood authority er...where concerns were raised..um.. about the groundwater level on occasions being high on this site, er.. potential drainage problems. So I'd like clarification on that please. Thank you.

Cllr Stedman

Thank you, thank you very much um..Counsellor Watt..... *[Cllr Stedman microphone off?]*

Katie Maxwell

Councillor Watt, your microphone is switched off.

Cllr Stedman

Sorry I keep doing that... Councillor Watt you're on...

Cllr Watt

Yes thank you Chair. The question is really for Mr Robin. Um..The conservation area boundary and change... I just want to get this very clear for myself and also the other members. Is there any possibility that the site could actually be slightly reduced to give a bigger buffer zone between the the boundary of the conservation and the boundary of the proposed site? Er..um.. I think that it just needs a bit of clarification of whether or not that would be possible, because obviously this is an outline planning permission that we're considering today and obviously the nitty gritty will come at a later stage if this does get approval today. I just really want that to be clarified, then my second point is I.. I think Councillor Draper has made quite a few points about the East Hoathly village which is very relevant because there isn't very much there from a local perspective..er ... in facilities um..so that was only really a comment rather than a question but I would like the clarification on the boundary issue. Thank you back to you Chair.

Cllr Stedman

Thank you and we now have Councillor Blake-Coggins who, despite my request seems not to have turned his camera on. Councillor Blake-Coggins and your microphone? Maybe you're having problems? I'll go...

Cllr Blake-Coggins

I think I'm alright now..um

Cllr Stedman

You're live now..

Cllr Blake-Coggins

Councillor Draper has put forward a number of issues um..against all of this. I.....I'm somewhat bemused because recently we had a planning application for 50 odd houses in East Hoathly and that was refused on the strength of the fact that the village couldn't cope with such a large influx of building and promises..premises and so and so forth. So that being the case, why are we now looking at over 200 houses? The same situation is current here. There is there isn't anything, as council Draper said... there are no facilities to support this... this this type of development. It's far too huge for a very small village. We just saw one of the pubs close, which now leaves us with one. The medical facilities are not available, the education isn't available transport is not available. It's a part time bus service. And I've seen within the papers that there are plans for that to being increased, however this is a historic thing the number of people who have written in with their views. They have to be taken into account. You can't just shove 900 plus comments away. Um..there... there is much within these pages. It's taken me days to go through all of this, plus a package of stuff I had from one of the organisations out there to do with this development. We have to listen to these

people. We have to. We can't just willy nilly decide to stick 200 houses here, 200 there... you know...it... it is just not on. I'm... I'm going to propose that we reject this.Thank you.

Cllr Stedman

OK I'm.. I will put that down that you wish to refuse that. I obviously will, of course, need planning reasons for that and er..obviously whether or not you get a seconder. You were the third person to speak so I will now turn to Mr Robins to answer the questions raised so far.

Mr Robins

Yes.. yes sorry there's an echo.. yes thank you through you Chair. Just on Councillor Blake-Coggins, his..his last point there. Not the motion for rejection but the taking into account the volume of opposition.er.. that's been received on this case. Just to make absolutely clear members, we have done that. I mean it's not just ignoring these comments, it's not just tucking them away and..and deciding to do something completely differently. As the committee, I hope will know that we consult people for a very good reason and we do read all of the submissions that come in. This type of development is always emotive but for there to be an impact on the subsequent assessment there must be..er... material planning considerations that justify or influence the debate to the contrary, if that makes sense. We are in a departure situation we are in a ..you know.. contrary to the 1998 local plan but as the report sets out and we've debated on a number instances of late, this committee and planning committee north. The real issue here, a particularly pressing issue is the five year land supply and is the predicament that we find ourselves in, having tried with a reduced growth plan last year and failed with that. Er.. because everybody knows in the committee and watching, the plan was criticised on a number of levels including the quantum of growth that was proposed at that time. So we find ourselves in a very difficult position in regards to weighing and balancing tensions within planning policy. Councillor Blake-Coggins made the point that he was bemused we had the South Street scheme which was for er.. 50 odd dwellings and it was refused on the basis of unsustainable location in the village. That's not the reason for refusal and we had quite a bit of debate about that. It was a character based over-development back land location. The reason for refusal didn't talk to accessibility of the facilities and that brings me round to Counsellor Snell and Councillor Watts' point on accessibility and it's what the inspector said in... late last year about the..the..the accessibility of East Hoathly and it's set out in the update reports an independent inspector on behalf of the Secretary of State has said that the village is not without services and facilities um...and we must be mindful of that. We can't, a few months later, just try to argue that there... that that same issue, where an inspector is tested that and given an opinion on the accessibility. It's also relevant that in the submission local plan we were proposing a development boundary around East Hoathly and the evidence which underpinned that did talk to accessibility. So there is there is a point there and there is a consistency of decision making with the South Street appeal and subsequent case. I mean the subsequent case is refused as well, as you know chairman and members, er.. but character based over-development back land development rather than inaccessibility. Councillor Snell asked about the local lead flood authorities comments and the higher water level. Well that comes from the report, the technical report that informs the application and what the local lead flood authority was saying is this is very good and they've never objected. but the subsequent detail of this scheme and how it's laid out across the fields would be informed by that base data. So it's not a criticism that we've had in other cases where they say they want more information or they're unhappy with the level of detail. They were happy here, what they are saying is, we know what's going on in and the resulting scheme ought to be informed by that information, including the variations in the...in the...in the water table, the level of water. So that's.. that's good as far as I'm concerned. Counsellor Watts' point about the boundary of the conservation area... it is true of course and we've seen it in the papers and hinted at it in the presentation, that in 2017 the conservation area was expanded and it was expanded deliberately along Waldron Road, for the reasons that were all set out in the evidence base which underpinned the expansion of the boundary. And at that point the eastern edge of the site abut in the conservation area and I think Councillor Watt said, 'is it possible that the site be reduced to ease it away from the boundary'. And there's a couple of issues there and there's a there is a parallel with the comments in the update report about a reduced scheme that historic England asked about and also the conservation officer and the legal submissions that criticised the report that a smaller scheme is not being considered. The site area is the site area, it hasn't been

amended other than the withdrawal of the Ailies Lane component of the scheme. So the redline area does include up to the boundary with the conservation area and is not changed in that regard. But then as we now know or we do know as the committee, it isn't up to number, you know it's not fixed at 205. The reserved matters will inform that it could be fewer units, er.. once you take into account the constraints. I have to say I think it probably will because as the committee know there are other site specific constraints, ancient Woodland buffers, upgrades to the public right of way, this business of er...er..er...the sustainable drainage which I've just talked about. When we glue those all together, including those natural features which I spoke to on the on the presentation, and you take those into account, I don't think it would be a 205 unit scheme um... it will be fewer but we will get into that. Councillor Watts' nitty gritty point as part of reserved matters, it ought not to necessarily inform the principle of development at this stage. The final point, chairman I think, unless I've missed any, was the question about impact on the business. Well I can't sit here and say that that amount of er....acreage hectarage broken off from the stud will not have any impact on the business. I think it would there's no denying that. That is a factor that members will need to take into account er..but as Councillor Draper said at the top, it's the employment is already reduced over the last few years, is that signs of a failing business? Perhaps... and you know is this then the final straw having regard to the business. It might but nonetheless that is a factor amongst a whole host that the committee have got to take into account as part of the assessment. I think that's all of the questions. If I've missed any then I apologise and I will come back.

Cllr Stedman Not at all. Thank you very much um...Mr Robins. I now have the next three speakers who are Councillor Grocock, followed by Councillor Roundell, followed by Councillor Howell. So Councillor Grocock is ready for the off and you're live.

Cllr Grocock Thank you. They talked about the village – they've lost the pub, they've lost some shops – why? Because they're like a business. People not there for using it and the school oversubscribed um..where are those children going to live when they grow up? If you don't build the houses they're going to move out the village the village is going to die. Erm people have said about the um...road is a 60 mile an hour speed limit past the site. I'm sure somewhere along the line we can put this... get a speed limit in past that site, traffic calming measures on the site on.. on that Rd to control the traffic. Also, is there any plans for cycle routes through the er.. and also um.. to ease some of the traffic problems. I'll leave it at that Chair, I'll come back to you.

Cllr Stedman Thank you. The next speaker is Councillor Roundell - can you put your cam.. *[loss of sound]* ..and you are going to be live now. Thank you.

Cllr Roundell Good morning fellow member. As the committee we are in a terribly difficult situation here. Choose the failure of our submitted local plan at the beginning of the year. It's easy to play the blame game we could blame central government we could blame the ? inspector we could blame our own council for it and we could blame developers who're possibly sitting on land which they have development approval for that are not delivering and prefer to sit on it for as long as they can, in the expectation house prices will increase, but we are where we are. As a committee we have the horrendously uncomfortable position of having to consider and approve sites which will deliver thousand, yes thousands of houses and in places we have never out of preference wanted to build like in the AONB and in Wealden's beautiful villages like East Hoathly. We must however recognise that every time and village is going to have to take new development even in AONB, which the principle created last week and indeed has been referenced in one of Parker Dann statements, that has already been used as a precedent for this. This is why this application in front of us is so very, very important. The precedent it will create. Now to my mind this is the case with proportionality. To increase the size of East Hoathly by over 50% which this application would do so, I'm afraid, despite what I've heard so far, in my view is totally wrong. But I am not averse to some development on this site. 40% of it already had been considered at an earlier stage and we should consider it in the light of where we are. Wealden's conservation officer and indeed, Historic England, concede that a much smaller scheme, respecting the main listed buildings in the conservation area, and specifically the four grade two listed magnificent buildings, one of which is starred, even stronger, even that would be feasible. But this can only be achieved by our refusing this application in the hope the developer will reconsider the scale of this



application. Or if not, the developer may take it to appeal on this and then perhaps the inspector might take the same view as us. We have sound reasons for refusing. First of all the sustainability which was already mentioned by Mr Robins. One of the reasons this committee refused the side street application for 55 houses, we should perhaps be consistent in this case with our refusal. But the main issues we have debate and make a judgement on is the public benefits judgement and those are listed on page 64 of the report. The first few of those the increase in housing numbers, increasing choice and type of home.. affordable homes, custom built dwellings, employment opportunities during the construction phase, additional jobs and fiscal benefits - they're going to happen wherever we put development. So just because we're putting them here we could put them elsewhere and we get exactly the same benefits. So they would apply to any new major development wherever it is built and by and large are not benefiting the public in East Hoathly, but more for the district. Best look at some of the other ones - provision of community open space footpath improvements, highways, work to London Road, etc. Obviously none of these are necessary if the houses aren't built. They are they are of no benefit to existing residents. Only for new residents. The bus issue is only a temporary one for three years... it's no long term resolution. And the other point which I think Councillor Snell raised about the stud. Um.. the stud used to employ more than 20 people on it and it has been reduced and there is no doubt but with the destruction of cottages and I believe the remaining strong buildings which have recently been refurbished gather enormous cost, that probably and the fact that the owner has bought er.. an extremely well known stud in (Arras?) in.. in France where there are huge advantages to breeding fillies and horses. Um... I... I would have really serious doubts that that they're going to carry on with the stud...um and (sound break up)

Cllr Stedman

Okay now Councillor Roundell, you have had five minutes...(alarm sound)..there you go... which is normally only allocated to local members so I'm afraid I'm going to have to stop you there. Thank you very much and I will now move on to the next speaker who is Councillor Howell. Could you turn your microphone on please Councillor Howell?

Cllr Howell

Sorry Madam Chairman yes indeed...indeed sorry.

Cllr Stedman

Hold on your not live at the moment for some reason..

Cllr Howell

Oh I'm not live...

Cllr Stedman

Yes you are live..

Cllr Howell

I am live. Good. These committees have got to make some very difficult decisions and I keep hearing from other councillors that we're going to have to refuse this one and put it somewhere else. Well where? You don't want them wherever they are. We've got to make some very very difficult decisions. Last week we made the difficult decision, and it was difficult to put some houses on the Eridge Rd, again outside of the development boundary near heritage assets but also in the AONB. We do not have a five year land supply. We have to have some control. If we don't have any control we lose it and then we have no control over anything. As far as I can see. East Hoathly is as sustainable as any of our other villages in Wealden. Horam had no facilities and it has had thousands of houses. Frant has very few facilities and we've got hundreds of houses. Thomas Turner Drive was one of the most controversial er...developments within East Hoathly and that went through and seems to have settled in very well. South Street we turned down because of the access to the A22. This site has marvellous access to the A22. You know we have got to make the grown up decisions and we've got to face up to the grown up decisions. None of us want this housing. None of us want it but if we don't do it it will be done unto us. So I suggest that instead of telling everybody that it's going to go elsewhere we actually wise up to the fact that we're going to have to start taking it. East Hoathly has a doctors surgery, a pre-school, a primary school, a church a pub, a restaurant, local shops with a p..p.. post office and cafe with posh trinkets I am told, a hairdresser, a book shop, a holistic vet, an elderly care home. It has a recreation ground, a play area, a village hall, a sports pavilion, allotments and public woodlands. It has what a lot of our villages have and possibly a little bit more so I would suggest that we actually start facing up to what we've got to do and that is take these nasty horrible decisions and so Madam chairman, for that reason I will go with the officers recommendation As hard as I might find it but that is what I will do.

Cllr Stedman

Thank you very much Councillor Howell. Thank you for referencing the ward I represent that, as you say is taking hundreds and has very similar er..facilities to East Hoathly and yet this..

this council..this committee gaily passed 50 in the most inaccessible location a couple of weeks ago. We have got to take these difficult decisions and um.. it's.. we are where we are.. where we are. I won't go on at this stage. I will turn now to Mr Robins if he wants to come back with any of those comments. You're live thank you.

Mr Robins

I don't think I need to. To be perfectly honest with you. I mean, I had scribbled down a few things here but Councillor Howell has said most of it. I think the key point really just....to just to follow on from that is the scale of growth on the objective the housing need... it's 1231 dwellings per annum. That's a lot.. it's an awful lot. I've said elsewhere and in public forums that there's a frightening amount of growth compared to what we've delivered over the years at Wealden. When I was asked in the briefing in regards to what the core strategy numbers envisaged that was 450. Er..That doesn't reflect full objectively assessed housing need. The submission plan which failed had a stepped trajectory. It began at 950 with a kick up at the end of the plan period. That wasn't enough for all the reasons that we know, so it really does go to underpin and really reinforce and, I'm sorry to use that language, the point about need and growth everywhere across the district where sites are supportable and I can really say no more than that at this stage Chairman.

Cllr Stedman

Thank you.. thank you I just like to come in here with regard to the up to 205 figure. It is very clearly an up to and Mr Robins you've already said that..um.. there will be lots of constraints which will bring that number down the um.. quite considerably and I note from Parker Dann Hannah Ronan's submission that she talks in her 4th paragraph that there is significant scope for alternate layout to provide relief to the heritage matters.. er.. heritage matters.. at reserved matters and indeed our own officer in her lengthy, lengthy report states fairly early on that she ..um..she states there is scope in investigating a smaller.. far smaller development area and in her fifth paragraph states she would be pleased to work closely with the applicant and our officers to try and achieve the most appropriate layout. So we do have it from these other people that..um...they are aware that the 205 figure is something pluck...not quite plucked from the air but..um... that it is unlikely to be achievable and it is regrettable that the (coughs) the agents, having withdrawn part of the application did not see fit to come in and make it clearer for everybody but I think we're all clear that um.. exactly what is proposed and we're all clear that 205 is unlikely to be ..um..achieved. So having made my little statement I will now turn to the final two speakers that I've got on um..the chat and that is Councillor Cleaver, followed by Councillor Lunn. I have noted Councillor Watts you want to come back and maybe I will as well. Councillor Cleaver, you're live.

Cllr Cleaver

Thanks Chair. First of all, Historic England objects. Wealden District Council Conservation and Design Officer he objects. Woodland Trust objects. East Hoathly Parish Council objects. Chiddingly Parish Council objects. Wealden have had 918 rep.. representatives who put in to Wealden about this application. That says something. Wealden plan has not been accepted. It is unsustainable. The core... the core land using planning principles confirms that in rural areas housing developments should reflect on local needs. I would like to second the refusal please. Thanks Chair.

Cllr Stedman

Thank you that is note.. that's noted. Um..I turn now to er.. Councillor Philip Lunn please. Hopefully he'll live in a moment... you're live.

Cllr Lunn

Er..thank you Chair. Um..I have to say that Councillor Howell said much of what I wish to say and she did emphasise that difficult decisions do have to be made. We've heard a lot of negatives this morning but like other members I spent hours, reading and re reading the documents in this case and I looked from a different perspective. I thought can I see you know, positives here? So with positive eyes, I can... I can..I can see justifications and understand why this application I um..is sensitive but I can also see the benefits. Just to make clear to other members and anybody else watching, in my Ward alone I've potentially 600 new houses being built. Um..I hear that in East Hoathly 85 were built in the last 10 years. 185 new houses have been built in my Ward in the last 10 months. Er..the development is..is never welcomed in um.. a councillor's own ward, but again with all these applications in my ward I tried to look at the positives. Part of that was being involved in discussions with the developers and Chair, you..you made comments about the most appropriate layout on this site. That is exactly the sort of discussions that I had with the officers and the developers and they did involve me, genuinely and changes were made to

the layout of two or more of the sites within my ward. So, rather than repeating what Councillor Watts Councillor Howell and, in some of the positive comments that Councillor Roundell made in the opening part of his..his um presentation, um.. I can only echo that, you know, people should look at the positives and there.. there are benefits to be derived from this for the village. Because you've got these people coming in they will bring wealth, they will patronise local businesses. I can't see all of these people driving through the village for the reason that we said re highways. They will go back to the A22 and those are just a few positives I'd like to emphasise. Back to you Chair.

Cllr Stedman Could I take it then that you'd be happy to second Councillor Howell's approval of this application, in line with officer recommendation?

Cllr Lunn Er. Yes Chair.

Cllr Stedman Thank you very much. Um..I don't know whether Mr Robins wants to come in on any of that. He can shake his head if not. If..um but there weren't really any questions on there. Um. Fine. I now have two um.. resolutions on the table. Councillor Watts, I will turn to you for um..did you wish to make a new comment? You're live.

Cllr Watts Sorry, no actually um.. I'm okay chair I think the question has just been answered in er..Councillor Lunn's comments. Thank you.

Cllr Stedman Thank you. Right, I will now close this debate as everybody, as I did ask people to let me know quickly when they wanted to talk and nobody else said they want to talk. I will now turn back to Councillor Draper to make a closing remarks and again, please brief. Everybody else has to be brief when they do this so I will turn to you now and you're.. hold on.. you're live.

Cllr Draper Thank you Madam Chair. Um.. on regards employees at.. at the stud itself they have been reduced due to this application being in front of this committee and it is anticipated that it will be closing and even those six that are still there will... will get the boot. Um..we haven't lost any pub.. er..any shops at all. The shops are thriving with the local custom.We have lost the pub, funny enough to a developer. Um..I'm not against and we are not against building in East Hoathly to serve the local community. We know we must have some, not 205. It is erroneous to say pass it and then, they the applicant will look and reduce the figures because you know, out of altruism. We all know if we grant this, with all matters reserved then lip service will be given and 205 maybe 5 less, 200 will be built. In conclusion, it is not fair that we should take a 54% in East Hoathly increase. 205 where..where we have 381 at the moment. Let's do something which has got a sensible proportion. I urge you to ask for this application to be withdrawn. It is so important to stop irrevocable damage to the historic building setting of East Hoathly and it's heritage assets and really, to the inhabitants themselves because new and old residents will be affected by, again having to drive hundreds of miles just to get a normal way of life. I rest my case Madam Chair and thank you for er..bearing with me but the local committee members have read the papers and I hope that they will do the right... right (technical blip) thing.

Cllr Stedman Thank you very much. There is no proposal for withdrawal, and we have now closed the discussion. We have two resolutions on the table one for approval in line with officer recommendation and one for refusal put forward by Councillor Blake-Coggins and seconded by Councillor Cleaver. Um..(bleeper) there we are, that's your time up there. (Bleper) Oh..I'm trying to turn it off.. sorry er.. Mr Robins, can I turn to you? Do you want to take reasons for refusal at this stage or would you prefer we go to the vote first? We ought to know what we're voting for I suppose..if.. to consider. Over to you now, hopefully ..live..

Mr Robins Yes thank you...Chair.. I think if there.. is there... if we are to committee are to vote on the on the er..counter proposal then we didn't really need to know. What I've noted down is um...accessibility, er...unsustainable location, scale of growth er...disproportionate to the existing settlement and by and large, that the positives don't outweigh the harm that would be caused. If you'd like to put that to the proposer and seconder of the refusal, if they agree, then I can build a refusal, if that's the will of the committee, around those points. Coming back to you.

Cllr Stedman I will do. Um..Councillor Blake-Coggins, are you happy with that? Would you want anything added?

Cllr Blake-Coggins No...

Cllr Stedman Briefly.

Cllr Blake Coggins .. I'm happy with what he's put up, if it's going to support a refusal.  
 Cllr Stedman Okay Councillor Cleaver, are you happy with exactly what Mr Robins has said?  
 Cllr Cleaver I'm happy with that as well.  
 Cllr Stedman Then I won't add anything to it. Thank you. I will in line with procedure, turn to Councillor Snell who will take the vote. We will in normal procedure, just to clarify, we start with the officer recommendation and if that fails. we will then turn to the second resolution. So, Councillor Snell, over to you.

Cllr Snell Thank you Madam Chair. Er..before I do put the proposal to the members, could I just ask the Chair to support me in clarifying that the proposal for approval would emphasise the fact that the application is up to 205 um..and that there is scope during the reserved matters discussions or there be further consideration to the layout, so that the heritage sites are also not encroached? Um..Is that right Madam Chair?

Cllr Stedman I wouldn't use the word encroach but I will turn to Councillor Howell who put forward that motion. Are you happy with Councillor Snell's resume of your reasoning for approval?

Cllr Howell Yes, yes indeed I am with that and I would like to give great weight too um.. to be um..thinking about the listed buildings, but actually to be sympathetic to the listed buildings.

Cllr Stedman I think that's a better word 'sympathetic' but it is all there in the officer's update..sorry...officers report so I think we better now we've added that but I think we need now need to turn to Mr Robins to put that into planning speak before we take the vote. Mr Robins, if you wouldn't mind coming in here and just clarifying and putting into planning speak what Councillor Snell has précised, thank you.

Mr Robins Well..well Chairman I think what..what the committee might do in these circumstances is ...is instruct me and our officers to explain in the decision notice that the layout is purely illustrative, is should not to be regarded as approved, that further work is required and that the reserved matters should be properly informed by all of the constraints, er..having regard to the setting of the listed buildings and the setting of the conservation area. So we're really laying down a marker that this, as you... as you said in the discussion Chair, the agents have said there is scope for a different layout. The scheme is up to. If we don't like a reserved matters, assuming outline is granted, then we can withhold a reserved matters if were unhappy with how that manifests itself on er.. the ground and with all those reserved matters that come forward via another application.

Cllr Stedman Thank you. I'll hand back to Councillor Snell.

Cllr Snell Thank you Mr Robins, thank you Chair. So the proposal on the table is for approval in line with the opposite recommendation, bearing in mind what Mr Robins has just said, that the layout will be subject to discussion at reserved matters and that the number of houses is up to 205 and might also come into alteration at reserved matters. So, I will now go to the vote. Councillor Blake-Coggins?

Cllr Blake-Coggins Against.

Cllr Snell Councillor Cleaver?

Cllr Cleaver Against.

Cllr Snell Councillor Draper? I know you're the local member, Councillor Draper but I just wanted you to voice that, so...I will carry..

Cllr Draper Local member.

Cllr Snell Thank you. Councillor Grocock?

Cllr Grocock For approval.

Cllr Snell Councillor Howell?

Cllr Howell For.

Cllr Snell Councillor Lunn?

Cllr Lunn For.

Cllr Snell Councillor Redman? I understood the Councillor Redman had managed to join the meeting but I'm not getting anything from him so I'll come back to him at the end. Oh..

Cllr Redman I'm here... subject to the fact that I missed the first half dozen slides of Mr Stacey's presentation, um.. I've done hours of work making sure I know exactly what's going on but I did miss the first six slides... six or seven slides of his presentation rather than I subject to all the discussion that's gone on since and have done all the homework. Subject to all of that to make sure that there's no issue on the fact that I did miss that first few slides I would be for the application.

Cllr Snell Thank you.

Cllr Stedman I..I'm sorry that was remiss of me, at the beginning of the meeting. I'll talk, you needn't turn my camera on. I.. I'm happy as chairman of the committee will be that er.. Councillor Redman, who attended the technical briefing and as he stated has um... read all the documents, was here for the discussion. Mr...was somebody else wishing to say something there? Mr Robins? Mr Robins?

Mr Robins Yes. thank you just waiting to go live..er... I mean it's your discretion Chairman but I would just like to say is, yes Councillor Redman did attend yesterday with the briefing but moreover the slides have been available in the public domain for several days now. I..whilst I was talking to them and explaining the issues, they have been available. Er..so to my mind nothing has been missed but it's very much at your..your..your discretion Chair.

Cllr Stedman Well as far as I'm concerned, he saw the majority..at this time when he joined the meeting, he saw the majority of the presentation and he was here for the full discussion. So I would hope that his vote is acceptable. Thank you.

Cllr Snell Thank you Madam Chair. So back to the vote. Councillor Roundell?

Cllr Roundell Against.

Cllr Snell Councillor Shing?

Cllr Shing Abstained.

Cllr Snell I am for. Councillor Watts?

Cllr Watts I'm for with the (interference) counter outlines in the (interference) before you took the vote um I.. I'm for.

Cllr Snell Ok. Well I want to hand back to the Committee Clerk Mrs Maxwell for...

Cllr Stedman Can I vote?

Cllr Snell Oh sorry, I'm so sorry..

Cllr Stedman I'm for.. I'm for approval.

Cllr Snell Ok, I will now hand back to the Committee Clerk Mrs Maxwell for a resume of what's happened. Thank you.

Mrs Maxwell So we have seven votes in favour, three against with one abstention and Councillor Draper being er..the local ward member. So it's been approved.

Cllr Stedman Thank you very much everybody. That is that an outline application for up to 205 houses at Hesmonds Stud, for dwellings rather, is now approved. I think this would be an appropriate moment to take a 10 minute comfort break, we might make it 12 minutes in actual fact and come back at 12:15. Thank you very much everybody, see you in 10 minutes.