PRESENT:

Walton Parish Councillors: J. Harvey [chair], B. Collins [vice chair], L. Hardware, S. Loader, R. Vowles, H. Shearer, D. Harvey, R. Crossman. [8]

Members of the public approx. 50

Somerset Cllr. H. Shearer

Parish Clerk: H. Moore

2025.26.168 To receive and consider reasons for non-attendance.

None.

2025.26.169 Councillors

a. Disclosure of any undeclared interests and notification of dispensations granted.

None.

2025.26.170 Public Speaking

a. **Declaration of interest in speaking on agenda item[s]**: To speak for no more than 3 minutes on items on the agenda [Public participation shall not exceed 30 minutes in total.]

The Chairman introduced the meeting and outlined the Council's position in the planning consultation and decision-making process and went on to provide a general overview of the application.

Residents then spoke for approximately 30 minutes raising issues and concerns regarding the application, including:

- Loss of view, loss of property value
- Increased traffic
- Lack of school places in existing village school.
- Lack of pavements along the South of the A39.
- A zebra crossing would be ineffective.
- The development should not connect to minor roads, only the A39.
- The need for a S106 infrastructure agreement.
- Lack of detail and accuracy within the Traffic Assessment.
- Local knowledge lacking within the reports.
- Bypass comments irrelevant.
- Impact on traffic exiting from Asney Road.
- Flood zoning & local high water table and low water pressure.
- Capacity of local sewerage treatment plant.
- Phosphate mitigation.
- The ability of Somerset Council to provide independent reports about the application.
- Existing lack of facilities in the village – e.g. No shop, lack of pavement on both sides of the road, nothing for teenagers, no doctors or dentists.
- Impact on the Royal Oak Public House.

The Chairman drew a close to the public speaking time.

2025.26.171 Planning

a. To consider planning applications received.

I. **2026/0105/OUT – Outline permission with all matters reserved except for access, for the development of up to 78 homes, a commercial unit of up to 155sqm, formation of a new access and associated development. Land at 346374 136183 Main Street Walton.**

Councillors discussed their views on the application which reiterated many of the views expressed by residents, along with other comments, including those regarding the village development boundary, MDC local district plan, size and density of the proposed development, active travel routes, the size of internal roads, the impact of the blocking off of the junction of East Mead Lane with the A39.

It was ***RESOLVED [8/0]*** that:

Walton Parish Council OBJECT to this application for the following reasons:

- **Highways:**
  a. The proposal for a signalised junction with the A39 fails to consider:
     - The A39 is a main freight route, and the lights will block the flow of vehicles.
     - The impact on vehicles attempting to turn right onto the A39 from the nearby junction of Asney Road and the A39.
     - The projected future traffic volume will be higher than expected due the existing housing land allocation within the Mendip District Local plan for both Walton & Street, and the projected increase in both the size of the Street Business Park and its changing nature.
     - The proposed changes to the traffic signal layout at the Quarry Batch junction associated with the Street Business Park Development.
     - The traffic assessment lack of detail and reliance on 'comparative locations' desk studies. Walton is a rural village located around a busy freight route. There is a higher reliance on vehicular journeys due to its rural nature. The use of local knowledge and data is imperative.
  b. The proposal to relocate the access to East Mead Lane:
     There are two working farms on East Mead Lane [not one as stated in the transport assessment] and the implications of the access for farm vehicles to the A39 have not been taken fully into account. No detail of the layout of proposed access to the development from East Mead Lane has been provided, no information regarding visibility splays, no information regarding the width of the proposed new access road through the development, no information regarding the use of the proposed development roads by farm traffic.
  c. The width of the proposed internal roads:
     The narrow width of the internal roads is a matter of concern for use by utility vehicles, [rubbish & recycling etc.] emergency vehicles, and delivery vehicles associated with the proposed commercial unit.
  d. Bypass:
     The bypass mentioned in the traffic assessment has been a proposal for well over 20 years and is unlikely to occur within the foreseeable future.

- **Water:**
  a. Part of the proposed development site lies within flood zone one and the local water table is very high.
  b. The local capacity for sewerage treatment is limited.
  c. The village already has low water pressure.

- **Local Infrastructure**

a. There is a lack of spaces at the village primary school with residents already unable to obtain a space for their children.
b. The capacity of the local health facilities [doctors' surgery, dentists etc.] to take on further clients is not clear.
c. The lack of a shop in village and no youth facilities etc.

- **The Local Environment**
  a. This is a greenfield site that was not included within the Mendip District Local Plan as a housing land allocation. It lies outside the local development boundary.
  b. The proposed development is large for the village which currently consists of around 550 homes. The number of homes [78] is too high for the size of the plot.
  c. The proposed development will result in the loss of high-quality agricultural land.
  d. The location of the proposed development will erode the green gap between the village of Walton and the neighbouring town of Street. It will have a high visual impact and a high impact on the nature of the village itself.
  e. There will be an impact on the local community asset, The Royal Oak Public house, due to the potential loss of custom and event bookings caused by the building of an adjacent housing estate damaging the rural setting of the pub with its outside seating and views over farmland. The general noise coming from the pub with its skittle alley and events needs to be taken into consideration to prevent the likelihood of complaints being made by residents of the proposed development. Careful housing layout and live screening could be used to mitigate this issue.

- **General Comments / proposed conditions**
  a. Any vehicular access to the development needs to be limited to the A39 junction and East Mead lane – no vehicular links should be made between this development and any other local lanes or other existing or proposed developments.
  b. Any housing built needs to appropriate to the needs of the village, that is smaller and more affordable.
  c. The Walton independent 2025 housing needs survey and Masterplan framework Design guidance report, need to be considered.
  d. Sec 106 Contributions to mitigate the impact on not only the school but also the village hall and existing play spaces.
  e. Council considers that building on brownfield sites would be more appropriate for the village and that locations that have already been granted planning permission should be built before more permissions are granted.

b. General planning concerns to note.

None raised

THE MEETING WAS THEN CLOSED.

Signed by Chairman Date