



New Romney Town Council – Press Release

Issued 28th May 2021



NEW ROMNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Greatstone's Controversial Coast Drive Car Park application stopped in its tracks

The controversial Planning Application to build 20 new homes and reduce the area for public car parking faced strong opposition from the Community and from Town and District Council representatives.

First considered in 2016, the proposal has united local residents who object to the loss of this important amenity and are concerned about the negative impacts of the development on this highly sensitive site. New Romney Town Council Planning Committee has consistently supported resident's objections to the application, citing the argument that it is not in accordance with a number of key planning policies.

Planning Officers were keen to argue that the site's allocation within the emerging Places and Policies Local Plan meant the development was effectively endorsed. One Planning Committee member suggested that the site be removed from the Plan – a comment which, had the public been present, would have drawn a round of applause.

Town Mayor and Chairman of New Romney Town Council's Planning Committee submitted a written representation that highlighted many areas of concern to local residents. He stated: *"Reduced parking is likely to have an adverse impact on local businesses, particularly those struggling to re-establish their trade after the current Covid-19 crisis ends. It will also have an adverse impact on local roads by forcing even more car users to park inconsiderately or dangerously. We also asked for the potential impact on the Sea Cadets at TS Veteran and at the Indee Rose Trust House to be taken into account"*.

It was noted that the car park is used extensively over the summer months, with one local resident providing information that the Car Park had been overflowing with visitors to the area the previous day. It was further observed that domestic tourism has increased in the area, and post-pandemic, visitor numbers are likely to further expand as UK residents avoid travelling abroad.

Both local District Councillors argued against the application. Committee Member, Councillor Wimble, presented a detailed and extended report outlining the many reasons why the application should be refused. His detailed analysis of the negative environmental impact was applauded by many of his fellow Committee members. Councillor Patricia Rolfe also argued against the application, reasoning that it was unwanted and inappropriate with a number of legal issues that were unresolved.

One of the main issues that caused concern for all was the fact that most of the site is located in the highly vulnerable Flood Zone 3a due to its adjacency to the Channel shoreline. Despite that fact, the application did not include a Sequential Test.

The strength of local feeling against this proposal was juxtaposed against the following agenda item wherein the Committee decided upon the development of a new Community Hall and Sports Pavilion for the time and associated 34 unit residential development. The latter application receiving unequivocal support from the local community.

Councillor Paul Thomas summarised the feeling of the local community following the application's refusal, stating: *"This is a victory for common sense. There has been an unprecedented level of local response against this application; an overwhelming NO from the local residents. We now have to prepare for the next stage of this process, which is likely to be an appeal."*

"My thanks for the research and background work that supported both Town and District Councillors go to New Romney Town Council Planning Clerk, Mrs Marlene Worf, and Planning Committee Member, Councillor Russell Tillson. I would also like to recognise the work of Martin Chamberlain, who led the local resident campaign."

New Romney Town Council cares for, and is committed to serving the best interests of the local Community.