



EAST
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning Committee held at 1:00pm on Wednesday 6th October 2021 in the Council Chamber at The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely, CB7 4EE.

PRESENT

Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith
Cllr David Ambrose Smith (Substitute for Cllr David Brown)
Cllr Sue Austen
Cllr Matthew Downey
Cllr Lavinia Edwards
Cllr Lis Every
Cllr Bill Hunt (Chairman)
Cllr Lisa Stubbs (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr John Trapp *from 1:30pm*

OFFICERS

Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager
Maggie Camp – Legal Services Manager
Holly Chapman – Planning Officer
Tracy Couper – Democratic Services Manager
Caroline Evans – Democratic Services Officer
Toni Hylton – Senior Planning Officer
Jade Ling – Press Officer
Dan Smith – Senior Planning Officer
Angela Tyrrell – Senior Legal Assistant
Russell Wignall – Legal Assistant

IN ATTENDANCE

James Chilvers (Objector, Agenda Item 6 / Minute 40)
Barry Garwood (Objector, Agenda Item 6 / Minute 40)
Keith Hutchinson (Applicant's Agent, Agenda Item 6 / Minute 40)
Antony Smith (Applicant, Agenda Item 6 / Minute 40)

35. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs David Brown, Alec Jones and Gareth Wilson.

Cllr David Ambrose Smith was attending as a substitute for Cllr Brown.

36. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith stated that, as a Ward Member, she had commented favourably on Agenda Item 5 with respect to its potential for increasing local employment opportunities. She would however be viewing the application with an open mind.

37. MINUTES

The Committee received the Minutes of the meeting held on 1st September 2021.

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 1st September 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

38. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman thanked the Vice-Chairman for Chairing the previous meeting.

He reminded Members that applications considered at Committee were generally not straightforward and therefore site visits were extremely helpful. Consequently, Members were strongly encouraged to visit all sites between publication of the Agenda and the meeting date; mileage costs could be claimed as Member expenses. The situation would be reviewed in December with the expectation that formal site visits, travelling by bus, would be reintroduced from January 2022.

39. 20/01579/FUM – SITE NORTH OF UNIT 10, FARADAY ROAD BUSINESS PARK, LITTLEPORT

Dan Smith, Senior Planning Officer, presented a report (W79, previously circulated) recommending approval of an application seeking full planning permission for the erection of two blocks of business units in Use Class E(g) (formerly known as B1 use – Office, R&D and Light Industrial), B2 (General Industrial) and B8 (Storage and Distribution).

Members were informed that, in accordance with the Council's Constitution, the application had been referred to Committee for decision since the floor area of the development was in excess of 1000 sqm. The application sought permission for approx. 1250 sqm of buildings for flexible commercial uses on a site outside Littleport and within an existing business park with ongoing allocation for business use. The main body of the site comprised approx. 0.32 hectares of land between the existing units accessed from Wisbech Road, and a large storage building to the rear accessed from Henry Crabb Road. Various site plans, aerial photographs, block plans, elevations, and site photographs were shown to illustrate the site's position amongst industrial buildings, and the new proposed buildings' design and relationship with the existing business units. If approved, two linear blocks of accommodation would be constructed, with four units in the north-west block and six in the south-east block, each of which would face and be served by a central parking and turning area accessed from Wisbech Road.

The main considerations for the application were deemed to be:

- **Principle of development** – the proposed uses of the buildings were for employment, which was in accordance with the location of the site on an existing industrial business park that was allocated for employment use in a past Local Plan. The use class B1 had been incorporated within a new wider use class E which also included other uses such as retail, cafés and restaurants, and health centres. It was therefore considered necessary to restrict by planning condition the use of the proposed buildings to use

classes E(g) (rather than the broader class E), B2 and B8, in order to ensure that they remained in employment uses that were in accordance with the allocation.

- **Visual amenity** – the site was currently laid to grass and hardstanding and was surrounded by other industrial and commercial buildings on the existing business park. The buildings in the proposed development would be of a similar scale and character to the existing buildings on the business park and were therefore not considered to cause harm to the appearance of the area. Boundary fencing, whilst functional rather than aesthetic, would also be similar to the existing fencing on the park.
- **Neighbouring amenity** – although the site would be accessed between existing units, they were already in commercial use and therefore the additional vehicle movements were not considered to harm the amenity of the occupants of the existing units. The siting and scale of the proposed buildings would not overshadow or otherwise harm the amenity of the neighbouring properties. The proposed uses of the buildings for office space, research and development, industrial, and storage uses would not cause harm through noise given the existing uses in the surrounding area. In addition, having considered the potential for noise generation, the Environmental Health Officer had recommended planning conditions related to the construction phase and the hours of operation of machinery and plants once the site was operational. Consideration had been given to the concerns of the current occupants of nearby units. The Local Highways Authority had been satisfied that the additional traffic caused by the development would not cause a significant impact to the amenity of the neighbours.
- **Highway safety and parking** – the site would be accessed *via* an existing vehicle access onto Wisbech Road, with internal access running between existing units. Up to three existing parking spaces would be lost but parking for 28 vehicles would be provided (together with manoeuvring space for large vehicles), resulting in a net gain of 25 parking spaces. The Local Highways Authority was content that the site access and turning space would be sufficient and without harm to highway safety. A mix of uses with varying parking demands were proposed, therefore a planning condition had been agreed with the applicant to specify a maximum floor area for the uses that would generate more intensive parking demands, in order to ensure that there would be sufficient parking on-site in line with adopted parking standards.
- **Flood risk and drainage** – the site lay partially within Flood Zones 1, 2 and 3, but as a site already allocated for employment use the sequential test was passed. The proposed uses for the buildings were “less vulnerable” and therefore considered appropriate development in Flood Zone 2 and defended Flood Zone 3. A Flood Risk Assessment had been submitted with the application and the Environment Agency had no objections. Following an initial objection from the Lead Local Flood Authority with regard to drainage, further information had been provided regarding the drainage strategy which proposed underground tank storage to attenuate surface water drainage prior to discharge to the Internal Drainage Board. The objection was then withdrawn subject to a detailed drainage scheme and compliance with measures in the Flood Risk Assessment, which would be secured by a planning condition.

In summary, the proposed development was consistent with the allocation of the site for employment use. The impacts on the visual amenity, neighbours, highway safety, parking, flood risk and drainage were all considered to be acceptable and no significant harm had been identified. The energy efficiency of the development would be achieved by a planning condition requiring that the buildings be constructed to at least BREEAM "very good" standard. The application was therefore recommended for approval.

There were no public speakers for the application.

In response to questions from the Chairman, the Case Officer confirmed that the entire site lay within the employment allocation from a Local Plan predating 1995, and the sole reason for the application being considered at Committee-level was that the site area was in excess of 1000 sqm and therefore was required to be determined by Committee in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith asked whether there would be any cycle parking provision given the close proximity of the site to the town, although recognising the lack of dedicated crossing point on the A10. Referring to the block plan, the Case Officer highlighted an area allocated for that purpose and also drew Members' attention to proposed planning condition 10 which required adequate cycle parking on-site.

The Chairman then opened the debate. Cllr Every expressed support for the proposal as a welcome addition to Littleport which would be beneficial to local businesses and local employment. She also thanked the Officer for his report and commented that it illustrated the quality of application achieved when Officers and applicants worked well together.

It was resolved unanimously:

That planning application ref 20/01579/FUM be APPROVED subject to the recommended conditions detailed in Appendix 1 of the Officer's report.

40. 21/00794/FUL – 14 THE AVENUE, BURWELL, CB25 0DE

Holly Chapman, Planning Officer, presented a report (W80, previously circulated) recommending approval of an application seeking planning permission for the construction of 2no. two-bedroom detached bungalows.

The Case Officer drew Members' attention to the three responses that had been received since publication of the report and had been sent to them earlier in the week; objections from 16 and 17 The Avenue and a sustained objection from Burwell Parish Council. The main points addressed were increased traffic, safety of children playing on the roundabout, safety and width of the proposed access, removal of vegetation on the northern site boundary, impact on wildlife, drainage, appearance and impact on the street-scene, accuracy of the plans, overlooking, and overdevelopment. It was considered that all of these issues had already been addressed in the Officer's report.

1:30pm Cllr John Trapp joined the meeting.

Members were shown various images including site plans, aerial photographs and site photographs, block plans, elevations, floor plans, and a CGI image of the proposals to illustrate the design of the proposed buildings and the site's location within the development envelope of Burwell as well as its relationship with its neighbours. In total, the site comprised approximately 0.1 hectares of garden land to the rear of 14 The Avenue, an area within Flood Zone 1 (lowest risk). It was not within a conservation area or near any Listed Buildings, Structures or Monuments. A water pump to the front of no. 14 was neither a listed structure nor designated as being a feature of special interest. A new dropped kerb and access was proposed from The Avenue to give a 3.05m wide access road widening to a shared turning area in front of the proposed bungalows and two parking spaces per new property. The potential for one off-road parking space for no. 14 would also be created and the existing right of way for no. 15 to access their rear garden would be retained through the rear garden of no. 14. The height of the proposed bungalows would prevent first floor accommodation and the removal of permitted development rights by way of a planning condition would prevent extensions and alterations, including extension into the roof space.

There was no available planning history for the site itself but Members were shown several relevant consents and applications in the immediate vicinity; a detached chalet bungalow at 17a The Avenue (approved June 2016), a detached bungalow at 25 Carter Road (approved May 2018, April 2019 and September 2021), two dwellings at 27 Carter Road (pending).

The main considerations for the application were deemed to be:

- **Principle of development** – the site lay wholly within the development envelope for Burwell, where the Local Plan sought to focus development. A contextual analysis of The Avenue and surrounding area had been included with the planning application and showed that traditionally “back-land” developments had been permitted near the application site; in this instance the Local Planning Authority would therefore be unreasonable to object to the principle of the development on the basis that it comprised back-land development. The proposal would be liable for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and the payment would be in line with policy GROWTH3 and the Developer Contributions SPD. The proposed development was therefore considered to comply with policies GROWTH2, GROWTH3 and GROWTH5 of the Local Plan 2015, the Design Guide SPD, the Developer Contributions SPD, and the Guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- **Residential amenity** – the proposed dwellings would be modest in scale and footprint and would be set off from the shared boundaries with 11 and 15 The Avenue. They were not considered to result in significant or detrimental overlooking, overshadowing, overbearing, or loss of light to 11 or 15 The Avenue or to the host dwelling no. 14. The removal of permitted development rights would prevent insensitive development which could give rise to overlooking of nearby properties. Private amenity spaces would be provided for both new dwellings, and the rear amenity space retained for no. 14 would exceed the stipulations of the Design Guide SPD. Although vehicle movements between no.s 11 and 14 would be increased, neither property had ground floor habitable windows facing the proposed access road, and existing closeboard fencing between the dwelling at no. 11 and the site access would provide screening. The use of gravel would also be

precluded *via* a planning condition in order to prevent noise and disturbance from vehicle movements. A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and piling foundations planning condition would minimise disturbance during the construction phase. The proposed development was therefore considered to comply with policy ENV2 of the Local Plan 2015.

- **Character and appearance** – the plot sizes and the density of the proposals were comparable with existing development in the immediate area. The plot sizes exceeded the 300sqm minimum requirement in the Design Guide SPD, and at ~20% the plot coverage also bettered the maximum 33% plot coverage requirement. The design of the two proposed dwellings, together with the materials palette, was considered to represent a high quality, sympathetic and complementary development which would not be prominent within the street-scene of The Avenue. Plot 1 would be visible from the street-scene due to its position in relation to the access road, whereas Plot 2 would be screened from view by the existing properties along The Avenue. The proposed dwellings were not considered to result in visual harm to the character or appearance of the area and were therefore considered to comply with the Design Guide SPD, the NPPF, and policies ENV1, ENV2 and HOU2 of the Local Plan 2015.
- **Highways, parking and access** – sufficient parking and turning space for each of the two proposed dwellings would be provided, together with off-street parking for no.14 which currently did not benefit from a dropped kerb or off-street parking. The proposed dwellings would be served *via* a 3.05m wide access road from The Avenue with passing bays at either end. Right of access for no. 15 would be safeguarded and, due to the provision of level and bound access to The Avenue, would be enhanced. The Local Highways Authority had raised no objections to the proposal and Building Control had raised no concern with regard to Fire & Rescue Service access to the site. (A sprinkler system within the dwellings would be secured *via* planning condition as a safeguarding measure.) Recent planning history showed other approved properties with access widths of 2.5-3m, in particular the recently-constructed property at 17a The Avenue had a 2.5m wide access road. The proposals were not considered to result in any adverse highway safety concerns and the proposed development was therefore considered to comply with the NPPF and policies COM7 and COM8 of the Local Plan 2015.
- **Biodiversity and ecology** – the application site comprised residential garden land with areas of hardstanding and a line of established trees along the northern boundary; no loss of trees would be required to facilitate the development and consequently there would be no requirement to provide replacement trees. The honey locust tree subject to a Tree Preservation Order in the garden of no. 15 would be safeguarded during the construction phase and, following the re-location of parking spaces that had initially been proposed under the tree's canopy, the Trees Officer had no objections. Soft landscaping and biodiversity enhancement measures, including the provision of bat boxes, bird boxes and hedgehog holes, had been included within the proposals in order to achieve a significant biodiversity net gain. The proposed development was therefore considered to satisfy the requirements of policies ENV1 and ENV7 of the Local Plan 2015, and the Natural Environment SPD.
- **Flood risk and drainage** – the site lay wholly within Flood Zone 1, the area at lowest risk of flooding and where residential development should be

focussed. Soakaways within the rear gardens of the proposed dwellings would be used for surface drainage, as had previously been accepted for 17a The Avenue. For foul drainage, the proposed dwellings would be connected to the mains sewer, with details to be secured by planning condition. The proposed development was therefore considered to comply with policy ENV8 of the Local Plan 2015 and the Flood and Water SPD.

- **Other matters** – due to its residential use the site was considered to represent a low risk of contamination in accordance with policy ENV9. The application site was in a sustainable location and the properties would be constructed using hard-wearing and high-quality materials. Sustainable drainage measures and provision for a biodiversity net gain were also included in the proposal. Concerns had been raised by neighbours regarding the accuracy of the submitted plans, the description of the development, and the quantity of site notices erected. The Local Planning Authority were of the opinion that the plans and description were sufficiently accurate, and that notification and advertisement of the application had been in line with standard practice (direct notification of ten properties in The Avenue and Carter Road, and a site notice on the lamppost in front of 20 The Avenue adjacent to a pedestrian route to Martins Road).

In summary, the application site was a sustainable location within the development envelope for Burwell. The proposals would provide a high level of residential amenity and a safe and acceptable means of vehicular and pedestrian access whilst maintain the existing right of access for no. 15. The proposals were acceptable in terms of flood risk, drainage, climate change and contamination, and would provide a net biodiversity gain in addition to protecting the existing biodiversity within and around the application site. The application was considered to comply with the policies in the Local Plan 2015, the Supplementary Planning Documents, and the NPPF and was therefore recommended for approval.

The Chairman thanked the Officer for her report and invited James Chilvers and Barry Garwood, immediate site neighbours at 15 and 11 The Avenue, to address the Committee as objectors to the application. They highlighted their concerns as follows:

- Highway safety – the report mentioned that the narrow width of the access would discourage vehicles from travelling at speed but that did not address the concern, particularly for the shared pedestrian access to the rear of no. 15. A parking space for no. 14 was referenced but not shown on the plans, therefore there was concern that it could encroach on to the access and cause an obstruction.
- Density – the neighbouring properties referenced in the report to illustrate the density in the immediate area had centred on those with smaller gardens, rather than those with larger gardens to the east.
- Ecological impact – there would be disturbance of the wildlife and bats in the area and, although there were bats in the immediate area, no bat survey had been submitted.
- Noise – vehicles would be passing within 2m of the only access door for no. 11. There was only 3m between the building at no. 14 and the boundary fence belonging to no. 11, therefore access would be difficult and there would be no space for delivery vehicles to turn. The noise and fumes of passing and idling vehicles would be harmful to no.11 if they wanted to have their only door open.

- Overlooking – the new buildings would overlook 11 The Avenue, the terrace of 14-17 The Avenue, and properties on Carter Road to the rear of the site.
- Precedent – 17a The Avenue had been mentioned but since it was considered by residents to be a blight to the neighbourhood its precedence should not be considered favourably. The residents at 11 and 14-16 The Avenue had not been consulted regarding the plans for 17a; if they had been then they would have objected. Due to the angles of the gardens in relation to the dwellings, 17a could not be seen from the rear of its neighbours' properties whereas the proposed bungalows would be unavoidable from their immediate neighbours.
- Local housing requirement – 350 new homes in Burwell were already being built off Newmarket Road which was a more than adequate provision for the village. The location of the proposal under consideration was not suitable for development because of its narrow access and associated safety, especially for young children.

The Chairman then invited questions from Members for the objectors.

Cllr David Ambrose Smith questioned the lack of consultation that had been mentioned and James Chilvers clarified that the comment had been in reference to 17a The Avenue rather than the current application.

In response to a question from Cllr Edwards, James Chilvers explained that no. 15 had right of way across the rear of no. 14 and that this shared access was very regularly used by his young children and their friends as well as by the whole family on foot, with bicycles, and to move kayaks and wheelie bins to and from the rear garden. He was therefore very concerned about the safety of this becoming a shared vehicular access point.

Cllr Every commented that she had visited the site at midday and had found the street to be congested around the roundabout due to the parking arrangements. She asked whether this situation was worse outside standard working hours. James Chilvers agreed that the road could get very busy and that it was particularly difficult to get around the roundabout during weekends and evenings. He commented that there was limited parking available and the current residents of no. 14 often parked on the kerbside obstructing his driveway and access for couriers and delivery vehicles. Despite one property currently being unoccupied, the parking in the immediate vicinity was already at capacity.

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Trapp to the meeting and confirmed that he was satisfied that Cllr Trapp had been present for the majority of the item and was therefore able to participate in the debate and the voting. Cllr Trapp apologised for arriving late to the meeting, confirmed that he had visited the site that morning and had not experienced any difficulty driving around, and asked for clarification about the neighbouring properties and their gardens. James Chilvers explained that there was a mixture of single-storey and two-storey buildings, and that the gardens for the two-storey properties at 15-17 The Avenue were angled away from the houses such that, from the rear, each house had sight of their neighbour's garden rather than their own.

On the invitation of the Chairman, Keith Hutchinson (agent for the applicant) addressed the Committee. He thanked the Case Officer for her full and

comprehensive report and emphasised that the proposed development was not intended as a speculative venture; the applicant's brother lived at no. 14 and it was likely that their grandmother would occupy one of the proposed bungalows since there was a clear need for single storey dwellings in the village. The proposal was in accordance with the policies of the Local Plan regarding sustainable development within development envelopes of settlements with sufficient provision of facilities. He acknowledged that it would be a form of back-land development but the Design Guide SPD allowed for that where contextual information was provided, as detailed in paragraph 7.4 of the Officer's report. Following a pre-application discussion with Officers, the application had included a contextual analysis of The Avenue and surrounding area. Regarding the impact of the development on the immediate area, Members' attention was drawn to the property at 17a The Avenue as well as other similar developments in the vicinity as shown on the block plan. The hedges and trees would be retained and the bungalows were modest in scale and proportion whilst having appropriate amenities. There would be no overlooking or overbearing since they were both single-storey with a shallow roof. In terms of the access road, it would be constructed of a bound material to reduce noise and there would be likely to be fewer than 14 traffic movements per day, therefore there would be no adverse effects. Adequate parking and turning would be provided, the Local Highways Authority had no objections, and the Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service had not commented. The development would be in keeping with its surroundings and there were no policy or technical reasons for refusal.

There were no questions from Members for the applicant's agent.

The Democratic Services Officer then read aloud the following statement supplied by Ward Member Cllr David Brown:

"Dear Chairman and Members,

My apologies that I cannot be with you this afternoon. I ask that you take the following comments into account when discussing Agenda item 6, 21/00794/FUL, the proposed erection of two private detached dwellings to the rear of 14 The Avenue, Burwell.

I ask Committee to refuse this application.

My primary reason for asking you to refuse this application is the fact that the access road is too narrow to meet the requirements of Building Regulations. Just because the Fire and Rescue Service has not responded to requests for comment should not, in my opinion, be taken to mean that the Fire and Rescue Service is content with the design and layout. I am concerned that the narrowness of the access road puts the safety of people including the neighbours, who have pedestrian rights along the access road, at risk.

I do not believe that Committee should be overriding the requirements of the Building Regulations, they are there for a reason.

I also understand and share the concerns of local residents and Burwell Parish Council and ask you to take their objections into consideration when debating the application.

Thank you for your time and please refuse this application."

The Case Officer had no further comments; the Chairman therefore invited questions from Members.

Cllr Trapp asked for further clarification regarding the parking arrangements for the proposed dwellings and for 14 The Avenue. Referring to the block plan, the Case Officer highlighted the two car parking spaces per proposed bungalow and the proposed cycle parking which could be reached *via* the side access for each property. Regarding the parking for no. 14, she explained that there was currently no dropped kerb or on-site provision, instead the residents parked on the roundabout in common with neighbouring properties. It was considered that the design of the proposed development and provision of a dropped kerb would provide sufficient space for one vehicle to park on-site for no. 14. In response to Cllr Trapp's observation that the garden space for no. 14 would be greatly reduced, the Case Officer accepted that it would be a notable reduction but explained that this size had been accepted at 17a The Avenue, and at 60 sqm it would exceed the minimum acceptable size of 50 sqm.

Following the concerns raised in Cllr Brown's earlier statement, Cllr Downey asked about the lack of response from Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service. The Case Officer explained that they had been consulted three times but had not received a reply, she had therefore deferred to Building Control who had stated that they would not object to the access on fire access and safety grounds. A planning condition was also proposed regarding the provision of sprinklers in the bungalows in order to address fire safety concerns. The Planning Manager added that sprinklers were not usually required by condition but in this case were proposed in recognition that it was a constrained access; a similar planning condition had previously been used in applications for similar sites.

Cllr David Ambrose Smith asked how the height of the proposed bungalows compared to the height of the existing neighbouring bungalow at 11 The Avenue. Referring again to the submitted block plan, the Case Officer informed Members that the ridge heights of the proposed bungalows would be 1.81m below the ridge height of no. 11, 3.92m below the ridge heights of no.s 14-17, and 2.05m below that of no. 17a.

The Chairman then opened the debate.

Cllr Downey stated that he considered the application to be a sensible proposal wholly within the development envelope of the village. Regarding highway safety and access, the proposal was for two bungalows each with two parking spaces and was therefore within policy, and Building Control had stated that the access arrangements would be satisfactory. Concerns regarding overlooking and privacy were not credible since the proposed dwellings would be low, screened by a fence, and with a planning condition to prevent conversion or extension for a second floor. He therefore proposed approval of the application since there were no substantive planning reasons to refuse it. When asked by the Chairman whether he had visited the site, he stated that he had not. Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith added that, although she had not visited the site, the Officer's report together with the plans and photographs showed that there would be little harm from two modest and discreet bungalows that would be likely to appeal to older residents.

Cllr Edwards proposed refusal of the application due to the Parish Council's comments, the issues raised in Cllr Brown's submitted statement, the views of the local residents, and general concern in the area. 17a The Avenue had been referred to several times but was a single dwelling, rather than two properties as proposed for this site, and was therefore not comparable.

Cllr Every commented that having visited the site she had concerns about the access and, whilst she understood that the development included an opportunity for additional parking for no. 14, there was no guarantee that it would be used. She therefore supported Cllr Brown's call-in reason that the proposals would be detrimental to highway safety given the number of dwellings proposed.

Cllr Trapp queried whether a condition could be imposed regarding the parking provision for no. 14. The Case Officer replied that the land was within the red line for the application and a condition could therefore be included but she reminded Members that the application included a new access for the property which currently had no allocated parking provision. The Planning Manager added that the proposed development could not be held accountable for the existing parking situation. Two parking spaces would be provided for each proposed dwelling and no existing parking spaces were being removed. Cllr Trapp added that he had visited the site and, although he understood that two dwellings could be considered to represent slight overdevelopment, they would both be modest in size with a low ridge height. He seconded Cllr Downey's motion to approve the proposal.

With no further Members wishing to speak, the Chairman stated his perspective. Having visited the site on a Saturday afternoon he found the approach to be very tight with a large number of parked vehicles, and consequently felt that there would be a cumulative effect on the traffic situation if more properties were added. He considered that the proposal would lead to overdevelopment and would affect the character and appearance of the area. The access between the existing houses was severely restricted and he had sympathies for the resident at no. 11 should the development go ahead. He also noted the significant loss of amenity that would occur to no. 14 when considering the proposed remaining rear outside space as compared with its existing plot.

Upon being put to the vote, Cllr Downey's motion to approve the application was lost with 4 votes in favour, 5 votes against, and 0 abstentions.

Cllr Edwards confirmed her earlier proposal to refuse the application on the grounds of the access road being too narrow, the proposed development representing overdevelopment and being out of character for the area and street-scene, the parking issues on the street, and the amenity loss to 14 The Avenue. Cllr Every seconded the motion. The Planning Manager reiterated that the Local Highways Authority had not objected to the planning application, and that the existing parking arrangements would not be valid planning reasons for refusal and that the application proposed two parking spaces for each proposed dwelling, in accordance with policy. Cllr Edwards, with the agreement of Cllr Every, revised the motion to propose three reasons for refusing the application; overdevelopment, being out of character for the local area, and restricted access.

It was resolved, with 5 votes in favour, 4 votes against, and 0 abstentions:

That planning application ref 21/00794/FUL be REFUSED on the grounds that it would constitute overdevelopment, would be out of character for the local area, and would have restricted access.

41. PLANNING PERFORMANCE REPORT – AUGUST 2021

Rebecca Saunt, Planning Manager, presented a report (W81, previously circulated) summarising the performance of the Planning Department in August 2021. She drew Members' attention to the high case load and emphasised that Officers were all dealing with more applications than had been the norm. Two appeals had been dismissed and a third was due to be heard at an appeal hearing on 9th November. The outstanding appeal related to a delegated decision to refuse permission for an agricultural worker's dwelling at Hurst Farm, West Fen Road, Ely. This had in turn been a resubmission of a previous application that had been refused at Committee. Enforcement complaints were lower than for 2020 which reflected the department's early and proactive engagement in ensuring compliance with planning conditions.

The Chairman emphasised the impact of COVID-19 on the work of the department and the pressure that the Planning Officers were under. He thanked them for their hard work, excellent performance and the department's good management.

It was resolved:

That the Planning Performance Report for August 2021 be noted.

The meeting concluded at 2:33pm.