
MAIN CASE

Reference No: 16/00500/OUT

Proposal: Outline application for two storey residential dwelling, garaging, parking, access and associated site works

Site Address: Land South Of Hodsons Farm Hasse Road Soham
Cambridgeshire

Applicant: Mr C J Murfitt

Case Officer: Oli Haydon, Planning Officer

Parish: Soham

Ward: Soham North
Ward Councillor/s: Councillor James Palmer
Councillor Carol Sennitt

Date Received: 11 April 2016 **Expiry Date:** 9 November 2016

[R101]

1.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

1.1 Members are requested to REFUSE this application for the following reasons:

1. The proposed additional dwelling is located within the countryside and, by virtue of its distance from the main settlement of Soham, is considered to be in an unsustainable location. The proposal does not promote sustainable forms of transport and the future residents of this additional dwelling will be reliant on motor vehicles in order to access any local services or facilities. The proposal does not meet any of the special circumstances as identified in Paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The proposal fails to comply with the Policies GROWTH 5 and COM7 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 and Paragraphs 14 and 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework, as it fails to promote sustainable development.

2.0 **SUMMARY OF APPLICATION**

2.1 Outline planning permission is being sought, with some matters reserved, for the erection of a new dwelling and detached garage. Matters of access, layout and scale are to be considered as part of this application, however matters relating to appearance and landscaping are reserved.

2.1 The full planning application, plans and documents submitted by the Applicant can be viewed online via East Cambridgeshire District Council's Public Access online service, via the following link <http://pa.eastcambs.gov.uk/online-applications/>. **Alternatively a paper copy is available to view at the East Cambridgeshire District Council offices, in the application file.**

2.2 This application has been called in to Planning Committee by Councillor James Palmer as it is viewed that Hasse Road, like many other similar roads in East Cambs, is completely sustainable and has been a residential area for generations. Cllr Palmer believes that the inspector's views are not relevant in this semi-rural district.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 No relevant planning history.

4.0 THE SITE AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

4.1 The site is located in the open countryside to the east of Soham, approximately 1.5 miles from the established development framework for Soham. The site is located along Hasse Road, a 60mph road which runs from the A142 on the edge of Soham to the convergence of Northfield Road and Great Fen Road, 2 miles north of Soham. Hasse Road is characterised by extremely sporadic residential dwellings, farm complexes and light-industrial uses.

4.2 The development site is located adjacent to Hodsons Farm, a small complex of barns and disused farm buildings to the north, and a residential dwelling to the south. 100m to the north is a large stud complex containing staff dwellings referred to as Freda Vinrye Stables in previous planning applications.

5.0 RESPONSES FROM CONSULTEES

5.1 Responses were received from the following consultees and these are summarised below. The full responses are available on the Council's web site.

Soham Parish Council - The Committee noted that the development was not associated with the original purpose and therefore consideration should be made in regards to condition of inhabitation set subsequently on this dwelling.

Ward Councillors - Councillor James Palmer took the view that Hasse Road, like many other similar roads in East Cambs, is completely sustainable and has been a residential area for generations. Cllr Palmer believes that the inspector's views are not relevant in this semi-rural district.

The Ely Group Of Internal Drainage Board – The District has no residual capacity to accept direct discharged of surface water from the site into watercourses within the District. This application states that water will be discharged into a watercourse. Therefore, the Board would wish to see the detailed design for drainage at the full planning stage.

CCC Growth & Development - No Comments Received

Local Highways Authority – No objections in principle to this application. The inter-vehicle visibility splays are entirely within the adopted highway and this information is therefore not required. A condition should be placed on any approval to ensure that the maneuvering area is maintained free of any obstruction.

Waste Strategy (ECDC) - East Cambs will not enter private property to collect waste or recycling, therefore it would be the responsibility of the owners/residents to take any sacks/bins to the public highway boundary on the relevant collection day. East Cambridgeshire District Council as a Waste Collection Authority is permitted to make a charge for the provision of waste collection receptacles.

- 5.2 A site notice was displayed, advert placed in the Cambridge Evening News and two neighbouring properties have been notified of the application. However, no representations have been received.

6.0 The Planning Policy Context

6.1 East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015

GROWTH 2	Locational strategy
GROWTH 3	Infrastructure requirements
GROWTH 5	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
ENV 1	Landscape and settlement character
ENV 2	Design
ENV 4	Energy efficiency and renewable energy in construction
ENV 7	Biodiversity and geology
ENV 8	Flood risk
COM 7	Transport impact
COM 8	Parking provision

6.2 Supplementary Planning Documents

Design Guide
Developer Contributions and Planning Obligations

6.3 National Planning Policy Framework 2012

- 6 Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes
- 7 Requiring good design
- 10 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- 11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

7.0 PLANNING COMMENTS

- 7.1 The main issues to consider when determining this application relate to the principle of development, the impacts upon character and appearance of the area, ecology, highway safety and residential amenity.

7.2 Principle of development

- 7.2.1 The application site lies outside of the defined development boundary. The development of the site for housing would therefore conflict with Policy GROWTH 2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan which seeks to focus new housing development within defined settlement boundaries. However as the Council cannot currently demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing land, Policy GROWTH 2 cannot be considered up to date in so far as it relates to the supply of housing land. In this situation, the presumption in favour of development set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) means that permission for development should be granted unless any adverse impacts of so doing would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits or specific policies in the Framework indicate that development should be restricted.
- 7.2.2 Paragraph 55 of the NPPF states that isolated new homes in the countryside should be avoided unless there are special circumstances. This site is considered to be isolated from any built settlement, being 1.5 miles from the nearest settlement of Soham. The site is located along a 60mph road in a rural location. It is therefore considered to be an unsustainable location for the erection of a new dwelling, similar to the conclusions of the Inspector in a recent appeal decision which forms a material consideration to be given significant weight in determining this application.
- 7.2.3 The appeal decision bears similarities with this proposal and followed the refusal by the Planning Committee for two dwellings at 14 The Cotes, located 1.8 miles north of Soham, in an isolated cluster of dwellings. The proposed development site in this case is some 1.5 miles east of Soham and 2.2 miles from the centre of Soham where local shops and services are located.
- 7.2.4 The recently received appeal decision for The Cotes in Soham (APP/V0510/W/16/3143840) cited the location as unsustainable due to the reliance on the car. The appeal stated that “both (sites) would be reliant on the car to gain access to services and facilities. This would not accord with the Framework or the environmental dimension of sustainable development” and “the isolation of the sites from community facilities would weigh against the social dimension and would not accord with paragraph 55 of the Framework regarding the location of rural housing”. Furthermore, the appeal also stated “given the distance of the sites from local facilities and the unsuitability of the road for pedestrian access, I conclude on this issue that the occupiers of the proposed dwellings would be highly reliant on the car to gain access to services and facilities”. As previously stated, the Cotes is approximately 1.8 miles to the centre of Soham, and this application site is 1.5 miles from the edge of Soham and 2.2 miles from the centre of Soham where local shops and services are located.
- 7.2.5 It is considered that the proposal is contrary to Local Plan policy COM7 which requires that development is designed to reduce the need to travel, particularly by car, and to promote sustainable forms of transport. This site is located 2.2 miles from the centre of Soham and, as such, the Local Planning Authority view it as unsustainable as there are a number of sites within Soham which are in a more sustainable location and are either allocated for development or could be windfall sites. The proposal is located within the parish of one of the market towns where

growth should be focused in a sustainable location in accordance with the inspector's decision.

7.2.6 This proposal differs from residential permissions granted in the small rural settlements in the District. This is due to the fact that encouraging growth at these rural sites will improve their sustainability and since they are presently reliant on nearby villages and reliant on the car already; the introduction of new dwellings ultimately helps their long-term sustainability and keeps these communities alive. The NPPF supports this by stating in paragraph 55 that development can support services in a village nearby and that isolated new homes in the countryside should be resisted unless there are special circumstances.

7.2.7 It should be noted that the plot size is approximately 1200m² which is well in-excess of the guidelines of 300m² plot size as set out in the Design Guide SPD 2012.

7.3 Visual Amenity

7.3.1 The area surrounding the application site is predominantly rural in nature in a small cluster of residential dwellings surrounded by agricultural fields. The application site is currently an open agricultural field with surrounding farm buildings and small residential dwellings.

7.3.2 Policy ENV1 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 requires new development proposals to demonstrate that their location creates positive, complementary relationships with existing development and protects, conserves, and where possible enhances space between settlements and their wider landscape setting. Furthermore, Policy ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 requires all new development proposals to respect the landscape of the surrounding area and ensure the location of buildings relates sympathetically to the surrounding area

7.3.3 Due to the matter of appearance being reserved, no details of the design of the proposed dwelling will be considered. The indicative design is one of a large, two-storey dwelling with several positive design elements and features that resemble the scattered residential dwellings located in the vicinity. The proposed layout and scale of the dwelling is not out of character with the surrounding residential properties and it is not likely to harm the rural nature of the immediate area. The proposed dwelling will not occupy more than a third of the plot size, in line with the guidelines of the SPD Design Guide.

7.3.4 On balance, it is considered that the proposed dwelling in this location would not cause significant and demonstrable harm to the rural character and appearance of the area in line with Policies ENV1 and ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 and Paragraphs 14, 17 and 56-68 of the NPPF.

7.4 Residential Amenity

7.4.1 The proposed dwellings would be distanced sufficiently from the neighbouring Number 28 to prevent any significant adverse impacts upon the residential amenity of this neighbouring property. The site also has sufficient space to accommodate the dwelling with an acceptable level of amenity as set out in the SPD Design

Guide. It is therefore considered that the proposal accords with Policy ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 in respect of residential amenity.

7.5 Highways

- 7.5.1 The submitted plans demonstrate that adequate parking and turning could be achieved for at least 2 domestic cars within the plot. The vehicular access benefits from adequate visibility onto Hasse Road and Cambridgeshire County Council Highways have raised no objections in principle, subject to conditions relating to maintenance of an unobstructed access onto the site.

7.6 Ecology

- 7.6.1 In order to protect and enhance species in accordance with policies ENV1, ENV2 and ENV7 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015, a condition should be placed on any approval to ensure that measures to enhance the biodiversity in the vicinity are installed prior to occupation of the development.

7.7 Flood Risk and Drainage

- 7.7.1 The site is located in Flood Zone 1 (albeit adjacent to Flood Zone 3) and is not therefore considered to be at high risk of flooding. Any planning permission granted will be subject to a condition requiring a detailed drainage strategy to be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

7.8 Trees

- 7.8.1 The applicant has stated that, although there are several trees on the perimeter of the site, they will not be impacted upon as a result of the development. At the reserved matters application stage, a scheme to assimilate the development into its surroundings will be submitted.

7.9 Planning Balance

- 7.9.1 The proposal would provide the following benefits:- the provision of an additional residential dwelling to the district's housing stock which would be built to modern, sustainable building standards and the positive contribution to the local and wider economy in the short term through construction work.
- 7.9.2 However, it is considered that these benefits would be outweighed by the significant and demonstrable harm which would be caused by the siting of an additional dwelling in an unsustainable location and increasing reliance on the car to gain access to services and facilities.
- 7.9.3 In conclusion, this proposal is in conflict with Policies GROWTH5, ENV1, ENV2 and COM7 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 and would counterbalance the recent conclusions of the Planning Inspectorate.

8.0 APPENDICES

- 8.1 Appendix 1 - Appeal Decision - APP/V0510/W/16/3143840 - The Cotes, Soham

<u>Background Documents</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Officer(s)</u>
16/00500/OUT	Oli Haydon Room No. 011 The Grange Ely	Oli Haydon Planning Officer 01353 665555 oli.haydon@eastcambs.gov.uk

National Planning Policy Framework -

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf

East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 -

<http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Local%20Plan%20April%202015%20-%20front%20cover%20and%20inside%20front%20cover.pdf>