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**MAIN CASE**

**Reference No:** 17/00373/OUT

**Proposal:** Proposed bungalow, garaging, parking, access and associated site works.

**Site Address:** Land Adj To Phoenix Barcham Road Soham Ely  
Cambridgeshire CB7 5TU

**Applicant:** Mr And Mrs R Bramley

**Case Officer:** David Gibson, Planning Officer

**Parish:** Soham

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

**Date Received:** 7 March 2017      **Expiry Date:** 08 May 2017

[R281]

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1.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

1.1 Members are requested to REFUSE planning permission for the following reasons:

1. The proposed site is not considered to be sustainably located and would have negative effects on the environmental and social roles of sustainability.

The site is located outside of the development framework at a distance of approx. 0.6 miles from the nearest part of Soham's development envelope, and approx. 2 miles from the closest part of the town centre.

There is a bus stop at a distance of approx. a third of a mile from the site along a 60mph road (Barcham Road) with no pedestrian footpaths. This road is also used to access Soham. Barcham Road is not considered a safe route for pedestrians, and would lead to a reliance on vehicular transport to access facilities by the future occupiers of the dwellings. The contribution to the housing supply by one additional dwelling would be modest, as would the short-term benefit to the construction trade.

The unsustainable location does not accord with paragraphs 35 and 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) or policy GROWTH 5 of the East Cambridgeshire District Council Local Plan 2015. The adverse impacts of the proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits to the construction trade and housing supply.

2. There is considered to be a negative impact on the character of the area from the development of dwellings opposite each other, as this is not the existing character of the streetscene. It is considered that having dwellings on both sides of the road would contribute to a sense of enclosing that part of Barcham Road, does not make a complementary relationship with the wider landscape setting or preserve the streetscene, and therefore would cause significant and demonstrable harm to the rural and open character of the area. The proposal, therefore, does not comply with Policies ENV1 and ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire District Local Plan 2015.

## 2.0 SUMMARY OF APPLICATION

2.1 The application seeks outline planning permission for the erection of a single bungalow. Matters relating to access and scale are to be considered.

2.2 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.**

2.3 The application was called in on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2017 by Cllr. James Palmer as he considers it to be a sustainable location.

## 3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

|     |              |  |         |            |
|-----|--------------|--|---------|------------|
| 3.1 | 17/00374/OUT | Proposed bungalow, garaging, parking, access and associated works. | Refused | 15.08.2017 |
|-----|--------------|--|---------|------------|

## 4.0 THE SITE AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

4.1 The site is located north of Soham, outside the development envelope. Barcham Road is a single car-width road with no pedestrian footpaths, leading from the A142 along the edges of agricultural fields. Dwellings and rural businesses are regularly spaced along Barcham Road in the vicinity of this site.

4.2 Residential properties of differing styles, sizes and designs are located directly to the north and east of the site. Planning permission (16/01751/OUT) was recently approved by Planning Committee for 2no. bungalows to the north of the site at 'Land To North East Klere View Barcham Road'

4.3 The northern edge of Soham's development envelope is approx. a third of a mile away, and the closest part of the town centre boundary is approx. 2 miles away.

4.4 The site is currently used as paddock. It has an area of 0.1 Hectare.

## 5.0 RESPONSES FROM CONSULTEES

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

Parish - No objections to the development

Ward Councillors - Cllr James Palmer has requested the application goes to Committee as he feels it is a sustainable location.

Local Highways Authority - No objections in principle to this application. It should be noted at this time that I am concerned with the increasing number of new dwellings along Barcham Road. There is a lack of infrastructure, sustainable travel and highway amenities. Although speeds are low, this is a 60mph road, this is a single track road and there is no lighting or footways. Should this incremental development continue it is likely it will result in the detriment to highways safety an increase in vehicle and pedestrian conflict and be unaligned with the ECDC Sustainability policies.

CCC Growth & Development - No Comments Received

Senior Trees Officer - No objections to the development. The trees that would be affected are not significant.

Waste Strategy (ECDC) - No objections. Standard advice on distances that occupants should have to take waste bins, bin collection information, bin requirements per household, and payment methods.

Drainage Board – Consent would be required for drainage into the ditch

5.2 Neighbours – A site notice was erected adjacent to the site. 2 neighbouring properties were notified directly and the responses received are summarised below. A full copy of the responses are available on the Council's website.

Preivale – Infrastructure is inadequate unless there is improvement to road, drainage, telephone and broadband electricity and water.

Phoenix and Klere View, Barcham Road – Development does not conform to local plan as is outside development envelope. Road is single track with no footpaths, due to the distance to Soham, a car is necessary. Residents driveways are being used as pull in places due to the nature of the road. Impact to neighbouring homes would be high due to deliveries and workmen. Permission will need to be granted to the electricity supply. Dwelling built on paddock in the countryside. It is not in a sustainable location. Out of character with the streetscene as there are no other

dwelling that overlook each other. The dwelling will be accessed by a ditch at the front. This will require correct piping as at present it is not well maintained.

## 6.0 The Planning Policy Context

### 6.1 East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| GROWTH 1 | Levels of housing, employment and retail growth        |
| GROWTH 2 | Locational strategy                                    |
| GROWTH 4 | Delivery of growth                                     |
| GROWTH 5 | Presumption in favour of sustainable development       |
| HOU 2    | Housing density  |
| 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   |
| ENV 9    | Pollution  |
| COM 7    | Transport impact                                       |
| COM 8    | Parking provision                                      |

### 6.2 Supplementary Planning Documents

Design Guide  
Developer Contributions and Planning Obligations  
Contaminated Land - Guidance on submitted Planning Application on land that may be contaminated  
Cambridge Flood and Water

### 6.3 National Planning Policy Framework 2012

- 11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- 7 Requiring good design
- 6 Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

### 6.4 Planning Practice Guidance

## 7.0 PLANNING COMMENTS

The main considerations in relation to this application are the principle of development, the visual impact on the rural character of the area, residential amenity, transport impact, ecological impact, and drainage.

### 7.1 Principle of Development

The Council has recently refused full planning permission for a bungalow and a detached double garage (16/00754/FUL) on the grounds of the site being in an unsustainable location. This therefore forms an important material consideration when assessing this application.

- 7.2 The Council is not currently able to demonstrate that it has an adequate five year supply of land for housing. Therefore, all Local Plan policies relating to the supply of housing must be considered out of date and housing applications assessed in terms of the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. This means that development proposals should be approved unless any adverse effects of the development significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. It should be noted that all other local plan policies and relevant material considerations remain relevant and form part of the planning balance for this application.
- 7.3 The benefits of this application are considered to be: the positive contribution of the provision of one additional dwelling to the district's housing stock, and the positive contribution to the local and wider economy in the short term through the construction of the new dwelling.
- 7.4 The application site is located outside Soham town and approx. a third of a mile from the nearest part of Soham's development envelope, and approx. 2 miles from the closest part of the town centre. Barcham Road is a 60mph road with no pedestrian footpaths. There is a limited bus service currently with the closets stop on the A142 and linking with Newmarket, Ely and Cambridge. This would mean that occupants of the proposed dwelling are very likely to depend on a vehicle to access the services of the town and beyond.
- 7.5 Paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside; this proposal also does not meet any of the exceptions detailed in that paragraph. Paragraph 35 also encourages development to protect and exploit opportunities for sustainable transport. For the purposes of assessing the proposal in relation to the presumption in favour of sustainable development, the site is therefore not considered to be in an environmentally or socially sustainable location and is contrary to policy GROWTH 5 of the Local Plan and paragraphs 35 and 55 of the NPPF.
- 7.6 An application (16/1751/FUL) for two bungalows opposite to the proposed site was recommended for refusal by Officers on the grounds of unsustainable location and visual intrusion and was approved by Planning Committee in March 2017. Members are also aware of recent appeal decisions which have upheld the Local Planning Authorities decision to refuse planning permission on the grounds of an unsustainable location. This is also a material planning consideration.
- 7.7 The proposal is, therefore, considered to be contrary to the requirement of the NPPF to deliver sustainable development.
- 7.8 Visual Amenity and character  
The existing streetscene on this part of Barcham Road is generally characterised by single storey dwellings at staggered intervals so that no dwelling is directly opposite another, with detached garages to the sides. The openness of the agricultural land also forms part of the character of the area.
- 7.9 The proposed single-storey scale of the dwelling (4.6 metres) is in keeping with the streetscene, and the proposed layout of the garage being detached and to the side

is also generally in keeping with those dwellings in the vicinity. The footprint of the proposed dwelling looks to be a little bit larger than the dwellings in the immediate vicinity but not overly so. However, whilst there are no significant concerns regarding the scale, there is considered to be a negative impact on the character of the area from the development of dwellings opposite each other, as this is not the existing character of the streetscene. It is considered that having dwellings on both sides of the road would contribute to a sense of enclosing to that part of Barcham Road, it would not be consistent with the rural and open character of the area.

7.10 Residential Amenity

Whilst design is a Reserved Matter, some assessment can be made of the impact on residential amenity at this stage. The proposed scale of single storey, and distances to neighbouring dwellings (approx. 30m to Klere View, approx. 25m to Phoenix) mean that there are not considered to be any significant concerns regarding impact on the residential amenity of these properties. Whilst there are no concerns at this stage regarding residential amenity and compliance with policy ENV2, any future Reserved Matters application would still be assessed against this policy.

- 7.11 To protect neighbours from unreasonable levels of disruption and therefore comply with policy ENV2, the construction and delivery times proposed by the Environmental Health Officer will be conditioned if planning approval is granted.

7.12 Highways

No objections have been received from the Local Highways Authority as the required visibility can be achieved without removal of the front boundary hedge. However, they have raised concerns with the increasing number of new dwellings along Barcham Road. They have stated that there is a lack of infrastructure, sustainable travel and highway amenities. Whilst they acknowledge that speeds are low, they highlight that Barcham Road is a 60mph road, is single track and there is no lighting or footways. They go on to state that should this incremental development continue it is likely it will result in the detriment to highways safety an increase in vehicle and pedestrian conflict and be unaligned with the ECDC Sustainability policies. Based on the above, the application is considered to accord with Policies COM7 and of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan but future development may raise objections from the Local Highways Authority.

7.14 Ecology

With the characteristics of the site it is not considered that a detailed biodiversity investigation is required. Some of the front hedge is proposed to be removed to allow for the access to each dwelling, and some hedge will be trimmed back to allow visibility splays, however the trees officer considers the hedge to be in a poor condition. The proposed native hedging to form the southern and western boundaries is likely to result in improved biodiversity levels on site, and whilst landscaping is a Reserved Matter, the indicative boundary treatment of native hedging is considered to comply with policy ENV7.

- 7.15 Flood Risk and Drainage  
The site is not within flood zones 2 or 3 so there are no concerns in this regard. The Internal Drainage Board has no objections to make to this application at this stage but would like to be consulted at the reserved matters stage should the application be approved. It is therefore considered to comply with policy ENV8.
- 7.16 Other Material Matters  
The dwelling would have a single garage and two outside parking spaces. These meet with the Design Guide in terms of minimum sizes and therefore comply with policy COM8.
- 7.17 The contamination report submitted with the application was considered sufficient by the environmental health officer and therefore only the standard condition for reporting of unexpected land contamination during construction would be applied if permission were granted. This complies with policy ENV9
- 7.18 Planning Balance  
The location outside of the development envelope and on a road with no footpaths is not considered to meet the social and environmental aspects of sustainability expected by the NPPF, nor is the dwelling proposed for special circumstances as outlined in paragraph 55 of the NPPF. Therefore whilst the development would bring modest benefit to the housing supply and construction trade, no significant impacts on highway safety at this time, acceptable residential amenity, ecology, flooding or pollution, the location is considered as unsustainable and therefore unacceptable. In addition, the proposed development would be at odds with the existing character of the streetscene, which would contribute to a sense of enclosure of this part of the road causing harm to the character of the area.
- 7.19 It is requested that Members refuse this application for the above reasons.

| <u>Background Documents</u>  | <u>Location</u>                            | <u>Contact Officer(s)</u>                        |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| 17/00373/OUT                 | David Gibson<br>Room No. 011<br>The Grange | David Gibson<br>Planning Officer<br>01353 665555 |
| 17/00374/OUT<br>87/01306/FUL | Ely  | David.Gibson@east<br>cambs.gov.uk                |

National Planning Policy Framework -  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](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>