



EAST
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning Committee
held in the Council Chamber, The Grange, Nutholt Lane,
Ely on Wednesday, 7th December 2016 at 2.00pm.

P R E S E N T

Councillor Joshua Schumann (Chairman)
Councillor Sue Austen
Councillor Derrick Beckett
Councillor Ian Bovingdon
Councillor David Chaplin
Councillor Paul Cox
Councillor Bill Hunt (Substitute for Councillor Lisa Stubbs)
Councillor Tom Hunt
Councillor Mike Rouse

OFFICERS

Hannah Edwards – Planning & Highways Lawyer
Barbara Greengrass – Senior Planning Officer
Catherine Looper – Planning Officer
Janis Murfet – Democratic Services Officer
Andrew Phillips – Senior Planning Officer
Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor Anna Bailey
Councillor Julia Huffer
23 members of the public attended the meeting.

67. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lavinia Edwards and Lisa Stubbs.

It was noted that Councillor Bill Hunt would substitute for Councillor Stubbs for the duration of this meeting.

The Committee also noted that with regard to November's meeting, Councillor Bovingdon had texted his apologies, but they were not noted in time to be announced at that meeting.

68. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Austen declared a personal interest in Agenda Item No. 7 (16/00849/FUM, Land to Rear of 1 to 7 Sutton Road, Witchford), saying that

her daughter lived in Sutton Road, although not in close proximity to the application site.

69. MINUTES

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 2nd November 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

70. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

For the benefit of all those who had registered to speak at the meeting, the Chairman explained the procedure and how the 'traffic lights' system worked.

71. 16/00403/FUL – LAND SOUTH OF 36 NEWMARKET ROAD, FORDHAM, CB7 5LL

Barbara Greengrass, Senior Planning Officer, presented a report (R153, previously circulated) which sought consent to erect two detached dwellings with detached double garages.

The application had been amended since submission to omit the front projections and to overcome objections raised by the County Highway Authority.

It was noted that the application had been called in to Planning Committee by Councillor Julia Huffer.

On a point of housekeeping Members were asked to note that a condition relating to the removal of Permitted Development Rights for the properties had been omitted from Appendix 1 to the report.

The site was located just outside of the settlement boundary of Fordham and it formed part of a larger field. The front of the site was bounded by a mature hedge and further to the south was a farm complex. To the north, within the settlement boundary, individual dwellings in spacious plots fronted Newmarket Road.

A number of illustrations were displayed at the meeting. These included a map of the application site, an aerial photograph, a photograph of the street scene along Newmarket Road, the proposal showing the layout of the application site, and the elevations.

The Senior Planning Officer said the key issues for consideration in the determination of this application were:

- Principle of development;
- Visual amenity;

- Residential amenity; and
- Highway safety.

The Council was currently unable to demonstrate a 5 year land supply for housing and therefore the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the NPPF meant that permission for development should be granted unless any adverse impacts would significantly or demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposed dwelling.

Speaking of the principle of development, the Senior Planning Officer reminded Members that although the site was outside of the settlement boundary, it was at the edge and there were other dwellings close by, so it could not be considered isolated. Fordham was a large village with a range of local services and there was also a regular bus service to Ely, Newmarket and Cambridge.

It was considered that the proposal would make a positive, albeit modest, contribution towards the provision of housing in the area and its construction would bring some short term economic benefits. The proposal therefore supported the economic dimension to sustainable development which weighed in favour of the scheme.

With regard to visual amenity, the site fronted Newmarket Road and formed part of a sizeable field of open agricultural land immediately to the south of the settlement boundary. It was very prominent and open when approaching Fordham from a southerly direction and made a valuable contribution to the wider field in which it was situated.

The site, however, benefitted from a mature hedge with hedgerow trees along its frontage and this would help to screen the proposed dwellings from the street scene on approach to the site. Whilst the dwellings would be visible in the landscape, the proposal was not considered to be so visually intrusive that it would cause significant and demonstrable harm to the settlement edge and the character and appearance of the countryside.

Members noted that there would be no loss of residential amenity to adjoining residents, as there would be a sufficient separation distance for each dwelling.

In terms of highway safety, the Committee was reminded that the County Highway Authority had initially recommended refusal of the application, as it was not supported by sufficient highways information to demonstrate that the proposed development would not be prejudicial to highway safety. The application had been amended to overcome these objections by providing an extension to the existing footpath up to the site entrance and showing adequate visibility splays from a joint access to retain as much of the front boundary hedge as possible. This section of the hedge would be removed for a length of 9 metres; a section of hedge further north would also be removed and replaced in order to accommodate the footpath extension.

Speaking of the planning balance, the Senior Planning Officer said that the proposal would provide two additional dwellings to the District's

housing stock and a positive contribution to the local and wider economy in the short term through construction work.

It was considered that the scale and design of the dwellings were sensitive to this edge of settlement location and the proposal would not significantly harm the character and appearance of the area.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Malcolm Roper, a resident of Fordham, read out the following prepared statement:

'The application site adjacent 36 Newmarket Road is outside the development envelope of the village as shown in the adopted Local Plan of April 2015. This is a Greenfield site and will intrude into open countryside.

There is a large mature hedge on the northern boundary defining the natural settlement envelope of the village and new housing development should be within well defined settlement boundaries in accordance with Policy Growth 2.

It is mentioned that ECDC cannot demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing land. This comment should be disregarded. The Council is well advanced with a revised Local Plan and following the 'call for land' Fordham Parish Council have supported areas of land that would provide up to 350 new homes. All these sites are within the village boundaries and do not encroach on any part of the open countryside as this site would. I have to ask the question why the applicants did not put this land forward when the 'call for land' was requested as other major landowners in the village did for discussion by the Parish Council and Parishioners.

In paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy framework it states 'isolated new homes in the countryside should be avoided unless there are special circumstances'. There are no special circumstances. I do not regard the 5 year supply of land issue as a special circumstance with this application as this is being dealt with in the proper manner by ECDC.

In paragraph 17 of the NPPF it seeks to protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. The site is very prominent and open agricultural land when approaching Fordham from a southerly direction. If this development is granted approval it will most certainly have an impact on the character and appearance of the area and will be visible from the public highway. I ask Members of the Committee to take note that the hedge on the eastern boundary north of the access to the site will be removed in its entirety. Not only for the construction of the new footpath but also to achieve the visibility splay as required by the Highways Authority.

I am concerned and believe that if permission is granted a precedent would be established and it would be very difficult for the District Council to refuse any additional applications on any other parts of this field resulting in a much larger development taking place in the future.

Mr Chairman, District Councillors, all communities large and small are facing unprecedented demands for housing. With this in mind I ask this Planning Committee to treat this minor inflammation now and refuse this application before it becomes a rash covering the entire area and wait for the Local Plan to be adopted.'

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Andrew Fleet, agent for the applicant, addressed the Committee and made the following remarks:

- He concurred with the comments made by Officers;
- Fordham is a sustainable village, with a range of services and facilities, and it has regular bus services to Newmarket, Ely and Cambridge;
- Although the proposal is outside the development envelope, it immediately abuts it;
- With regard to the lack of a 5 year supply of land for housing, the proposal would contribute to the Council's housing stock;
- Similar applications in the village had recently been approved;
- The Parish Council made no comments, but questioned the access, and the application had since been amended to address this;
- The access would be uninterrupted and there had been no further response from the Parish Council;
- With reference to the local Member's comments, the application is for 2 dwellings. The applicant has no intention of further developing the land as it will be used for beef cattle. Any further submissions would have to be decided on their own merits.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Julia Huffer, a Ward Member for Fordham Villages, addressed the Committee and made the following points:

- This application had caused much concern because the site was outside of the development envelope and a natural boundary to the village;
- Although mindful of the lack a 5 year supply of land for housing, the new Local Plan was proposing over 200 homes for Fordham;
- Granting permission could allow the development of the whole meadow despite the applicant saying there were no plans to do so 'at this time';
- Newmarket Road is dangerous, with fast moving traffic. The speed limit drops from 60mph to 30mph and it is even too unsafe for Speedwatch;
- The scheme would spoil the approach into the village because the dwellings would be isolated and incongruous.

Councillor Tom Hunt asked the Senior Planning Officer if any steps had been taken to ensure that vehicles did not obstruct the highway during construction. She advised him that condition 9 restricted the operating hours, but vehicles could not be prevented from parking on the highway. However, if

Members were so minded, a condition could be imposed requiring the provision of an on-site parking area for construction vehicles.

Councillor Bovingdon enquired whether land already put forward in the new Local Plan could be discounted, and the Planning Manager replied that it could not be given any weight at this point.

Councillor Bill Hunt said he had listened to all the points put forward by the objectors, but all the services on the road were flush to existing development, Highways would ensure that there was a footpath within the 30mph zone and there could be an area on-site for construction traffic. He duly proposed that the Officer's recommendation for approval be accepted.

Councillor Tom Hunt agreed, saying that Members had to look at the application as it was before them today. What might or might not happen in the future was beside the point. Unless there were strong reasons why, he did not feel that there were grounds to refuse the application. The proposal would provide additional dwellings, and although the site was in open countryside, it was next to the development envelope. He had concerns about vehicles parking on the highway and was still keen that the issue should be explored. The Parish Council had raised no objections, and whilst he respected the Ward Member's views, he supported the recommendation for approval.

Councillor Beckett said he felt for the objectors and would be pleased when the new Local Plan was in place. However, if Members were minded to refuse the application, they would have to put forward strong reasons for doing so because there was an appeals process. He had a number of concerns that he wished to raise. He believed there should be boundary planting on the approach from Newmarket; Councillor Huffer had alluded to the speed of the traffic and he felt that if the application was granted permission, visibility to the south should be improved by moving back the hedging. He concluded by saying that he could see no reason to refuse the application.

Councillor Chaplin expressed his support for the views put forward by Councillors Beckett and Tom Hunt, adding that he thought this was a tricky situation. The new Local Plan was going through a review and could not be given any weight at this point. He thought it must be very frustrating for the village, as it had engaged in the review process, but was bound by circumstances.

Councillor Bovingdon responded by saying that the Authority had to deliver housing and allocated sites did not necessarily mean deliverability. This plot had been put forward with plans for housing; the more sites that came forward, the more dwellings could be delivered and it could help to stop the big developers coming in. He duly seconded Councillor Bill Hunt's motion for approval.

When put to the vote,

It was resolved unanimously:

That planning application reference 16/00403/FUL be APPROVED subject to the recommended conditions as set out in the Officer's report, and the following additional conditions:

- Removal of the Permitted Development Rights in the gardens;
- The provision of on-site parking for construction vehicles;
- Soft landscaping condition (No 10) to include boundary planting to ensure a safe access and potential repositioning of the hedge to allow for this.

72. 16/00686/OUT - STANFORD PARK, WEIRS DROVE, BURWELL, CB25 0BP

Barbara Greengrass, Senior Planning Officer, presented a report (R154, previously circulated) which sought outline planning permission for a change of use of land used as a touring caravan camp site to residential with the erection of a maximum of 91 mobile homes.

All matters were reserved apart from scale and access. Access was proposed from a new opening in the existing hedge to the northern end of the site onto Weirs Drove just north of Glengarry bungalow. An indicative layout plan had been submitted to indicate how the dwellings and roadway might be accommodated. It included provision for an area of open space and a communal space for residents to comprise a small building with community room, park office, sewage treatment plant and recycling area.

It was noted that the application had been brought to Committee as it was over 50 dwellings, in accordance with the amendments made to the Constitution at Full Council on 16th November 2016.

On a point of housekeeping, the Senior Planning Officer informed Members that she had received an additional pack of information regarding the application. It included a reduction in the number of units to a maximum of 81, an amended indicative plan, and an updated Flood Risk Assessment. It had been received at such a late stage that there was insufficient time for her to assess all the details before the Committee meeting. She therefore wished to amend her recommendation to that of deferral so that she could finalise the reasons for refusal.

The site was located to the west of Burwell village and was accessed via Reach Road and Weirs Drove. It was outside of and some distance from the development boundary of Burwell. The site was well landscaped and well enclosed with mature planting both within and outside of the site. It was currently in use as a touring caravan site with ancillary buildings and a manager's dwelling. The site was surrounded by countryside and to the east by Priory Wood, and there were three Public rights of Way in close proximity leading eastwards.

A number of illustrations were displayed at the meeting. These included a map of the application site, an aerial photograph, the layout of the proposal, a photograph of mobile homes at other caravan parks to give an

idea of how the proposal might look, and a map showing the site in relation to Priory Wood and two of the Public Rights of Way.

The Planning Officer said the key issues for consideration in the determination of this application were:

- The principle of development;
- Affordable housing provision;
- Visual impact;
- Residential amenity;
- Highway safety; and
- Ecology and drainage.

Members were reminded that the Council was currently unable to demonstrate a 5 year land supply for housing and therefore the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the NPPF meant that permission for development should be granted unless any adverse impacts would significantly or demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposed dwelling.

However, the proposed development site was over a mile away from the centre of Burwell and considered to be in an unsustainable location remote from local service centre provision. There was an absence of continuous footpath connecting to the village amenities which conflicted with the aims of sustainable development, meaning that Burwell was unlikely to be easily accessible other than by private car. The Public Rights of Way and permissive path could not be accepted as the principle pedestrian route to the village facilities as they were not formal lit routes with hard surfacing capable of catering for all users.

Paragraph 55 of the NPPF stated that to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. This was not considered to be the case with this proposal, as it would result in a significant number of isolated new homes in the countryside.

It was noted that as the proposed dwellings were not suitable for provision of affordable housing units on site, the applicant would make an off-site contribution in lieu of on-site provision.

The impact of the proposal on the character of the countryside was considered to be minimal as the site was very well enclosed by mature planting on all site boundaries. There would be a loss of hedgerow for access provision, but this would be limited and it was not considered that a refusal would be justified on these grounds as there would be no demonstrable harm.

Members noted that if the dwelling at Glengarry was not occupied by an employee at the site it was likely that the future residents would suffer a

loss of residential amenity by the position of the new access road alongside the boundary of the property. The level of noise and disturbance associated with vehicles accessing the site was likely to be significantly harmful; however, this could be overcome by securing future occupation by condition.

The County Highway Authority had raised no objection to the proposal.

The Senior Planning Officer reminded the Committee that an Ecology Report had been submitted with the application. The findings concluded that the habitats to be affected by the development were of low ecological value but the applicant had agreed to put in place mitigation measures to avoid potential harm to animals and biodiversity enhancements for birds and bats.

Whilst a Flood Risk Assessment and additional information had been submitted to satisfy both the Environment Agency and the Lead Local Flood Authority that the development could be accommodated in principle, there was insufficient information to ascertain whether the site could accommodate 91 units.

The Senior Planning Officer reiterated that, due to the late receipt of the pack of additional information, she had had no chance to assess the material and she therefore wished to amend her recommendation to that of deferral to allow her time to do this.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Ms Rebecca Peachey spoke in support of the application and made the following points:

- Turners Britannia Parks Ltd was the second largest park home provider in the UK, and she was a member of the Management Team and also lived in Burwell;
- There was an age limit of 45+ for residents, and only two occupants were permitted per dwelling;
- Having consulted at the pre-application stage, the applicant had listened to Officer feedback and amended the plan;
- From March to September the occupancy of the site was 4% and it is no longer viable and the proposed site had been carefully planned;
- The applicant will retain the hedgerow and will plant additional hedgerows within the site;
- If this application was successful, as part of the sale the applicant would also buy the manager's house and rent it out;
- The site could accommodate 81 dwellings;
- Reasons 2 and 3 in the report have been overcome through the submission of additional information;
- Sustainability should be considered whilst bearing in mind that the site could currently take 103 cars and touring caravans;

- The communities of Soham Fen and Burwell had grown and the use of the car was no longer valued;
- The residents of this scheme would likely be making their trips outside of peak times;
- The site was not isolated and would place no burden on schools;
- A 2014 survey showed that 78% of people moving house were living within 10 miles of their old home;
- There had been no objection from Burwell Parish Council or the County Council;
- This was an opportunity to approve an alternative type of dwelling and the demand for bungalows was high;
- It supported the Development Plan objectives and could provide an excellent park home facility.

Councillor Tom Hunt asked Ms Peachey about the enforcement of the age limit and numbers of occupants. Ms Peachey informed him that the residents of the parks reported any breaches and the occupant of the home concerned would receive a letter in the case of there being someone under the age limit. If the letter was ignored, there would be a further warning and then it would be escalated to a first tier tribunal. No children were permitted to live on the sites.

Councillor Bovingdon stated that with the existing licensing/permissions there could be 35 log cabins, 100 touring pitches and 3 static caravans, and wanted to know if the site was capable of reaching capacity. Ms Peachey responded that the site had never reached capacity and the highest number of bookings recently was 38 in March to September this year. A lot of people stayed at the site who were attending shows and this had now declined.

In response to questions from the Chairman, Ms Peachey confirmed that all the hedgerows would be retained with the exception of those at the roadways. She also stated that if the application was granted permission, the applicant would trigger the option and purchase the site within 3 months. The units could be on sale by this time next year.

Councillor Chaplin enquired about the prices of the units and was advised that this varied according to the location of the site. A two bedroom unit in Lincolnshire would cost £75k - £110k and one in Waterbeach would be £185k - £200k; residents could bespoke their homes.

The Chairman queried the number of units, and the Planning Manager said that whilst the description stated up to 91 mobile homes, the plans which had been submitted late in the day did only show 81 mobile homes in order to be able to provide appropriate SuDS systems. As the description stated up to this, it did not set the number at 91. The dwelling at Glengarry was within the boundary of the site and could be conditioned for occupancy by an employee.

Councillor Tom Hunt remarked that with no residents under the age of 45, there might not be any pressure on schools, but there would be on health and social services. He asked if the development would be liable for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and whether the units would contribute to the Authority's housing targets. He also queried why the Senior Planning Officer felt it necessary to defer a decision if she was still going to recommend it for refusal.

The Senior Planning Officer replied that the scheme would not be liable for CIL but it would contribute to the Council's 5 year supply of housing. She was asking for a deferral because the applicant had submitted additional information the day before the Committee meeting and there had not been enough time before this meeting to assess it. She would like the time to assess the waste and drainage details to ensure they would work.

At this point the Chairman interjected to say that it had been his decision to allow the application to proceed rather than have it withdrawn because of sustainability.

Councillor Bill Hunt had a couple of queries; he asked if there was mains sewerage on site and if there would be pavements on the internal roads, as he thought they should be made to an adoptable standard. The Senior Planning Officer informed him that the site was served by a sewage treatment plant rather than mains sewerage, and the issue of internal roads would be addressed at the Reserved Matters stage.

Councillor Rouse declared himself to be impressed with the agent's presentation. The site visit had shown that the site was in need of a substantial investment and makeover, as it had huge potential. He could see no reason to defer a decision as the issues raised could be conditioned. He believed the scheme would provide desperately needed housing and he therefore supported granting approval.

Councillor Beckett said he agreed in part because the units would be potential homes for older people and not only would they meet the needs of people wishing to downsize, but they would also help to create a community on the site. With regard to sustainability, he believed that this development site was no further away from a settlement than some sites that had recently been approved. However, he did have concerns about the two hedgerows within the centre of the site as he believed there would be an advantage in retaining them. He objected to the submission of late information but thought the application should be deferred. The Committee was not being given the best advice because the Officer had had no time to assess that information.

Councillor Tom Hunt said the application should be refused because he believed it to be 'massively unsustainable'. It would put additional pressure on GP surgeries and other services, on top of the existing residents of the village, and it would attract no CIL contributions. On principle he would not support an application without CIL.

The Chairman believed this to be a quite exciting application and a prime example of the need to look at new ways of developing properties as bungalows are not delivered by developers. Park homes did not tend to be found located in town centres; this was an exception from the norm by its

nature and form and cannot argue sustainability on these grounds. The homes could be built quickly and this was an outline application, so concerns could be addressed at the Reserved Matters stage. To defer a decision today on the basis of the receipt of late information only to bring the application back to Committee to refuse it served no purpose. It would be for Members to decide if they wanted any Reserved Matters brought back to Committee.

Councillor Chaplin said he could appreciate the reasons for wishing to defer a decision but as this was only an outline application, the concerns raised could be dealt with by conditions and the reserved matters. He was on record as saying that the Authority should look at different types of housing, and he believed this to be an imaginative scheme. Furthermore, it was being promoted by an operator known to the community. He was not sure that the internal roads should be of an adoptable standard as this might undermine the principle of the development, but he thanked the applicant for bringing forward the proposal. He concluded by saying that if Councillor Rouse was minded to formally propose a motion for approval, he would be happy to second it.

The Planning Manager stated that if permission was granted, the scheme would be subject to a S106 Agreement for affordable housing. She reiterated that as the dwellings were temporary, the Authority could not charge CIL.

Councillor Bill Hunt said the Committee had a responsibility to weigh up the balance of the application. There would be a clear benefit regarding housing need, but he believed the negatives carried slightly more weight. There would be no pavements on site, people would be driving down unadopted roads and the majority of parking would be tandem. The increased demand on health, social and adult care would be unacceptable, access would be via a 60mph single track road, there would be no affordable housing, and he had concerns regarding the storage of calor gas. For these reasons he could not support approval of the application, which he declared to be a 'dreadful thing'.

Councillor Cox commented that the storage of gas would be central. His main concern was waste, as he would not wish to encourage a community where there was a second rate recovery of waste. The collection should be extended into the site and Veolia indemnified from damage.

Councillor Bovingdon said he had some experience of this type of development and he thought it to be an innovative use of the site. People would have the choice as to whether or not they wished to live there and it would provide housing for those that wanted it. The roadways could be conditioned and a 10mph limit imposed. A car was a necessity and the site was sustainable as it was only a mile away from Burwell. He felt that Members should make a decision today and he would support approval of the scheme.

It was duly proposed by Councillor Rouse and seconded by Councillor Chaplin that the Officer's recommendation for deferral be rejected and the application be approved. When put to the vote, the motion was declared carried, there being 6 votes for and 3 against. Whereupon,

It was resolved:

That planning application reference 16/00686/OUT be APPROVED for the following reasons:

- Members believe the site will be sustainable;
- The proposal will contribute to the District's housing stock and provide much needed homes;
- Concerns raised during the course of debate can be addressed at the Reserved Matters stage;

with the Planning Manager being given delegated authority regarding the completion of a S106 Agreement, and the imposition of suitable conditions.

73. 16/00849/FUM – LAND TO REAR OF 1 TO 7 SUTTON ROAD, WITCHFORD

Barbara Greengrass, Senior Planning Officer, presented a report (R155, previously circulated) which sought permission for the construction of 13 affordable dwellings on an exceptions site, in the form of 10 two storey houses and 3 bungalows. The mix would provide for 10 two bedroom units and 3 three bedroom units.

Access would be via an existing agricultural access used as a public byway from Sutton Road. The byway would be widened to 5.5 metres and constructed to adoptable standards with provision of a 2 metres wide footway.

It was noted that the application had been brought to Planning Committee at the discretion of the Planning Manager as the Planning Committee refused a previous planning application on the site for the erection of 14 affordable dwellings in the form of two storey houses. The reasons for that refusal were summarised in paragraph 2.5 of the Officer's report.

On a point of housekeeping, the Senior Planning Officer informed Members that since preparing her report she had received additional information regarding waste collection, and as the Waste Team were now satisfied, recommendation No. 3 in her report had been overcome. She had also received comments from Highways, and letters from 3 neighbours.

The site comprised agricultural land which formed part of a larger field to the south of Sutton Road. It was bordered to the north by dwellings fronting Sutton Road and by public byway along the eastern end of the site.

A number of illustrations were displayed at the meeting. These included a map of the application site, an aerial photograph, the layout and elevations of the proposal, and illustratives relating to highway safety and flood risk and drainage.

The Planning Officer said the main considerations in the determination of this application were:

- Principle of development;
- Visual amenity;
- Residential amenity;
- Access and highway safety; and
- Drainage and flood risk.

The Senior Planning Officer reiterated that the Local Planning Authority was currently unable to demonstrate an adequate five year supply of land for housing and therefore the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the NPPF meant that permission for development should be granted unless any adverse impacts would significantly or demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposed dwelling.

Policy GROWTH2 of the Local Plan strictly controlled development outside development boundaries. However certain exceptions were allowed, one of which was affordable housing schemes which were compliant with Policy HOU4.

Members noted that Witchford had no housing allocations in the Local Plan and the Housing Officer had stated that the analysis of the housing register indicated that there were 25 applicants on the Register with a local connection to the village. The Housing Officer was of the opinion that the application site would make a valuable contribution towards meeting local need for those with a connection to Witchford. It was therefore accepted that there was an identified local need which could not be met within the development envelope and that the mix and size of the provision accorded with the requirements of Policy HOU4.

The site adjoined the edge of the settlement boundary of Witchford, and although served by a footpath, it was nevertheless somewhat removed from the centre of the village where the main facilities were located. In this respect the previous reason for refusal by Members of the Planning Committee had not been overcome.

Although the application had been amended to re-orientate the dwellings, to reduce the numbers by one unit and to provide for 3 bungalows, this would not make the development any less visually intrusive. It would still provide an unacceptable form of backland development out of character with the existing pattern of development in this part of the village, and this reason for refusal had therefore not been overcome.

In determining the previous application, the Planning Committee was concerned that the two storey dwellings would be overbearing on the residents fronting Sutton Road and that the dwellings were poorly positioned in front of the open ditch to the east of the site.

The layout had been amended to substitute the two storey dwellings behind the properties on Sutton Road to the provision of 3 single storey

units. It was considered that there would not be an overbearing impact on the existing residents to the north. In addition, the layout had been re-designed to re-orientate and move the dwellings away from the open ditch.

Although neighbours continued to raise concerns about the loss of residential amenity due to general noise, disturbance and light pollution, noise and light pollution were not previously issues of concern raised by the Planning Committee. It was considered that no significant loss of residential amenity would occur and this reason for refusal had been overcome.

The Senior Planning Officer stated that the County Highway Authority raised no objection to the provision of the upgraded access and were satisfied that the required visibility could be achieved. The road to the turning head would be to an adoptable standard.

It was noted that the applicant had submitted a Flood Risk Assessment. The Lead Local Flood Authority was satisfied that the attenuation and flow controls proposed would provide an acceptable surface water drainage scheme, subject to submission of further details which could be secured by condition. A S106 Agreement would be required to secure the provision of the scheme as the land was outside of the applicant's ownership and was not within the application site boundary.

The fourth reason for refusal of the previous application related to waste collections. The applicant had submitted additional information to the Waste Team; Veolia would be indemnified against damage and the previous reasons for refusal had now been overcome.

With regard to ecology, the site had limited potential to support wildlife as it was agricultural land, so there were considered to be no ecology issues. However, if permission was to be granted a condition would seek to secure biodiversity improvements.

Comments had been made by residents regarding the ability of Rackham School to accommodate more pupils. The County Council had advised that the school should have capacity to admit all catchment pupils and still have some options for out-catchment options.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr John Grace spoke in objection to the application and read the following prepared statement:

'I agree with the Senior Planning Officer that the proposal still represents a cramped, unacceptable form of back land development which doesn't make efficient use of the land whilst not respecting the density and character of the surrounding area and doesn't ensure the location, layout, scale, form and massing of buildings relates sympathetically to the surrounding area.

The site hasn't changed its location and as such is poorly related to Witchford in terms of distance from the centre of the village where most goods and services are and will therefore not enhance and contribute to the local community.

I note that an Indemnity agreement has been made offered the prospective Registered Social Landlord and ECDC Waste Management/Veolia, but I ask

you to consider this - Is it right that a poorly designed layout should have the least acceptable solution approved, as per Consultees comments, whilst not forgetting how this impacts on the future residents? Is it good practice to accept that the development doesn't meet with the RECAP Waste Management Design Guide, but mitigate against that with an insurance policy? This is a case where two wrongs definitely do not make it right.

In addition to the "sticking plaster" indemnity approach to the very real issue of waste management, the current layout still means that the collection point adjacent to property 11 will have up to 8 houses worth of waste on its front door for possibly 48 hours before collection. Is that acceptable on a development in 2016? I wouldn't want it, as I am sure most people wouldn't, so why are the future residents being asked to?

The Highways Authority states that it CAN NOT accept the extent of adoption in regard to the length of the estate road carriageway or layout as shown on drawing EDG/15/03/2C. This has not been addressed in the latest plans submitted.

There are still no apparent footpaths within the development, surely a significant oversight and one that cannot be approvable. Also, there has been no attempt to address the issue of the open ditch, running down the side of the development, with all the inherent dangers that it will have on young and old alike.

I hope that you will have had a chance to see the mock-up I sent you all yesterday regarding the changes made in the design and the placement of the properties in relation to existing properties on Sutton Road? In it I explained how Properties 10, 11, 12 and 13 were initially placed approximately 10 m from the northern boundary of the site but 11, 12 and 13 have now been moved 5 m closer so that a collection point can be included at the front of property 13. This is another example of the design being tinkered with to mitigate against the Members refusal point last time.

The Housing Officer indicates that there is a need for Affordable Housing in Witchford, and that isn't disagreed with but she does say she "expect(s) it to be a mix of affordable rented and shared ownership". This is not a mixed tenure site, but exclusively affordable rental. Reports show the most successful developments are a mix of affordable shared equity, affordable rental and market value houses.

Of great importance is the recent Call for Land by ECDC which has led to better suited sites being identified within Witchford that meet with CLT guidance and supported by local people as well as NHBC assertions regarding mixed tenures including market value, affordable ownership and rentals are the vision of successful 21st Century housing schemes.

As someone who has attended all the Parish Council meetings, I can attest to the fact that this application, and its predecessor, was refused outright by WPC on all the refusal points, the three district councillors and the residents affected, a true example of devolved, decision making. This shouldn't be a first past the post application, if it were to be approved, despite the recommendations to refuse, future judgements on this decision may well

suggest it to have been a race to the bottom of what a good, affordable development was in 2016.

In conclusion, I agree with the Senior Planning Officer's summary that the "significant and demonstrable harm set out above in relation to the location of the development would outweigh any benefits such that planning permission should be refused and that the previous reasons for refusal have not been overcome.'

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Philip Kratz, agent for the applicant, addressed the Committee and made the following points:

- He heard the same thing over and over from Councils with no adequate 5 year supply of housing land;
- This proposal was compliant with Policy HOU4;
- The registered provider was unable to attend the meeting today, so he was speaking on their behalf;
- The 32,400 affordable homes provided last year was pathetic – a 52% decrease in the number provided;
- If an Authority did not have a 5 year supply of land for housing it was required to approve sustainable developments unless they caused demonstrable harm;
- The application was before Planning Committee and recommended for approval. The Committee had refused the previous application in May and the applicant had now addressed those reasons for refusal;
- Highways had no objection to the scheme and the social housing provider would manage the site;
- The road to the turning head would be to an adoptable standard and refuse collection vehicles would be able to go into the site;
- The density of the site had been reduced and bungalows were being delivered;
- The location could not be changed, but it was immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary and was therefore, by definition, sustainable;
- There were 50 houses beyond the development site.

Councillor Bill Hunt challenged Mr Kratz's comment that the internal road would be to an adoptable standard, saying he had been told by a Highways Officer that it would not be; Mr Kratz replied that he had an email saying that the road would be up to standard in relation to width and turning.

Councillor Austen wished to know if there would be specially designed accommodation for the elderly disabled. Mr Kratz said that the dwellings would have generic modifications and built to lifetime home standards but could be adapted for individual needs.

Councillor Beckett asked about the timescale and deliverability of the scheme. Mr Kratz said there would be a S106 Agreement; the money was available from Cambridge Housing Society, so the development could be started in this financial year.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Mark Hugo, a Ward Member for Haddenham, addressed the Committee and made the following remarks:

- He was also speaking on behalf of his two fellow Ward Councillors;
- The application should be refused for the reasons given in the Officer's report;
- The proposal still failed to comply with ENV2, the Design Guide and the NPPF;
- It is a cramped form of backland development and would upset the settlement pattern;
- It will still have an overbearing effect on residential amenity;
- The proposed properties have got closer to the existing properties which is worse than the previous application;
- The Parish Council stated that the site is too far from the centre of the village and this is reconfirmed by all the Ward Members;
- There is no need for this cramped form of development because there are already 30 affordable houses to be built;
- In the new Local Plan there will be 130 homes to come in amongst the open market dwellings;
- Community Land Trusts (CLTs) could bring massive benefits and they were the Council's chosen policy. A CLT had already been established for Witchford;
- Nobody had contacted him in support of this proposed scheme.

Councillor Bovingdon asked Councillor Hugo if the Witchford CLT had got an allocated site. Councillor Hugo advised that there was a call for sites and at present did not have a suitable site.

Councillor Beckett asked Councillor Hugo to give his definition of "cramped", as he believed it was very subjective. Councillor Hugo replied that he did not have a figure in his head, but he could look at a site and decide whether or not a developer was "trying it on".

Following on from this, Councillor Bovingdon asked the Senior Planning Officer how this proposal fitted with the Council's policy regarding density. She replied that she was thinking subjectively rather than in terms of figures; her thought was to compare the proposal to types of development within the vicinity of the site and the houses to the front of the site were situated in larger plots with lower densities. The Chairman reminded

Members that this was a matter of subjectivity because policy stated that appropriate density should be decided on a site by site basis.

Councillor Rouse said that everything came back to the question of the site and whether the land could be built on. Here was a rural exception site for affordable housing, and the provider was well known. A very balanced decision was required and he believed this exception site should be dealt with 'exceptionally'. On balance the scheme was needed and the applicant had gone a long way to meet the Council's requirements. He duly proposed that the scheme be accepted because it would provide much needed homes.

Councillor Austen expressed concern that residents would be unable to cope without transport because the bus service was unreliable.

Councillor Tom Hunt was content with the housing mix but had concerns regarding the pressure on services in Witchford. He noted that a significant number of residents were concerned and he believed a key part of localism was having a regard for local feeling. The proposal was opposed by the Parish Council and some of the neighbours, and he believed the Committee should take this on board and listen to the Ward Members. The development would alter the pattern of the settlement and he would support the recommendation for refusal.

Councillor Bill Hunt remarked that there had already been mention of the opposition to the development by the Parish Council and the Ward Members, and there was confusion regarding the views of Highways. The views of the professional planning officers should also be taken into account; they had given good sound reasons for refusal. He would therefore go with the Officer's recommendation.

Councillor Beckett expressed amazement at what he was hearing. Members were being told that this was a 'can do' Council, the Leader wanted ECDC to achieve its housing targets and here was a rural exception site. It would be an effective way to deliver housing and yet whenever he heard CLTs mentioned, they seemed to provoke opposition to affordable housing. Witchford needed housing for local people and the connection to the village would be conditioned.

Councillor Beckett continued, saying that he did not agree that it would be backland development because there was a development 250 metres along the road. With regard to the Senior Planning Officer's views, the last time the application came to Committee it was recommended for approval but Members refused it. He could not see any real reason why it should not now be approved, and he seconded Councillor Rouse's motion to grant permission.

The Chairman reminded Members that if they were minded to approve the application it would be subject to a S106 Agreement and conditions.

When put to the vote, the motion for approval was declared carried, there being 5 votes for, 3 against and 1 abstention.

It was resolved:

That planning application reference 16/00849/FUM be APPROVED for the following reasons:

- It is a rural exception site for affordable dwellings;
- The scheme will go towards meeting an identified housing need;

with the Planning Manager being given delegated authority regarding the completion of a S106 Agreement, and the imposition of suitable conditions.

At this point there was a comfort break between 4.20pm and 4.30pm.

74. 16/00875/FUL – WITCHAM BRIDGE FARM, WITCHAM BRIDGE DROVE, WARDY HILL

Andrew Phillips, Senior Planning Officer, presented a report (R156, previously circulated) which sought permission for a single one and a half storey three bedroom dwelling. The proposal would not lead to the loss of the existing barn, sheds or paddock area.

It was noted that the application had been called in to Planning Committee by Councillor Anna Bailey in order that the agent could present new/more detailed information.

On a point of housekeeping, the Senior Planning Officer stated that a Flood Risk Assessment was received yesterday and had been distributed to the Members of the Planning Committee in advance of the meeting.

The site was within, but on the edge of Flood Zone 2 and partially within Flood Zone 3, and located approximately 440 metres outside of the defined development boundary.

A number of illustrations were displayed at the meeting. These included a map, two aerial photographs (one zoomed out to show the New Bedford River), the layout, elevations, and floor plan of the proposal.

The Senior Planning Officer said the main considerations in the determination of this application were:

- Principle of the development/sustainability; and
- Flood risk.

The Senior Planning Officer stated that the Local Planning Authority was currently unable to demonstrate an adequate five year supply of land for housing and therefore the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the NPPF meant that permission for development should be granted unless any adverse impacts would significantly or demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposed dwelling.

The developer had described the proposal as a farmhouse but supporting information indicated that it would be a market house near the applicant's hobby.

The site lay outside of the defined development boundary of Wardy Hill, and therefore conflicted with Policy GROWTH2 of the Local Plan. The proposed dwelling was remote from the development boundary of Wardy Hill and was separated from the properties along Jerusalem Drove. With this separation the property was considered to be too remote to support a rural community as defined within paragraph 55 of the NPPF, and for this reason it was not acceptable in principle.

Members noted that paragraph 14 of the NPPF made it clear that where the development plan was absent, silent or relevant policies were out of date, planning permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole. Paragraph 100 of the NPPF stated that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk, but where development was necessary, making it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

The NPPF required that a sequential approach be taken to the location of development, based on Flood Zones, and development should as far as possible be directed towards areas with the lowest probability of flooding. The NPPF required Local Planning Authorities to steer new development to areas at the lowest probability of flooding by applying a Flood Risk Sequential Test. The Local Planning Authority must determine whether the application site passes the NPPF Sequential Test.

The Environment Agency did not object to the application, however, it was for the Local Planning Authority to apply the Sequential Test. A Sequential Test had not been submitted and the Senior Planning Officer reiterated that where no information was provided, the application would be deemed to have failed the Sequential Test.

It was considered by the Local Planning Authority that there were a number of other reasonably available sites within the Parish of Coveney which were at a lower probability of flooding. Therefore the proposed dwelling was not necessary in this location and the application failed the Sequential Test for this reason.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Mark Duckworth, agent for the applicant, and Mr Alan Rich, drainage consultant, addressed the Committee and made the following points:

Mr Rich

- The Flood Risk Assessment had been made available since July but he was concerned that Members had not had a chance to peruse it;
- Appendix B of the Assessment showed the flood risk maps, as presented by the Environment Agency;
- There was no correlation between the maps so he had had to determine their use;

- The proposal was at the feather edge of the defended area. The normal habitable floor levels required by the Building Regulations would raise the proposal above predicted flood risk.

Mr Duckworth

- On balance the proposal had merit and would not have a demonstrable adverse impact;
- The house would be completely screened;
- Since the 1600s farmsteads were a part of the countryside;
- His clients were currently having to travel to the site 2/3 times each day;
- Wardy Hill had limited amenities, but this applied to all the properties in the area;
- The site would be unobtrusive and the surrounding buildings would be cared for;
- The house would contribute to the District's housing stock;
- Travel to and from the site would be reduced and it would be a sustainable home;
- A precedent had been set with Cophall Drove;
- The positive benefits of the proposal would outweigh the negatives and contribute to the community.

In response to a question from Councillor Rouse, Mr Duckworth informed the Committee that the applicant lived in Haddenham and was having to travel to the site two or three times each day of the week to attend to his horses and the other livestock.

Councillor Bill Hunt commented that the Flood Risk Assessment seemed to be critical and he asked Mr Rich about his qualifications and experience. Mr Rich replied that he used to produce planning maps when he worked for the Environment Agency; they were not actually flood maps. He now worked as a drainage consultant.

Councillor Rouse thought this was an unusual site for the accommodation of horses and asked if there were any other sites such as this one. The Senior Planning Officer replied that there were if one looked at it as an agricultural business. However, as it was a market house, it would be looked at on a village basis.

Councillor Tom Hunt thought that Wardy Hill had a certain charm and whilst he had sympathy with the points raised, he believed the proposal was in keeping with fenland history. He thought that the dwelling could enhance and strengthen the community. The house fitted pretty well in the area and he therefore proposed that Members should go against the Officer's recommendation for refusal and grant planning permission.

Councillor Rouse said he too could see no reason for refusal. It was not sustainable for the applicant to travel to and from Haddenham several times each day. This would be an attractive house in a beautiful area and it would be well screened. He seconded Councillor Tom Hunt's motion for approval.

Councillor Beckett disagreed. He could understand if it was a farm and someone had to be on hand for machinery, but this was purely for leisure. The applicant could buy a house in the village to be closer to the animals. This proposal was in the open countryside and it was not adjacent or close to any other dwellings. The farmhouse would not be visible at the moment but that could change. It was not part of any settlement and there was no business need for the dwelling. For these reasons he would support the Officer's recommendation for refusal.

Councillor Bill Hunt felt the proposal was in a sustainable location and communities such as Wardy Hill should be supported otherwise they would die. This location was heaven sent for leisure, the flood risk was low, and the scheme would have a very limited effect on the surrounding landscape.

Councillor Cox said there was not much wrong with the application and he could not imagine it becoming a cluster of dwellings.

The Chairman thanked the Senior Planning Officer for all the hard work he had put into the application. He said he had sympathy with Councillor Beckett's views, as there was an argument that the proposal would have an impact on the countryside and should therefore be refused.

The Committee then returned to the motion to grant planning permission. When put to the vote it was declared carried, there being 7 votes for and 2 votes against.

It was resolved:

That planning application reference 16/00875/FUL be APPROVED for the following reasons:

- The proposal will fit in well with the rural character of the area;
- The property will be well screened and will not be visually intrusive upon the surrounding rural landscape;
- The scheme will contribute to the District's housing stock;

with the Planning Manager being given delegated authority to impose suitable conditions.

75. 16/00907/FUL – 59A GREAT FEN ROAD, SOHAM, CB7 5UH

Planning application reference 16/00907/FUL was withdrawn from the Agenda.

76. 16/01022/FUL – 67 ORCHARD ROW, SOHAM. CB7 5AY

Catherine Looper, Planning Officer, presented a report (R158, previously circulated) which sought consent for a part two storey, part single storey side extension along the north elevation of the dwelling. The extension would provide an integrated garage with inspection pit, a utility area, WC and study to the ground floor. To the first floor, the extension would provide an additional bedroom with en-suite.

It was noted that the application had been called into Planning Committee by Councillor Dan Schumann following concerns raised by neighbouring occupiers.

On a point of housekeeping, the Planning Officer informed Members that drawing number 15:012-02 had been amended to Revision A. This was a location plan for the site and an amendment was made to reflect the proposed floor plan in drawing 15:012-01. The ridge heights referred to in Paragraph 8.1 of the Committee report had been amended to reflect those stated in the Summary of the Application in Paragraph 2.2 of the report.

The site was located to the south east of Soham and within the designated development envelope.

A number of illustrations were displayed at the meeting. These included a map, an aerial photograph, photographs of the streetscene, the existing plans and elevations, and the proposal.

The Planning Officer said the main considerations in the determination of this application were:

- Residential amenity; and
- Visual amenity.

With regard to residential amenity, the heights of the proposed extensions were not considered sufficient to block light entering the neighbouring properties. The distance between the host dwelling and the neighbouring property to the north would ensure that the proposed side extension did not appear overbearing on this dwelling.

Members noted that concerns had been raised regarding the vehicle inspection pit and its potential for commercial use. It had also been raised that the proposed pit would create environmental issues such as oil spillages and car fumes. Neighbours were concerned about the noise levels that would be generated by the work being carried out on vehicles within such a confined space. There had also been comments regarding one of the studies being used as an office for commercial use, and the inspection pit causing subsidence due to it being lower than the footings of the dwelling.

The applicant's agent had responded to confirm that the pit would only be used for the applicant's private vehicles, and the depth of the pit would be agreed at Building Control stage, as it would depend on the structural requirements of the proposed extension. The structural integrity of the proposed pit would not be assessed at planning application stage and would not affect the determination of the application.

It was considered unreasonable to condition the noise generated by the use of the pit, as the maintenance of vehicles could be conducted within a garage without a pit. Environmental Health had been consulted on this point and raised no objections, but advised that any health and safety implications would fall within the remit of the Health & Safety Executive. The Health & Safety Executive Land Planning Team confirmed that as the development was not for commercial use, the householder's access pit did not fall under their remit and they had no comments to make.

It was recommended that a condition be imposed to ensure that no external fixed plant machinery be installed without the written agreement of the Local Planning Authority.

In terms of visual amenity, it was noted that the ridge height of the proposed extension would be lower than that of the original dwelling and set back from the front elevation. This would give the proposed extension a subservient appearance and would ensure that the original dwelling was clearly legible in line with the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Design Guide. The applicant proposed to render the ground and first floors of the new extension to match the first floor of the existing dwelling. There would also be matching roof tiles, windows and doors to ensure that the extension did not appear uncoordinated and would be in keeping.

It was considered that once extended, the symmetry of the original dwelling would be retained and the design would ensure that it did not dominate the original semi-detached pair.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mrs Harlow spoke in objection to the application and made the following comments:

- The existing kitchen had not been built with permission so should be considered new development;
- There was a lean-to conservatory which, if removed, would expose the rear structural wall. This was not shown on the drawings;
- The kitchen diner was on their party wall. It was very large and the extension would need to be supported at the rear and a beam would need to be tied into the party wall to achieve such a large kitchen;
- The drawings had items missing;
- The new extension would be over a public sewer;
- There would be environmental issues with the pit;
- The foundations would be twice the depth of the originals;
- Noise would be a problem;
- Why was a pit of this size needed for two small family cars? Most garages were moving away from the use of inspection pits because of the dangers associated with them;

- Health & Safety Advisories had been given to the Planning Department and she had spoken to the Planning Enforcement Officer;
- If the property was to be sold, what would stop it being used for commercial purposes?
- She and her husband did not know how they were going to go on because this would be intolerable for them;
- They had a legal right of access from the rear of the applicant's property.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Andrew Fleet, agent for the applicant, spoke in support of the application and made the following comments:

- He wished to echo the comments in the Officer's report that the proposal conformed with the requirements of the Local Plan and the SPD Design Guide;
- There would be no detrimental effect;
- All the works would be subject to approval under Building Regulations Approved Document H4 and also with the agreement of Anglian Water;
- Any additions or excavations would be subject to the Party Wall Act.

Councillor Beckett noted that Mrs Harlow was worried about a steel beam coming into the party wall and he asked Mr Fleet if he could reassure her that this would be covered by legislation. Mr Fleet replied that the beam would have to be designed by a structural engineer, and it would be part of the Party Wall Agreement.

The Chairman reminded Members that there would be a condition restricting activity to private use and enforcement action could be taken to address any noise nuisance. He said he wished debate to continue, but he was proposing from the Chair that the Officer's recommendation for approval be accepted.

In response to a question from Councillor Chaplin, the Planning Manager said that a condition could be added in respect of the hours of working. However, the difficulty was that knocking down internal walls did not require planning permission and therefore a condition on working hours could be difficult to enforce.

Councillor Tom Hunt said he was not sure about the proposal; efforts had been made to address concerns, but he felt it needed to be handled with sensitivity. If approved, he would wish to see a condition restricting the hours of construction.

Councillor Beckett commented that these types of applications could create tensions between neighbours and he appreciated the concerns raised. However, the agent had said that those concerns would be

safeguarded by legislation. Councillor Beckett seconded the Chairman's motion for approval.

Councillor Rouse expressed his support for the proposal saying he believed that as much as possible had been done to safeguard the neighbours.

Councillor Bovingdon raised the issue of noise nuisance and suggested that this should be conditioned. The Planning Manager informed Members that the agent had emailed to say that the applicant intended installing acoustic measures; it would not be considered reasonable to impose a condition.

Councillor Bill Hunt said whilst he understood the Officer's dilemma he also appreciated the neighbours' concerns and he believed some sort of compromise should be reached. Councillor Chaplin agreed, adding that the extensions would become a very significant part of the property and the other side of the party wall would change.

The Planning Manager reminded the Committee that it was an existing room and the applicant could play loud music without planning permission. She urged them to think in planning terms because, if conditioned, it could be subject to challenge.

It was proposed by Councillor Tom Hunt and seconded by Councillor Bill Hunt that the Officer's recommendation be amended to include a condition regarding construction hours. When put to the vote, the motion was declared carried, there being 7 votes for and 2 against.

Returning to the substantive motion,

It was resolved unanimously :

That planning application reference 16/01022/FUL be APPROVED subject to the recommended conditions as set out in the Officer's report with the addition of Rev A to be inserted in condition 1 and with the imposition of an additional condition regarding construction hours.

77. 16/01036/FUL – HILL TOP FARM, 33 GREAT LANE, REACH, CB25 0JF

Rebecca Saunt, Planning Manager, presented a report (R159, previously circulated) on behalf of the Case Officer, which sought planning permission for the erection of a two storey detached dwelling on a parcel of land located on the south eastern side of Great Lane and some 50 metres from the edge of the settlement envelope of Reach.

It was noted that the application had been called in to Planning Committee by the Ward Member, Councillor Allen Alderson, as he considered it to be an inappropriate form of development that would have an adverse impact on the area and set a precedent of building in the open countryside.

As Councillor Alderson was unable to attend the meeting a written copy of his comments was circulated to the Members of the Planning Committee in advance of the meeting.

A number of illustrations were displayed at the meeting. These included a map, an aerial photograph, the proposal, visualisations of the elevations, and photographs regarding visual and residential amenity.

The Planning Manager said the main considerations in the determination of this application were:

- The principle of development;
- Visual amenity;
- Residential amenity;
- Highway safety; and
- Ecology.

Members were reminded that the Council was currently unable to demonstrate an adequate five year supply of land for housing and therefore the policies within the Local Plan relating to the supply of housing should be considered out of date. In view of this, all applications for new housing should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), unless any adverse impact would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

The development site was located within an existing agricultural holding approximately 50 metres from the settlement boundary and the closest residential dwellings. Some 30 metres to the north across Great Lane, planning permission for a dwelling had recently been granted on the land currently occupied by a stable block.

Overall, the site was located within an area now increasingly defined by the built form and some 50m from the settlement boundary of Reach. Given the absence of the 5 year housing land supply, the boundary limitation placed by the village development envelope would not apply with instead, the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained within both Policy GROWTH 5 of the Local Plan and paragraph 14 of the NPPF taking precedence in this respect.

In connection with visual impact, the dwelling would be conventionally designed and consistent in terms of its design and scale with the local built environment both within and just outside of the village edge. Whilst it would retain some form of visual profile within the landscape it would not be visually intrusive.

On balance it was considered that the proposal would not demonstrably harm the settlement edge and that subject to appropriate hard and soft landscaping schemes it would comply with Policies ENV1 and ENV2. It was noted that if permission was granted, Permitted Development

Rights could be removed in relation to the extension or alteration of the dwelling. This would ensure that the Local Planning Authority retained control over the site and would avoid a plethora of residential paraphernalia dominating the landscape.

With regard to residential amenity, there was sufficient separation distance from neighbouring dwellings to avoid overlooking. Similarly, the closest dwellings were of a sufficient distance from the site over intervening landscape to avoid any adverse impact upon the residential amenities of local residents.

A new access was proposed onto Great Lane; it would lead to an area of permeable paving that would act as a turning and parking area, and a detached garage. The Local Highway Authority had raised no objections and was satisfied that the visibility splays required were entirely within the highway. The creation of the access would require the removal of a small section of hedging. However, the Trees Officer had raised no concern and was satisfied that a future landscaping scheme would provide an opportunity to introduce native hedgerow planting to boundaries other than on the highway that would be conducive to improving the current setting of the site.

It was expected that biodiversity enhancements in the form of bird and bat boxes would be included as part of the landscaping of the site.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Michael Aves and Ms Suzannah Bell spoke in support of the application and made the following comments:

Mr Aves

- Reach was a lovely village and it needed young people;
- The village had a village hall, a pub, a playing area, tennis court and Reach Wood;
- They had taken over 24 acres from the National Trust and the finished site would be for people to ride horses and a cricket pitch;
- The village envelope did not allow them to build small houses.

Mr Aves concluded by asking Members to support the application.

Ms Bell

- They wanted to make a home in the village as Robert had grown up in Reach;
- They tried to play their part in the village. She had a job working in the pub;
- They wanted to be a part of village life.

Councillor Beckett was curious to know if the parcel of land was separate to the farm. Mr Aves replied that it was not, but had been gifted to Robert.

Councillor Rouse thanked Mr Aves for his comments about Reach, saying that he had found them to be very well put.

It was duly proposed by Councillor Bill Hunt and seconded by Councillor Bovingdon that the Officer's recommendation for approval be supported.

When put to the vote,

It was resolved unanimously:

That planning application reference 16/01036/FUL be APPROVED subject to the recommended conditions as set out in the Officer's report.

78. PLANNING PERFORMANCE REPORT – OCTOBER 2016

Rebecca Saunt, Planning Manager, presented a report (R160, previously circulated) which summarised the planning performance figures for October 2016.

Members noted that neither of the vacant posts had been recruited to and the agency Officer's contract had therefore been extended to the end of February 2017. The Planning Manager was considering all her options, which might include the possibility of engaging a Planning Assistant for the full time post and re-advertising for both the full time and part time posts. She would also look to see if an agency worker could help until such posts were filled. The posts would be re-advertised in January 2017.

The Planning Department was extremely busy at the moment, with work having been very steady for the last 4-5 months. Officers were endeavouring to keep on target with performance indicators.

The Chairman congratulated the Planning Manager and her team on their efforts. He also wished to remind Officers that it was the nature of Members that they sometimes went against the recommendation. This was not intended in any way as a slight on Officers because they produced fantastic reports.

It was resolved:

That the Planning Performance Report for October 2016 be noted.

The meeting closed at 5.40pm.