



EAST
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning Committee
held in the Kempen Room, The Maltings, Ship Lane,
Ely on Wednesday, 29th April 2015 at 2.00pm

P R E S E N T

Councillor Joshua Schumann (Chairman)
Councillor Derrick Beckett
Councillor David Brown
Councillor Lavinia Edwards
Councillor Lis Every
Councillor Jeremy Friend-Smith
Councillor Bill Hunt (Substitute for Councillor David Ambrose
Smith)

Councillor Mike Rouse
Councillor Robert Stevens
Councillor Gareth Wilson

OFFICERS

Maggie Camp - Solicitor
Penny Mills – Senior Planning Officer
Janis Murfet – Democratic Services Officer
Andrew Phillips - Senior Planning Officer
Richard West - Planning Officer
Sue Wheatley – Planning Manager

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

6 members of the public attended the meeting.

104. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors David Ambrose Smith and Tom Hunt.

It was noted that Councillor Bill Hunt would substitute for Councillor Ambrose Smith for the duration of the meeting.

105. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman said he wished everyone present to be aware that all Members of the Planning Committee had a personal interest in Agenda Item

No.7 (15/03001/CCA, Strikes Ten Pin Bowling, The Dock, Ely), as the District Council held the freehold to the land.

Councillors Brown, Bill Hunt, Rouse and Schumann, being Cambridgeshire County Councillors, declared an interest in Agenda Item No 7 as the application was being made by the County Council.

In connection with Agenda Item No 7, Councillor Brown stated that he would leave the meeting prior to discussion on the item.

106. **MINUTES**

Further to Minute No 99 (14/01006/FUL, Lode Village Social, 45 Lode Road, Lode), page 10, 6th paragraph, Councillor Stevens clarified that he was questioning the planning condition regarding the size of the car parking spaces and manoeuvring space. He queried whether the Senior Planning Officer was confident that the condition could be met as, until the application was put forward, she could not be sure.

Further to Minute No 100 (14/01353/FUM, Land Adjacent to Ely Rugby Club, Downham Road, Ely), page 17, antepenultimate paragraph, Councillor Stevens said he was not referring to himself personally in the last sentence. He was saying that the residents in the south of the District would be more likely to use the cinemas in Newmarket and Cambridge. Whereupon,

It was resolved:

That subject to the above clarifications, the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 1st April 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

107. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- The Chairman welcomed Andrew Phillips, Senior Planning Officer, to his first meeting of the Planning Committee;
- The Chairman reminded Members that the Local Plan had been adopted by Full Council on 21st April 2015. Therefore any references to the Core Strategy in the recommendations contained within the reports would be amended to refer to the adopted Local Plan;
- The Chairman said that Councillor Bill Hunt had asked to address the Committee at the end of the agenda.

108. **14/01370/OUT – STORAGE LAND OPPOSITE 12 HOLT FEN, LITTLE THETFORD**

Richard West, Planning Officer, presented a report (P245) which provided details of an application seeking outline planning permission for the erection of four dwellings and associated works. The application form indicated that there would be 2no three bedroom, and 2no four bedroom open market dwellings.

Illustrations were displayed at the meeting which included a map of the application site, an aerial photograph, an indicative plan of the proposed layout, and photographs of the landscape and settlement character.

The Committee was reminded that the main considerations in the determination of this application were:

- Principle of development;
- Landscape and settlement character;
- Layout;
- Amenity;
- Ecology;
- Flood risk and drainage; and
- Highway safety.

It was noted that the application site was located to the south east of Little Thetford adjacent to, but outside of the development envelope. It was triangular in shape with mature trees and a drain along the southern boundary and a mature hedgerow along the northern boundary.

The site was last used as a scaffolding yard and comprised stores, portable buildings and hardstanding. The existing access was in the north east corner of the site.

With regard to the principle of development, the Planning Officer stated that the proposal was outside the development envelope and it did not fall within any of the exceptions listed within the adopted Local Plan. It was therefore contrary to policy. The submitted Design & Access Statement stated that the Council could not demonstrate a five year housing land supply and therefore the “presumption in favour of sustainable development” should apply. However, the Council was considered to have a five year housing land supply.

The last use of the application site was as a scaffolding yard, which was considered to be a B8 Use. Policy EMP1 of the Local Plan seeks to retain land or premises last used for employment purposes (including B8). Where a site was to be redeveloped for an alternative use based on viability, the Applicant was required to actively market the site with a commercial agent and advertise on the District Council’s website for a continuous period of 12 months. Members noted that a number of builders, roofing and storage companies had shown an interest in the site, and this was without being

advertised on the Council's website. It was not considered that the site was unviable and the main reason for redevelopment was the material benefits.

The Applicant had stated that the material benefits from the change of use from B8 to residential would be positive for the amenity of the village due to a reduction in the number of heavy goods vehicle movements. Nevertheless, given the limited size of the site, it was unlikely that the associated vehicle movements would be detrimental to the amenity of the village. The material benefits associated with the redevelopment of the site to residential were therefore not considered to outweigh the contravention of policy.

Members were reminded that the southern side of Holt Fen was characterised by Holt Fen Common which provided informal open space and adjoined agricultural land beyond separated by a mature tree line. The existing buildings did not impact upon the undeveloped and verdant character of the area, as they were hidden by a hedge.

It was proposed to erect 4 two storey dwellings, and for amenity purposes, to cut back the existing boundary hedge that adjoined Holt Fen Common. It was considered that the introduction of such a development would have a significant urbanising impact on the undeveloped southern side of Holt Fen Common, which was contrary to the visual appearance and character of the area. It was considered that the proposed development would be contrary to Policy ENV1 of the Local Plan which seeks to protect, conserve and where possible, enhance landscape and settlement character.

Due to the irregular shape of the site the indicative plan showed the dwelling on plot 4 fronting Holt Fen Common and the dwellings on plots 1, 2 and 3 having their side gables fronting Holt Fen Common. When viewed from the Common, the massing and bulk of the dwellings would appear contrived and uncoordinated.

The indicative plan had failed to demonstrate that four dwellings could be accommodated on the site without having a detrimental impact on the amenity of the occupiers of the dwellings. Plot 3 would have a significant overlooking impact on plots 2 and 4, and several habitable rooms on plots 1 and 2 would front on to the railway. It was noted that noise issues could be overcome using mechanical ventilation, but the most effective method of reducing the impact was through layout and minimising the number of habitable rooms facing the railway line.

It was considered that the location and layout of the dwellings had been dictated by the irregular shape of the site and an attempt to introduce too many dwellings. This would result in a development comprising buildings that did not relate sympathetically to the surrounding area or each other.

In terms of ecology, the proposed site was adjacent to the countryside, had a drain running along the southern boundary, comprised many mature trees and was overgrown having lain vacant for approximately

two years. Given these characteristics, there was the potential for the presence of protected species, especially foraging bats. It was noted that an ecology report was not submitted with the application nor requested by the Local Planning Authority as the application was to be recommended for refusal. If Members were minded to go against the Officer's recommendation and grant approval, determination of the application should be deferred until an ecological report had been submitted.

The impact of the proposed development on flood risk and drainage and highway safety had been assessed and was considered to be acceptable.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Adam Tuck, agent for the Applicant, addressed the Committee and made the following comments:

- His clients had lived in the bungalow for 44 years and had run the business from the application site;
- The business use could recommence at any time;
- The planning application had been submitted at a time when the Council was not sure it had a 5 year housing land supply;
- If the site was retained for employment use, there could be increased HGV movements;
- At school times the road was very busy;
- There were concerns regarding the loss of employment land but this was not a key site;
- The hedgerows would be retained;
- The plans were indicative only and the dwellings could be single storey;
- This was an outline application with the layout to be dealt with at the reserved matters stage;
- The whole site was within District standards and the application had been declared valid;
- The Officer's site visit had taken place in January 2015, so why had it taken 3 months to reach this point ?
- The Officer had not confirmed the presence of any protected species on the site so therefore an ecological report was not needed;
- The Council could grant planning permission;
- There had been no third party objections and the application would provide much needed housing in a predominantly residential area.

Mr Tuck then responded to comments and questions from the Committee.

Referring to the previous use of the site, the Chairman asked if Mr Tuck could say how many vehicle movements there were in a day at peak times; Mr Tuck said he was unable to answer this as he did not know.

Councillor Wilson wished to know if the hedges would be retained, particularly the high hedge at the front, as the Officer had said that they were likely to be reduced to 1m. Mr Tuck replied that they would be trimmed to keep them tidy, but they would be kept at the same height. Picking up on this point, Councillor Hunt remarked that having seen the plan, it was his understanding that the hedges would be cut back and he asked if the Planning Officer could clarify. Mr West responded, saying the wording was that the existing hedges were to be cut back to suit the development. Mr Tuck reiterated that his client was keen to keep the hedges, but they would need trimming.

Raising the issue of traffic movements, Councillor Every asked if it was anticipated that there would be a great increase in traffic should the site be brought back into use for employment purposes. Mr Tuck said Mr Fletcher still owned the scaffolding business and the site was essentially B8 Use. Councillor Stevens reiterated that it was Council policy to preserve sites for employment use and asked Mr Tuck if thought had been given to using the site for other forms of employment. Mr Tuck replied that the Fletchers had concentrated on the existing use; living across from the road, they wished for less traffic movements. They had spoken to other operators, but it was impossible to say who the end user would be.

Councillor Friend-Smith remarked that with the site being outside the development envelope, it would need an exception and the easiest option would be to apply for permission to build sheltered/affordable housing. Mr Tuck responded by saying that he did not know if this had been considered, as he had only started acting for his clients 18 months ago.

In response to a question from Councillor Wilson, Mr Tuck said that, to the best of his knowledge, his clients had not advertised the site for employment use for the required two years; they did not want it to go on as a B8 Use.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Robert Bullen, Chairman of Little Thetford Parish Council, addressed the Committee and made the following points:

- He had very little to add beyond what had already been said, but he wished to put forward the view of the local residents;
- It was outside the development envelope but still very much within the village;
- The proposed development would be in keeping with the village and would not diminish it at all;
- Little Thetford was quiet and rural. It was a “no through route” village, so any traffic coming in would have to turn round to go back out again;
- The proposal was the same as other ad hoc and “one off” developments in the area;

- If the proposed development was not permitted, the area would become very much used. The roads were narrow and at school times there was much light car traffic;
- The road was not suited to heavy use and heavy vehicles would further degrade the condition of the road;
- At present the site was very dilapidated, but if it was used for heavy storage there would be further heavy vehicle movements and this would not be to the benefit of the village.

Councillor Bullen concluded by asking the Committee to take a broader view of the application. He then responded to comments and questions from Members.

The Chairman asked whether traffic through the village had been flagged up with the Parish Council when the scaffolding business was in operation. Councillor Bullen replied that it was not an issue because there were only two movements a day, one out and one in, in the evening.

Councillor Stevens enquired about the generation of farm traffic from the land to the east of the railway line. Councillor Bullen said the use of the road by farm traffic was irregular and much more spasmodic in comparison to that of the scaffolding business.

Councillor Stevens next asked if the Parish Council was involved in acquiring more space for affordable housing. Councillor Bullen stated that they had been urged to identify suitable sites, and a community land trust (CLT) scheme had also been considered. However, the conclusion reached was that the Parish did not have the ability to form a CLT and there were no suitable sites in the village.

Councillor Friend-Smith asked Councillor Bullen if it was known how much demand there would be in the village and was informed that it would be very minimal.

Councillor Hunt noted that Officers had various concerns about the proposal including the loss of a rural area, the layout of the site and possible overdevelopment. He asked if the Parish Council would be happy if the site maybe had a different layout, fewer houses and the dwellings were of a lower height. Councillor Bullen replied that the issue of overdevelopment was a matter for further consideration, and as a general rule, the Parish would be more supportive of a slightly less intensive development. The Parish Council was not in a position to make particular comments, but it did not want to be against the proposal.

The Chairman remarked that the site had the potential for development, but it would be difficult to fit in the dwellings as per the indicative plan. It was also too soon for the application as proof would be needed that the site was not viable for employment use.

Councillor Rouse disagreed, saying it was only an outline application and he had been persuaded by Councillor Bullen that on balance, the site was suitable for residential use. He would therefore go against the Officer's recommendation.

Councillor Wilson felt that the proposed scheme was totally against several policies and as such, there was no need to hurry a decision; more thought was needed. He supported the Officer's recommendation for refusal adding that the applicants should go away and work with Officers to come back with a more suitable scheme. He thought that affordable housing would be ideal and said he would be surprised if there was not some need for it.

Councillor Hunt believed a delicate balance had to be achieved. On the one hand, the living standards of the people in the village had to be considered, bearing in mind the narrowing of the High Street, the traffic issues and HGV's coming through twice a day. However, the housing mix was not very dense at 7 per acre, and the application could cope with the railway noise. He agreed with Councillor Rouse that the application should be approved but he was very keen to insist that two of the dwellings were single storey. This was a very beautiful, desirable end of the village, so care must be taken with the site.

Councillor Brown commented that he had difficulty with the application as he did not think there was enough information for him to be able to make an informed decision.

Councillor Beckett concurred, saying the application was too much for the site whereas he thought it would suit 2-3 executive bungalows. The issue of hedge trimming was immaterial because a buyer could cut down the hedge, and if the site was used for housing there would be more cars than lorries coming along the road. He could not support what was before him today and suggested that the Applicants should come back with a different application.

Councillor Every believed the site should be used for residential rather than employment purposes, but she was concerned about the timescale involved. According to the Officer's report the site should have been advertised and the process could take some time.

It was proposed by Councillor Beckett and seconded by Councillor Stevens that the Officer's recommendation for refusal be approved. When put to the vote, the motion was declared carried, there being 7 votes for and 3 votes against. Whereupon,

It was resolved:

That planning application reference 14/01370/OUT be REFUSED for the reasons given in the Officer's report, subject to revisions to remove reference to the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy as the Local Plan has now been adopted.

109. **15/00082/OUT – 2 HIGH STREET, LITTLEPORT**

Richard West, Planning Officer, presented a report (P246) which provided details of an application seeking outline planning permission with all matters reserved for the erection of a two storey, two bedroom dwelling.

It was noted that amended plans had been received during the application process reducing the dwelling from a three bedroom house with a footprint of 43 sq metres to a two bedroom house with a footprint of 42sq metres, re-siting the dwelling within the plot and widening the access.

Illustrations were displayed at the meeting which included a map of the application site, an aerial photograph, an indicative plan of the proposed layout, and a photograph of the visual appearance and character of the Conservation Area.

The Committee was reminded that the main considerations in the determination of this application were:

- Principle of development;
- Layout;
- Visual appearance and character of the conservation area;
- Amenity; and
- Highway safety.

Members were reminded that the Conservation Area, in which the application site was located, was characterised by buildings set forward on their plots with long narrow gardens, especially along the High Street. The proposed dwelling would be located in approximately the centre of the site with a shared turning space to the rear. Although the indicative plans showed that the dwelling could provide sufficient amenity space and car parking provision, other necessary space such as where bins would be stored had not been taken into account. It was considered that the proposed dwelling, by reason of its cramped layout and contrary form in relation to the surrounding development would have a detrimental impact on the character of the Conservation Area.

In terms of amenity, the dwelling was to be constructed on the rear garden land currently serving No. 2 High Street. As a result of the development, No. 2 would be left with a significantly smaller rear amenity space which was not considered to be proportionate to the size of the dwelling. Additionally, the remaining rear amenity space would be enclosed by the new dwelling which would have an overbearing impact.

The Planning Officer concluded by reiterating that due to the impact of the proposed scheme on the visual appearance and character of the Conservation Area, refusal of planning permission would be justified due to a cramped layout, contrary form and massing in relation to the surrounding

development, and lack of full plans to assess the extent of the impact. The development was considered contrary to Policies GROWTH2, ENV2 and ENV11 of the Local Plan.

Councillor Beckett remarked that while Members were being asked to consider the impact of the proposal on the visual appearance of the area, he did not see how they could do so because they did not have any plans. For this reason he thought the Committee should support the Officer's recommendation for refusal.

Councillor Hunt declared his support for refusal of the application, especially in the light of the Conservation Officer's comments as set out in paragraph 5.1 of the report. He felt that a message should be given to the Applicant that the Committee thought a house could be built on the proposed site but the design should be considered carefully. Consent could be given for a low price open market dwelling with one parking space.

Councillor Wilson said he did not see how County Highways could accept two car parking spaces, as he believed this to be impossible. Also the land was 1.5 metres higher than street level, so the house might have to be on a lower level. He thought the application was all wrong, and he therefore supported the Officer's recommendation.

Councillor Rouse said it was expected that the buildings in town centres would be cramped close together. He thought problems could be overcome if handled in the right way, and there was scope for improvement, but the question was how to do this. He agreed with his fellow Members that there was not enough information to be able to make a decision.

Councillor Friend-Smith thought there were too many unanswered questions and the application could not be granted permission as it stood.

The Chairman interjected to say that the Committee had given a clear steer and Officers should note Members' concerns. Councillor Hunt requested that when the Applicant was advised that his application had been refused, Officers should pass on the feeling of the Committee's debate.

It was duly proposed by Councillor Beckett and seconded by Councillor Brown that the Officer's recommendation for refusal be approved. When put to the vote, the motion was declared carried and,

It was resolved unanimously:

That planning application reference 15/00082/OUT be REFUSED for the reasons given in the Officer's report, subject to revisions to remove reference to the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy as the Local Plan has now been adopted.

At this point, Councillor Brown said that before he left the meeting he wanted to wish good luck to all those Members standing for re-election; he then vacated the Chamber at 3.12pm.

110. **15/03001/CCA – STRIKES TEN PIN BOWLING, THE DOCK, ELY**

Penny Mills, Senior Planning Officer, presented a report (P247) which sought endorsement of the consultation response proposed by Officers in relation to an application which was being determined by Cambridgeshire County Council. She reiterated that East Cambridgeshire District Council was a consultee and not the determining body.

It was noted that the application sought permission for a change of use from D2 (leisure) to D1 (non-residential institutions) including the addition of a mezzanine floor consisting of B1 (office) and D1 Use to create Public Archives, Registration Service and County Council Offices.

The proposed facility would bring together a number of separated County Council functions. It was expected that the following services would move into the new facility: records office/public archives; Ely Registration Office, Cambridgeshire Collection and office accommodation for Children's, Families and Adult Services. There would be reading rooms, a microfiche facility and storage upstairs.

The Senior Planning Officer asked the Committee to note a couple of housekeeping issues relating to the application:

Three additional representations objecting to the proposal and a letter from the agent had been received and circulated to Members.

There would also be the following additional comments for the response to the County Council:

"The development provides less than the number of spaces set out in the Council's parking standards and it is anticipated that some users will therefore use the adjacent Angel Drove pay and display car park. A contribution should be secured through a Section 106 Agreement to formalise and improve a pedestrian link between the site and the commuter car park."

Illustrations were displayed at the meeting which included a map of the application site, an aerial photograph and a layout of the proposal.

The Committee was reminded that the key issues were:

- Out of centre location;
- Loss of community facility; and
- Highways and accessibility.

The application site was located to the north of The Dock Business Park, close to the Tesco Petrol Filling Station, and Tesco Superstore, and was within the development envelope as drawn in the adopted Local Plan. The site comprised an L-shaped warehouse building, which was currently occupied by Strikes Bowling Alley, and a car park area which wrapped around the building to the east and southeast. An access road, which also provided access to an adjacent builder's merchants, currently divided the site in two with a smaller parcel of land on the northern side of the road currently being unused. The site fell within Flood Zone 3 of the Environment Agency's flood risk maps.

Members noted that the proposed development was considered to be a "town centre use". Policy COM1 of the Local Plan stated that out of centre sites should only be allowed where it could be demonstrated that specific criteria were met; paragraph 7.3 of the report set out the requirements.

Local and National Policy would normally dictate that proposals for town centre uses in out of town locations were subject to a sequential test. However, in this case the presence of an existing town centre leisure use, which had occupied the site for a number of years, was a material consideration that could be given considerable weight. The County Council's specific requirements for the building, especially in relation to the Records Office, made it highly unlikely that a suitable building within the town centre would be available.

The site was considered to be suitable for the proposed use both in terms of the form and design of the building, which would accommodate the unique requirements of the records storage, and its location close to the Ely "Station Gateway" which was anticipated (in the future) to provide a mix of uses including office, retail and residential alongside an enhanced public transport interchange. The location was accessible by a choice of public transport and the transport system was capable of accommodating the traffic implications.

The use did not involve any external alterations and therefore the building would continue to reflect the character and surroundings of the area. The absence of nearby residential dwellings meant that there would be no adverse impact on residential amenity.

On balance it was considered that the out of town location was acceptable for the proposed use.

With regard to the loss of community facility, Policy COM3 of the Local Plan sought to retain community facilities and their loss would only be permitted if certain criteria were met; paragraph 7.11 of the report set out the requirements.

The proposed development would provide an alternative community use, establishing a new educational and cultural facility, which was anticipated to be of county-wide significance. The facility would incorporate

the Records Office and its Public Search Room, the Cambridgeshire Collection local studies library and the Ely Registration Office, and it was expected that it would attract between 6,000 and 9,000 visitors each year.

It was considered, on balance, that the proposed use was likely to achieve wider community benefits than the existing bowling alley. This was due to the special significance the site would have as a County Centre for historical records and other documents, and the ability this would have to draw visitors to Ely. The proposal also offered sustainability benefits by bringing together a presently dispersed collection and benefits in terms of contributing to protecting the historic records. The proposal therefore met the requirements of Policy COM3 of the Local Plan and was acceptable in principle.

It was also considered that the proposal met the requirements of Policy COM4 of the Local Plan, which dealt specifically with new community facilities. However, in order to ensure that the use remained primarily a community one, it was recommended that the office accommodation be restricted by the imposition of a planning condition. It was also requested that a condition be used to restrict the use of the building to the specific one proposed rather than a general D1 Use, to prevent future changes of use without a planning application, as this could lead to an increase in the amount of parking required.

In connection with highways and accessibility, it was noted that the Applicant had submitted a Transport Statement which stated that traffic movement was likely to be comparable to the existing use but with different peak times and a slight reduction on Saturdays.

The adopted Local Plan set out parking standards for different types of uses, and the requirement for this development was a total of 113 spaces; this was above the current existing provision on site of 52 car parking spaces. However, given the excellent public transport links and the close proximity of the Council's Angel Drove Commuter Car Park, the level of parking available was considered to be acceptable for this proposal.

Councillor Friend-Smith had brought to Officers' attention the route from the commuter car park to the site, and asked if some consideration could be given as to how the pedestrian link could be improved. Officers felt that it would be appropriate to seek a contribution through a S106 Agreement towards establishing/upgrading the link.

The Senior Planning Officer concluded by summarising the Officer response to the County Council and inviting Members to add their comments.

The Chairman requested that a specific limit to the number of staff parking on site be included in the response.

Councillor Rouse said it was a very exciting prospect to have all this coming to Ely, especially if one enjoyed research, and this would be a very accessible site. However, he was concerned that the County Council was not good at talking about their plans; their will tended to prevail and they had to engage in meaningful dialogue. Nothing should be allowed to deflect from the real use of the building and he believed that there were better places for some of the other functions due to be located on the site; he did not think the Registry Office needed to move from its present location. With reference to car parking spaces, he did not wish to see the car park full of staff cars.

Councillor Hunt agreed with Councillor Rouse's comments about the County Council's inability to communicate, and said that this point should be emphasised to them. He also made reference to comments in the local media which inferred that the District Council was responsible for the bowling alley having to close. He wished it to be made clear that this was misinformation as the building had been advertised for sale by the owner's estate agent, who had consequently contacted the County Council.

Councillor Hunt continued, saying he was excited by this prospect because it was time that Ely was recognised as a transport hub and historic Cathedral city. The new use would not be so commercially popular as the bowling alley, but the area was suitable for public transport. For the safety of the public, he urged Officers to include the provision of a footpath in the talks with the County Council. With regard to parking on the site, he did not think spaces should be filled up by staff and visitors from Noble House; there must be adequate parking and there should be discussion with the County Council regarding a contribution towards the expansion of the car park. As far as the Registry Office was concerned, he did not think Members should get too "tied up" about it, as it was not down to the Committee to interfere.

Councillor Beckett expressed amazement that colleagues thought the County Council would listen to the District Council and said that his biggest concern was also car parking. The level of parking was already 21 spaces short, and it was impossible to park there down after 9.30am. He thought the consultation response should include a request to consider the crescent shaped area to the north as a staff car park, with a minimum of 15 spaces in the front car park for visitors.

Councillor Every said she agreed with all the previous comments made about car parking. The new facility would also be an educational opportunity, so there could be coaches arriving on the site. As far as the Registry Office was concerned, she thought it was really important and should not be "round the back of a tin building" as the location was part of a whole experience. Careful thought should be given to what was being offered so as to enhance the current heritage.

Councillor Wilson said he agreed absolutely with everything that had been said, especially regarding the Registry Office. It should be left in its current location and a condition imposed to stop it being relocated to the new facility. The car parking had been critically informed, and the County Council

should make sure of a good pathway, suitable for use by wheelchairs and buggies, between the commuter car park and the site. With regard to Strikes, he said it was a pity to lose the bowling alley, but this was not the fault of the District Council.

Councillor Stevens expressed concern that the application site was located in Flood Zone 3, as some of the County assets were priceless and the building had to be thoroughly considered regarding flood risk. The Senior Planning Officer replied that comment on this aspect of the application was the role of the Environment Agency and they had raised no objections. The County Council had and would continue to work closely with the National Archives in designing the new facility which would be fully compliant with national standards. The Chairman added that the County Council was moving because its current accommodation was wholly unsuitable.

Councillor Friend-Smith said that when the Angel Drove car park was first opened, he thought there would be a through route and he was horrified that this was not possible. He was therefore delighted that the Senior Planning Officer was able to include an improved route in the consultation response.

The Chairman stated that a list of the additional issues raised would be drawn up and submitted to the County Council. Councillor Hunt asked that a comment about the County Council's lack of communication and giving out misinformation also be included, as there had to be proper communication with the public.

The Senior Planning Officer asked for a clear steer regarding the Registry Office, as a number of competing views had been expressed. She said that, in consultation with the Chairman, she would put together some wording about the issues raised and they would be sent to the County Council along with a copy of the minutes of the meeting.

Councillor Rouse reiterated that this was the very early stage of the process. There should be consultation with both the District Council and the City of Ely Council about how the facility was to be used. The essential thing for Ely was the Archives, and all else should be kept to a minimum.

The Chairman asked about the consultation and next steps; the Senior Planning Officer said they would keep to a condition limiting the office space.

Councillor Beckett reiterated his previous comment about a suggested staff car park to the north of the site and he suggested a stipulation about how much research facility space and reading area there should be. In connection with this, the Senior Planning Officer said there would be a maximum of 50 people at desks and the Registry Office would have 3 full time staff. There were to be talks about having a travel plan to maximise the existing transport. Councillor Beckett responded by saying that this could equate to 60-65 people working there, and the Chairman interjected to add

that the transport assessment would take into account that not all staff would be using the office at the same time. With the Committee's comments, this point could be hammered home.

In connection with the transport assessment, Councillor Hunt felt there was a clear need for a cycle path and it would be a simple matter to extend the cycle path near the golf course.

Referring to the relocation of the Registry Office, the Chairman agreed that this was not the best place and the County Council should look elsewhere. Members comments would be included in the response.

Having been proposed and seconded, the Officer's recommendation to endorse the consultation response was put to the vote and the motion was declared carried.

It was resolved unanimously:

That the consultation response to planning application reference 15/03001/CCA, as set out in the Officer's report, be ENDORSED and that the list of additional issues should be agreed in consultation with the Chairman of the Planning Committee.

111. **CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

The Chairman said he wished to say from the Chair how grateful he was for the conduct and professionalism of the Members of the Planning Committee.

They had not always agreed, but matters were debated fairly and thoroughly. He wished everyone all the best for the future. He also paid tribute to the former Chairman, the "fantastic" Councillor Philip Read, saying he had inherited the Chair when Councillor Read stepped down due to ill health. On behalf of the Committee he sent best wishes to him.

Councillor Hunt, speaking as a Substitute Member, likened the Planning Committee to a family. Sometimes there were disagreements, but all shared the same desire to do the best for the area they represented, and he was really pleased to have been part of it. It was sad that they would no longer all be together, particularly as Councillors Robert Stevens and Jeremy Friend-Smith were not standing for re-election. He also mentioned Councillors Sheila Friend-Smith and Sue Willows who were leaving, and with the forthcoming elections, all other Members were at risk.

He concluded by wishing to put on record his absolute thanks to all, both Members and Officers.

Councillor Friend-Smith said he had enjoyed his 16 years as a Member of the Planning Committee and he would look back on it with great

pleasure. He made particular mention of Penny Mills, Alan Dover and David Archer, but said he wished to thank all the Planners for their kindness and courtesy.

The meeting closed at 4.01pm.

DRAFT