

PLANNING COMMITTEE



THURSDAY, 7 MAY 2020 - 1.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor D Connor (Chairman), Councillor A Hay (Vice-Chairman), Councillor I Benney, Councillor A Lynn, Councillor C Marks, Councillor Mrs K Mayor, Councillor N Meekins, Councillor P Murphy and Councillor W Sutton, Councillor Mrs J French (Substitute)

APOLOGIES: Councillor S Clark,

Officers in attendance: Stephen Turnbull (Legal Officer), Jo Goodrum (Member Services & Governance Officer), Nick Harding (Head of Shared Planning) and David Rowen (Development Manager)

P80/19

F/YR19/1082/F

LAND SOUTH OF HAROLDS BANK, SEALEY'S LANE, PARSON DROVE, CAMBRIDGESHIRE, CHANGE OF USE OF LAND TO A TRAVELLER'S SITE INVOLVING THE SITING OF 2NO MOBILE HOMES, 2NO TOURER VANS; ERECTION OF 2NO DAY ROOMS, 1.8 METRE HIGH FENCE AND 1.2 METRE HIGH POST AND RAIL FENCING (PART RETROSPECTIVE)

David Rowen presented the report to members and drew their attention to the update report which had been circulated to members.

Members received a presentation in objection to the application, in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure, from Councillor Gavin Booth as District Councillor.

Councillor Booth stated that he spoke to Officers in February and was advised that further reports had been requested regarding provision of traveller pitches and flood risk. He added that looking at the online file these do not appear to have materialised for public viewing and therefore, the justification Officers have given to approve this site after it has been refused twice in the last 3 years, demonstrates a lack of consistency in approach. He also requested that he was kept informed of progress on the application, sadly this did not happen.

He stated that the policies in place since the last 2 previous refusals have not changed and he fails to understand why a third application was allowed. He added that it appears to be based on an appeal elsewhere in the District, however, planning appeals do not set precedent as in case law, instead are informative in decision making and different sites will have their own individual characteristics.

Councillor Booth expressed the view that, in his opinion, the appeal site used to bring this third application is completely different in nature to the site in Sealey's Lane, which is in the open countryside

He stated that the officer report appears to dismiss the previous reasons for refusal even though they have not changed over the last 3 years and in his opinion the report does not make it clear enough that the site has been developed and occupied since October 2019, even though it was refused twice.

Councillor Booth stated that with regard to flood risk, the last correspondence on file from the Environment Agency is dated 3 January 2020 and objects to the proposal. He questioned why Officers are putting such weight on the agent's report, when in the past the Environment Agency report would determine the nature of flood risk and is also contrary to previous decisions made regarding caravans and flood risk, given their vulnerable nature.

Councillor Booth expressed the view that with regard to open countryside, it appeared that Officers have now changed their mind on why this is not a consideration citing the nursery at the end of Sealey's lane as justification. He added that the T junction with Harrold's Bank has been developed for a considerable number of years with farm buildings, a nursery and property, situated some distance from this proposed development and the site in question is quite visible in the open countryside and different in nature to the site referred to in the appeal at Bevis Lane.

Councillor Booth expressed the opinion that with regard to traveller status there is no public report on file regarding the provision of traveller sites across the District, however previously it was determined there were sufficient at this time, with some provision needed in the future. The Parish Council has pointed out that spare capacity exists at Turf Fen site in Murrow; it appears only 2 of the 6 plots are currently occupied there. He added that the officer report also indicates that traveller status can only be justified for one occupant, so why would they support the second plot, which goes against policy?

Councillor Booth added that since the occupation of the site in October he has received several complaints regarding loss of amenity due to the constant generator noise and light pollution in the open countryside. He stated that the Parish Council strongly objected to the planning application for the change of use, however the report before committee does not address the points raised and does not consider all the policy reasons the Parish Council objected to this and previous applications.

Councillor Booth made reference to various elements of the National Planning Policy Framework and also the Council's Local Plan which the Parish Council had highlighted.

Members received a presentation in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure, from Dr Sheila Child in objection to the application.

Dr Child outlined to the committee the previous planning application references and letters of objection. She explained that she wrote to the Planning committee on 30th December 2019 to object to this latest application and that despite three previous refusal decisions, the Planning Officer's recommendation is to grant this application. Dr Child stated that she objects most strongly to that recommendation and she added that in her opinion she believes that the grounds for refusing permission for the previous applications are still very valid and this new application does not address, or even attempt to address, the reasons for the original rejection decisions.

Dr Child expressed the view that contraventions of local planning and policy regulations appear to still apply, as does the unsuitability of the site for dwellings of any nature, evidenced by the site having already having been turned down for social housing development. Dr Child stated that the Councils Enforcement Team must be aware, that the applicants have continued to build and construct elements of this application. Dr Child stated that a number of youths are now living in the caravans and there is a large generator which has been installed and is working day and night. She stated that the applicants continue to disregard the law and do whatever they want.

Dr Child summarised the main points that she asked the Planning Committee to consider.

1) Sealeys Lane is a very narrow thoroughfare which is not even wide enough for two cars and reverts to single car width at exactly the point where this proposed development is located, which in addition, is a blind comer.

2) The recent extension of the footpath at the Main Road end of Sealeys Lane has further narrowed that section of the Lane. Lorries, trucks and vans frequently have to mount both the pavement and/or the edges of her property to make their way through. It is not suitable for an increased traffic load and should be subject to a weight limit.

3) There is no street lighting at all at the Harold's Bank end of Sealeys Lane. This means that the travellers will erect high intensity lighting to light their site - just as they have done at the Turf Fen site. Blinding the eyes of motorists in this way is really not a responsible practice and especially not at an already dangerous junction.

4) This plot of land was previously put forward as an exception site for affordable housing. This was rejected, not only on some of the grounds stated above but for reasons of distance from the shops, school and other essential services. Nothing has changed which could possibly make this application now worthy of consideration

5) Evidence from the Turf Fen site, which we can all see for ourselves, suggests that travellers will quickly turn the surrounding area into a scrap metal heap or a rubbish tip. Litter and other unwanted, unsavoury items are left on verges and will find their way into the Lane.

Dr Child concluded by stating that she does not necessarily disagree with traveller sites, provided they are in the right place and well away from residential areas. She added that, in accordance with local plans, there is already sufficient provision for traveller sites within the area and stated that there is no need for any more and certainly not on this site. She expressed the opinion that the very nature of being a genuine gypsy or traveller is to be free to move on as and when the mood takes you and questioned that should the applicants decide to move on, what and who will replace them. Dr Child asked the committee to refuse the application and for urgent and legal action to remove these unauthorised residents and their buildings from land they are not entitled to use.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows;

- Councillor Hay asked officers to clarify whether there are any vacancies for traveller pitches over the area and whether there is a waiting list for any vacant pitches? David Rowen stated that advice has been sought from the Councils Traveller and Diversity Manager who has stated that there are no habitable pitches at the moment at and there is a waiting list for pitches at Council traveller's sites.
- Councillor Murphy expressed the opinion that he is in agreement with a great deal of what Councillor Booth and Dr Child have presented. He asked officers to clarify what the difference is between the application before members today and the previous applications that were refused? David Rowen stated the fundamental difference is not to do with the application site or the applications themselves, it is more to do with that there have been several appeal decisions received within the last 6 to 12 months. In particular the appeal decision with the Bevis Lane application which has various similarities to this site, with regard to flood risk, location and settlements in the countryside, which have changed officers thinking and approach on the way they look at this type of application based on the appeal decisions made by Inspectors.
- Councillor Benney asked for confirmation on how recent the figures are from the Traveller and Diversity Manager with regard to the waiting lists for traveller pitches, as he would expect them to be fluid? David Rowen stated that the information obtained is from within the last couple of weeks which sets out there are no habitable Council pitches available at present. The details of the waiting lists were not able to be provided.
- Councillor Murphy stated that he cannot understand why another traveller site a few miles away should deter from the application before members today. Each application should be considered on its own merits. David Rowen stated that he concurs with Councillor Murphy and agrees all applications should be taken on their own merits, appeal decisions do form

part of officers considerations especially when there is an appeal decision which includes fundamental principles on how to approach a particular type of an application. He added that the Bevis Lane application is similar to the application before members today, which would give an indication on how an inspector would perhaps determine an appeal should the application be refused.

- Councillor Hay stated that the previous applications which are no different to the one before the committee today had numerous reasons for objection. She added that she appreciates that there may be the need for additional traveller sites, but that does not mean that they should be given preferential treatment when granting planning permission. If the proposal was for a dwelling on that site, then in her opinion, the recommendation would be to refuse permission.
- Councillor Meekins expressed the view that the application has been refused before and the occupants on the site have already started work on the site, and if the application is approved then the Council would be guilty of giving into non-compliance by the occupants of the site.
- Councillor Benney stated that if the application was for a house it would be refused, it is in flood zone 3 and there is a distance of 450 metres which is unlit linking the site to Parson Drove. He stated there is no ecology report as the site had been cleared before the ecology report could take place. He expressed the view that works have taken place with total disregard for planning. He expressed the opinion, that travellers do have special status in law, and if this application is not passed and goes to appeal, then the Council would lose meaning that the Council would incur costs.
- Councillor Sutton stated that he shares many of the concerns raised by other members, but having sat as an as an observer at a recent planning appeal, in his opinion the committee would be foolish to go against the officers recommendation today.
- Councillor Mrs French stated that she agrees with comments that other members have made. The Council does not have an adequate supply of traveller pitches and if the application went to appeal it would cost the authority dearly.
- Councillor Benney expressed the view that there is also a human element to be considered and travellers do need somewhere to live, however his decision will be made on policy.
- Councillor Sutton stated that travellers are part of our community, but the way travellers live and work has changed significantly over the years.

Proposed by Councillor Sutton, seconded by Councillor Benney and decided that the application be APPROVED as per the officer's recommendation.

P81/19

F/YR20/0083/F

**THE HOLLIES, MIDDLE BROAD DROVE, TYDD ST GILES, CAMBRIDGESHIRE
ERECT A 3-STOREY 4/5-BED DWELLING WITH DETACHED GARAGE AND
STUDY ABOVE INVOLVING DEMOLITION OF EXISTING DWELLING AND
CHANGE OF USE OF LAND FROM PADDOCK TO GARDEN**

David Rowen presented the report to members and drew their attention to the update report which had been circulated to members.

Members received a presentation in objection to the application, in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure, from the applicant Mr Zane Watson.

Mr Watson stated that the property has been in his family's ownership for 78 years and was his great grandparents' home with his parents living at the adjacent property. He added that, in his opinion, the footprint of the proposal is not more excessive than in its current form and will be higher as the property falls within flood zone 3 so the bedrooms will need to be off the ground floor level. The garage proposed conforms to Council's policy.

Mr Watson stated that the existing bungalow is suffering from structural issues which are due to it

being next to the drain and why he is proposing to move the dwelling nearer to Jillendy which will also allow for easier maintenance of the drain.

He stated that to make use of all available space it was considered to make use of the attic space rather than leave it as empty space.

Mr Watson concluded by stating that he wants to be near his parents who fully support the proposal and added that with the current situation and worldwide pandemic it has been reiterated that family is important and we need to be there to look after each other.

Members asked Mr Watson the following questions;

- Councillor Benney ask for clarity that Mr Watson lives in his great grandparents' home and his parent still live in his grandparent home? Mr Watson confirmed that this is correct.
- Councillor Meekins asked for clarity with regard to the track and outbuildings which are in the vicinity of the property? Mr Watson explained that the track is a roadway, which runs to farm buildings and sheds. A new roadway will be installed to the right hand side of the property to access the buildings. Mr Watson confirmed that the land and farm buildings are owned by his parents but rented out to tenants.

Members asked officers the following questions;

- Councillor Murphy asked for clarification with regard to the replacement increase of the new dwelling which is shown in the officer's report as 257% and asked what the normal percentage that would be expected. David Rowen stated that the policy in the Local Plan talks about it being similar. The percentage increase in the proposal is significant and the scale is considered as inappropriate in this particular case.
- Councillor Hay asked for clarification with regards to ridge heights for 2 storey dwellings? David Rowen confirmed that a normal 2 storey ridge height would be 7.5 metres.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Benney expressed the view that the proposal is for a 2 and a half storey dwelling and he is of the opinion that to utilise the loft space is a good use of space. He does not feel the proposal will be a blot on the landscape and in his opinion it will be an attractive building and be a beacon to the Fens. Larger families, require larger homes and officers have recommended refusal due to the scale of the development and apart from the bungalow next door, it is open countryside and he welcomes this development.
- Councillor Sutton stated that it is a big plot and should be replaced with something larger than what is currently on the plot and the reasons for refusal are subjective. He added that, in his view the proposal needs to be approved on its own merits. He does not feel it is out of character and nor not out of character with Fenland as a whole. He will be supporting the application. The bungalow currently on the plot has major structural defaults and for it to be moved away from the ditch will also allow better maintenance of the ditch.
- Councillor Mrs French agreed with Councillor Benney and Councillor Sutton and stated that there are large houses in other areas of Fenland, which started off as small dwellings and are now very large properties. She stated that she will be voting against the officer's recommendation.
- Councillor Lynn stated he cannot see any reason to reject this application. There have been no objections to the application. The applicant has enough space to build the property for his growing family.
- Councillor Meekins stated that he concurs with all the comments made by the other members and he will be voting in favour of the application and going against the officer's recommendation.
- Nick Harding stated that he hopes members of the committee can understand why officers

have made the recommendation to refuse the application. He explained that under policy LP12c it states that any replacement dwellings have to be of a similar size and scale to the original dwelling, hence the recommendation. Nick Harding added that if members are considering going against the officer recommendation then the proposing member needs to demonstrate why the particular element of the policy should be outweighed by the benefits that the development brings.

- David Rowen clarified that the Parish Council has objected to the proposal.
- Councillor Benney expressed the opinion, that the officer's report is recommending refusal because of scale and referred to the Local Plan. He stated that the policy is a guideline for members to consider and not a rule. He expressed the view that the proposal will be of a benefit to the community and he will be happy to propose the application to go against the officer's recommendation.
- Councillor Sutton stated that the development does not quite fit with policy, but the benefits do outweigh the consideration given to a particular area of the policy and he will be happy to second the proposal.
- Nick Harding stated that that if Councillor Benney were to approve the development proposal he would ask that he considers giving officers delegated authority to apply appropriate planning conditions in respect of the planning permission.
- Councillor Mrs French added that she would want reasonable conditions applied and not onerous conditions.
- Councillor Connor stated that he would ask that the conditions are decided in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman, along with the proposer and seconder.

Proposed by Councillor Benney, seconded by Councillor Sutton and decided that the application be APPROVED, against the officer's recommendation.

Members approved the application against officer's recommendation for the following reasons; Councillor Benney stated that it is a subjective reason for refusal and the proposal is a benefit for the area and a benefit for Fenland.

It was decided that the conditions imposed on the planning permission be agreed in conjunction with the Chairman and Vice Chairman, Councillor Benney and Councillor Sutton.

**P82/19 F/YR20/0099/F
SITE OF FORMER DRP VEHICLE SERVICES, FALLOW CORNER DROVE,
MANEA.ERECT 2 DWELLINGS (2-STOREY 4-BED) INVOLVING DEMOLITION OF
EXISTING BUILDING**

David Rowen presented the report to members.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure, from Mr Alan Melton the Clerk of Manea Parish Council in support of the application.

Mr Melton stated that Manea Parish Council, recommend approval of the application. He stated that the Parish Council do not agree with the aesthetic impact information which is detailed in the officer's report. He added that the information with regard to flooding is disputed as that part of Manea does not flood and the reasoning behind the applicant not carrying out a sequential test is understandable and the applicant has agreed to raise the property by a metre and Mr Melton stated that there have already been two dwellings approved which has set a precedent and the fact that the property will be a metre higher will have little impact and the adjacent building or the aesthetic appearance of the area.

David Rowen read out a written representation received from Mr Ian Gowler, the Agent for the

Application.

Mr Gowler highlighted that the committees main comments in relation to the previous application F/YR18/0899/F for 3 dwellings were; too many dwellings, cramped development with little parking, don't disagree with development although site is in a flood zone and that two dwellings would seriously be considered.

He further stated that in relation to application F/YR19/0459/F, the comments of members were taken into account and the application resubmitted with just two dwellings but this application was refused by Officers.

Mr Gowler stated that the current application is for 2 dwellings with the size reduced to further to further improve the reduction in impermeable areas and additional detailing has been added to the house designs to match the recently constructed dwelling on the adjacent site. He made the point that the development of the site will also include formal road widening and a new footpath.

Mr Gowler indicated that in relation to flood Risk policy LP14d, the proposed development would now after changes, reduce the impermeable area by 65%, which will be a huge benefit to flood risk in the area passes the exception tests as with the benefit above, the site being previously developed and with the Flood Risk Assessment demonstrating the dwelling is safe.

Mr Gowler expressed the view that this proposal would remove the eyesore building on the approach to Manea which would be a benefit to the community as an exception to the requirement under paragraph 160a of the NPPF. He stated that the the buildings are let on a short term tenancy and the site is no longer appropriate for industrial businesses to be located close to the dwellings.

Mr Gowler expressed the opinion that the proposed houses are proposed to be a link in hierarchy from the new property of 1 and half storey and the large agricultural building that is around 2 and half storeys high which provides a balance to the street scene. He made the point that the bungalows opposite are set back from the road and past the proposed site the street scene is mostly larger properties.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows;

- Councillor Benney stated that one of the reasons that the officers have listed as a reason for refusal is that the proposal is in flood zone 3. He feels that this risk can be mitigated and the land can be built up a metre. He expressed the opinion that the proposal is the entrance to Manea and to have a nice house on the entrance to the village will set a good impression. He added that when this application came to committee previously, the proposal was for three houses and the applicant was advised that if the number of dwellings was reduced, then the committee would consider it further. He stated that the applicant and agent have listened to the committee and we should be considering this proposal seriously.
- Councillor Hay stated that she remembers the proposal previously, when the committee concluded it was over development. She added the site is currently an eyesore, and already has residential dwellings in the vicinity on Fallow Corner Drove. Councillor Hay expressed the view, that although the proposal is in flood zone 3, development can be achieved and she will approve this application.
- Councillor Mrs French stated that she concurs with Councillor Benney and Councillor Hay and added that she would like to see the villages enhanced.
- Councillor Sutton stated that he also remembers when this proposal was last before the committee. He expressed the view that two dwellings on the site would enhance the area visually and the permeable area would be increased.

- Councillor Sutton added that the last time Manea had any flooding episode was 1912 and even if there was a breach in the flood defences, the level of the land to the rear of the proposed properties is at least a metre below road level and the chances of this area being flooded are remote. Councillor Sutton questioned why a sequential test would be needed at that location as it is a brownfield site. He stated that it will improve the area and he will be voting against the officer's recommendation.
- Nick Harding stated that in terms of the flood risk assessment and the need for the sequential test, that requirement forms part of the national planning policy guidance and is reiterated in the planning policy that the council has adopted, as well as the Cambridgeshire County Council policy in managing surface water and flood risk. He added that the Council has prepared some specific guidance around how flood risk and new development is dealt within Wisbech, which differs from other locations.
- Nick Harding explained that the reason why flood risk is important for the proposal before members today and in relation to it being brownfield, it is a change of use, changing from employment use to residential use and Government policy states that housing use is a more at risk use than employment use. Nick Harding explained to members the reasoning concerning the requirement to have the dwelling at 1 metre above the existing ground level, was to reflect a 1 in 100 year storm event there would be a 1 metre deep level of water on the site hence the need to have the dwelling 1 metre above ground.

Proposed by Councillor Benney, seconded by Councillor Mrs French and agreed that the application be APPROVED against the officer's recommendation.

Members approved the application against the officer's recommendation for the following reason; The flood risk issue can be mitigated, and the benefits of bringing more houses to Manea and providing more homes to people outweighs any reason for refusing the application.

Members agreed to delegate authority to officers to apply appropriate conditions in consultation with the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Councillor Benney and Councillor Mrs French

(Councillor Connor declared an interest by virtue of the fact that the Agent for this application is a Doddington Parish Councillor and Councillor Connor attends Doddington Parish Council in his position as an elected member of Fenland District Council)

(Councillor Marks declared a pecuniary interest in this application by virtue of the fact that his business supplies materials to the applicant and retired from the meeting for the duration of the discussion and voting thereon).

P83/19

F/YR20/0186/F

LAND WEST OF 110, WESTFIELD ROAD, MANEA, CAMBRIDGESHIRE.ERECT 1 DWELLING (2-STOREY 4-BED) INCLUDING AN OFFICE AND A DETACHED DOUBLE GARAGE IN ASSOCIATION WITH EXISTING BUSINESS

David Rowen presented the report to members.

Members received a presentation in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure, from Mr Alan Melton the Clerk of Manea Parish Council in support of the application.

Mr Melton stated that members have always sought to encourage well designed and well thought out properties in settlements and on the edge of settlements. He stated that whilst he appreciates what officers have said with regard to the proposal being outside of the development area, under the new proposal, this dwelling will fall within the development area. He expressed the opinion, that as you approach Manea, this dwelling is exactly the type of property that they would like to see. He

added that in 10.4 of the officers report it makes reference to the business use, commercial premises and security cameras and that is a subjective view and should be down to the applicant as to whether he wishes to live adjacent to his business.

Mr Melton drew member's attention to a previous application where approval was given against officer's recommendation which was classed as an agricultural dwelling. He expressed the opinion that there is no such thing as an agricultural business, they are all business dwellings, it is no longer a vocation, and it is a business. He expressed the view that members need to be consistent when determining planning applications.

Mr Melton added that earlier in the year there was a month of torrential rain and there was no sign of flooding at the proposed site. He stated that he agrees it is a large house, but it is a well-designed house and will enhance the entrance to Manea and it will not mitigate any of the aesthetic appearance of Westfield, Road and it is the sort of house that should be on the outskirts to the village of Manea. He concluded that the Parish Council welcome this type of development and this executive home will support the business and enhance the entrance to the village

David Rowen read out a written representation received from Lee Bevens , the Agent for the application.

Mr Bevens reminded members that a similar scheme was presented at Planning Committee in August 2019, and this application attempts to address the reasons for refusal. With reference to refusal reasons 1 and 2 the sequential test argument is not relevant to this scheme as the whole point of the dwelling is to serve the immediate business use at the site, there is little point in putting the dwelling off the site and hopefully members understand this. The dwelling has been raised above ground level to meet all the necessary requirements contained within the supporting flood risk assessment and No objections have been raised by the Environment Agency.

Mr Bevens expressed the view that reason 3 of the previous refusal is slightly ambiguous as the development will make a positive contribution to the local character of the area offering a positive feature to the entrance to the village and help screen the industrial sheds currently seen when approaching Manea. He made the point that, there have been no negative consultee or neighbour responses to the proposal.

Mr Bevens stated that the applicants have been residents of Manea all their lives and purchased Westwood farm over 3 years ago for their businesses with the site being generally in a poor state,, with the front of the site covered in dense scrub and brambles. He made the point that the applicants have invested a great deal of time and money in recent years to improve it, and this has seen other local businesses with local people attracted to the site.

Mr Bevens made the point that there are now a number of businesses using the premises including their own haulage and storage business, a dog grooming business and a forklift business. The forklift business stores emergency forklifts and relies on the premises and the applicant's business to transports the hire machines 24 hours a day for 365 days a year. These businesses all employ Manea residents and in turn they support the local community.

Mr Bevens explained that the business started with just 1 lorry and now the transport company has some 9 lorries with the subsidiary business storing agricultural produce. He highlighted that members and FDC have been provided with additional letters which demonstrate that the businesses on the site are not only concerned with security, with some million pounds worth of equipment being in the yard. The unattended farm buildings and lorry fleet have been targeted for both theft of items such as tools and also for fuel theft with each lorry holding in excess of £500 worth of fuel which is a common target for thieves in exposed rural areas and a dwelling on site

would act as a deterrent.

Mr Bevens stated that his client would like it noting that for 8 months of the year the cold storage units on the site require 24 hour monitoring due to inclement weather from climate change which can mean checking and adjusting temperatures up to 6 times a day in any 24 hour period and at the moment this means that Mr Cook makes visits through the day and night. Living on site would allow Mr Cook to walk next door to check the temperatures and the site without disturbance.

Mr Bevens expressed the view that he proposed development would offer an attractive solution to the entrance of Manea when entering the village from Toll Drove, offering a solution that helps obscure the views of the large storage sheds behind the dwelling and garage. In his opinion whilst it is behind prevailing frontage development it is designed as a standalone dwelling to support the business being run from the address and therefore should not be viewed as setting any form of dangerous precedent for future applications in this area.

Mr Bevens expressed the view that the dwelling has been designed to be dual aspect, so as to provide two key elevations of glazing facing the entrance and side road to offer passive surveillance and attractive elevations. He feels the dwelling will help obscure the views of the large storage sheds when entering the village and additional proposed landscaping will assist with the screening and encourage biodiversity and wildlife and has been moved since the previous application to the highest point on the site to further mitigate against flooding concerns.

Mr Bevens made the point that numerous local residents have written in to support the proposal, together with businesses that use the premises and no objections have been received or raised by highways, the Environment Agency, Parish Council or perhaps most importantly immediate neighbours along Westfield Road. He referred to a further raised at the last planning committee by one member, stating that the applicants have no intention to apply for any further dwellings within the yard area, in fact it is more likely that future plans will be to apply for additional small starter business units adding further local employment and benefit to Manea, should it be approved.

Mr Bevens stated that the applicants want to continue to grow their successful family business at the address and this scheme will see the long-term future secured and continue to employ people. He hopes that members will see that the positives of this scheme outweigh the negatives and approve the scheme.

Members made comments, asked questions and received responses as follows;

- Councillor Benney expressed the opinion that a boundary is not something that is fixed, it is something that moves over time. He added that the best kind of security you can have at a business, is being able to live on site. Councillor Benney expressed the view that from a business perspective, the proposal is something to enhance the business. He expressed the opinion that any surplus money that the applicant may have after selling his bungalow, could be invested into the local economy and that in turn benefits the area by providing additional employment for the local people. He added that by approving this proposal for the applicant to live on site, it will assist and act as a deterrent and in turn reduce crime. The proposal will enhance the area and the view as you arrive into Manea. Councillor Benney concluded by stating that there are no letters of objection at all and the applicant is doing the right thing for his business, for employment and for the village of Manea.
- Councillor Mrs French concurred with Councillor Benney and stated that she will support this application and approve it.

- Councillor Connor expressed the view that the only way to ensure your business is secure is to live on site and he will be voting against the officer's recommendation.
- Councillor Lynn expressed the opinion that there is the need for diverse housing and for nice housing and he stated that he would like to see more forward thinking with regard to determining applications. He expressed the view that there is the need where people can grow and progress and the applicant deserves to have a home that suits them.
- Nick Harding highlighted to members that in August last year, one of the reasons planning permission was refused was on flood risk grounds. He stated that member's decisions should be consistent and in accordance with planning policies unless there are other considerations. Any proposal that members make must identify why the flood risk reason for refusal is outweighed. Members should also consider that the previous application was refused on its design and appearance, so members need to identify why the small revisions that are in the current scheme make it acceptable.
- Councillor Sutton stated that he agrees with many of the comments made by other members. Councillor Sutton expressed the view that members need to consider the key issue with regard to flood risk and whether they believe that the proposal is desirable for the company owner to have his house adjacent to his business rather than 200 yards away. Councillor Sutton expressed the opinion that if members think that is the case, then the sequential test becomes irrelevant, as it cannot be built anywhere else, it has to be there to serve its purpose. Councillor Sutton stated that he will be voting against officer's recommendation.
- Councillor Benney stated that although the proposal is in flood zone 3, there is mitigation in place. Manea does not flood and the benefits outweigh the bad and there are many good elements of this application.
- Councillor Sutton stated that there is a comment in the agenda pack with regard to linear development in Westfield Road. He added that this is not relevant for all sections of the road and highlighted certain properties within the road and also roads in the vicinity of the proposal. He stated that he disagrees with a comment in the officer's report which states that the majority of Westfield Road is linear. David Rowen stated that Westfield Road is a long road and there are numerous examples of in-depth development within the road, however the report makes reference to the prevailing character of Westfield Road in the vicinity of the application site.

Proposed by Councillor Sutton, seconded by Councillor Mrs French and decided that the application be APPROVED, against the officers recommendation.

Members approved the application against the officer's recommendation for the following reason; The proposal to increase the business strengthens the view that it is an essential dwelling and the sequential test is therefore void. The Parish Council are supportive of the application and it will improve the area coming into the village of Manea.

Members agreed to delegate authority to officers to apply appropriate conditions in consultation with the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Councillor Sutton and Councillor Mrs French

(Councillor Marks declared a pecuniary interest in this application, by virtue of the fact that the applicants are landlords on this site for one of his businesses, family friends and he has submitted a letter of support for the application, and retired from the meeting for the duration of the discussion and voting thereon).