

# PLANNING COMMITTEE



**WEDNESDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 2019 - 1.00 PM**

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

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Sheila Black (Principal Planning Officer), Nick Harding (Head of Shared Planning), Izzi Hurst (Member Services & Governance Officer), David Rowen (Development Manager) and Stephen Turnbull (Legal Officer)

**OBSERVING:** Councillor Mrs J French, Councillor Mrs D Laws and Councillor R Skoulding

## **P41/19      PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of 9 October 2019 were confirmed and signed, subject to the following comments;

1. Councillor Sutton said in relation to minute P35/19 point 3; he had stated that the impact of the extra development land on residents would be no different to those houses located close to the existing site with planning permission.

## **P42/19      F/YR15/0699/O - ERECTION OF 14 DWELLINGS (MAX) (OUTLINE APPLICATION WITH ALL MATTERS RESERVED) INVOLVING DEMOLITION OF EXISTING DWELLING AND INDUSTRIAL OUTBUILDINGS - DENNICKS YARD, BACK ROAD, GOREFIELD, CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

The Committee had regard to its inspection of the site (as agreed in accordance with the Site Inspection: Policy and Procedure (minute P19/04)) during its deliberations.

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

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

1. Councillor Sutton supported the application and said the site could easily accommodate more dwellings.
2. Councillor Connor agreed and said development would be an improvement on the current dilapidated site.

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

## **P43/19      F/YR18/0345/FDL - ERECTION OF UP TO 41 FLATS AND 4 DWELLINGS (OUTLINE APPLICATION WITH ALL MATTERS RESERVED) INVOLVING DEMOLITION OF EXISTING DWELLING - BREWIN OAKS, CITY ROAD, MARCH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

The Committee had regard to its inspection of the site (as agreed in accordance with the Site

Inspection: Policy and Procedure (minute P19/04)) during its deliberations.

Sheila Black presented the report to members and drew their attention to the update report that had been circulated to them.

Members received a presentation in objection to the application, in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure, from Councillor Mrs Jan French (March Town Councillor).

Councillor Mrs French thanked members for the opportunity to speak at today's Planning Committee meeting. She raised concern with the officer's recommendation to grant planning permission and highlighted that the consultation with statutory consultees was carried out in April/May 2018 and is therefore outdated. She stated that Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) Highways should have been re-consulted.

Councillor Mrs French informed members that the March Transport Strategy Study (MTSS) is underway and currently out for public consultation. The document highlights congestion at the Burrowmoor Road and High Street, March junction which would be further impacted by this development. She added that March Town Council had recommended refusal as well as the Council's own Transport team.

Councillor Mrs French explained that the scheme is not compliant with policy and highlighted that National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Paragraph 1- 17 promotes the effective use of land which this scheme fails to do as the application is only an outline application and therefore only indicative. She reiterated that due to the application only being for outline planning permission, the compliance with policy cannot be assessed effectively.

Councillor Mrs French informed members that March is currently subject to several studies including the MTSS, Growing Fenland Project and the High Street Study and if successful, will bring in the region of £14 million of government funding into the town. A development such as this is premature and therefore its effect on these studies must be considered.

She asked members to refuse the application based on the following factors; over-development, traffic concerns, detriment to the surrounding area and not in keeping with the current site and surrounding locality. She highlighted the effects of overlooking on the residents of Ravenhill Drive and stated that as no tree surveys have been carried out, it is unknown the effect the development will have on the wildlife and habitat onsite.

Councillor Mrs French asked members to refuse this application as only a full application for planning permission would highlight the full impact of this development on the town. She reminded members that the site is opposite a Council owned car-park in City Road, March and stated that this should not be expected to accommodate residents parking.

She drew members attention to the architect's drawings submitted with the application and highlighted the use of a roof garden in one of the proposed blocks and argued that this was out of keeping with other blocks of flats located in the town.

Councillor Mrs French reiterated that the application fails to address the impact of additional traffic and offers no means of mitigation against this. She added that the outline application does not provide assurance in relation to the impact on neighbouring properties and asked members to refuse planning permission because of this.

Members had no questions for Councillor Mrs French.

Members received a presentation in support of the application, in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure, from Ted Brand (Agent).

Ted Brand clarified the highways concerns in relation to the application and explained to members that whilst the Council's Transport team had initially raised concerns about traffic implications, Highways had carried out a full assessment and confirmed that the traffic implications of the proposal would not be sufficient enough to warrant a refusal of planning permission.

He explained that he had worked closely with the Planning officers for many months and had reduced the amount of dwellings on site during this period. Whilst the indicative layout does show the existing property on the site being demolished, he explained that there may be an option to retain this property for use as a nursing home or another community provision. He encouraged members to grant planning permission and welcomed any questions from them.

Members asked Ted Brand the following questions;

1. Councillor Hay said whilst she has no issue with the principal of development on the site, the scale of the development is an issue. As the application is only for outline planning permission, the site plan submitted is only indicative. She raised concern with the effect of the development on the character of the area and the visual impact this would cause and stated that she may view the application differently if the agent had made clear the possibility of utilising the existing dwelling at an earlier point in the planning process. She proposed members defer the application today and ask that further plans are submitted to allow members full consideration of the scale and layout of development. Ted Brand explained that the applicants are a local charity and they have a duty to obtain the best value for this land. He reiterated that the application is for the maximum amount of dwellings suitable for the site following consultation with Planning officers. He added that a developer may choose to alter the scheme at a later stage and confirmed that he believes the scale of the site and parking provisions proposed can be delivered in a satisfactory way.
2. Councillor Hay asked Ted Brand why he believes there will be no issue with the overlooking of properties in Ravenhill Drive considering the proposed block will be three-storeys in height. Ted Brand confirmed that whilst the proposed building is three-storeys in height, the third-storey will utilise the attic space and therefore have the appearance of a two-storey building thus minimising overlooking.
3. Councillor Meekins agreed that he has concerns with the scale of development and the proposed parking provisions too. He asked Ted Brand if consideration would be given to reducing the number of dwellings. Ted Brand explained that this could be considered at the reserved matters stage. Regarding the parking provisions, the site is located within March town centre and therefore many residents may not require a vehicle on site. He highlighted that national planning policy would possibly support no parking on site due to the town centre location.
4. Councillor Benney asked for clarification on the number of storeys proposed as one of the drawings submitted shows a 3.5-storey building. Ted Brand confirmed that this was an error and the dormer windows were included incorrectly.

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

1. Councillor Sutton asked if officers had a response to the issues raised in the presentations. David Rowen said in relation to the highways concern the comments from the Council's Transport team were received in September/October 2019. These comments were discussed with Highways and their decision has been made with full knowledge of these comments.
2. Nick Harding explained that a meeting had been held between himself, Highways and the Council's Transport team. Following this, Highways had subsequently provided figures for expected traffic generated from this site. He highlighted that a report carried out in 2011, had identified that the junction at Burrowmoor Road was under capacity and the additional traffic generated by the site is not expected to have a significant detrimental impact on this. He reminded members that the MTSS is in its infancy and feasibility has not yet been

considered therefore members should not refuse this application based on future improvements to this junction, as nothing has been yet approved or adopted.

3. Councillor Sutton highlighted that if members grant planning permission today the development will be taken into account as part of the MTSS anyway.
4. Councillor Murphy made the following statement;

'It worries me greatly that we are going to sit here today with this indicative outline planning application showing what it might look like but we know that if we approve this the designs can be changed beyond all recognition and we also know that the developer contributions to such things as affordable housing, education, libraries and public open space provisions can diminish or disappear altogether.

Now, I would like to discuss the Highways situation. Concern has been raised by members of the public and the Council's own Transport team regarding the traffic generated by the proposal and the potential impact on the junctions. At the mini-roundabout there are three roads directly converging, two from the main through road in High Street, which already has queued traffic trying to get in and out of the town centre and the third road, Burrowmoor Road, coming from the busy school and March bypass. Then we have the narrow City Road which already serves the car park, the busy leisure centre, the library and West End Park. This is also an un-adopted road. Unfortunately this road does not directly join straight onto the mini-roundabout; traffic has to stop at Burrowmoor Road which is further exacerbated by the traffic lights in close proximity to the junction. If traffic wants to turn right onto Burrowmoor Road, this can cause a standstill as it has to negotiate not only the normal flow of traffic but the traffic lights themselves.

Now, what is interesting is that Highways have said only ten two-way trips will be generated by the development in morning peak hours and only seventeen trips generated in the evening peak hours. Please remember these figures.

The proposal is for 45 flats and dwellings, some flats will no doubt be one-bedroom but even so, could accommodate two people. This being so, potential there could be 90 persons living on site with a car each totally 90 potential vehicles. As with other roads, you see many residents have work vans, some have caravans and other types of vehicles going in and out all day. Then they have relations and friends come and visit all times of day. Then most people as we know shop online, so delivery vans will deliver all times of day. In light of this, I do not believe the Highways authority have considered this.

Finally in the NPPF, NPPF 24 states that 'Local Planning authorities and County Councils (in two-tier areas) are under a duty to co-operate with each other, and other prescribed bodies, on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries'.

NPPF 109 states 'development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highways safety or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe'. I believe this will happen on both accounts. So, following discussion by members, I will be recommending refusal of this application due to the following reasons; NPPF 109, overdevelopment and the dramatic change of the landscape of the area.'

5. Councillor Hay agreed that the application proposes overdevelopment of the site and whilst she realises that the plans are purely indicative, 45 proposed dwellings would be inappropriate and out of character for the area. She added that whilst she appreciates the Highways assessment of vehicle trips, residents of March know that junction is busy and therefore she recommends that members refuse planning permission.
6. Councillor Benney agreed and drew members attention to the many letters of objection received. He urged members to listen to local residents and consider their comments. He added that he disagreed with the figures provided by Highways and said March Town

Council are also against the proposal. As Portfolio Holder for economic growth in the district, he raised concern that the development could deter residents from visiting the town centre which in turn could have a detrimental impact on March High Street.

7. Councillor Sutton disagreed and argued that all buildings have a visual impact. He urged members not to refuse the application based on highways grounds as the Highways authority has recommended the scheme for approval. He said as a regular user of this road, it is nowhere near as congested as other local routes and whilst he appreciates resident's concerns, members should only refuse planning permission on planning grounds.
8. Councillor Sutton highlighted that the March Broad Concept Plan proposes development only a short distance away from this scheme and no concerns were raised about the roundabout when these applications were submitted.
9. Nick Harding drew member's attention to other local schemes which have had planning permission granted that are also located within a close proximity to the roundabout and the junction in question. He explained that the Council's comments in relation to the access road have been purely made from a landowner perspective as the road is un-adopted. He confirmed that the road width is sufficient for development.
10. Councillor Murphy reiterated NPPF 109 and argued that whilst planning permission has been granted to nearby sites, the 'cumulative impact' would be affected by further development.

**Councillor Hay proposed that the application be refused due to the scale of the development and detrimental impact on the area.**

**Councillor Murphy proposed an amendment to Councillor Hay's proposal and added that the application should be refused as it contravenes NPPF 109.**

Stephen Turnbull offered members legal advice and reminded members that the Highways authority had recommended the application for approval.

**Proposed by Councillor Hay, seconded by Councillor Lynn and decided that the application be REFUSED due to overdevelopment; against officer's recommendation**

*(Councillor Marks abstained from voting).*

**P44/19 F/YR18/1108/FDL - ERECTION OF A PART 2-STOREY, PART 3 STOREY AND PART 4-STOREY BUILDING COMPRISING OF: 1 X RETAIL UNIT (A1) AND UP TO 26 X FLATS INVOLVING DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDING (OUTLINE APPLICATION WITH MATTERS COMMITTED IN RESPECT OF LAYOUT AND SCALE) - 15 STATION ROAD, MARCH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE, PE15 8LB**

The Committee had regard to its inspection of the site (as agreed in accordance with the Site Inspection: Policy and Procedure (minute P19/04)) during its deliberations.

Sheila Black presented the report to members.

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

1. Councillor Hay supported the application and said she was pleased to see the amendments to the scheme following the previous refusal of planning permission.
2. Councillor Murphy agreed and stated that development of the site is long overdue.
3. Councillor Sutton highlighted that the impact of this scheme would have a similar impact on traffic as the previous application considered today (F/YR18/0345/FDL) and reminded members that they must consistently assess planning applications. He offered support to the application, as per his support for application F/YR18/0345/FDL.
4. Councillor Hay agreed but stated that all applications should be considered on their own

merits and disagreed that this application is similar to the previous application F/YR18/0345/FDL. She highlighted that this proposed development is in keeping with the neighbouring block of flats and is located in a town centre location surrounded by retail units.

**Proposed by Councillor Meekins, seconded by Councillor Mrs Mayor and decided that the application be GRANTED; as per officer's recommendation.**

**P45/19 F/YR19/0726/O - ERECT 1NO DWELLING WITH ATTACHED GARAGE (OUTLINE APPLICATION WITH MATTERS COMMITTED IN RESPECT OF ACCESS AND LAYOUT) - LAND NORTH OF 20, ST FRANCIS DRIVE, CHATTERIS, CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

The Committee had regard to its inspection of the site (as agreed in accordance with the Site Inspection: Policy and Procedure (minute P19/04)) during its deliberations.

David Rowen presented the report to members.

Members received a presentation in support of the application, in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure, from Lee Bevens (Agent).

Lee Bevens thanked members for the opportunity to speak at today's meeting. He reminded members that planning permission had previously been granted approving the erection of two dwellings; one of which was a two-storey house. He highlighted that this application proposes the erection of only a single dwelling and this expected to be a bungalow.

Lee Bevens stated that there had been no objections from statutory consultees and Chatteris Town Council supported the application. In light of objections from residents, he highlighted that this application seeks a 50% reduction in dwellings compared to the previously approved scheme and this reduction will therefore mitigate the impact on neighbouring residents as the construction phase will be much shorter. He asked members to support the application today.

Members had no questions for Lee Bevens.

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

1. Councillor Connor asked for clarification on the site's current planning permission. David Rowen explained that the site currently has planning permission for two dwellings and this is due to expire in February 2020.
2. Councillor Benney said this site is situated within his ward and development would enhance the current piece of land. He offered his full support to the application.

**Proposed by Councillor Benney, seconded by Councillor Hay and decided that the application be GRANTED; as per officer's recommendation.**

*(Councillor Murphy declared an interest by virtue of the fact that he is a member of Chatteris Town Council but takes no part in planning matters)*

*(Councillor Hay declared an interest by virtue of the fact that she is a member of Chatteris Town Council but takes no part in planning matters)*

*(Councillor Benney declared an interest by virtue of the fact that he is a member of Chatteris Town Council but takes no part in planning matters)*

The meeting was adjourned at 2.24pm.

**P46/19**      **F/YR19/0760/O - ERECT UP TO 3 X DWELLINGS (OUTLINE APPLICATION WITH MATTERS COMMITTED IN RESPECT OF ACCESS) - LAND WEST OF 130, LONDON ROAD, CHATTERIS, CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

The meeting reconvened at 2.34pm.

The Committee had regard to its inspection of the site (as agreed in accordance with the Site Inspection: Policy and Procedure (minute P19/04)) during its deliberations.

Sheila Black presented the report to members and drew their attention to the update report that had been circulated to them.

Members received a presentation in support of the application, in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure, from Matthew Hall (Agent).

Matthew Hall thanked members for the opportunity to speak at today's meeting. He stated that the site is located between and opposite existing dwellings and has not been used for agricultural purposes for some 40 years. The site is located within Flood Zone 1, has the support of Chatteris Town Council and no concerns have been raised by the Environment Agency, Environmental Health and the Council's Tree officer. He confirmed that subject to planning approval, his client would be happy for a condition to be added to the planning permission requiring an ecological survey to be carried out.

Matthew Hall explained that the majority of trees will be retained on site and any that are removed will be replaced with additional landscaping behind the visibility splays. He added that the Council's Tree officer has visited the site and has requested that an extensive landscaping design is required. He reminded members that the earlier planning application considered (F/YR18/0345/FDL) had many mature trees on site and that was recommended for approval by officers without the need for this.

Matthew Hall drew member's attention to the aerial photo showing that residential dwellings surround the site currently. He informed members that as part of the application, an independent highways report had been submitted however the Highways authority denied ever being sent this report by officers and as a result, raised an objection to the application. Following this, he confirmed that he has engaged with an officer at the Highways authority to find an acceptable solution for the site and following this engagement, they have now removed their objection.

Matthew Hall reminded members that at the Planning Committee meeting on 9 October 2019, they had granted planning permission a similar application F/YR19/0684/O. He drew member's attention to the similarities between this application and application F/YR19/0684/O and said officer's had also recommended this application for refusal. One of the main concerns raised was whether or not the site was located within the village of Doddington and he highlighted that this site is located approximately 650m inside the 'Chatteris' road sign. He asked members to support the application today.

Members had no questions for Matthew Hall.

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

1. David Rowen clarified Matthew Hall's point regarding information not being passed on to the Highways Authority. He confirmed that it is the responsibility of the Highways authority to access any supporting documents via the Council's Planning Portal.
2. Councillor Benney agreed with Matthew Hall that the site is within the boundary of Chatteris and disagreed with officer's opinion that it is situated in an 'elsewhere location'. He said the

site will provide desperately needed, good quality, housing stock to Chatteris and offered support to the application.

3. David Rowen reminded members of a recent planning appeal decision in Westry, in which the Planning Inspector had stated that despite the presence of street signs, the site was located in an 'elsewhere location'. He reiterated that whilst residents may consider a site to be located within a town's boundary, it is about the character of the area and the built form of settlement and the location of road signs should not be considered.
4. Councillor Benney disagreed with this and referenced application F/YR19/0684/O in which members had approved planning permission. He stated that the dwellings would enhance the town and the character of areas naturally evolves as development occurs.
5. Councillor Hay said she had supported officer's recommendation to refuse planning permission due to highways concern but as Highways have now removed their objection, she believes the road can afford to take the additional traffic from the site. She stated that as a local resident of Chatteris she considers the site to be located within the town and therefore supports the application.
6. Councillor Sutton stated that he was unsure whether to support this proposal or not. He asked officers for clarification on the proximity of the site to the Hallam land boundary. Sheila Black indicated this location on a map for members. Councillor Sutton observed that this development would be adjacent to the built form of the Hallam Land, Chatteris.
7. Stephen Turnbull observed that paragraph 6.1 of the report (page 89 of the agenda pack) states; Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a planning application to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for the purposes of this application comprises the adopted Fenland Local Plan (2014). He confirmed that officers have confirmed that this application is in breach of the Development Plan unless members are satisfied that there are other material planning considerations which outweigh this statutory obligation.
8. Councillor Sutton stated that there is a dispute between members and officers in relation to the site's 'elsewhere location' and there is nothing in the legislation that stops members disagreeing with officer's opinion.
9. Councillor Benney asked Councillor Sutton what his concerns were in relation to the proposal as the application is very similar to the application F/YR19/0684/O which Councillor Sutton had supported. Councillor Sutton explained that he assesses each application individually and whilst he is reluctant to go against officer's recommendation, he will if necessary. He explained that previous long-standing Chatteris members had argued for many years about development in this location and he would give consideration to their opinions too.
10. David Rowen drew members attention back to recent planning appeal decisions and the Planning Inspector's opinion on 'elsewhere locations'. He highlighted that these appeal locations were located in a more urbanised area than this site and the Planning Inspector still described them as being in an 'elsewhere location' in line with officer's opinion.
11. Councillor Hay disagreed and said residents of Chatteris view the site as being part of the town.
12. Councillor Sutton highlighted a planning appeal in Elm that was upheld by the Planning Inspector and said officer's must provide members with all appeal decisions and not just those that agree with officer's recommendations. David Rowen confirmed that the planning appeal in Elm did not relate to the site's location and the cases he has referenced specifically relate to sites situated in 'elsewhere locations'.
13. Nick Harding explained that members must seriously consider the consequences of making planning decisions based on the location of road signs. He explained that the Council's planning policy makes no reference to the location of road signs but instead references the nature and character of the area. He highlighted that there is only sporadic development in this location which is distinct from the built-up urbanised area of Chatteris. Whilst members may choose to take this approach and grant planning permission, they must be aware of the consequences of uncontrolled 'ribbon' development across the district.



14. Councillor Benney highlighted that planning permission had been granted to a nearby garden centre which will provide a retail area therefore there will be amenities within close proximity to this development.

**Proposed by Councillor Benney, seconded by Councillor Hay and decided that the application be GRANTED; against officer's recommendation.**

*(Councillor Murphy declared an interest by virtue of the fact that he is a friend of the applicant and left the Chamber for the duration of this agenda item)*

*(Councillor Hay declared an interest by virtue of the fact that she knows the applicant)*

*(Councillor Benney declared an interest by virtue of the fact that he knows the applicant)*

*(Councillor Connor declared an interest by virtue of the fact that he knows the applicant)*

*(Councillor Mrs Mayor, Councillor Meekins and Councillor Sutton abstained from voting on this item)*

*(Councillor Lynn left the meeting at 3.11pm)*

**P47/19 F/YR19/0799/VOC - REMOVAL OF CONDITION 6 OF PLANNING PERMISSION F/YR15/0004/F (ERECTION OF 3 X 2-STOREY 4-BED DWELLINGS INVOLVING THE FORMATION OF NEW ACCESSES) RELATING TO THE PROVISION OF A FOOTWAY - LAND SOUTH OF THE CONIFERS 67, FRIDAYBRIDGE ROAD, ELM**

The Committee had regard to its inspection of the site (as agreed in accordance with the Site Inspection: Policy and Procedure (minute P19/04)) during its deliberations.

David Rowen presented the report to members.

Members received a presentation in support of the application, in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure, from Shanna Jackson (Agent).

Shanna Jackson thanked members for the opportunity to speak at today's meeting. She explained that the application seeks to remove a planning condition in relation to the widening of an existing footpath. She explained that the condition was originally imposed as result of comments made by the Highways Authority however following further consultation; they have been unable to provide evidence showing poor highway safety to support this condition.

Shanna Jackson explained that the NPPF states that conditions must adhere to six tests, one of which states that conditions must be 'reasonable'. She highlighted previous planning applications and subsequent appeals, in which the widening of a footpath was not a condition of the planning permission and stated that she believes the condition to be unreasonable due to lack of highways evidence to support the need for a wider footpath. She requested that members agree with officer's recommendation to grant planning permission.

Members had no questions for Shanna Jackson.

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

1. Councillor Benney stated that he cannot see any issues with the proposal and supported the application.
2. Councillor Sutton agreed and stated that the condition should never have been added to the original planning permission. He asked officer's to be more robust when considering

comments received by the Highways authority.

**Proposed by Councillor Benney, seconded by Councillor Clark and decided that the application be GRANTED; as per officer's recommendation.**

**P48/19 F/YR19/0809/F - ERECT 1 DWELLING (2-STOREY 5-BED WITH ATTACHED 4-BAY GARAGE AND SWIMMING POOL TO REAR), 2.0M HIGH (MAX HEIGHT) WALL WITH RAILINGS AND GATES TO FRONT AND THE TEMPORARY SITING OF 2 X STATIC CARAVANS INVOLVING THE DEMOLITION OF EXISTING DWELLING AND GARAGE - 6 BRIDGE LANE, WIMBLINGTON, MARCH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

The Committee had regard to its inspection of the site (as agreed in accordance with the Site Inspection: Policy and Procedure (minute P19/04)) during its deliberations.

David Rowen presented the report to members.

Members received a presentation in support of the application, in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure, from Councillor Mrs Jan French.

Councillor Mrs French explained that this application proposes a replacement dwelling which demonstrates the effective use of the land for a residential property. The dwelling will provide a high quality living environment that will not compromise the amenities of neighbouring occupiers. She informed members that the applicant is a local business man who employs 58 members of staff locally. If planning permission is approved the applicant will relocate all of his remaining businesses to Fenland which will both promote economic growth in Fenland and may encourage other businesses to follow.

Councillor Mrs French explained that that whilst the proposed house is large in scale, it will be built to a very high standard and provide a good example of an executive home in the district. She explained that the applicant has engaged with herself in relation to his proposed business relocation due to the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Councillor Benney, being a member of the Planning Committee. She asked members to approve the application and promote the Council's message of 'Open for Business'.

Members had no questions for Councillor Mrs French.

Members received a presentation in support of the application, in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure, from Shanna Jackson (Agent).

Shanna Jackson explained that the proposed dwelling has been specifically designed for the changing lifestyle of the applicant and whilst concerns have been raised about the scale and proposed materials being out of keeping with the area, this has been derived from the accommodation needs of the applicant. She highlighted that the site can clearly accommodate this size of dwelling and drew members attention to the varying size of properties located in Bridge Lane.

Shanna Jackson confirmed that whilst there is no strict building line on Bridge Lane, the dwelling will cause no harm to the appearance of the area and the property will be positioned further back on the site. She highlighted the varying pallet of building materials on the street scene and confirmed that the application was welcomed locally and had received no objections from technical consultees.

She addressed the concerns raised by Wimblington Parish Council in relation to the caravans

onsite and confirmed that these would be removed post completion of the dwelling. She asked members to support the application.

Members asked Shanna Jackson the following questions;

1. Councillor Meekins asked for clarification about the proposed building materials. Shanna Jackson confirmed that the dwelling would be built in buff brick and the roof would be slate.

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

1. Councillor Benney stated that he has considered this application carefully and believes that the proposed dwelling and garage are suitable for the site. Whilst the property will be large it is perfectly in keeping with the plot and the application has support from both local residents and businesses. He said it was commendable that a local business man is in the position to build a home of this standard and if the Council are keen to relocate businesses to Fenland, there must be the properties to accommodate these people. He highlighted that the applicant supports the Council by bringing business through the Port in Wisbech and said the scheme would both enhance the area and bring financial economic benefit to the wider district.
2. Nick Harding reminded members that the application should be assessed on planning grounds and not on the personal and business circumstances of the applicant as if planning permission is granted, the applicant is not legally obliged to relocate his businesses to Fenland or retain the dwelling for his own personal use. He reiterated that members should not link the planning permission to the applicant's business activities.
3. Councillor Benney stated that he supported the application and encourages the development of homes like this regardless of the applicant.
4. Councillor Sutton agreed with Nick Harding and said support of the applicant's business relocation is not a reason to grant planning permission. Whilst he is not against the principal of development on the site, he agrees that the character of the area will be affected and is not convinced of the benefits the development will bring to the wider district.
5. Nick Harding highlighted that officer's recommendation for refusal is based on the position of the building in relation to existing dwellings, the physical scale of the building in relation to neighbouring properties and the proposed building materials. He reminded members that if they are minded to grant planning permission, they should identify why they disagree with these points.
6. Councillor Mrs Mayor stated that whilst she has only recently been reappointed a member of the Planning Committee, she cannot recall an occasion in which an applicant's personal circumstances have been used to decide whether or not planning permission is granted. She stated that members should not consider this during their deliberation.
7. Councillor Benney stated that circumstance aside, the proposal is not out of keeping with the area and the applicant and agent have worked hard to ensure the design is in keeping with the neighbouring properties.
8. Councillor Meekins raised concern about the size of the building and did not agree that the scale was in line with surrounding properties.
9. Councillor Hay said member's judgement should not be clouded by the potential economic benefits the development could bring to Fenland. She highlighted that the proposal is for a residential dwelling which has no tie or obligation to business use. Whilst she has no issue with the building materials proposed, the scale of the development is entirely out of keeping with the area due to its size and height. She supported officer's recommendation to refuse planning permission.

**Proposed by Councillor Meekins, seconded by Councillor Hay and decided that the application be REFUSED; as per officer's recommendation.**

*(Councillor Connor declared an interest by virtue of the fact that he knows the applicant and took no part in the discussion or vote for this item)*

**P49/19      PLANNING APPEALS.**

David Rowen presented the report to members with regards to appeal decisions in the last month.

**P50/19      ENF/104/15 - LAND WEST OF THE COACH HOUSE, NEEDHAM BANK, FRIDAY BRIDGE**

Members considered the confidential report presented by David Rowen.

**The Planning Committee agreed to the recommendations contained within the confidential report.**

**P51/19      ENF/166/18 - 100 WISBECH ROAD, COATES**

Members considered the confidential report presented by David Rowen.

**The Planning Committee agreed to the recommendations contained within the confidential report.**

4.18 pm

Chairman