

MINUTES

of the

PLANNING COMMITTEE

held on 26 March 2019 at 7:00 pm

Present:

Councillor I Wright (Chairman)

Councillors E A Ahmed, L Ashley, R F Denston, M W Holoway, P V Hughes,
L A Millane, F B Mountain, R J Poulter, T E Roper, G C Seeley,
D W Stevenson, R A Villa and M D Watson

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P R A Wilson. Councillor D W Stevenson acted as substitute for Councillor Wilson.

2. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. **Public Question Time**

Members of the public attended to ask questions and make statements on item 6 on the agenda. Details are recorded under the relevant minute number below.

4. **Declarations of Interests**

All Members were reminded to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) or other registerable interests where appropriate in any of the items of business on the meeting's agenda. Councillor T E Roper said that he would be speaking against the application at item 6 in his capacity as a ward councillor.

5. **Announcements**

There were no announcements.

6. **Site at Jubilee Farm, Newney Green, Writtle, Chelmsford – 18/01167/FUL**

The Committee considered an application for the demolition of existing buildings on a site at Jubilee Farm, Newney Green and its redevelopment to provide 12 dwellings with associated landscaping, access, garages, parking and amenity space. A Green Sheet of additions and alterations was distributed at the meeting which, among other things:

- informed the Committee that the Council had been notified by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government that a third party request to call in the above application had been received. The Secretary of State had advised that he did not act on such requests until the relevant Planning Committee had resolved to approve the application. Officers had confirmed to the Secretary of State that the Council was content not to issue a Decision Notice in this case, if the Committee was minded to approve the application, until the Secretary of State had decided whether or not to call in the application;
- clarified the Council's policies on the provision of affordable housing and protected lanes; and
- set out a proposed additional condition to require the retention of the underground bunker on the site.

The agent for the applicant spoke in support of the application, saying that it involved the use of a brownfield site; that the development would have a lesser impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing buildings on the site; that it would be beneficial from the point of view of ecology and the creation of jobs; that it would not result in a material increase in traffic and would remove from the protected lane the large vehicles that currently used the site; and the development would comply with national local planning policies.

Four local residents spoke against the application, their main objections and concerns being:

- the area was not suitable for the type of development proposed. It was contrary to policies on development in the Green Belt and would have an adverse impact on the countryside;
- the emerging Local Plan provided a sufficient supply of developable land and therefore the use of Green Belt land was not necessary;
- this would be a high density development in an area of low density housing; the style of the proposed houses was not in keeping with the present dwellings; and it would virtually double the number of properties in Newney Green;
- the development was not sustainable and therefore contrary to local and national planning policies; and
- it would result in an increase in traffic movements. Those who opposed the development believed that the anticipated number of vehicle movements associated with it had been understated and the number associated with the current use of the site overstated. There would be an adverse impact on the protected lane.

Councillor Roper stated that as he was pre-determined on this application he would not participate in the discussion of or voting on it and would withdraw from the meeting during its consideration. Before that, however, he spoke against the application in his capacity as a ward councillor. He reiterated the points made by those who had spoken against the application and emphasised the impact the development would have on the openness of the Green Belt. He did not believe that the land could be regarded as a brownfield site or that the development could be seen as infilling. He noted a lack of infrastructure, such as streetlights and footpaths, and that the site was in an unsustainable location.

In response to the points made by the objectors, the officers informed the Committee that:

- whilst the site was not allocated for development, that did not mean that the development proposals were unacceptable in principle;
- the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) acknowledged that development of previously developed land in the Green Belt may be appropriate. The land was no longer in agricultural use and the current equestrian use, all of which was lawful, was regarded as previously developed land;
- the floorspace and volume of the proposed development had a lesser impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing buildings and the height of the new buildings was no greater than the tallest of the existing structures. The design was sympathetic to the rural location. When considering development in the Green Belt, regard was given to its form and size, not to the number of dwellings;
- from the point of view of highways considerations, the development would be acceptable. Taking into account the results of a speed survey of vehicles using the lane to the site, the visibility splays at the entrance/exit of the development site would be satisfactory. An analysis of the trips likely to be generated by the proposed development indicated a 15% increase in the overall number of vehicle movements using the lane when compared with current movements which would be a minor impact and easily accommodated. The lane was sufficiently wide to enable two cars to pass slowly, and on-site parking was adequate.

Discussing the application, several members expressed doubts about the accuracy of the estimated number of vehicle movements associated with the new development. It was also regrettable that planning policies did not require the provision of affordable housing. Overall, the Committee was concerned about the impact of the new development on the area and believed that it was not acceptable for the following reasons:

1. It would be contrary to policy CP1 and the objectives in the NPPF relating to sustainability in that it would be some distance from services and amenities. There was no public transport serving what would be a car-orientated development; there was a lack of street lighting in the lanes leading to the development site; and the increased traffic using those narrow lanes would present a danger to pedestrians and cyclists who used them.

2. The development would be contrary to policy DC15 insofar as it would have an adverse impact on the protected lane leading to the site from the additional traffic likely to be generated, the likely damage to verges, ditches and banks, and the fact that the lane was part of a national cycle route.
3. The development was in the Green Belt and would be contrary to policy DC1 and the NPPF. It would have a major impact on the hamlet of Newney Green by almost doubling its size; would have an adverse effect on the openness of the Green Belt and the setting of Newney Green; it would involve the change of the site from a rural equestrian use with partly open sided structures to effectively a housing estate of solid buildings; and the height and number of buildings proposed, and the associated car parking, would have a greater impact on the small rural community than the existing use.

The Committee was therefore minded to refuse the application.

RESOLVED that the Committee being minded to refuse application 18/01167/FUL in respect of the site at Jubilee Farm, Newney Green, Writtle, Chelmsford, consideration of it be deferred to the next meeting to enable officers to prepare detailed reasons for refusal based on the grounds outlined above.

(7.06pm to 8.43pm)

7. **The Stables Visitor Centre, Hylands Estate, London Road, Chelmsford - 18/01969/FUL**

An application had been submitted for the installation of a sail awning to the west side of the Stables Visitor Centre at Hylands Estate. A Green Sheet amending the wording of paragraph 6.1 of the report was distributed at the meeting.

RESOLVED that application 18/01969/FUL in respect of the Stables Visitor Centre at Hylands Estate, London Road, Chelmsford be approved, subject to the conditions detailed in the report to the meeting.

(8.43pm to 8.48pm)

8. **Planning Appeals**

RESOLVED that the information on appeal decisions between 21 December 2018 and 22 February 2019 be noted.

(8.48pm to 8.50pm)

9. **Urgent Business**

There were no matters of urgent business brought before the Committee.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.

Chairman