

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning Committee held on
Wednesday, 14 December 2022 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Peter Fane – Chair
Councillor Geoff Harvey – Vice-Chair

Councillors: Henry Batchelor Dr Martin Cahn
Bill Handley Heather Williams
Dr Richard Williams Anna Bradnam

Officers in attendance for all or part of the meeting:
Vanessa Blane (Senior Planning Lawyer), Mary Collins (Senior Planning Officer), Laurence Damary-Homan (Democratic Services Officer), Neil Langley (Senior Planning Compliance Officer), Phil McIntosh (Interim Delivery Manager) and John Shuttlewood (Principal Planning Enforcement Officer)

Councillor Dr John Loveluck was in attendance as a guest.

Councillor Peter Sandford was in attendance remotely.

1. Chair's announcements

The Chair made several brief housekeeping announcements.

2. Apologies

Councillors Ariel Cahn, Dr Tumi Hawkins and William Jackson-Wood sent Apologies for Absence. Councillor Anna Bradnam was present as a substitute for Councillor Ariel Cahn.

3. Declarations of Interest

With respect to Minute 5, the Chair declared that all Members knew the applicant, as it was an application received from a Councillor, and all would be approaching the application afresh.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

By affirmation, the Committee authorised the Chair to sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2022 as correct record.

5. 22/03957/HFUL - 62 High Street, Melbourn

The Senior Planner presented the report. Members asked questions of clarity regarding the coverage of the boundary by the hedge, the air source heat pump and the impact on the Conservation Area and nearby heritage assets.

Councillor Anna Bradnam, seconded by Councillor Henry Batchelor, proposed that the Committee move to a vote as there were no points of contention regarding the application.

The Committee unanimously voted to **approve** the application in accordance with the officer's recommendation, and subject to the conditions, laid out in the report from the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development.

6. Member Site Visit Protocol

The Interim Delivery Manager presented the report. Members stated that site visits were very useful and welcomed the introduction of a site visit protocol for clarity and transparency. It was noted that there had not previously been documentation regarding the operation of site visits in place and the Committee discussed the procedures around site visits in the past. Members felt that there were points in the protocol that required refinement. Discussions were held over paragraph 3.5 and who could request a site visit; the Committee felt that local Members should also have the ability to request a site visit be held and, if they wished to do so, the Parish Council could subsequently request a site visit through their local Member. With regards to attendance on the site visit, Members stated a reference to the ability of substitute Members of the Committee should be included. There was some debate over whether local Members should attend site visits, but the Committee agreed that local Members can provide useful, factual information on a site visit that could be beneficial to Members of the Committee. Thus, the Committee felt that local Members should be able to attend site visits but the onus would be on the Chair to ensure that the local Member, or any other person present, did not attempt to make any comments which were intended to influence the decision making perspective of Members. It was also requested that clarity be given as to what qualifies as a reason for a request for a site visit, as stated in Appendix 1 of the report, alongside a request that Members be notified of what applications were due to come before the Committee.

Councillor Heather Williams, seconded by Councillor Anna Bradnam, proposed that officers be given the opportunity to take the comments of the Committee away and make any amendments required to allow for the endorsement of the Committee to be given- this was agreed by affirmation. The Interim Delivery Manager confirmed that the Committee could continue to conduct site visits prior to the implementation of the protocol and that the Committee had an information item before them. In order to allow the Interim Delivery Manager to amend the protocol based on the comments by the Committee, the Committee agreed to **note** the report but **not confirm it**, until a further update had been received from the Interim Delivery Manager.

7. Enforcement Report

The Principal Planning Enforcement Officer presented the report, notified the Committee that a lead officer for planning compliance had been recruited and that the online enforcement register had been launched. The Committee was also informed that the compliance policy was open for consultation on the South Cambridgeshire District Council website for the next 6 weeks. Members discussed a number of topics, including potential changes to compliance legislation. Concerns were raised over the removal of a generic email inbox and address for the compliance team, but Members were informed that enforcement complaints could be raised over the phone and that a 24 hour contact/call back protocol was in place for Councillors. The Principal Planning Enforcement Officer stated that contact of enforcement officers would be further discussed by enforcement staff. Members also suggested that a briefing on enforcement and the procedures around it be given.

The Committee **noted** the report.

8. Appeals against Planning Decisions and Enforcement Action

The Interim Delivery Manager presented the report. Members discussed some of the applications listed in the report and the Committee **noted** the report.

9. Planning Compliance - Smithy Fen Traveller Site

By virtue of paragraph 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 this Minute is subject to the exclusion of press and public.

The Meeting ended at 12.45 p.m.
