

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

5 March 2014

AUTHOR/S: Planning and New Communities Director

Application Number:	S/0645/13/FL
Parish:	Waterbeach
Proposal:	Erection of 60 dwellings (Class C3) including affordable housing, access, car parking & associated works, open space, landscaping & a children's play area
Site address:	Land to the West of Cody Road
Applicant(s):	Manor Oak Homes
Recommendation:	Amend putative reason for refusal (ii)
Application brought to Committee because:	The public inquiry in relation to the appeal commences on 7 April 2014 and the Council's Proofs of Evidence need to be submitted by 25 March 2014

Introduction

1. This report is a supplementary item to the agenda. An appeal has been submitted and the public inquiry commences on 7 April 2014. The Council has to submit its Proof of Evidence by 25 March 2014. Therefore, there is an urgent need to address this issue as soon as possible.
2. The planning application was considered at the planning committee meeting on 2 October 2013 and members agreed to grant officers delegated powers to refuse the application on the following grounds, subject to the resolution of landscaping, drainage and Section 106 matters: -
 - i) *The implementation of the proposed development, if approved, would prejudice the consideration of Draft Policy S/4 Cambridge Green Belt and the proposed Green Belt Extension shown upon Policies Map Inset No.104 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Proposed Submission (July 2013) in that the site occupies a significant proportion of the area which has been included in the Draft Local Plan and would harm the effectiveness of the submitted proposal, if included in the Adopted Local Plan. The erosion of the proposed Green Belt Extension would seriously harm the objectives of the proposed Waterbeach New Town as set out in Draft Policy SS/5 Waterbeach New Town and Policies Map Inset H: Waterbeach New Town of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Proposed Submission (July 2013).*

- ii) *The development would result in the loss of an important landscape buffer area between Waterbeach and Waterbeach Barracks, to the harm of the landscaped setting of each, and would represent an undesirable coalescence of the village and Barracks contrary to the adopted Local Development Framework 2007 at Policy DP/3, which seeks to prevent development that would have an unacceptable adverse impact on the countryside and landscape character; at Policy DP/7, which states that outside village frameworks only development for agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation and other uses which need to be located in the countryside will be permitted: the aims of the policy seek the protection of the countryside from gradual encroachment and to help guard against incremental growth in unsustainable locations: and at Policy NE/4, which seeks to preserve the local character and distinctiveness of the District's landscape.*
 - iii) *The proposal to erect 60 dwellings on the application site adjacent to the adopted development framework boundary for Waterbeach represents development which is unsustainable in scale and location because it fails to accord with the adopted intentions of the Local Planning Authority for the provision of housing in the District as set out in Policy ST/2, which provides a strategy for the location of new housing in the District, and Policy ST/5, which includes Waterbeach as a Minor Rural Centre with more limited services where residential development up to an indicative maximum of 30 dwellings will be permitted, in the South Cambridgeshire Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2007.*
- 3. A copy of the original report, update report and committee minute are attached as an appendix.
- 4. The applicants submitted an appeal on 29 October 2013 against non-determination of the application.
- 5. The decision notice has not been issued to date due to the ongoing resolution of the landscaping, drainage and Section 106 matters.

Planning Comments

- 6. Reason for refusal (ii) refers to the impact of the development upon the character and appearance of the countryside and rural landscape and the coalescence of Waterbeach and the barracks.
- 7. The site is surrounded on three sides by existing residential development and the primary impact of the proposal would be the loss of part of the existing visual separation between the existing village and the barracks, rather than to a loss of countryside or impact on landscape character itself. The adverse impact is to the character of Waterbeach as a village through loss of visual separation. The site is not considered to represent the characteristics of "The Fens Landscape Character Area" as defined by Natural England (i.e. expansive, flat, low lying wetland landscape offering extensive vistas to low level horizons and huge skies throughout, provides a sense of rural remoteness and tranquillity).
- 8. It will be apparent that the putative reason for refusal (ii) could have been better worded. Rather than allege "an unacceptable adverse impact on the countryside and landscape character", the putative reason for refusal should instead have referred to the development having an "unacceptable adverse impact on village character", and

as such, a contravention of policy DP/3 criteria 2 (l). For the same reason, the reference to policy NE/4 is unnecessary and should be deleted.

Recommendation

9. It is recommended that putative reason for refusal (ii) be amended so as to read: -

The development would result in the loss of a visually important open buffer, which presently separates Waterbeach and Waterbeach Barracks, to the harm of the setting of each. It would represent an undesirable coalescence of the village and Barracks. As such, the development is contrary to the adopted Local Development Framework 2007 at Policy DP/3, which seeks to prevent development that would have an unacceptable adverse impact on village character; and contrary to Policy DP/7, which states that outside village frameworks only development for agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation and other uses which need to be located in the countryside will be permitted. The development would conflict with the aims of the policy, which is to seek the protection of the countryside from encroachment and to help guard against incremental growth in unsustainable locations.

10. The amendments suggested should help to ensure that the appeal for non-determination is considered against the correct development plan policies and in respect of the correctly identified adverse impacts of the proposed development on this site.

Background Papers

The following list contains links to the documents on the Council's website and / or an indication as to where hard copies can be inspected.

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy DPD 2007
- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD 2007
- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Supplementary Planning Documents
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Proposed Submission (July 2013)
- Planning File ref. S/0645/13/FL
- Natural England National Character Area Profile: 46. The Fens

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