

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning Committee held on
Monday, 28 February 2022 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Henry Batchelor – Chair
Councillor Judith Rippeth – Vice-Chair

Councillors: Dr Martin Cahn
Dr Tumi Hawkins
Heather Williams
Eileen Wilson
Jose Hales

Geoff Harvey
Deborah Roberts
Dr Richard Williams
Anna Bradnam

Officers in attendance for all or part of the meeting:

Laurence Damary-Homan (Democratic Services Officer), Mike Huntington (Principal Planner [Strategic Sites]), Stephen Kelly (Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development), Stephen Reid (Senior Planning Lawyer) and Paul Ricketts (Principal Planner [Strategic Sites])

1. Chair's announcements

Councillor Henry Batchelor, the Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee, informed the Committee that he would Chair the meeting as the usual Chair was not present. The Chair proposed the appointment of Councillor Judith Rippeth as Vice-Chair for the meeting and the Committee approved the appointment by affirmation.

Due to the exceptional circumstances of the meeting, the Chair proposed two motions. Firstly, it was proposed to allow all those who had registered to speak before the deadline an opportunity to make a three-minute representation. The first motion was approved by affirmation.

The second motion was to structure the debate through discussing the topics present in the report in groups. The groupings were:

- Sections 1 & 2- Principle of development, land use and vision, parameter plans
- Section 3- Access and transport
- Sections 4, 5 & 6- Employment assessment, housing delivery & social and community infrastructure
- Sections 7-10- Environmental considerations, cumulative impact, financial obligations/S.106 & planning balance

The second motion was approved by affirmation.

The Chair also made several brief housekeeping announcements.

2. Apologies

Councillors Pippa Heylings and Peter Fane sent Apologies for Absence.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Heather Williams declared that she was a member of the Greater Cambridge Partnership Assembly.

4. **20/02142/OUT - Longstanton and Oakington/Northstowe Parishes (Northstowe Phase 3B, Station Road, Longstanton)**

The Principal Planner (Strategic Sites), Paul Ricketts, presented the report. Members asked questions of clarity for officers. Questions were raised on:

- The village traffic scheme payments, detailed in the Heads of Terms- Cambridgeshire County Council's Principal Transport Officer, Tam Parry, offered details on how payments would be divided and used.
- The potential to include another roundabout/ other access point to the site- the Principal Transport Officer informed the Committee that the land suggested for an additional access point was not in the ownership of the applicant and that it was designated as green space in the parameter plans so an additional point of access could not be added. The Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development stated that the boundaries of the proposed site was reflected the Local Plan allocation and inclusion of a new access point would require land outside of the site allocation set out in the Local Plan.
- Assessment of Gypsy requirements- the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development stated that work was ongoing in conjunction with Housing officers and, at this stage, there was no specific need to safeguard land on the site for Traveller pitches. The Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development acknowledged that meeting the needs of the Traveller community was part of the forthcoming Local Plan.
- Building heights- The Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development offered context on the building heights across the site and clarified that buildings along the B1050 were up to three storeys.
- Drainage and water- The Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development advised that, as a representative from Swavesey Internal Drainage Board (IDB) was due to speak, it would be best to save comments until the debate.

Councillor Geoff Harvey joined the meeting. The Senior Planning Lawyer advised that Councillor Harvey should not vote on the application as he had joined the discussion after the start of the item

Public Speakers

The Committee was addressed by a number of public speakers:

•Keith Wilderspin on behalf of Swavesey IDB- The IDB's concerns on the impact of the development on both surface and foul water drainage were raised. Members asked questions of clarity of Mr Wilderspin which covered the following matters; flood risk and historical flooding, meetings between the IDB and the developers, sewerage discharge, pump requirements, monitoring (telemetry), long term impact on drainage and the long term impact of the development on Swavesey was discussed.

•Daniel Fulton- Concerns over the impact on groundwater, the chalk aquifer, river terrace deposits and the assessment process of those topics were raised.

•Bruce Robjent- Concerns over the provision of amenities, drainage and sustainability matters including permeable paving and other green infrastructure throughout the overall development were raised. Members asked questions of clarity.

•Agent of the applicants- Clarity on a number of topics was offered by Michael Bottomley

(Tibbalds), and a drainage consultant (Madelaine Davies, Arcadis) answered questions on water, on-site water storage and the drainage scheme on the site. Dean Harris (Homes England) answered questions of clarity on the provision of amenities, building heights, construction traffic and permeable paving provision- he stated that Homes England would be happy to explore the levels of permeable paving on site. Janice Hughes (Arcadis) responded to questions on the provision of solar panels and ground source heating. Katja Stille (Tibbalds) responded to questions on the boundaries of the site and the green buffer. The Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development responded to questions on faith provision and funding for medical facilities.

•Councillor Warren Wright on behalf Swavesey Parish Council- Councillor Wright raised the Parish Council's concerns over drainage and flood risk, traffic and public transport. Members asked questions of clarity.

•Councillor Paul Littlemore on behalf of Northstowe Town Council- Councillor Littlemore stated that Northstowe Town Council objected to the application as it stood and informed the Committee that strict conditioning would be required to garner the support of the Town Council. Issues around access, the lack of ownership of surrounding plots by the applicant, the timing of the completion of infrastructure, building heights, construction traffic management and the concerns over the Swavesey drains were raised. Members asked questions of clarity.

The Chair noted the summary of the comments from Longstanton Parish Council, raised at the meeting held on 28 January 2022, and the comments from the local Members.

Debate

Sections 1 & 2- Principle of development, land use and vision, parameter plans:

Members raised concerns over the heights of buildings, particularly those on the Longstanton border of the site, and some Members suggested that the principle of development gave too much flexibility regarding building heights. It was noted that the footprints in the principle of development were appropriate but alternative strategies to manage heights, such as tiering at the edge of the site, would be desirable. Concerns were also raised on the size of the landscape buffers and proximity of new homes to existing homes around the periphery of the site and the lack of green space within the buffers- the comments of the local Members on these issues were also noted. The Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development responded to the points. He stated that some changes would be hard to justify from a landscaping perspective and that the design code for the development was still to be agreed- extensive consultation was to be undertaken in the development of the design code. The Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development advised that a condition limiting the building heights on the site edge could be appropriate. The Committee noted that the Reserved Matters application would be further opportunity to secure an appropriate form of development.

Section 3- Access and transport:

Concerns over the routing of construction vehicles were raised by Members; "rat running" of HGVs through the surrounding villages was unacceptable due to the impact on the neighbourhoods and village infrastructure. Request was made to tighten conditioning to avoid "rat running" and mandate construction vehicles to use the A14 and A10 to access the B1050 and subsequently the site. The Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development stated that condition 39 (Construction Environmental Management Plan [CEMP]) could be amended to strengthen monitoring- part c was cited. The Principal Transport Officer offered context on the CEMP and explored some of the vehicle monitoring options available. Members requested flexibility on the monitoring approaches

utilised to ensure that the most up to date technology could be used and expressed a desire to not blacklist construction vehicles from certain villages leading to “rat running” in non-listed villages. It was suggested that the approach to the CEMP in the Phase 3A application be mirrored. In response to a question, the Principal Transport Officer offered clarity over the funding for traffic management set out in the Heads of Terms.

Sections 4, 5 & 6- Employment assessment, housing delivery & social and community infrastructure:

Members offered comment on and commended the levels of affordable housing; healthcare provision was questioned.

Sections 7, 8, 9 & 10- Environmental considerations, cumulative impact, financial obligations/S.106 & planning balance:

Members debated water and drainage on site. Topics covered included:

- The concerns of Swavesey IDB
- Water storage and pumping capacities
- Impact on natural waterways/features
- Pre-existing conditions on the site
- The impact of the development on the wider drainage network
- Monitoring and telemetry equipment requirements
- Long term management
- Responses of statutory consultees and the assessments undertaken
- The ability to provide further conditioning at the Reserved Matters stage

The Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development provided responses to the concerns raised by the Committee. Members stated that the local Councils (Parish and Town), local Members and other consultees had objected to the application and that opposition was stronger to the Phase 3B application than to Phase 3A. It was also noted by Members that there were many benefits to the application, and that the development was part of the Local Plan, and that the overall application needed to be assessed on the basis of the Planning balance. The Committee asserted that, if the application was to be approved, strict and careful conditioning would be required.

Councillor Dr Richard Williams left, and took no further part in, the meeting

The Chair summarised the conditions to be added or amended, if the Committee were minded to approve the application. These were:

- Condition 32 (Surface Water- reserved matters details)- amended to add a monitoring requirement and add the use of permeable paving and SuDS to point b
- Condition 34 (Surface Water- Temporary Storage and Management of Surface Water)- amended to include the phrasing “notwithstanding the approved parameter plans” and add a requirement to bring forth a scheme to include capacity optimisation and active monitoring
- Condition 39- (Construction Environmental Management Plan)- amended to include reference to control systems in order to prevent heavy construction vehicles associated with the development from using unsuitable roads through local villages
- A new condition was added to limit building heights on properties facing onto the B1050 to no more than two storeys to ensure compliance with policy NS/4 of the Northstowe Area Action Plan

The drafting of the wording of the conditions was delegated to officers, to be approved in conjunction with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee if the Committee approved the application.

The Chair summarised the reasons for refusal, if the Committee were minded to reject the application. Drainage and environmental concerns were cited as a reason for refusal, with policy CC/9 of the Local Plan agreed on as the policy basis for the reason.

The drafting of the wording of the reason(s) for refusal was delegated to officers, to be approved in conjunction with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee if the Committee refused the application.

By 7 votes to 2 (Councillors Deborah Roberts and Heather Williams) with 1 abstention (Councillor Geoff Harvey; did not vote in accordance with the advice from the Senior Planning Lawyer), the Committee **approved** the application. Councillor Richard Williams was absent at the time of the vote. The approval was subject to the prior completion of a s106 agreement and the conditions laid out in the reports from the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development and those amended and added by the Committee.

The Meeting ended at 3.30 p.m.
