

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

06 September 2017

AUTHOR/S: Planning and New Communities Director

Application Number / type of application:	S/1901/16/OL / Outline planning application
Parish(es):	Meldreth
Proposal:	Outline planning permission for a mixed use development (up to 150 dwellings, public open space and new technology plant), new car park and access for Sports and Social Club and associated infrastructure. All matters reserved with the exception of the means of access
Recommendation:	Approval subject to a Section 106 Agreement covering the issues detailed in the main report and conditions based on the draft list in paragraph 188 of the report.
Material considerations:	Five year supply of housing land Principle of development (including redevelopment of a brownfield site) Density of development Affordable housing (including viability considerations) Character of the village edge and surrounding landscape Highway safety Residential amenity of neighbouring properties Surface water and foul water drainage Remediation of contaminated land Trees Ecology Provision of formal and informal open space Section 106 Contributions
Site address:	Land at Eternit UK, Whaddon Road, Meldreth SG8 5RL
Applicant(s):	Mr James Munnery, Footprint Land and Property
Date on which application received:	22 July 2016
Site Visit:	Undertaken on 04 July 2017
Conservation Area:	No
Departure Application:	Yes
Presenting Officer:	David Thompson, Principal Planning Officer
Application brought to	Approval of the planning application would represent a

Committee because: departure from the Local Plan and would be contrary to the recommendations of Meldreth and Whaddon Parish Councils.

Date by which decision due: 08 September 2017 (agreed extension)

A. Update to the report

Paragraphs 44 – 47 of the main report record the representations that have been received to the application. Since the publication of the revised report, the following additional representations have been received.

56 letters of support from employees of the existing Marley Eternit operation on the site and the factory manager. The letters raise the following points (summarised):

- There is local support for the scheme. Support has been received from the Marley Eternit Sports and Social Club which has over 500 members, who live locally.
- The proposal will generate 25 new jobs. This is an important consideration for many local people. It would be a long commute to find similar work.
- The employment use of the site is well established and would continue as part of the proposed development.
- The schools, road network and doctors can all accommodate the additional demands that would be placed on them, otherwise the relevant consultees would have objected to the planning application.
- The highway safety implications have been independently assessed and there are no objections from the statutory consultee in this regard.
- The inclusion of the cycleway will improve access to the Sport and Social Club, which would be a benefit arising from the proposed development.
- The new factory is a facility that would diversify the current nature of the employment on the site, modernising the operation, safeguarding existing jobs and creating new ones.
- 18 objections to the application only represents a small proportion of the village and does not include employees who work on the site, who are in favour of the proposals.
- What do the Council propose to do with a contaminated redundant site if it is not developed for viable re-use?
- The cost of remediating the site will be enormous due to the historic nature of the sources of contamination – a viable re-use therefore needs to be secured.
- The inclusion of affordable housing, new transport links into the village and to the railway station are measures which are considered to make the development sustainable.

The Chairman of the Marley Eternit Sports and Social Club has also written in further support of the application, making the following points (summarised):

- The Sports and Social Club has a membership of over 500 members of which 42% come from Meldreth and 44% from the surrounding villages including: Melbourn, Shepreth, Whaddon, Bassingbourn and Barrington.
- The proposed footway/cycleway link would improve access to the Social Club for residents of the development and people who already live in Meldreth.
- The club has a wide range of facilities, including meeting/function space which would be available to the occupants of the proposed development as part of the 2 year guaranteed membership to be offered.
- The proposed re-development of a brownfield site would have a positive impact overall and should be approved.

In addition to the objection letters reported in the main report, 1 further objection has been received which makes the following comments:

- The additional highways assessment undertaken by Atkins does not include any meaningful reference to the junctions with the A1198 near Bassingbourn cum Kneesworth. Chestnut Lane is a narrow village lane which leads to the cross roads at Meldreth and provides a key link to Royston. Most of Chestnut Lane is within a 60 miles per hour speed limit and does not have a footpath or street lighting. The Lane has become a rat run at commuter times.
- The roundabout which forms the connection from Chestnut Lane to the A1198 is a regular accident blackspot. The proposed development would add additional pressure to this junction, along with the committed development in Bassingbourn and will exacerbate what is already a highway safety hazard.
- Further assessment of the junctions should be undertaken at peak times during neutral months.

WS Atkins who have undertaken the independent highways impact assessment have confirmed that the baseline data taken into account when forming their conclusions included traffic data collected along the section of the A1198 which includes the Chestnut Lane junction. This formed part of the data used from recent neutral months to account for the fact that the surveys undertaken by Atkins were not conducted in a neutral month.

On the basis of that information, WS Atkins concluded that the level of trips generated by the proposed development would not result in an adverse impact on the traffic flow on the A1198 with reference to the baseline data. The baseline data included traffic flows through the A1198/The Causeway/Chestnut Lane junctions and so the impact of the additional trips generated by the proposed scheme has considered the impact on this junction.

The overall conclusion of the Atkins report indicates that, when applying this baseline data to the capacity of the surrounding highway network, there is no evidence to suggest that the development would result in an adverse impact on highway safety. That is not to say that there would be no impact, as clearly additional traffic would be flowing through the junctions, particularly at peak times. This would therefore increase the risk of queuing but the test that needs to be applied is whether any harm identified significantly and demonstrably outweighs the benefits of the proposals, as required by paragraph 14 of the NPPF. Given that the baseline data from Chestnut

Lane has informed the conclusion that adjacent junctions would operate well below capacity, in neutral months, once the impact of the development has been factored in, officers are of the view that the level of harm identified in relation to highway safety does not meet this test, as concluded in the main body of the committee report.

B. Conclusion

Officers consider that there is nothing further to add to the conclusion in the main body of the report. The recommendation therefore remains to approve planning permission, as per the committee report.

Additional Background Papers: the following background papers (additional to those referred to in the agenda report) were used in the preparation of this update:

No additional papers

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