

Histon & Impington Affordable Housing Panel:

Date / Location:

Tuesday the 31st March 2009, 2.30pm (Mezzanine)

Item:

S.0175.09.O – Affordable Housing (23 Units) at land south east of St Georges Court, Impington.

Attendance:

5 - Mike Jones, Schuyler Newstead, Gareth Jones, Cllr Mike Mason, Brian Ing & Max Parish.

- a) A brief overview of the site was discussed along with the content of the outline application for the determination of layout and access only. With a full review of the proposed layout.
- b) The most relevant policy for discussion was highlighted as HG/5 "Exception Sites for Affordable Housing" of the South Cambridgeshire Development Control Policies DPD, 2007. Copies of this policy were handed out to all attendees.
- c) A brief explanation of the most recently refused planning permission S/1767/07/F was revisited along with the appeal decision, which was dismissed. The two reasons for refusal within both of these documents were confirmed as relating to impact upon neighbour amenity and the impact upon highway safety.

1. The consultation responses, which have been received, were discussed in full starting with those of the Impington Parish Council. Due to the length of these comments this discussion centred on the summary provided by the Parish, which was structured in such a way that it referred directly to Policy HG/5. The summary of this particular discussion is set out below:

POLICY HG/5 "Exceptions Sites for Affordable Housing" of the South Cambridgeshire District Council Development Control Policies 2007:

As an exception to the normal operation of the policies of this plan, planning permission may be granted for schemes of 100% affordable housing designed to meet identified local housing needs on small sites within or adjoining villages. The following criteria will all have to be met:

a) The development proposal includes secure arrangements for ensuring that all the dwellings within the scheme provide affordable housing in perpetuity for those in housing need;

2.0 The panel felt that this aspect of the policy had not been addressed as the application makes no reference to the willingness to enter into a legal agreement to ensure that the proposed dwellings would be affordable and available to local people. Although the application does not provide a S106 legal agreement, the application is

for outline permission and officers felt that this matter could be suitably conditioned prior to the agreement of reserved matters with the agreement of the applicant.

b. The number, size, design, mix and tenure of the dwellings are all confined to, and appropriate to, the strict extent of the identified local need;

2.1 The panel felt that the current application did not provide sufficient information to argue that the development would provide an adequate tenure, mix, size or design to meet local need. Officers informed the panel that the application was only outline and that design was a matter for future determination. Nevertheless, it was confirmed that in it presents form officers felt that the application did not provide sufficient information to illustrate that the development could meet local need both in terms of tenure and mix. It was made clear that officers felt that the site could if revised meet the required size, mix and tenure required in order to satisfy local need. In order for the application to be supported this information would have to be provided and clearly illustrated by the applicant via amended plans.

c. The site of the proposal is well related to the built-up area of the settlement and the scale of the scheme is appropriate to the size and character of the village;

2.2 The panel felt quite strongly that the site was too far from the village core and was too large given its periphery upon the village edge. It was therefore argued that this site did not meet criteria c) of the policy. Officers referred to the previous planning application whereby this was not detailed as a reason for refusal and stated that it did not appear within the inspector's material considerations or his recommendations for refusal. Officers acknowledged that although the application cannot be considered to be entirely well related to the built up core of the village it is sufficiently located to the village framework to provide much needed affordable housing, which on balance would outweigh its edge of village location. In support of this, Impington is designated as a rural centre and therefore by definition is considered one of the largest and more sustainable villages within the district, which has no strategic constraint to the number of homes that can come forward on the grounds that the relevant development control policies are met.

2.2.1 The panel argued that they believed this issue was not adequately considered within the previous planning application and that individual members were under the impression that a reason for refusal on this criteria would feature. As a consequence of this the inspector did not fully consider this issue upon the subsequent appeal. Officers stated that in their opinion this matter was addressed within the previous determination as was it at the subsequent planning committee meetings. Furthermore, the planning inspector's report did make reference to issues of sustainability as did it acknowledge the information provided by the Parish Council. It was concluded that officers and the panel would agree to disagree on this matter.

d. The site is well related to facilities and services within the village;

2.3 The panel stated that the site is not well related to key services and facilities, which are primarily located close to the village core. Furthermore, the site does not benefit from adequate pedestrian or public transport links to such services. Officers referred to the inspectors report on this issue, which makes clear distinctions to typical distances to key services within the village. Officers took the view that the inspector examined this albeit in terms of assessing highway safety implications and felt that the site was adequately located to address these criteria. Nevertheless, it was acknowledged that the site would be more or less dependent on the motor car as it is rural in nature. In addition the inspectors report does make reference to the

good level of facilities within the village whilst also stating that the site is not reasonably well located to public transport with services not within easy walking distance.

e. The development does not damage the character of the village or the rural landscape.

2.4 The panel felt that the developments density and built form within this location would have a detrimental impact upon the rural character of the village given the green nature of the site and its location upon the village edge far away from the built up core of the village. Officers argued that the site is protected from views to the north by the village framework, which encompasses St Andrews Way, whereas the periphery of the site benefited from a natural landscape boundary. Nevertheless, it was acknowledged that as the site was within the Green Belt, the very nature of the development was to be defined as harmful upon the openness and character of the surrounding countryside. Notwithstanding this, officers perceived that the community benefit that would arise from much needed affordable housing would outweigh on balance this harm.

3.0 Other Matters:

3.1 In discussing the above the panel raised the following issues in relation to the design and outstanding detail that should be required from this application:

3.2 The panel stated that the application does not provide adequate information in relation to bin storage and refuse and recycling collection. Officers stated that they are still awaiting comments from the relevant statutory consultees on this matter. However, this type of detail would normally be agreed at the reserved matter stage and that the site would appear to provide adequate turning facilities for refuse collection in line with documents as the manual for streets.

3.3 The panel felt that a green field site developed in this nature would undoubtedly suffer from poor drainage and that the village has suffered most recently by sewage and drainage failures. Officers stated that the Environment Agency would not comment on this application and that comments were still awaited from the Councils drainage matters. Nevertheless, no issues of drainage were raised upon the previous application and that the Council would seek water conservation measures by condition.

3.4 The panel highlighted that the application makes no reference to how it aims to provide 10% on site energy through renewable energy. This was acknowledged by officers and that the applicant would be asked to agree to a condition in order to supply a statement of intent for such provision. Comments are awaited from the sustainability officer to whether or not such provision is feasible.

3.5 The panel concurred that the indicative planting provided upon the plan would not appear suitable given its close proximity to the proposed units. Furthermore, the proposed on site open space was too close to the car parks. Officers acknowledged this detail and confirmed that landscaping was not under determination in this instance, yet revisions would be sought to the layout to address all of these issues.

3.6 The panel reiterated concerns from local residents in relation to potential wildlife species currently occupying the site. Officers stated that ecology comments were yet to be received and that a biodiversity enhancement strategy would be sought by condition.

3.7 Officers stated that the current car parking standards are sufficient in meeting the Council's maximum standards and this would address the previous reason for refusal whereby the proposed car parking was well below maximum standards. Notwithstanding this it is acknowledged that 2 visitor spaces serving 23 dwellings is not wholly appropriate in light of the weight attached to the potential harm of on street parking by the inspector. It is considered that additional visitor spaces should be required. The panel requested that officers refer to the Cambridge Design Guide towards more up to date and feasible parking standards. Adequate car parking is of particular concern due to on street parking being perceived as detrimental to highway safety.

3.8 The panel also highlighted that the pedestrian footways leading into the main village are inadequate for families or large groups of people due to their limited width. There is a danger here in that there are a large amount of HGV's who use the Milton Road. Officers acknowledged that the footpaths were referenced as narrow and along a busy road within the inspectors report.

3.9 In summarising the proposal the panel felt that the scheme was badly designed in a dated and poor layout. It was requested that the Urban Design Officers are asked to comment upon the application in relation to its layout. This was noted and agreed by officers.

3.10 In addition to the above, the panel requested that any further consultation responses were sent via email to the local member and Parish council so that they could be kept abreast of the applications status prior to its determination at the next available planning committee meeting, regardless of its recommendation. This was agreed by officers.

3.11 The possibility of alternative more appropriate sites was raised by the panel, such as The Orchard, Unwin's and other forthcoming sites. These sites were argued to be better located to the village core or services and facilities. Officer's made it clear that there is a clear distinction between sites that provide affordable housing via a S106 and exception sites; such as an exception site would provide affordable housing to local people in the first instance. Furthermore, the application had to be determined on its own merits and against the most recent housing needs survey.

3.12 The panel raised the issue that the housing needs survey was due to expire and that they felt numbers would drop in the future. Alternative housing sites within the vicinity would also accommodate large numbers of people who were on this list. Officers made it clear that there is a distinction between the housing needs survey for exception sites and the usual allocation for housing people in affordable housing elsewhere within the village framework. Officers also advised that the results Housing Needs Survey were valid for 5 years and that no new survey would be commissioned at this present time. To conclude officers confirmed that they believed that should this site come forward then the housing team would be inundated with requests.

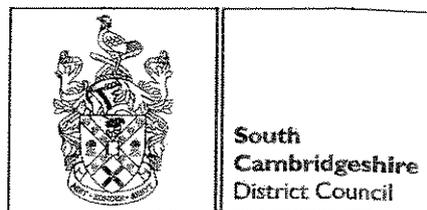
4.0 Conclusion:

4.1 The panel made it quite clear that they disagreed with the principle that the amount of affordable housing proposed would outweigh the unsuitable location of the proposed site. In turn the panel felt very strongly that should the application be approved it would undermine Policy HG/5 setting a precedent for future unsuitable sites.

4.2 Officers confirmed that in its present state the planning application could not be recommended for approval, however, officers felt that revisions and additional information could satisfy the identified outstanding matters. If received and all policies within the DPD were adequately met then officers would be mindful to recommend approval of the application.

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Mrs Angela J Young
Histon and Impington Parish Councils
Pavilion Histon And Impington Recreation Ground
New Road
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Planning Services
Contact: DC Team East
Direct Dial: 01954713464
Fax: 01954 713152
Direct email: dcteameast@scambs.gov.uk
Our Ref: S/0175/09/O
Your Ref:
Date: 20/02/2009

Dear Sir/Madam

Proposal: Affordable Housing
Location: Land to the South-east of, St Georges Court, Impington
Applicant: HR Properties Ltd & Bedford Pilgrim Housing Society

Attached is a copy of the above application for your retention.

Any comments that your Parish Council wishes to make should be made **on this form** and returned to the above address **no later than 21 days from the date of this letter.** (You should note that at the expiry of this period the District Council could determine the application without receipt of your comments.)

Comments of the Parish Council:-

*Please see attached, as previously
e-mailed*



Recommendation of the Parish Council:- (please tick one box only)

Approve	<input type="checkbox"/>	Refuse	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No Recommendation	<input type="checkbox"/>
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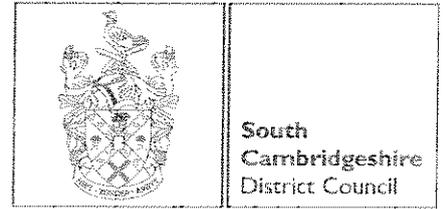
Signed:  Date: 23.3.09
Clerk of the Parish Council or Chairman of the Parish Meeting

EXPLANATION OF APPLICATION SUFFIX

- | | | | |
|-----|---------------------------|-----|--|
| O | Outline | LDC | Lawful Development Certificate |
| F | Full | PNA | Prior Notification of Agricultural Development |
| RM | Reserved Matters | PND | Prior Notification of Demolition Works |
| LB | Listed Building Consent | PNT | Prior Notification of Telecommunications Development |
| CAC | Conservation Area Consent | HSC | Hazardous Substance Consent |
| A | Advertisement Consent | | |

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Planning Services
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Our Ref: S/0175/09/O
Your Ref:
Date: 09/03/2009

Mrs Angela J Young
Histon and Impington Parish Councils
Pavilion Histon And Impington Recreation Ground
New Road
Impington
Cambridge
CB24 9LU

Dear Sir/Madam

Proposal: Affordable Housing
Location: Land to the South-east of, St Georges Court, Impington
Applicant: HR Properties Ltd & Bedford Pilgrim Housing Society

The above planning application has been amended. A copy of the revised plans is attached. These are for your information only.

Any comments that your Parish Council wishes to make should be made on this form and returned to the above address not later than **14 days** from the date of this letter. (You should note that at the expiry of this period the District Council may determine the application.)

Details of Amendment:

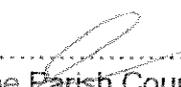
Additional information - traffic speed survey and visibility splays.

Comments of the Parish Council:-

As previously submitted & attached

Recommendation of the Parish Council:- (please tick one box only)

Approve	<input type="checkbox"/>	Refuse	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No Recommendation	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Signed:  Date: 23.3.09
Clerk of the Parish Council or Chairman of the Parish Meeting

EXPLANATION OF APPLICATION SUFFIX

O	Outline	LDC	Lawful Development Certificate
F	Full	PNA	Prior Notification of Agricultural Development
RM	Reserved Matters	PND	Prior Notification of Demolition Works
LB	Listed Building Consent	PNT	Prior Notification of Telecommunications Development
CAC	Conservation Area Consent	HSC	Hazardous Substance Consent
A	Advertisement Consent		

Planning Application

S/0175/09/O

H R Builders Ltd & Bedford Pilgrim Housing
Association

Land Adjacent to St George's Court, Impington

Mrs A J Young
Clerk to the Council
Parish Office
New Road
Impington
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CB24 9LU

18th March 2009

Introduction

S/175/09/0 is substantially alike S/1767/07/0 which was substantially identical to application S/0273/07/0 which was withdrawn before determination. As such the Parish's response, one of recommending refusal, is unchanged in principle.

However, further detail has been added in response to points made by the applicant, and to correct factual errors.

Relevant Policies

Two recently adopted policies appear to be relevant:

- Core DPD Policy ST/4 Rural Centres

and, since the proposed development is in the Green Belt:

- Development Control DPD Policy HG/5 Exceptions Sites for Affordable Housing

Location

The St George's Way/St Andrew's Way developments are at the very edge of the settlement of Histon & Impington, are poorly served by public transport and do not have good access to village facilities.

In addition, there is pavement to just one side of Milton Road and this is of less than standard width. Traffic calming has been introduced in the last few years in order to bring average speeds down. When measured immediately after installation, the 85% percentile figure was still over 32 mph and perception is that this has risen, together with the number of HGVs using the route.

Histon and Impington Parish Councils have, since the last application for this site, conducted automatic traffic surveys. The surveys were undertaken for a 7 day period Sites 1-8, 14 & 15 commencing 16th September 2008 and Sites 9-14 commencing 17th September 2008. Site 10 was on Milton Road at grid reference TL4542463740. The results were:

Location	Site 10, Milton Road - TL45424 63740	
Direction	Out of village	In to village
Start Date	Wed 17-Sep-08	Wed 17-Sep-08
End Date	Tue 23-Sep-08	Tue 23-Sep-08
Total Vehicles	9312	9047
7 Day Ave.	1435	1373
9 Day Ave.	1330	1292
85%ile Speed	42.4	40.0
Mean Speed	35.4	33.9

According to the survey, of the vehicles leaving the village 717 (7.6%) were not cars or motorcycles, and of those entering 687 (again 7.6% or about 1 in 13) were not cars or motorcycles. The Parish Council has been aware for some time of HCVs using this route to avoid congestion at the Girton interchange. For them to use this route, many have to pass the wrong side of traffic calming "give way to oncoming traffic" facility at the entrance to the built up area and thus demonstrating the unsuitability of this route for such vehicles

The footpath at the sharp corner at the junction of Milton Road and Burgoynes Road has required protection by posts. These are often damaged and necessitated the installation of metal to replace the original wooden posts, visibly demonstrating the inadequacy of the route for the traffic using it and the consequent danger to pedestrians and cyclists.

Since the Council last recommended refusal and the collection of the traffic survey, there have been some additional developments which have increased traffic flows, including of heavy vehicles.

First the Cowley Road Park and Ride scheme has relocated to Butt Lane Milton and many cars are accessing this from the west through the village rather than the A14 (and using the return route on leaving the park and ride facility) and Mereway Farm has been redeveloped as a warehousing and distribution centre. The latter is still in development for some of the buildings but the increase in distribution traffic is already noticeable and inevitable. The former has chosen not to restrict in any means the exit towards Impington in order not to increase traffic on the A10 trunk road.

The Parish Council stresses that with the inadequate path way (missing in some parts of the route and less than a metre wide on the part backing onto to Woodcock Close over which the wing mirrors of commercial vehicles overhang in order to pass ongoing vehicles) from the proposed site to all the facilities, the high preponderance of heavy goods vehicles make this unsafe route to the bus stops, the schools or the village shops for pedestrians or cyclists. This development will be a car using dominated community: the very opposite of the claim made by the applicant

Drainage

Residents in the neighbouring St Andrew's Way have repeatedly reported problems with drainage, as recently as 9th October 2007, after only moderate rainfall. Building on this plot, which now drains across to St Andrews Way will inevitably increase run off and exacerbate the situation.

Air Quality

South Cambridgeshire District Council has recently declared an air quality management area running along the A14 from Milton to Bar Hill. The site is 1.5km from the A14, with a southerly prevailing wind bringing pollutants towards the site.

In addition, the site is 1.4km from the HWRC and landfill site at Butt Lane, Milton. Noxious odours from the site, and processing operations there, do reach this area.

Relationship to the built up area of the settlement

Whilst adjacent to St Andrews Way, one must regard St Andrew's Way as poorly related to the overall settlement. It is further from public transport, village facilities, and would be unlikely to be granted permission in today's planning climate.

Relationship to facilities and services

The Design and Access statement claims:-

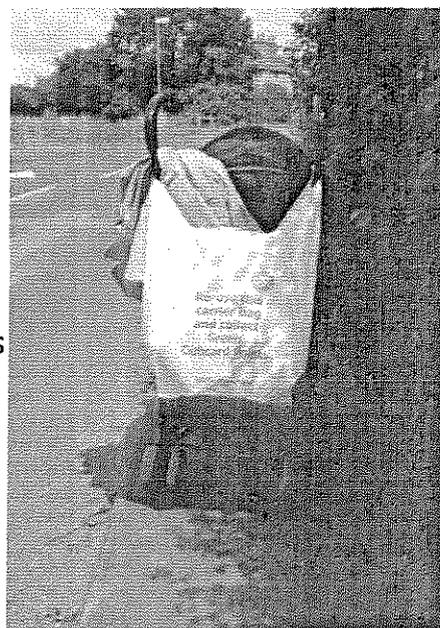
"This proposed development will be located within close proximity to many of the most needed services thus reducing the dependence on the private car. This is in accordance with the principles of sustainable development."

Except for the possible exception of a vets surgery, this claim of the "close proximity to many of the most needed services" is palpably misleading.

The Council's previous objection reported that the site is:

- approximately 1900 metres from the shops in the village centre
- long distance from the Junior School (1700 metres) and is even further from the Nursery and Infants' Schools,
- 900 metres to the stop at the Village College, exceeding 800 metre planning distance for access to public transport. (The developers may have been misled by a derelict bus stop on Milton Road for which there has been no public service for at least three years: the bus stop has now been removed, early 2008, for health and safety reasons)

The walking route along Milton Road is along a narrow footpath, in places barely wide enough for a buggy. The included photograph shows how a small buggy fills the pathway.



One route from there is along a section of road without footpath, alternatively, a longer route is available that has a footpath.

The applicant highlights Impington Village College (IVC) and St Andrew's, Impington.

IVC does not have a playgroup, nor does it host holiday activities. St Andrew's Impington is part of a joint benefice with St Andrew's Histon, and does not provide any children's worship or facilities.

A measure of the accessibility of local services can be taken from the 2001 census results that show just 8 out of 139 households in output area 12UGHN0027 do not have a car. These are likely to include the Council bungalows at the end of St Andrew's Way, primarily occupied by the elderly of whom many are not able to be car drivers. The remaining 131 properties had then 200 cars, an average of 1.53 cars per property. With the cessation of the bus service along Milton Road since that date, this figure is unlikely to have improved.

Alternative sites

Policy HG/5 para 2 requires that no alternative appropriate sites can be found.

The applicant refers to a dismissed appeal on S/0321/05/O. The Inspector holding the inquiry into the LDF has made it clear that he expects to approve a number of objection sites in order to meet a perceived shortfall in housing numbers, and there is such a site to the rear of Impington Lane, adjacent to the site of this rejected appeal.

Part of the Impington Lane site (the former employment area occupied by Unwins Seeds has been granted planning permission for residential development and there will be some 20 affordable houses on this site: the site has already been cleared in preparation for development. The much larger Impington 1 area has still not been developed although an application was considered for a half of that site. A new application is expected. Whilst there are designated lands available for development, and at least for a sizeable proportion of that site the developer assures us that they will soon come forward with plans for development, the Parish Council does not see an immediate need to grant permission on an exception site when there are already sites available within the village framework.

Adequate services

Policy ST/4 Rural Centres, specifies that development will only be permitted "provided that adequate services, facilities and infrastructure are available or can be made available as a result of the development".

The Council has consistently argued that local services, facilities and infrastructure are not adequate.

For example:

- the settlement is well short of public open space/recreation facilities
- has limited GP provision, and that provision is on a site that is landlocked
- the main route into the village (B1049) is forecast to be at between 150% and 175% of capacity by 2015 (Cambridge NW traffic study)

Let alone questions over the capacity of schools, where again sites provide limited (in some cases very limited) scope for expansion.

The Parish Council contends that the distances involved to all the needed services (not just one of them) are so much larger than the guidelines for affordable housing that this site is not suitable for affordable housing: it will be a need for any family on that site to be a car user. As it is in a green belt, the only possibility of development under current policies is for affordable housing, then the SCDC must concur with us that this site is not available for development.

Other significant comments

The Parish Council notes that in the particulars of the design:

- The demolition of the existing house does permit better access but that within the site, access and routing is still problematical. For instance if the car bays are occupied, would a refuse vehicle be able to turnaround and exit forwards as is required by SCDC?
- Poor unimaginative rectilinear block design which compared to other developments in the area will make this a very unattractive place to live: affordable housing should not visually stigmatised as "poorer" housing.
- No information given on the size of the units
- Plays areas sited next to and merging into car parking areas.
- The proposed splaying at the entrance does not seem to take into account the traffic from the vets surgery premises which will be joining at an acute angle. Given the existence of the additional amendment to the application, presumably because of the more than 5% increase in traffic requirement, has the junction on to Milton Road from St Georges Way been investigated?

Recommendation

The Parish Council recommends refusal on the following grounds:

- 1 The Housing Needs Survey is out of date, suggests requirements for a mix of housing sizes not demonstrated to be met by the

- application, and presents a confusing picture of demand and not necessarily need;
- 2 The application fails to meet Policy HG/5 1(d), in that it is not site is well related to facilities and services within the village;
- 3 The application fails to meet Policy HG/5 1(c), in that the site of the proposal is not well related to the built-up area of the settlement - in that this area of is not of itself well related to the rest of the settlement;
- 4 The application fails to meet Policy HG/5 1(c), in that it does not demonstrate secure arrangements for ensuring that all the dwellings within the scheme provide affordable housing in perpetuity for those in housing need;
- 5 The site, by its distance from all services and facilities is not suitable for affordable housing according to government guidelines, and the access to these facilities is also unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 6 That the Parish Council believes an alternative appropriate sites can will be brought forward in the nest 12 months;
- 7 The application fails to meet Policy ST/4 para 2, in that it does not demonstrate that there are adequate services, facilities and infrastructure in Histon & Impington;
- 8 There is inadequate parking for the number of cars that would reasonably be expected to be needed by residents. By its location this will a car using development.
- 9 The details provided are incomplete, maybe contrary to SCDC requirements and some the details of the design are unsafe.

Conditions

Should SCDC be minded to approve ion outline the application, the Council asks:

- 1 That further work be done to ensure that adequate drainage is provided, not only for the development itself, but also to ensure that neighbouring sites (particularly St Andrew's Way) are not adversely affected;
- 2 That housing on the site will be affordable in perpetuity;
- 3 That the Council is formally consulted regarding potential residents at the site as to their association with the community;
- 4 That an offsite provision, secured by S106 agreement, is made for public open space/recreation space
- 5 Contributions are sought to enable the upgrading of the pedestrian access from the site to the bus stops, schools and

shops in the village to enable them to be safely used by pedestrians and cyclists.

Jones Michael

From: Mike Mason [mjmason2609@aol.com]
Sent: 07 April 2009 14:06
To: Jones Michael
Subject: Affordable Housing St. Georges Way IMPINGTON
Attachments: Appeal by HRB Ltd St Georges Court .doc

Dear Mike,

Apologies for the delay in sending you the attachments as promised as the panel meeting last week. Together with the other two local members I have very primarily involved with the setting up of Orchard Park Community Council and am in fact acting as interim chairman of this new authority until the June elections. I will be advising SCDC of the communications address for all correspondence concerning Orchard Park as soon as possible.

With regard to the application I believe that that I have made my own representations as a local member very clear to the panel. These views have been consistent from the outset and **I copy below an email sent following the first application for this site.** In the changed from Local Plan 2 to LDF policies I do not believe there has be any material change of wording which would change my view. However as indicated by the Parish Council representatives (**and their evidence was noted as unchallenged by the inspector**) the whole traffic, safety of pedestrians and distance from village facilities are key in terms of sustainability and in my view should carry more weight as objections. I would add only that if the objectors, myself and the Parish Council were able to persuade the Committee to refuse this application then we would be willing to attend and make these representations direct to an Inspector at any subsequent appeal. As such if this were to occur I would make the request that any such appeal be determined by at a hearing rather than by written representation. This is not the first time that I have made such a request and I do so again because I believe that a strong case could be made to support any decision of refusal. **It would appear to me the the previous Inspector by making an unaccompanied site visit may have missed some vital points on the matters referred to above. I attach a copy of the document sent to Scrutiny Committee members.**

Regards Mike Mason.

Gareth.jones@scams.gov.uk wrote:

Hallo

I understand that an agent (Alison Harker) has approached the Parish re the above. In general terms we've indicated that in principle we'd have no objection to a 100% affordable exceptions housing scheme but that support would be dependant upon support from the parish. Is this something that you would like to give consideration to? If not please let me know so that I can advise the agent accordingly.

I'm happy to discuss this with you all or separately if it would be helpful.
Gareth Jones

Gareth,

The LP2 inspectors report for Histon and Impington indicated that development in excess of planned allocations on infill or "exception" sites would only be considered if there was no environmental detriment to the settlement and that sustainability was not compromised. (or words to this effect). I am therefore extremely disappointed that yet again (as in a number of recent enquiries) applicants are told that "we would have no objection in principle etc. etc. the applicants then being encouraged to contact the Parish Councils. With the greatest of respect the first question to any

enquiry should be does the proposal conform with policy? The applicant in this case should have been told that their proposal could not be supported on policy grounds. End of story. At Parish level we seem to be continually involved with objecting and appearing at appeals on applications which again with the greatest of respect should never have been encouraged in the first place or where refusal decisions were very flimsy thereby encouraging appeals. (I refer to Kay Hitch Way , Histon and Etheldred House, Histon, both of which were dismissed with the help of strong representation by the PC.) We now have the distinct possibility of another appeal on the Unwins site at Impington where officers refused the application without taking into account the very strong local opinion and technical comments on the highways aspects from Impington Parish Council. This lack of detail on the decision notice weakens the Council's position at appeal. I fully realise the pressures for development but SCDC must not compromise quality land use policy based planning decisions by trying to meet impossible quantity targets set by Government in order to obtain planning delivery grant. I addressed this problem at the last Scrutiny Committee in response to Mr. Hussell's contribution to the debate on appeals and Parish Council involvement. (the Unwins decision notice refers). I understand Jem Belcham is currently receiving more enquiries for the Kay Hitch Way site and I have made my views and those of the Parish Council known to him. The residents having supported us at appeal are understandably very worried and I am hoping to attend a residents meeting tomorrow to try to allay their fears. The potential applicants should be made aware that any proposal involving change of use is in contradiction of policy and will be strongly resisted. Swapping employment allocations for housing tips the balance of sustainability the wrong way.

In summary the Milton Road site is 1. Green Belt which cannot be considered as an affordable housing exception site in that it would constitute unsustainable development :-

2. Unacceptable traffic generation on a road already being traffic calmed as an A14 rat run. The road is narrow with dangerous bends and no footway in Old Impington.

3. Any development at this location is very poorly related to the main settlement which shops and junior schools over one mile distant in most cases. Traffic on all routes in Histon and Impington is now regularly gridlocked and getting worse. The B1049 route into Cambridge is currently running well in excess of designed capacity and will worsen even with the proposed A14 improvement many years away.

4. Facilities such as Schools and Doctors Surgery are currently operating at or over capacity.

5. The Parish of Impington already has 270 affordable housing units with outline consent.

It is therefore almost certain that any housing development within Histon and Impington will be resisted with the exception of the site already allocated in the LDF. I hope that this will be the message given out to any enquirers. Despite the lack of previous support from my fellow members I will again seek to remove Histon and Impington from the list of Rural Growth Settlements in the LDF second consultation. To quote Mr. Hussell the two words are - "Infrastructure Deficit"

Finally may I remind all officers that having suffered a Public Open Space deficit for the past 25 years and having received no meaningful 106 contributions in respect of the many developments, my Parish Councils' are this year trying to catch up on demand by buying the freehold of our Recreation Ground and building a large replacement Pavillion and other facilities with Parish Council taxpayer investment of £392,000 plus £458,000 grant aid and other voluntary contributions. This does not take account of recent spending of approximately £20,000 on 8 Acres of extension land acquired on short lease. This puts the meaning of unsustainability into context. I will also be seeking formal allocation of this additional land in our response to the LDF consultation. My apologies for a long answer to a short question but I do get the feeling sometimes that Parish Council and local member input is not given sufficient weight.

Regards Mike Mason

**Appeal by HRB Ltd & the Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing
Association.**

Land adjacent to St. Georges Court, Impington, Cambridge.

**PLANNING INSPECTORATE REF.
AAP/W0530/A/08/2080506**

**South Cambridgeshire District Council
Planning Application Ref. S/1767/07/O**

Third Party Representation

From

District Councillor M. J. Mason

Histon and Impington Ward

August 2008

100 Lambs Lane,
Cottenham,
Cambridge,
CB24 8TA

1. I am Michael Mason, District Councillor for Histon and Impington Ward . I am currently serving in that capacity for a third term, having first been elected in 1973 and subsequently in 2004 and 2008. In between these periods I have completed 32 years service as a Parish Councillor for Histon and have lived in the Ward for 67 years.

2. Impington and Histon Parishes comprise one settlement and are treated as such for planning purposes. As an elected member of both authorities I have been actively involved in the preparation of the two previous District Local Plans, the County Structure Plan and the currently emerging Local Development Framework. I am therefore familiar with the planning policies, the area, its facilities, and the appeal site.

The Site - Previous Planning History

3. The site which lies within the Cambridge Green Belt is located off the Impington to Milton Road on the edge of the built up area of the settlement. This application follows a previous, very similar one for the same site, which was withdrawn immediately prior to being presented at Planning Committee on 4th April 2007. Prior to submission of this application Alison Harker, a Chartered Surveyor, acting for the applicants / appellants had written to Impington Parish Council seeking their views on the proposed development. On 28th January 2005 the Parish Council replied stating that they could not support development at this location,

explaining in some detail their reasons for this statement. Thus at the outset the applicants were aware of the views of the Parish Council as statutory consultees within the planning process.

4. Nevertheless the applicants and their agent continued to meet with officers during 2006 in order to progress proposals for development. The district council failed to observe their own exception site protocol and did not include the parish council in these pre-application discussions.

However the applicants were well aware that any indication of support from officers should be taken as their personal opinion and may not reflect the views of elected members. In the event the parish council and local members were consulted only days before the application was due to be determined and, significantly, after the agenda report had been printed with the officer's recommendation of delegated approval/refusal.

The Senior Planning Officer, Ms. Fry in an email dated 30th March 2007 changed the recommendation to REFUSAL, *the site being inappropriate by virtue of its remoteness from the facilities of Impington and that there are other more suitable sites, which do not involve development in the Green Belt.* Please refer to the full text in **Appendix 1** of this document.

5. Also contained in **Appendix 1**. is an important exchange of correspondence between the planning officers, applicants and the parish council under the heading - **Subsequent Correspondence with**

Impington Parish Council. The planning authority had therefore fully examined and established the principle arguments for refusal of planning permission for this site. These were policy based and furthermore reflected the views of local members and the parish council as statutory consultees.

Planning Application S1767/07/0 - Determined 05/12/07

6. After drafting the reasons for refusal of the first application Ms. Fry was then prepared to ignore her own previous advice and now recommended approval subject to conditions. A comprehensive and well argued objection from Impington Parish Council was published in full on the agenda paper and was endorsed by myself and Councillor Davies at the meeting. (See **Appendix 2**). Every committee member and all officers were given copies of the minutes of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee 11th October 2007. (See **Appendix 1**.) The question on Exception Site Policy and Protocol was answered in writing and in person by Gareth Jones, Corporate Manager Planning and Sustainable Communities. By disregarding his own statement to Scrutiny Committee and recommending approval, Mr. Jones was being inconsistent. Furthermore with no reference to the reasons for refusal put forward by the parish council and debated by members, the decision was poorly recorded in the minutes.

7. In the document at **Appendix 1**. I have summarised the flawed procedure used by the planning officers to reach their recommendation and the reasons why the planning committee quite correctly voted for refusal. Under the heading - **Report and Recommendation 5th December 2007** the non compliance with the key policies ST/4 and HG/5 are emphasised. These are also comprehensively explained by reference to the parish council's written objection reproduced in **Appendix 2**.

8. The parish council's comments at **paragraph 34**. of the planning officer's report should be carefully considered in the light of more recent development applications within the village framework. An application, including affordable housing for the site at Impington Lane is currently awaiting determination. Thus an alternative site within the definition of policy HG/5 has already been identified confirming the parish council's prediction. In terms of sustainability, development at this location within the village framework is preferable to the use of an exception site in the Green Belt.

9. With regard to the parish council's detailed comments under the heading - **Relationship to facilities and services** the walking distances to shops, schools and services need to be seen to be appreciated. I would sincerely hope that the Inspector will be able to make a personal visit to see this and note the following :-

1. Approximately 1900 metres from the shops in the village centre
2. Long distance from the Junior School (1700 metres) and further from the Nursery and Infants' Schools
3. 900 metres to the stop at the Village College, exceeding 800 metre planning distance for access to public transport

Conclusion

10. Having been closely involved with the two recent applications to develop this site for affordable housing, I have come to the conclusion that it does not meet the policy criteria for exception sites in the Green Belt , would amount to unsustainable development and makes little or no contribution to the acknowledged infrastructure deficit in Histon and Impington. I ask the Inspector to dismiss the appeal.

Signed

Date

Appeal by HRB Ltd & the Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association.

Land adjacent to St. Georges Court, Impington, Cambridge.

**PLANNING INSPECTORATE REF.
AAP/W0530/A/08/2080506**

**South Cambridgeshire District Council
Planning Application Ref. S/1767/07/O**

Third Party Representation

From

District Councillor M. J. Mason

Histon and Impington Ward

APPENDIX 1.

Report To – Cllr. Mrs Corney , Chairman, Planning Committee, Cllr. Wright , Portfolio Holder, Planning Services, Cllr, Mrs. Heazell, Chairman ,Scrutiny and Overview Committee, Gareth Jones, Corporate Manager, Planning and Sustainable Communities. David Rush, Development Control Quality Manager, Ian Senior, Democratic Services Officer.

From - Cllr. M.J.Mason . Date 04/01/08

Subject - Planning Applications S/0273/07, S/1767/07 St. Georges Court, Impington - Affordable Housing in Impington Parish

Report To – Cllr. Mrs Corney , Chairman, Planning Committee, Cllr. Wright ,
Portfolio Holder, Planning Services, Cllr, Mrs. Heazell,
Chairman ,
Scrutiny and Overview Committee,
Gareth Jones, Corporate Manager, Planning and Sustainable
Communities. David Rush, Development Control Quality
Manager.
Ian Senior, Democratic Services Officer.

From - Cllr. M.J.Mason . **Date** 04/01/08

Subject - Planning Applications S/0273/07, S/1767/07 St. Georges
Court,
Impington - Affordable Housing in Impington Parish

Introduction

I must express concern over the way in which the authority has handled the two applications for this site. The first application was scheduled to be determined by Committee on 4th April 2007. In reading the correspondence on the Parish Council file it became apparent that the applicants had been in consultation with the authority for many months during 2006 prior to submission. I can find no record of the Parish Council being involved in these detailed pre – submission discussions despite that fact that this was an “exception site” outside of the village development framework. On 28th January 2005 the Parish Council had replied to an enquiry from Alison Harker, Chartered Surveyor concerning the potential for this site. The reply made it very clear that any application for this site would not receive the support of the Parish Council, together with the reasons for their statement. In view of what has now transpired I find this continued pressure from the applicants over 2 years, apparently with some support from officers, resulting in two applications, two Affordable Housing Panel Meetings, endless correspondence and wastage of time and resources, extremely regrettable.

As a local member I made detailed comments and objection to the first application which were printed in the agenda together with detailed objections from the PC and others. I was asked to attend an Affordable Housing Panel with Cllr. Denis Payne, Chairman, Impington Parish Council.

The First Affordable Housing Panel 28th March 2007

On Friday 30th March local members received the email copied below :-

Dear Councillor

I am writing to you in relation to the above mentioned planning application which will be presented at next weeks planning committee. The Affordable Housing Panel met on Wednesday 28 th March and after much discussion no support for the site was reached. Officers restated the view that whilst not an ideal site for affordable housing the benefit of providing affordable housing outweighed this remoter location from village facilities. The Parish Council and Cllr Mike Mason expressed the view that the site was not suitable due to the remoteness from facilities, shops and schools. In addition they considered that there were more suitable sites closer to the village centre. The recommendation before you is subject to the affordable housing protocol whereby the Planning Committee shall not approve the application unless the Panel so advises nor without a planning obligation being completed. In view of the Affordable Housing Panels recommendation officers are changing the recommendation to one of refusal. The reason for refusal relates to the site being inappropriate by virtue of its remoteness from the facilities of Impington and that there are other more suitable sites, which do not involve development in the Green Belt. Therefore the proposal does not comply with Policy GB2(5) of the Local Plan 2004. If you have any questions relating to this please do not hesitate to contact me.

kind regards

Frances Fry

Senior Planning Assistant

Planning Committee 4th April 2007

Between 28th March and 2nd April the applicant was allowed to withdraw the application and the site visit arranged for 2nd April was cancelled. This happened in spite of the 11 page report on the Committee Agenda and in the knowledge that the printed recommendation was for **DELEGATED APPROVAL/REFUSAL**.

S/0273/07/O – Impington (Land Adj St Georges Court, Off Milton Road) □PDF
148 KB

Additional documents:

- Application File, item12.

Decision:

12.

Withdrawn due to the refusal of the Council's Affordable Housing Panel to support the proposal.

Minutes:

The Committee noted that this application had been **WITHDRAWN** due to the refusal of the Council's Affordable Housing Panel to support the proposal. The site visit, scheduled to have taken place on 2 April 2007, was cancelled.

Subsequent Correspondence with Impington Parish Council

Impington Parish Council received a letter dated 4th June (received 2nd July) signed by Frances Fry on behalf of Gareth Jones setting out the position of the authority and giving the reasons for refusal that would have been drafted had the committee determined the application. Namely :-

“The proposed development by reason of its remote location in relation to village facilities and reduced access to public transport would be contrary to Policy P1/3 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policy HG8 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 in that the development would not represent a sustainable location whereby the need to travel by motor vehicle is minimised, would not make efficient use of energy and resources and therefore would not mitigate against the impacts of climate change.”

This text was communicated to the joint applicants and to the **Parish Council** who were requested to "*confirm in writing that the above draft reason reflects the main concerns raised from comments dated 23rd February*". In seeking this clarification, the officers suggested that it would be **beneficial for the Parish Council** to add any local knowledge concerning bus services and footpath links to the villages.

Frances Fry
South Cambridgeshire District Council
Development Services Department
South Cambridgeshire Hall
Cambourne Business Park
Cambourne
CAMBRIDGE CB23 6EA

30 July 2007

Dear Ms Fry

Affordable Housing Land Adjacent St George's Court Impington
Planning Application Ref S/0273/07/O (Withdrawn)

We note your letter of 2nd July 2007 informing the Parish Council (and HR Builders Ltd and Bedford Pilgrim Housing Association) of the expected reason for refusing the above planning application: the application having already been withdrawn.

The Parish Council supports the statement of proposed refusal and would add in support:

- *The bus service along Milton Road (which used to be three buses a day) has been withdrawn by Stagecoach.*
- *The nearest bus stop is 900 metres away (no footpaths on a busy and, with the opening of the new park and ride site at Milton, soon to be busier road or crossing that road at a blind corner) to the stop at the Village College, exceeding the 800 metre planning distance for access to public transport*
- *No shop facilities, or junior schools are within 1.7km*
- *The above points demonstrate that adequate services, facilities and infrastructure are not available and can not be made available as a result of the development, thus contravening Policy ST/4, Rural Centres). And also the site clearly fails to meet condition d of Policy HG/5 ("The site is well related to facilities and services within the village")*
- *The Housing Needs Survey indicated a demand for housing in the village centres and this has been met in part by Arbury Camp. Not including the provision of affordable housing in this site to the total of affordable housing provision, requires the parallel elimination of the housing need from the*

survey from non Impington residents in assessing the affordable housing need within the village.

There are alternative sites within the village framework, including a brown field site: recent government statements have re-iterated the need to give priority for brown field sites. These alternative sites have the capacity to meet the demand predicted for affordable housing in the next five years. The demand is based on the 2005 Impington Housing Needs Survey (incidentally which the Parish Council now questions the currency of the outcome). To grant any development of this Green Belt land would contravene main paragraph 2 of HG/5 (“In the case of sites within the Cambridge Green Belt, before planning permission is granted for such development, the District Council will have to be assured that no alternative appropriate sites can be found for the scale and type of development proposed”)

- *Whilst the Parish Council strongly supports the need for affordable housing, it also argues the need for employment opportunities within the village. Currently Impington is far short of the expected ratio of one employment opportunity for each economically active resident.: this development would adversely affect an already poor situation for the village and would require the extra residents to travel to work outside the village, and this conflicts with sustainability and mitigation against climate change policies.*
- *The proposed development made no improvement to village facilities or amenities*
- *There is no mention in the application about a mechanism for ensuring the long term availability of the housing*

In addition, the original application emphasised the need for one and two bedroom accommodation and the Parish Council notes that a substantial proportion of the Survey demand (nearly one fifth) was for more than 2 bedrooms, and experience shows that families requiring two bedrooms initially can need extra bedrooms later (or even by the time the housing is available). The Parish Council would look to all proposals for Affordable Housing to include a mix of dwellings reflective of longer term need (and the current village stock has more than half the dwellings with more than two bedrooms)

Hence, the Parish Council would wish that the proposed developers are not encouraged in any manner to believe that any near future applications will be successful

Yours sincerely

*A J Young (Mrs)
Clerk Impington Parish Council*

Site Meeting 7th August 2007 at St Georges Court, Impington.

As a local member I attended a site meeting detailed below, called by the case officer. In company with the joint applicants, their architect and RSL. The **Parish Council** and myself again rehearsed the arguments presented previously and the applicants were left in no doubt that, should a further application be submitted our basic objections remained.

Suggested Agenda

- 1) *Green Belt Location - principle of affordable housing at this site*
- 2) *Location of Site to Impington village Facilities*
- 3) *Walkability from site to Village facilities ie village college*
- 4) *Site specific issues*
- 5) *Next Steps*
- 6) *AOB*

Notes (1) *This meeting is being held on a without prejudice basis and the views and opinions expressed by the officer of the District Council and representatives of the Parish Council do not bind their respective organisations to such views and opinions should a subsequent planning application be submitted to the Local Planning Authority.*

(2) *Since the submission of the previous application 0273/07/O The Local Development Framework Document Development Control Policies 2007 has been adopted by the District Council and any subsequent application will be assessed against these policies.*

Second Application

Despite the very strong objections from two local members and the Parish Council, the joint applicants then submitted the second application and the consultation process began again.

Second Affordable Housing Panel 21st November 2007

The Corporate Manager Planning and Sustainable Communities and Cllr. Chatfield were unable to be present.

Our ref:

Your ref:

Date 15 November 2007

emma.george@scamb.gov.uk

Contact: Emma George

Direct dial: 01954 713151

Direct email:

***Denis Payne
48 Impington Lane
Impington
Cambridge
CB24 9NJ***

Dear Mr Payne

Re: Affordable Housing Panel

Further to my telephone conversation with you today. I confirm the details of the Affordable Housing Panel as follows:-

Date & time: Wednesday 21 November at 4.30 pm

Venue: Gareth Jones office, South Cambs Hall, Cambourne

Present: Gareth Jones, Fran Fry, Martin Williams, Cllr N Davies, Cllr M Mason, Mr D Payne (Chair, Impington PC)

Application: S/1767/07/F – Affordable Housing, land adj St Georges Court, Impington

If you have any queries concerning the above please contact Fran Fry on 01954 713252 or email

Panel Discussion

A long discussion centred around the weight to be given to Policies ST4 and HG5, housing needs in Impington, North and South of the A14, and the infrastructure deficit. Local members and the Parish Council strongly re-iterated the previous arguments for refusal. The case officers indicated that in their judgement the need for

affordable housing outweighed the other planning policy considerations but that the final recommendation from the panel would come from Gareth Jones.

Committee Agenda, Report, Minutes 7th December 2007

S/1767/07/O – Impington (Land adjacent St Georges Court off Milton Road) □
PDF 149 KB

Additional documents:

- 1767 - Impington Addendum, item139. □ PDF 39 KB
- Application File, item139.

Decision:

Delegated refusal, contrary to report. Members agreed the reason for refusal as being the adverse impact on the amenity of the occupiers of nos. 6 and 7 St. George's Court by virtue of increased light and noise pollution. Members also instructed officers to commission an independent highways assessment and, should that identify the proposed vehicular access as being dangerous, cite that as an additional reason for refusal.

Minutes:

139. Moira Callaghan (objector), David Keeley for Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association (applicant), Mark Cope (representing Impington Parish Council) and Councillors Neil Davies and Mike Mason (local Members) addressed the meeting. Comments from Councillor Jonathan Chatfield (local Member) were read out at the meeting and had previously been circulated to members of the Committee.

Prior to considering this application, Members attended a site visit on 5 December 2007. The Committee gave officers, in consultation with the local Members for Impington, **DELEGATED POWERS TO REFUSE** the application, contrary to the recommendation in the report from the Corporate Manager (Planning and Sustainable Communities). Members agreed the reason for refusal as being the adverse impact on the amenity of the occupiers of nos. 6 and 7 St. George's Court by virtue of increased noise and disturbance from the use of the proposed access. Members also instructed officers to commission an independent highways assessment and, should that identify the proposed vehicular access as being dangerous, cite that as an additional reason for refusal.

Report and Recommendation 5th December 2007

The very brief addendum to the Planning Committee agenda above did not fairly report to members the detailed discussions held at the Panel Meeting which had been postponed from a previous date. The publication of the main agenda before the meeting of the panel pre-empted any meaningful consideration of the views of local members and the Parish Council. This brings the purpose, scope and protocol of the panel into question and the planning committee procedures into disrepute. The resulting recommendation to the Committee for approval directly contradicts the previous recommendation for refusal citing the same policy.

A change in the panel's recommendation would only have been acceptable if there had been a material difference in the second application which had substantially addressed the basic concerns of the Parish Council. Whilst the new application did address car parking and drainage matters it certainly **did not address** the very basic issues of sustainability and relationship to the settlement. Thus a development which was deemed to be **"Contrary to Structure Plan Policy P1/3"** in the first application is now, according to the case officer's report, considered **"generally to accord with the Development Plan and Policy P1/3"**. In addition the report to committee, under reasons for approval, suggested **"general accordant with Policies ST/4 and HG/5. Policy ST/4 specifically refers to development "within the village framework" and is subject to a very strong caveat concerning "adequate services facilities and infrastructure."** The Parish Council has repeatedly drawn attention to **HG/5 Para 1** criteria which **"will all have to be met"** Clearly 1(c) and 1(d) (relationship to built development and services) **are not met**. Furthermore para. 2. of the same policy further restricts permission for **Green Belt sites** to locations where **"no alternative site can be found"**. As the proposal for Impington Lane is now well advanced the **application therefore fails also to meet HG/5 Para 2**. This inconsistency of assessment regarding compliance or otherwise with development plan policies is regrettable.

The Housing Development Officer's comments on meeting the need for affordable housing also illustrate a basic misunderstanding of the Parish of Impington and the current responsibilities of the Parish Council within the planning policy framework. The District Council has made the decision **not to create a new Parish and to leave Arbury Park with all its problems as part of Impington**. Thus by implication, the LDF Planning Policy Area, Cambridge Northern Fringe (W) must now be regarded as part of Histon and Impington as **"one settlement"**. If the District Council chooses to ignore the **Arbury Park S106 governance review condition, then it cannot have it both ways** and try to impose additional exception sites based on "needs assessments" which are **distorted by the edge of City factors**. **Housing need IS BEING met** in Impington, but at a huge cost to the Parish, with 11 members and a Clerk at the Parish Council almost at breaking point, carrying out the **essential third tier administration and services, both north and south of the A14**. This adds

a new dimension to the practical interpretation of “community sustainability” when set against “desk top” assessment of needs, dwelling numbers and build rates, to set targets which, in reality, are unlikely to be achieved in the near future. Arbury Park which received outline approval in 2001 is a classic example of the failure of the private sector and RSL's to deliver in accordance with the Master Plan and on time. Furthermore because of these failures and a change in the commercial market sector conditions, applications for more housing to replace unused employment allocations are expected. Additional affordable units are likely to be built in this development pushing up the total from 900 to 1300 dwellings. The Parish Council's sustainability argument concerning housing to jobs ration will again be ignored.

Committee Draft Minute 5th December 2007

I am unhappy about the wording of the draft minute. There is no mention of the document appended below, which was circulated to all members and officers at the meeting. Officers and Portfolio Holder, Planning Services, were aware of the public question and of the answer as published in the Minutes of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee. In the light of this **clear statement of policy and protocol on affordable housing and exception sites, the case officer's recommendation for approval is incomprehensible.** Cllr. Wright had in fact attended the Scrutiny meeting at Comberton and had taken part in the discussion on this item. In speaking as a local member at Committee I referred to these minutes which were neither denied nor challenged by officers or members. The members decision to refuse the application clearly indicated their acceptance of the Scrutiny minutes as “material” and I respectfully submit that they should be referred to in the Planning Committee minute and that the contents, **form part of the decision notice to the applicant.**

Furthermore during the discussion no member disputed the fact that the development was poorly related to village facilities and to the lack of infrastructure as specifically mentioned in the Parish Council's comprehensive representation. Committee members when visiting the site in the morning, had travelled via the Village Green and officers and a local member had answered questions concerning distance to schools and shops etc. Officers had pointed out an alternative housing site in Impington Lane which is not located in the green belt and which is likely to come forward as an application shortly. I also pointed out, in support of Cllr. Davies, Cllr. Cope (IPC) and Mrs. Callaghan (objector), that the detailed response from Impington Parish Council, as published in the Agenda for 5th December, gave valid reasons for a decision of refusal. As such non compliance with sections of **Policies ST/4 and HG/5 should be added to the reasons for refusal.**

In discussion with Officers I have said that I can accept their professional approach to advice from the other statutory consultees on drainage and highway matters although, in common with other members I may on occasion disagree. I fully realise the implications for the Council, should the applicant go to appeal. I did state publicly in the meeting, that should this happen, I and the Parish Council would stand by our comments and support a decision of refusal at an appeal hearing. In my view it is important that members state this clearly where they are asking committee to go against a recommendation. In the event, committee members needed little persuasion, agreed with arguments put forward and voted to refuse the application by **11 votes to 0.** This should in my opinion be **recorded in the minutes of the meeting.** I do of

course accept that following the Committee's observations during the site visit and at the meeting, there is a need for an independent highways assessment and further clarification of land available or in the control of the applicants for highway improvement at the site entrance. However the reason for refusal quoted in the draft minute does not adequately record the debate or the Committee's decision.

Conclusion and Request from Local Member

In summary therefore my concerns are :-

- (a) Consultation procedure and protocol has been flawed, drawn out and poorly handled.
- (b) Officers recommendations have been inconsistent even allowing for the change from Local Plan 2004 to LDF policies. Indeed the changes in wording of the relevant policies are minimal concerning the basic discussion on the main issue of sustainability. The Parish Council as a statutory consultee has been consistent in its reasons for objection.
- (c) The draft minute, if approved by members might well expose the authority to challenge at appeal. In this event the Parish Council, myself and other objectors would unfortunately be in a position of criticising the authority and its officers. In acknowledging the help and time given to me by the case officers I would deeply regret being placed in this position.
- (d) It is understood that the applicants being aware of the draft minute could possibly appeal on non determination, particularly if the report from independent consultants is delayed. In my view the risk at appeal would be considerably lessened if the authority were to issue the decision notice as soon as possible with the additional reasons for refusal as stated above. These could of course also be challenged but I believe could be better defended.
- (e) The continuing situation with regard to the late delivery of housing and departure from the approved Master Plan at Arbury Park, together with the decision of the Council (at this time) not to fully implement the S106 governance condition concerning the creation of a new Parish, should be properly reviewed and taken into account by all departments and some interim strategy on planning policy be agreed with the Parish Council. You should be aware that a number of meetings between the Parish Council, Local Members, Chief Executive, Principle Legal Officer and Community Development Officers have already taken place.

May I request please that the above concerns be addressed before the draft minutes are formally submitted for approval. I would express the hope that they could be amended. I would of course be happy to discuss any of the matters raised if that would be of any help.

Mike Mason Local Member Histon and Impington 4th January 2008.

Appendix 1.

Planning Committee 5th December 2007

S/1767/07 IMPINGTON Affordable Housing

Note from Cllr. M.J. Mason

In connection with this item I wish to draw the Committee's attention to the answer given to Comberton Parish Council concerning protocol for affordable housing on exception sites.

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee held on Thursday, 11 October 2007 (Extract)

35. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Comberton Parish Council had submitted the following questions, the answers to which are given underneath:

Question 1

What is the Parish Council's role in exception site applications?

For example:

- Who makes the final decision?
- How much of a say can the parish council have?
- **Would the district council support development of an exception site which was strongly opposed by the parish council and its parishioners?**

Answer

Parish Councils are consulted and provide assistance in the preparation of housing needs surveys specific to their Parish. They can prove invaluable assistance in identifying potential exception sites usually brought forward by the Rural Housing Enabler (Cambridgeshire Acre).

Parish Councils also provide the "local support" required for the consideration of "exception sites", **and of course, objections if they are not supportive of a proposal** which may be because of needs, site suitability, location etc.

Planning applications for exception sites will be determined against the criteria Policy HG/5 of the Local Development Framework Development Control Policies adopted in July 2007. Any information, which the Parish Council can provide to supplement the identified local housing need and to comment on the impact of the site upon the size and

character of the village, relationship to facilities and services and character of the village

or the rural landscape would be appreciated.

In addition, for sites in the Green Belt, Parish Councils may wish to indicate whether there are alternative appropriate sites outside the Green Belt.

An affordable housing panel will be arranged. Parishes will be invited to send representatives to discuss informally the merits of the scheme with local District Councillors and Planning and Housing Officers.

The Panel will consider the scheme against the criteria in Policy HG/5 and make a recommendation to the Planning Committee, which will determine all such applications. Parishes can speak upon these applications at Committee. The Committee will make the final decision.

It is unlikely that the Committee would support such an application if it is strongly opposed by the Parish Council and parishioners.

**Appeal by HRB Ltd & the Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing
Association.**

Land adjacent to St. Georges Court, Impington, Cambridge.

**PLANNING INSPECTORATE REF.
AAP/W0530/A/08/2080506**

**South Cambridgeshire District Council
Planning Application Ref. S/1767/07/O**

Third Party Representation

From

District Councillor M. J. Mason

Histon and Impington Ward

APPENDIX 2.

REPORT TO: Planning Committee 5th December 2007

**AUTHOR/S: Executive Director / Corporate Manager -
Planning and Sustainable Communities**

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee 5th December 2007

AUTHOR/S: Executive Director / Corporate Manager - Planning and

S/1767/07/O – Impington (Land adjacent St Georges Court off Milton Road)