

Development Control Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Development Control Committee** held on **Wednesday 3 February 2016** at **6.00 pm** at the **Council Chamber, District Offices**, College Heath Road, Mildenhall IP28 7EY

Present: **Councillors**

Chairman Rona Burt

Vice Chairman Chris Barker

Andrew Appleby

David Bowman

Ruth Bowman

Louis Busuttil

Simon Cole

Stephen Edwards

Brian Harvey

James Lay

Carol Lynch

Louise Marston

Peter Ridgwell

111. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

112. Substitutes

There were no substitutes at the meeting.

113. Chairman's Announcement - Councillor David Bimson

Prior to the consideration of the items on the agenda, the Chairman advised all present that as a result of his recent ill health Councillor David Bimson, who served on the Development Control Committee as the Ward Member for Brandon West, had resigned from the District Council earlier that afternoon.

The Chairman added that she and the Vice Chairman intended to visit Councillor Bimson in hospital later that week and she would pass on the regards of the whole Committee to him.

114. Planning Application DC/15/2215/FUL - Residential Caravan Park, Elms Road, Red Lodge (Report No DEV/FH/16/002)

The Chairman announced that this item had been withdrawn by the applicant's agent and was therefore no longer to be considered on the agenda.

115. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2015 were unanimously accepted as an accurate record and were signed by the Chairman.

116. **Planning Application DC/15/1863/FUL - Land North of 2 The Highlands, Exning (Report No DEV/FH/16/001)**

1 ½ storey detached dwelling.

This application was referred to the Delegation Panel at the request of Ward Member Councillor Simon Cole, following which the Delegation Panel resolved to bring it before the Development Control Committee for determination.

Exning Parish Council raised no objection to the application but four letters of objection had been received from neighbours.

A Member site visit was held prior to the meeting and Officers were recommending that the application be refused as set out in Paragraphs 23 – 25 of Report No DEV/FH/16/001.

Since the publication of the agenda comments had been received from the Council's Tree, Landscape and Ecology Officer and the Principal Planning Officer verbally reported these to the Committee. In summary, the Tree, Landscape and Ecology Officer raised concern at the loss of four prominent, mature trees as a result of the new dwelling and the affect this would have on the local amenity.

The Principal Planning Officer also drew attention to the objection received from the Highways Authority on grounds of unsafe access onto the highway.

In summary, Officers considered the application to be an inappropriate, cramped form of development and were recommending that it be refused.

Councillor Simon Cole then spoke on the application, as Ward Member for Exning, and supported the application. He drew attention to the other access points close to the development which he considered, in comparison, to be less safe than that which was before the Committee for determination.

Councillor Cole proposed that the Committee be minded to approve the application, contrary to the Officer recommendation, and this was duly seconded by Councillor Andrew Appleby.

The Service Manager (Planning - Development) confirmed that if Members were minded to approve the application, contrary to the Officer recommendation, then it would be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee in order to allow Officers to produce a risk assessment, due to there having been a technical objection to the application from the Highways Authority.

Upon the motion for approval being put to the vote, and with 3 voting for and 10 against, the Chairman declared the motion lost.

Councillor Carol Lynch then proposed that the application be refused, as per the Officer recommendation, and this was duly seconded by Councillor Brian Harvey and with 10 voting for the motion and with 3 abstentions, it was resolved that:

Planning permission be **REFUSED** for the following reasons:

1. The residential dwelling proposed represents an inappropriate cramped and contrived form of development, which fails to respect the character and appearance of the locality where adjacent dwellings are sited within relatively spacious plots. The resulting dwelling would be out of keeping with the established pattern of development. As such, the erection of a new dwelling in this position conflicts with the provisions of policy CS5 of the Core Strategy, DM22 of the Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Local Plan Joint Development Management Policies Document February (2015) and the National Planning Policy Framework which seek to create a high quality environment.
2. Paragraph 32 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires decisions to take account of safe and suitable access to the site being achieved for all. The access onto The Highlands near to the junction with Windmill Hill is considered unsafe due to the close proximity of this access to the junction. The visibility of approximately 19 metres of the proposed new access to the junction with Windmill Hill is well below the visibility splay of 43 metres required as per the Manual for Streets recommendation. In addition vehicles exiting the current access for No 2 the Highlands would potentially have their view obscured by vehicle(s) exiting the new access, thereby reducing inter-visibility with other road users. The failure of the proposal to provide a safe and secure access for this proposed dwelling will lead consequentially to increased adverse issues of highway safety, contrary to the requirements of Para. 32 of the NPPF.

117. Quarterly Monitoring Report of Development Management Services (Report No DEV/FH/16/003)

The Service Manager (Planning - Development) presented this report which updated the Committee on a quarterly basis with regard to performance and key trends relating to development management, planning enforcement and appeals.

A colour version of Appendix A (of Report No DEV/FH/16/003) was tabled to the meeting for clarity and ease of reference.

The Officer was pleased to report that over the last two quarters the planning service had met and exceeded performance targets. She explained that all of the service had worked extremely hard in order to achieve this and she gave thanks for their efforts. The Chairman echoed these thanks on behalf of the Committee for this considerable achievement.

Members were advised that work was now being undertaken in order to improve the quality of applications received by the authority on first submission and to reduce the amount of 'double handling' of applications by

the technical team. One element of this work was to introduce and accredited agent scheme which would rank the quality of application submissions, thereby, encouraging improvement.

The Officer was also pleased to inform the Committee that the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) was in the process of assisting a number of other local authorities who were undergoing shared services. PAS had been incredibly impressed with West Suffolk's shared planning service and had advised the authorities that they intended to use them as a case study of an example of a genuine shared planning service. This was a real accolade for West Suffolk.

Attention was then drawn to Paragraph 2.2 of Report No DEV/FH/16/003 and Members were advised that pleasingly the number of outstanding enforcement cases now stood at just 62 for Forest Heath.

Lastly, reference was made to Appendix B of the report and the Officer gave verbal updates in respect of:

- Hatchfield Farm, Newmarket – The Committee was informed that the DCLG had contacted the Council to state that they would issue their decision on the application “as soon as possible” although no specific timeline was provided. The Officer assured Members that the Council would be sending a formal reply to the DCLG expressing their disappointment at the amount of time it was taking to determine the application and outlining the implications this was having on the work of the planning authority;
- Meddler Stud, Kentford – Members were advised that the public inquiry in respect of this application had been arranged for 15 March 2016 for three days; and
- Eriswell Road, Lakenheath – Since the publication of the agenda this appeal had been dismissed.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

118. Chairman's Announcement - Principal Planning Officer

Before closing the meeting, the Chairman advised all present that this was to be the Principal Planning Officer's penultimate Development Control Committee prior to leaving the Council's planning department mid-March 2016 in order to take up a new position within Legal Services.

The Chairman wished the Officer well in her new role on behalf of the whole Committee and thanked her for all her assistance.

The meeting concluded at 6.50pm

Signed by:

Chairman