



EAST  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

### **AGENDA ITEM NO 3**

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning Committee held at 2:00pm on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2022 in the Council Chamber at The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely, CB7 4EE.

#### **PRESENT**

Cllr David Ambrose Smith (Substitute for Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith)

Cllr Sue Austen  
Cllr David Brown  
Cllr Lavinia Edwards  
Cllr Lis Every  
Cllr Bill Hunt (Chairman)  
Cllr Alec Jones  
Cllr Lisa Stubbs (Vice-Chairman)  
Cllr John Trapp  
Cllr Gareth Wilson

#### **OFFICERS**

Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager  
Angela Briggs – Planning Team Leader  
Tracy Couper – Democratic Services Manager  
Angela Tyrrell – Senior Legal Assistant

#### **IN ATTENDANCE**

Parish Cllr Derrick Beckett (Parish Council Vice-Chair, Agenda Item 5 / Minute 13)  
Edward Clarke (Agent, Agenda Item 5 / Minute 13)  
Kate Duvall (Applicant, Agenda Item 5 / Minute 13)  
Patrick Eggenton (Applicant's transport consultant, Agenda Item 5 / Minute 13)  
Richard Radcliffe (Chair of Lady Frances Peyton's Hospital Almshouse Charity (Landowner), Agenda Item 5 / Minute 13)  
Sally Bonnett – Director Communities  
Yvonne Carnichan – Development Services Support Officer  
Lucy Flintham – Office Team Leader, Development Services  
Melanie Wright – Communications Officer  
Adeel Younis – Legal Assistant

1 member of the public.

## **9. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Christine Ambrose Smith and Matthew Downey.

Cllr David Ambrose Smith was attending as a substitute for Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith.

**10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

**11. MINUTES**

The Committee received the Minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

**12. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman congratulated Toni Hylton, Catherine Looper and Dan Smith on their recent promotions to become Team Leaders within the Planning Department and he wished them success in their new roles.

The Chairman stated that this would be Planning Manager Rebecca Saunt's last meeting of the Planning Committee before leaving the Council to work for Cambridge University, and expressed his very mixed emotions regarding her departure. He was delighted for her career progression that she had been appointed to such a prestigious role, but following 15 years at the Council she would be greatly missed. She had been helpful, hardworking, diplomatic, inspirational, kind and professional throughout her time at the Council and he thanked her for her outstanding service and wished her the best of luck in her new role. The Committee Members and Officers present all then stood and gave a long round of applause to Rebecca.

**13. 21/01572/FUM – LAND WEST OF STATION ROAD, ISLEHAM, CB7 5GG**

Angela Briggs, Planning Team Leader, presented a report (X30, previously circulated) recommending approval of an application seeking full planning consent for 45 affordable dwellings, driveways, external lighting, open space, a pumping station, and other associated infrastructure including a new access road from Station Road and a new pedestrian/cycle link to Fordham Road and to Station Road.

Members were shown maps and aerial images to illustrate the site's location to the south of Isleham, partially adjoining the conservation area and within the updated development envelope of Isleham, as agreed in the recently-adopted Isleham Neighbourhood Plan. Station Road was to the east of the site, Fordham Road to the north and west, and The Beeches and the village recreation ground were to the north-west. Further to the west was the Bloor Homes development which remained under construction. Multiple photos of the site taken from Station Road and from Fordham Road were also shown, together with a proposed site layout for the 4 x 1-bed dwellings, 18 x 2-bed dwellings, 4 x 2-bed bungalows, 17 x 3-bed dwellings and 2 x 4-bed dwellings. Open space would be provided to the north, including SuDS to the west of the open space and a pumping station to the east.

The main considerations for the application were deemed to be:

- **Principle of development** – the site lay within the updated development envelope and had been allocated in the Local Plan for 15 dwellings and in the Isleham Neighbourhood Plan for approximately 45 dwellings. The site was considered to relate well to the village and its amenities. Policy 1b of the Isleham Neighbourhood Plan specified housing types and mix suitable to ensure a diverse community and placed an emphasis on 2-bed dwellings. The proposed development was therefore considered to comply with policies GROWTH2 and ISL1 of the Local Plan and policies 1b and 1c of the Isleham Neighbourhood Plan in terms of the principle of development.
- **Visual amenity, design and layout** – Elevations and floorplans for all proposed dwellings were provided together with 3D-imaging of the proposed development from Station Road and from Fordham Road.
- **Residential amenity** – the proposed plot sizes and garden sizes all met with the requirements of the Design Guide SPD and provided adequate space for future occupiers. The plots along Station Road had been amended to include a secondary window on the side elevations to allow for natural ventilation and to mitigate traffic noise. The proposed development was therefore considered to comply with policy ENV2 of the Local Plan, policy 3 of the Isleham Neighbourhood Plan, and the Design Guide SPD in terms of the residential amenity.
- **Highway safety and car and cycle parking** – 96 car parking spaces were proposed, 6 more than the minimum requirement stipulated in policy COM8. There would be 13 visitor car parking spaces (2 more than the minimum requirement) and across the site less than half of the car parking would be tandem spaces. Secure cycle parking had been allocated for each plot as a shed in the back garden. A new access with good visibility would be created from Station Road, and two new footpaths would link to Station Road and to Fordham Road, with a dropped kerb crossing at the Fordham Road end. The Local Highways Authority had not raised any objections. The proposed development was therefore considered to comply with policies COM7 and COM8 of the Local Plan and policy 3 of the Isleham Neighbourhood Plan in terms of highway safety and parking provision.
- **Flood risk and drainage** – the site lay within Flood Zone 1, where development should be concentrated. A Flood Risk Assessment had been submitted and subsequent amendments made to address objections from the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA); the LLFA now supported the overall proposed drainage strategy, subject to conditions as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report, and there had been no objection from the Environment Agency. The proposed development was therefore considered to comply with policies ENV8 of the Local Plan and 1C and 3 of the Isleham Neighbourhood Plan in terms of flood risk and drainage.
- **Biodiversity** – the application site was located approximately 800m to the north of the Isleham Nature Reserve and the applicants had submitted a preliminary ecology assessment, a reptile survey, a biodiversity metric calculation, and supporting statements. Bird and bat boxes would be provided together with hibernacula areas and a variety of hedging species to encourage wildlife. A net biodiversity gain would be achieved and a financial contribution towards the enhancement of the Nature Reserve would be secured *via* a S106 agreement. New residents would receive a welcome leaflet detailing alternative dog walking routes that would lessen pressures on the Nature Reserve. No objections had been received from

the Cambridgeshire Wildlife Trust or Natural England. The proposed development was therefore considered to comply with policy ENV7 of the Local Plan and policies 1C, 3 and 7 of the Isleham Neighbourhood Plan in terms of biodiversity.

- **Trees and landscaping** – an arboricultural impact assessment and a landscape visual impact assessment had been submitted with the application. Six trees would need to be removed along the site boundaries but all vegetation of at least moderate quality would be retained and protected throughout construction, and tree protection measures would also be implemented. The proposal included a comprehensive landscaping scheme including the planting of new trees across the site. There had been no objection from the Trees Officer. The proposed development was therefore considered to comply with the Natural Environment SPD and with policies ENV1, ENV2 and ENV7 of the Local Plan, and policies 1c, 3 and 7 of the Isleham Neighbourhood Plan in terms of trees and landscaping.
- **Other matters** – in terms of historic environment, waste provision and collection, housing mix, and land contamination no objections had been received from the relevant consultees. All dwellings would be affordable housing with a tenure split of 20 in shared ownership and 25 rental properties. An Energy Statement had been submitted which indicated a “fabric first” approach with high levels of thermal insulation, air tightness and natural ventilation as well as a 2% carbon reduction. A condition had been recommended regarding energy efficiency measures. The S106 legal agreement was currently being negotiated and would secure the affordable housing, public open space, SuDS, waste bins, biodiversity contribution, education contributions and a mobile library service.

In summary, the site was allocated for housing development in the Local Plan and the Isleham Neighbourhood Plan, would be well-connected to the village, and had received no objections from statutory consultees. The proposal was for a high-quality development of affordable housing with parking provision above the Council’s parking standards. A S106 agreement would secure mitigations such as a contribution towards the enhancement of the Isleham Nature Reserve. The application was therefore recommended for approval.

The Chairman invited Edward Clarke (agent), Kate Duvall (applicant), Richard Radcliffe (Chair of the Lady Frances Peyton’s Hospital Almshouse Charity which owned the land) and Patrick Eggenton (transport consultant) to address the Committee.

The agent thanked the Planning Team Leader for her report and her useful dialogue prior to and during the application process. His clients considered the proposal to be a much-needed bespoke affordable development in a sustainable location in accordance with the Local Plan and the Isleham Neighbourhood Plan. Amendments had been made in response to comments received during the pre-application discussions and the planning process. A suggested service road had not been supported by the Case Officer or the Conservation Officer, and had not been added. The development was of a high quality, with good design features and would result in biodiversity gains as well as much-needed financial contributions for the nature reserve and for education. The new homes would be well-connected to the village and the new dropped kerb crossing point would assist

pedestrian and cycle access to and from the site. The application would use allocated land in an efficient manner to deliver affordable housing for the village.

The applicant explained that Havebury Housing Partnership was a local registered provider with 20 years of experience managing nearly 7000 homes across Cambridgeshire, Suffolk and Norfolk. This 100% affordable homes scheme was of a high quality and they had worked with the landowner, the Parish Council and the Planning Team Leader to carefully refine the plans over time. The proposal would deliver 45 high-quality homes with suitable storage, practical room sizes, and gardens in an excellent location close to good amenities. Half of the dwellings would be available for rent to those on the housing register, and the remainder would be offered for shared ownership. The proposed scheme was both attractive and policy-compliant, and a consultation had indicated that there was local support for the development.

The Chair of the Lady Frances Peyton's Hospital Almshouse Charity explained that the charity had operated for many centuries in Isleham. Together with his fellow trustees, 4 of whom were current Members of the Parish Council, he fully supported the proposal on land that the charity owned and had long-wished to use to address the housing needs within the village. The site been allocated in the recently-adopted Isleham Neighbourhood Plan and the layout and design had been subject to full consultation to ensure they were policy-compliant. The development would form a natural extension of village in a style and street-design suitable for the village. The charity had worked in partnership with the applicant and would take ownership of some homes in the development to rent in order to significantly contribute to meeting the aims of the Neighbourhood Plan, the objects of the charity, and the need for new affordable housing.

The Chairman thanked the speakers and invited questions from Members.

Cllr Brown referenced the 31<sup>st</sup> March comments from the Local Highways Authority, included in the report, about the paths being insufficiently wide to be designated as cycle paths, and in that context questioned why the speakers had referred to the provision of great cycle routes. The agent explained that the cycle link through the site would pass through the public open space and would also provide access along Station Road into the village. The intended shared-use services that had been deemed to not be wide enough had been renamed as footpaths, but he emphasised that there was a cycle link as well as the footpaths.

Cllr Trapp suggested that the widths could be increased by 0.5m to satisfy the dual use and then asked whether the shared ownership properties would remain so in perpetuity, who would determine the eligibility for the affordable housing, what the housing mix would be, and whether charging points would be provided, even where parking spaces were not immediately adjacent to the dwelling. The applicant stated that, in her experience, most shared ownership properties remained in that tenure. The affordable housing would be available to those on the housing register and the hope was that those with a local connection to Isleham would have priority, although it would be necessary to ensure that properties did not remain empty. The agent explained that the housing mix was, in part, dictated by the Housing Officer, and the Planning Team Leader drew Members' attention to the details provided on page 36 of the Officer's report. The applicant added that the shared ownership properties would be six semi-detached 3-bed houses, two detached 3-bed houses,

two 2-bed bungalows, and ten 2-bed houses. This mix was intended to accommodate first-time buyers, those moving to bigger properties, and those down-sizing. She also confirmed that, subject to conditions, Havebury were expecting to provide charging point access.

Cllr Ambrose Smith stated that he considered the 40mph speed limit on Station Road to be too fast, and asked whether a reduction had been requested. The transport consultant explained that the limit was 40mph past the site and then 30mph nearer to the village. A speed survey had been undertaken which indicated that vehicle speeds were typically below 40mph in both directions past the site. The proposed access arrangements exceeded the required visibility splays for the observed speeds and were considered to be safe. He also explained the extensive process and obstacles to obtaining a speed reduction. Cllr Ambrose Smith suggested that parking in the area would increase concerns and he urged the applicants to take action towards getting the speed limit reduced, for example by undertaking a consultation to provide evidence in support of a request to the Local Highways Authority to reduce the speed limit.

In response to a question from Cllr Stubbs, the charity's Chairman stated that the Parish Council's proposal to use further land in order to provide a service road had not been directly proposed to the charity. Cllr Stubbs requested further information about the housing need in Isleham, and prioritisation of Isleham residents for the new homes. The agent explained that the most recent figures they had been given indicated that of the approximately 1000 people on the District's housing register, 46 had Isleham connections. The applicant confirmed that she would expect prioritisation of those with Isleham connections to be included in the nomination agreement as part of the S106 agreement, and she had no objections to that. The Planning Manager highlighted that page 14 of the Officer's report stated that occupation would be in accordance with a nomination agreement, and she confirmed that Officers would note the request to prioritise Isleham connections followed by a cascade approach in that agreement.

In response to a question from Cllr Hunt, the agent confirmed that six trees would be removed, all of which were a low quality, and stated that considerably more than six new trees would be planted on the site.

The Chairman then invited Parish Cllr Beckett to address the Committee on behalf of Isleham Parish Council. Parish Cllr Beckett requested that the Officer's images of the view along Station Road be displayed during his presentation. He stated that the Parish Council were very pleased with the amount of affordable housing being proposed, and were in full agreement with most aspects of the scheme. However, they had requested a service road next to Station Road, similar to that which had been included in the nearby Bloor Homes development on Fordham Road and had resulted in no increase in parking along Fordham Road. The Parish Council's concern was that, since Isleham was a rural village dominated by agriculture, large agricultural vehicles necessarily travelled along Station Road, and consequently any increased parking on Station Road would be detrimental to highway safety. Policy 3 of the Isleham Neighbourhood Plan sought to avoid informal parking on pavements, and the Parish Council's view was that new houses located directly on Station Road, rather than separated from it by a service road, would encourage visitor parking along that stretch. The charity owned land behind the development site and the Parish Council therefore requested that the

development be moved further back onto that land and a service road be incorporated to the front. For that reason, since the Committee's only options would be to approve or refuse the application, rather than to revise it, the Parish Council requested that the application be refused on the grounds of local knowledge of anticipated problems.

The Chairman thanked the Parish Councillor and invited questions from Members.

Cllr Brown asked whether the Parish Council had approached the County Council to request that double yellow lines be installed along Station Road in front of the site. The Parish Councillor explained that although that had not been requested, their most recent objection had stated that an approval of the application should be conditional on the installation of double yellow lines on Station Road. The Planning Manager explained that such a condition could not be applied since it would be outside the Council's jurisdiction and would need to be dealt with separately *via* the County Council. The Chairman added, for information, that there was a Local Highway Improvement (LHI) scheme run by the County Council to which Parish Councils could submit applications, often for speed reduction measures or double yellow lines. In general, the process would take about 1 year and the Parish Council would contribute 10% of the costs and the County Council 90%.

In response to a request from Cllr Trapp to clarify what was meant by a service road, the Parish Councillor explained that it would be a road at the entrance to the estate, immediately in front of the houses that front Station Road, effectively setting them back further from the main road and creating a slightly more open aspect at the entrance to the village. A similar design had been incorporated on the nearby Bloor Homes development on Fordham Road.

Cllr Stubbs asked where the additional land was that the Parish Council would like to be incorporated in the scheme, and then questioned why the Parish Council had not formally approached the landowning charity with the request. The Parish Councillor explained that the additional land was to the west of the development site and that the Parish Council had regularly discussed their request with Havebury who were the applicant on behalf of the charity. In addition, several of the charity's trustees were members of the Parish Council and consequently the charity were well aware of the Parish Council's views. Cllr Stubbs commented that it was unfortunate that no formal approach had been made since, as a result, the Committee did not know whether the Parish Council's proposal would be possible, and the Committee were only able to make a decision on the details of the application before them.

Cllr Ambrose Smith commented that the location of the Bloor Homes site, which had included a service road, had a lower speed limit (30mph) and was a straight stretch of road. There would be no guarantee that an application to the previously-mentioned LHI scheme would result in funding, hence his earlier suggestion for the developer and/or the Parish Council to invest in undertaking a consultation. The Parish Councillor made no comment.

Cllr Wilson stated that installation of double yellow lines and a reduction in the speed limit were both possible for the Parish Council to achieve themselves and efforts should therefore be made to do so. The Parish Councillor accepted the possibilities for the future, but reiterated his concerns about wide agricultural

vehicles being obstructed by parked cars. Cllr Wilson countered that repositioning the development further back from Station Road in order to accommodate a service road could result in fewer houses on the site and would certainly result in a delay to delivery of affordable housing while the new application was designed and considered, both of which would be a shame.

The Chairman invited further comments from the Planning Team Leader, and questions for her from Members. The Planning Team Leader drew Members' attention to the information regarding the pedestrian/cycle link detailed in paragraph 7.30 of her report. She emphasised that although the Local Highways Authority had commented that the proposed 2.5m width would be insufficient for them to be adopted, they had not objected to them and they did not consider that the width would create a safety issue. They would provide a strategic link through the site and serve a limited number of people. She also highlighted that proposed condition 24 in Appendix 1 of the report related to the provision of electric vehicle charging facilities.

In response to Cllr Trapp questioning why the additional width for the cycle/pedestrian route could not be accommodated, the Planning Team Leader commented that although ideally the paths would be widened to adoptable standards, the proposed 2.5m width was considered by the Local Highways Authority to be safe and acceptable. Cllr Ambrose Smith asked about maintenance of the unadoptable paths and the Planning Team Leader stated that the housing provider would have responsibility for all unadopted cycle/pedestrian paths. In response to a question from Cllr Wilson, the Planning Team Leader explained that the chimneys shown in some of the illustrations would not be functional; they were purely decorative to provide variety in the streetscape, which was not unusual for developments within the District.

The Chairman then opened the debate.

Cllr Brown expressed disappointment that the applicants had not widened the paths to the adoptable 3m standard, and he acknowledged the Parish Council's position on the provision of a service road. However, he stated his support for the application and cautioned that, in his opinion, a refusal of planning permission would be likely to be lost at appeal. Cllr Every commended what she considered to be an excellent proposal and applauded those involved in its development. She reiterated the importance of ensuring that local people would be the beneficiaries of the scheme.

Cllr Trapp expressed his strong support for the application and proposed that it be approved in line with the Officer's recommendation. He acknowledged the Parish Council's views regarding road safety but, having visited the site, he had seen cars parked along the road leaving the village and did not consider that the scheme would cause significant problems, although the addition of yellow lines could be beneficial as had been previously discussed. Cllr Stubbs seconded the proposal and added that the applicant's earlier commitment to prioritising local people had been appreciated. She expressed disappointment that the Parish Council had not formally approached the Lady Frances Peyton Trust regarding the additional land that they believed could be used, since the Committee were unable to consider options that were not included in the application. She urged the Parish Council to take on board the various suggestions that had been made regarding their traffic

concerns. Cllr Hunt added his support for the scheme, which he considered to be an exceptional proposal with good attention to detail that would benefit the residents of Isleham and give stability to local people, in particular to younger residents. He was pleased to see the inclusion of open space and the provision of bungalows within the dwelling types.

It was resolved unanimously:

That planning application ref 21/01572/FUM be APPROVED subject to the signing of the S106 legal agreement and the recommended conditions detailed in Appendix 1 of the Officer's report, with authority delegated to the Planning Manager and the Director Legal Services to complete the S106 legal agreement and to issue the planning permission

#### **14. PLANNING PERFORMANCE REPORT – MAY 2022**

Rebecca Saunt, Planning Manager, presented a report (X31, previously circulated) summarising the performance of the Planning Department in May 2022.

The number of applications received had decreased, as was the normal pattern at this time of year, 1 appeal had been received and another had been decided, and attention was drawn to the breakdown of enforcement complaints.

Members were also informed that an in-person Members Seminar for Phase 5 of the North Ely Development would be held in the Council Chamber at 6pm on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> August, to which City of Ely Councillors would also be invited, and an extra Planning Committee meeting was proposed off-site for Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> August starting at 10:30am to agree the Council's consultation response for the proposed Sunnica Energy Farm. The Planning Manager emphasised that the Council would not be responsible for determining the application since it was a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), instead they would be a consultee, hence the responsibility for the Planning Committee to agree the consultation response on behalf of the Council. A show of hands from Members indicated that the 22<sup>nd</sup> August meeting would be quorate.

It was resolved:

That the Planning Performance Report for May 2022 be noted.

The Chairman again thanked the Planning Manager for all of her support and guidance and then declared the meeting closed.

*The meeting concluded at 3:17pm.*