



EAST
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning Committee held at 1:00pm on Wednesday 2nd June 2021 at The Hive Leisure Centre, Ely, CB6 2FE.

PRESENT

Cllr Bill Hunt (Chairman)
Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith (*from 1:04pm*)
Cllr Sue Austen
Cllr David Brown
Cllr Matthew Downey
Cllr Lavinia Edwards
Cllr Lis Every
Cllr Alec Jones
Cllr Lisa Stubbs (Vice Chairman)
Cllr Gareth Wilson

OFFICERS

Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager
Maggie Camp – Legal Services Manager
Emma Grima – Director Commercial (*Minutes 9 – 14 only*)
Emma Barral – Planning Officer
Angela Briggs – Planning Team Leader
Tracy Couper – Democratic Services Manager
Caroline Evans – Democratic Services Officer
Anne James – Planning Consultant
Andrew Phillips – Planning Team Leader
Angela Tyrrell – Senior Legal Assistant
Russell Wignall – Legal Assistant

IN ATTENDANCE (in part)

Cllr Anna Bailey – Supporter, Minute 14
Cllr Lorna Dupré – Ward Councillor, Minute 16
Cllr Mark Inskip – Ward Councillor, Minute 13
Richard Dickson – Applicant, Minute 14
Cristine Fletcher – Applicant, Minute 15
Neville Fletcher – Applicant, Minute 15
Jamie Palmer – Agent, Minute 16
John Powell – Objector, Minute 14
Rebecca Smith – Agent, Minute 13
Five members of the press and public

9. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Trapp.

10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

11. MINUTES

The Committee received the Minutes of the meeting held after Annual Council on 29th April 2021 and the meeting held on 5th May 2021.

Cllr Ambrose Smith arrived at 1:04pm

It was resolved:

- a) That the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held following the meeting of Full Council on 29th April 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.
- b) That the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 5th May 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

12. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman thanked all those attending the first in-person Planning Committee meeting for over a year and asked for patience with the necessary cleaning procedures between each speaker.

13. 19/01707/OUM - LAND ADJACENT TO 43 MEPAL ROAD, SUTTON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Angela Briggs, Planning Team Leader, presented a report (W11, previously circulated) recommending approval of an application seeking outline planning consent for the demolition of existing buildings and erection of up to 173 dwellings, together with provision of land for community facilities, with all detailed matters reserved apart from access. The recommendation for approval was subject to the signing of a S106 agreement, the conditions detailed in Appendix 1 of the report, further negotiations to agree the off-site highway mitigation measures, and with authority delegated to the Planning Manager and the Legal Services Manager to complete the S106 and issue the planning permission.

The Officer updated Members that in paragraph 5.12 of the report (CCC Growth & Development) the figure for Primary Education should be £2,273,775 and therefore the total amount for education contributions would be £3,179,322. This amount would be subject to the total number of dwellings proposed as part of the reserved matters application (up to 173). She also corrected references to bus stops situated on The Brook: there was no eastbound stop, instead it was the westbound stop near Vermuyden Gardens that should be upgraded.

Members were shown various site plans, aerial photographs, site photographs, and a diagram of the proposed means of access. The site was outside the development envelope of Sutton but was an allocated site in the Sutton Neighbourhood Plan and the construction of 77 dwellings was already underway by the same developer on an adjacent site to the south of the application site (ref: 16/01772/FUM, approved on appeal). Some dwellings on that site were already occupied.

The main considerations for the application were deemed to be:

- **Principle of development** – the site was an allocated site in the Sutton Neighbourhood Plan and identified on the Sutton Policies Map as part of the Local Plan, 2015. Policy NP4 of the Sutton Neighbourhood Plan allocated the application site and the Phase 1 site (Ref: 16/01772/FUM) for approximately 250 homes in total. If approved, the up to 173 dwellings on the application site would combine with the 77 dwellings on the Phase 1 site

to deliver up to 250 dwellings in total. The application also included sports facilities, a new village green and green corridor areas, the provision of a burial ground on-site, and a new vehicular access point from Mepal Road. The proposed development was therefore considered to comply with Policies GROWTH2 of the Local Plan 2015 and NP4 of the Sutton Neighbourhood Plan 2019.

- **Highway safety and accessibility** – means of access was the only detailed matter in the outline application. A new access into the development would be provided from Mepal Road together with routes through the site from the Phase 1 development, a new 2m wide footpath connecting to Phase 1, a new dropped kerb pedestrian access and an upgrade to the existing bus stop on The Brook. Following comments from the County Transport Team regarding off-site highway mitigation works, the developers had submitted a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit to the Local Highways Authority on 24th May 2021. Correspondence was ongoing between the relevant parties and the Officer had been informed that, although due process was still to be followed, the County Transport Team were satisfied that appropriate mitigation measures at Witcham Toll and the Mepal roundabout could be achieved with further negotiations. The proposed development was therefore considered to comply with Policy COM7 of the Local Plan 2015 and Policy NP4 of the Sutton Neighbourhood Plan 2019.
- **Residential amenity** – detailed matters of layout, scale and appearance were reserved and not included in this application. The proposed development would change an undeveloped piece of agricultural land into a residential development and as such would impact on the outlook and setting of the nearest occupiers at The Orchards and St Andrew's Close as well as the occupiers of properties in Phase 1 to the south of the site. However, the illustrative plan showed that there would be sufficient space to adequately mitigate any adverse impact using a landscape-led design. A noise attenuation bund was proposed for the north east edge of the site near to the A142. The proposed development was therefore considered to comply with Policies ENV2 and ENV9 of the Local Plan 2015 and the Design Guide SPD.
- **Visual amenity and landscape impact** – a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) had been submitted and acknowledged that the site lacked a strong landscape framework or substantial field boundary vegetation. The development would be seen as a continuation of the Phase 1 development and would be visible from the A142 and from some parts of the existing settlement of Sutton. However, the illustrative plans showed a landscape-led development with dense areas of planting around the edges of the site to reduce the impact on visual amenity of the area. The proposed development was therefore considered to comply with Policy ENV1 of the Local Plan 2015.
- **Biodiversity and ecology and trees** – the site was positioned within 5km of the Ouse Washes (Ramsar Site, Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area, Site of Special Scientific Interest) and within 2km of two County Wildlife Sites; Natural England had been consulted and had not objected. The application had been accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, which had been accepted by the Cambridgeshire Wildlife Trust, and an Arboricultural Impact Assessment Plan which had raised no objections from the Trees Officer. No protected species had been found on site, a net biodiversity gain of 1.35% could be achieved, and the existing hedgerows and trees would be retained. The proposed

development was therefore considered to comply with Policies ENV1, ENV2 and ENV 7 of the Local Plan 2015, Policy NE6 of the Natural Environment SPD, Policy NP2 of the Sutton Neighbourhood Plan, and paragraph 170(d) of the NPPF.

- **Flood risk and drainage** – the site was within Flood Zone 1, an area of low flood risk, and a Flood Risk Assessment had been submitted. Due to the proposed burial ground on the development a Tier 1 Groundwater Risk Screening document was submitted and, after further information, the Environment Agency was satisfied that there was no significant risk to groundwater, subject to conditions. There had been no objections from the Lead Local Flood Authority in relation to the surface water drainage, and Anglian Water had no objections subject to a condition on foul water drainage. The proposed development was therefore considered to comply with Policy ENV8 of the Local Plan 2015, paragraph 155 of the NPPF, and the Flood and Water SPD.
- **Open space and sports facilities** – lengthy discussions between Officers, the developer, and the Parish Council had reached agreement that a financial contribution would be made by the developer to upgrade the existing Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) to the south of the site. The contribution would be secured via a S106 agreement and ringfenced for the MUGA upgrade, with discussion ongoing as to the size of the contribution. Open spaces within the development site would also be secured as part of a S106 agreement. The proposed development was therefore considered to comply with Policies GROWTH3, COM4, and ENV2 of the Local Plan 2015, Policies NP1, NP4 and NP12 of the Sutton Neighbourhood Plan, and the Developer Contributions SPD.
- **Other material matters** – 5% of the plots would be for self-build and 30% would be affordable housing, both secured via a S106 agreement, in accordance with Policies HOU1 and HOU3 of the Local Plan respectively. The application was accompanied by an Energy and Sustainability Strategy, the contents of which complied with Policy ENV4 of the Local Plan 2015 and Policy CC1 of the Climate Change SPD. S106 developer contributions in respect of various infrastructure costs including education, waste, and community facilities would be imposed; Members were requested to agree the draft list in the Officer's report and delegate powers to the Planning Manager to agree the final conditions. In terms of archaeology, the County Archaeology team had not raised any objections and the proposal therefore complied with Policy ENV14 of the Local Plan.

In summary, the Officer reminded Members that the site had been allocated for housing development and community facility provision in the Sutton Neighbourhood Plan. The development would be seen as a continuation of Phase 1, would bring environmental and community benefits to the village as well as improvements to the highway network. Flooding and drainage had been adequately mitigated and developer contributions would be secured via S106 agreements. It was therefore recommended for approval.

The Chairman thanked the Planning Team Leader for her very comprehensive report and then invited the planning agent for the applicant to address the Committee.

Rebecca Smith, Principal Planner at Bidwells, informed Members that Vistry, under the Linden Homes brand, were already building Phase 1 of the development and

were keen to maintain their momentum in delivering homes and amenities to the community. She reminded Members that the proposal would deliver 173 new homes, of which 52 would be affordable and 5% would be self-build. Within the site there would be 4.8 hectares of new green infrastructure, leading to a net biodiversity gain, as well as walking and cycling routes. The development would also provide football pitches, money to upgrade the existing multi-use games area (MUGA), and a total of 6 hectares for a new burial ground. The applicants would work with the Parish Council to deliver these facilities and would also work with the County Council regarding education needs; more than £2m would be provided for an extension to the primary school in Sutton as well as a contribution for secondary education. Vistry had been working with the County Highways Transport Team regarding the various issues in the wider highway network and had submitted the Stage 1 Road Safety Audit for consideration by the Local Highways Authority. A S106 contribution to the Witchford roundabout had been agreed and they remained confident that minor changes could be made to deliver the necessary mitigation measures at Witcham Toll junction and at the Mepal roundabout (Elean Business Park).

The Chairman invited questions for the applicant's planning agent. Cllr Brown stated that it was clear that large amount of work had been done for this application and, as it was evident that the Parish Council were keen for the MUGA to be upgraded, he asked if that could be delivered early. The agent replied that the applicants would be providing a financial contribution rather than undertaking the work, and that they would work with the Council's Leisure Officer.

Referring to the reported comments from the Parish Council regarding land in the south west corner of the site, Cllr Jones asked if the applicants were willing to grant the request for a green buffer strip rather than dwellings. The agent stated that all elements of the site design were for the reserved matters stage and there would be plenty of scope for considering comments from the Parish Council and from residents. She also commented that an existing water main in that area would restrict what development could take place.

Cllr Wilson asked for more detail about the proposed mitigation measures at Witcham Toll. Upon receiving the response that the discussions with County Highways had concluded that the flare there should be extended to allow two cars to queue to turn left or right, he replied that a roundabout would be better and that a significant issue was the amount of traffic from the A1421 waiting to turn left or right. The agent stated that any roadworks needed to be proportionate to the scale of the development and the applicants would continue to talk to County Highways to ensure the best solution.

The Chairman then invited Cllr Mark Inskip to speak as the Ward Councillor for Sutton. Cllr Inskip stated that this was the largest residential application in recent years for the Parish, and he therefore expressed disappointment that it had not been possible to livestream or record the meeting. He informed Members that, in addition to being the Ward Councillor, he was also the Chairman of Sutton Parish Council and would therefore be speaking in that capacity as well. He thanked Vistry for their commendable work with the Parish Council and said that the proposal demonstrated what could be achieved with a Neighbourhood Plan and a developer who worked constructively with the Parish Council. The proposed total of 250 homes across the application site and the Phase 1 site was in accordance with Policy NP4 and the application included 52 affordable homes, a range of

community facilities, and a significant education contribution. It was broadly supported by the local community. There were however a few specific concerns:

- Ground levels should not be raised due to the associated risk of surface water run off. Since commencement of Phase 1, there had been flooding in nearby Tower Road during the winter of 2019-20 and in The Orchards and St Andrew's Close during the following winter.
- The developer should engage in detailed planning of the community facilities before a reserved matters application so that they could be started early rather than waiting for completion of the development.
- Regarding biodiversity, the developer should demonstrate more than a marginal gain on-site and should additionally investigate off-site gains.
- At the reserved matters stage attention should be given to appropriate ventilation of all properties, in particular the noise mitigation measures for those nearest the A142 should not be at the expense of adequate ventilation and residents should be able to open their windows, whilst having acceptable noise levels.
- Since the Sutton to Ely cycle route had been completed as far as the Witchford roundabout, a S106 off-site highways contribution should be considered for crossing the roundabout and to improve the onward route from the roundabout to the station as part of an active transport plan to assist commuters.

He concluded by stating that he and his fellow Ward Councillor, Cllr Dupré, together with the Parish Council, were broadly supportive of the application, having regard to the aforementioned issues.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Inskip for his contribution and invited questions from Members. Cllr Stubbs thanked Cllr Inskip for his significant involvement with the Parish Council and Sutton's Neighbourhood Plan, and commented that she had been encouraged to hear about the Parish Council's relationship with the developer. She asked Cllr Inskip if there had been any reassurance given regarding the ground levels, whether the Parish Council felt their concerns regarding the development of the south west corner of the plot had been addressed, and whether the Parish Council could propose how to achieve an increased biodiversity gain. Cllr Inskip responded that he had discussed the issue of the ground levels with the Case Officer, who had in turn spoken again to the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), but he did not feel entirely reassured because, although the LLFA had been happy with Phase 1, flooding had subsequently occurred. Regarding the development of the south west corner of the site he stated that he understood the plans to be purely indicative and it would therefore be addressed at the reserved matters stage but he was encouraged by the agent's earlier comments. Finally, regarding biodiversity, he commented that the Parish Council would be willing to discuss this with the developer and could potentially involve two local groups with relevant interests and expertise.

The Chairman then invited the Planning Team Leader to make any further comments before inviting questions for her from Members. Addressing the issue of surface water drainage, the Planning Team Leader stated that Vistry had been quick to engage with the concerns when raised, and she drew Members' attention to Condition 17 in Appendix 1 which was comprehensive in tackling a surface water drainage scheme for the site. Cllr Brown asked if the reserved matters application would be considered at Committee level since it was for more than 50 dwellings. The Planning Manager explained that it was not automatic but such a requirement could be added to the recommendation. Cllr Jones asked if the concerns raised

by Cllr Inskip on behalf of the Parish Council should be addressed at this stage or at the reserved matters stage. The Planning Team Leader confirmed that they were more suited to reserved matters.

The Chairman then opened the debate. Cllr Jones commented that he believed the application to be well thought out and he therefore proposed the Officer's recommendation. Cllr Brown stated that the co-operation to get the proposal to its current stage was very encouraging and suggested that a requirement for the reserved matters application to be decided at Committee level could be added to the proposal. This was agreed by Cllr Jones and Cllr Brown then seconded the proposal. Cllrs Every and Stubbs echoed the praise for the co-operative work between the developer and the Parish Council and thanked them both, citing this application as an excellent example of how productive engagement could yield a positive outcome for both parties.

It was resolved unanimously:

That planning application ref 19/01707/OUM be APPROVED subject to the signing of the s106 agreement, the draft conditions detailed in Appendix 1 of the Officer's report, and further negotiations to agree the off-site highway mitigation measures, with authority delegated to the Planning Manager and Legal Services Manager to complete the s106 and to issue the planning permission.

It was further resolved:

That future Reserved Matters applications be brought to Planning Committee for decision.

14. 21/00160/OUM - PRINCESS OF WALES HOSPITAL, LYNN ROAD, ELY, CAMBRIDGESHIRE CB6 1DN

Anne James, Planning Consultant, presented a report (W12, previously circulated) recommending approval of an application for outline planning permission to demolish a number of hospital buildings and to redevelop parts of the site to provide new in-patient and out-patient facilities, a new multi-storey car park, access arrangements and associated infrastructure. The application included matters related to access, layout and scale, with matters of appearance and landscaping reserved. The recommendation for approval was subject to the conditions detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

Since the publication of the report, City of Ely Council had responded to state that they had no concerns regarding the application and the Wildlife Trust had stated that they had no comments to make. Members were shown various aerial photographs and site plans illustrating that the site was in a predominantly residential area, close to the new North Ely extension, and with the main buildings currently set back from Davison Road behind a car park. In the first phase of the development the semi-derelict social club and porters lodge would be demolished to allow the construction of the multi-storey car park, then the second phase would involve the demolition of the outpatient block and services building to make way for a new main hospital building which would be connected to the retained day surgery building. The hospital would continue to operate throughout the redevelopment. A new access road and turning circle would replace the current

surgery car park. Site plans were used to show which areas of the hospital site formed part of the scheme, and where new structures would be positioned within the site. Block plans showed the mass of the proposed buildings and their bulk within the setting. The current buildings had a maximum height of 13-14m whereas the proposed main hospital building would reach 20m at its highest point. Members were reminded throughout that the images were purely indicative since the design and materials were reserved matters. Similarly, the parking layout and charging point locations within the car park would be decided at the reserved matters stage. The new buildings would provide 54 consulting rooms and a multi-storey car park with 270 car parking spaces. There would be a designated bus stop, drop off and pick up bays, and secure bicycle and motorcycle storage.

The main considerations for the application were deemed to be:

- **Principle of development** – the site had operated as a healthcare facility since the 1940s and the proposed redevelopment would result in a state-of-the-art facility. The impact on the residential and visual amenities would not be injurious in view of the significant public benefits of the scheme. The principle of development was therefore considered acceptable.
- **Residential amenity** – the main hospital buildings would be set in from all adjoining boundaries and an acceptable buffer could therefore be achieved from neighbouring properties to ensure there would not be loss of amenity to any residential development in terms of its overbearing nature, overlooking, loss of sunlight/daylight, loss of privacy, overshadowing or visual intrusion sufficient to warrant refusal on that basis. The replacement of the surgery car park with the new bus turning circle would reduce trip generation in that location and could therefore be considered of benefit to the residents of the nearby properties in Lumley Close and Baird Lodge. A separation distance in excess of 30m could be achieved between the multi-storey car park and the nearest dwellings in Simeon Close and appropriate landscaping could soften its impact. Details of the design of the building should be considered at the reserved matters stage to prevent overlooking from the car park decks and glare from car headlights as well as ensuring vehicle noise would meet noise attenuation guidelines. The proposal was considered to comply with Policies COM4, ENV2 and ENV9 of the Local Plan 2015.
- **Visual amenity** – The dominance of the new hospital building would be reduced due to its generous set back from the street scene in Davison Road but the multi-storey car park would be more visible. The design, external appearance and landscaping would be key issues to consider in a future reserved matters planning application and could ameliorate the development. There would be significant public benefits in redeveloping the site to give a new state of the art hospital. The proposal was therefore considered to comply with Policies ENV1, ENV2, COM3 and COM4 of the Local Plan 2015 and the East Cambridgeshire Design Code.
- **Natural environment** – there would be the loss of small areas of poor-quality habitat meaning that the proposal would be ecologically low in impact and a Biodiversity Enhancement Scheme should be secured by condition detailing the mitigation and enhancements that would support wildlife and achieve net gains. 16 category B trees would be lost and the Trees Officer was satisfied that the planting of 31 replacement trees would be sufficient given that the site was already heavily planted and therefore provided limited potential to increase the number on site. The proposal was therefore

considered to comply with Policy ENV7 of the Local Plan 2015 and the Natural Environment SPD.

- **Transport, highways and parking** – the site was already served by a regular bus service that would be enhanced by the provision of a designated bus stop and turning circle closer to the entrance than in the existing layout. Safe pedestrian and vehicular access from Davison Road had been achieved to the satisfaction of the Local Highways Authority meaning that the site was accessible by foot, bicycle, car and public transport. The new multi-storey car park would remain free to use and would provide 58 additional car parking spaces, therefore reducing the displacement parking in neighbouring streets. 108 cycle storage spaces would also be provided. Details of the positioning of the disabled parking and electric charging points would be considered at the reserved matters stage.
- **Other matters** – archaeology, sustainability, ground contamination, noise, flooding and drainage had all been assessed and considered acceptable subject to appropriate conditions.

In summary, the matters of access, layout and scale had been considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development and in view of the significant public benefits of the scheme. It was considered from the layout and scale of the proposal that it would be possible to redevelop the site without detracting from the visual amenities and character of the area, or the residential amenity of adjoining occupiers, with the appearance and landscaping to be considered at the reserved matters stage. The proposal was therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions.

The Chairman thanked the Officer for a very comprehensive report and invited John Powell to address the Committee on behalf of the Ely Cycling Campaign. Mr Powell stated that the group had 75 members of which 28 were active and regularly participating in discussions, and confirmed he was speaking on behalf of the group. He questioned the suitability of the local network for safe cycling access to the site. In particular, that some sections of Lynn Road were unsafe for cyclists due to the 30mph speed limit being unsuited to the conditions, parked vehicles on the road, and/or the shared use pathway being narrow and crossing multiple driveways. A proposed cycle route linking the station and city centre with the new Ely North development did not access the hospital site. He suggested that the ongoing and proposed developments of the ex-MOD site, the hospital, and Ely North provided an opportunity for co-operation to improve cycling and walking access from the south of the area. He also stated that all on-site cycle parking for hospital employees should be secure and that the proposals would not comply with the NPPF, the East Cambs Transport Strategy and the District Local Plan.

Cllr Ambrose Smith questioned how many hospital users would realistically be in a position to cycle there, particularly given the large area served by it. Mr Powell agreed that cycling was not a universal opportunity but disputed that all those needing hospital treatment would be unable to cycle, and emphasised that staff could cycle. Cllr Jones sought and received clarification that all the route issues raised were off-site. He agreed with the speaker that co-ordination to improve cycling routes would be worthy of consideration and suggested that commenting on applications relating to the Ely North development sites would be more able to influence that. He also commented that this proposal would not generate CIL income and the hospital had to fund itself.

On the invitation of the Chairman, Richard Dickson spoke on behalf of the Cambridgeshire Community NHS Trust. He explained that the proposal to re-develop the hospital pre-dated the COVID-19 pandemic but that the last 15 months had acutely highlighted the inadequacies of the current buildings, for example long thin wards prevented the implementation of effective one-way systems. He stated that significant population growth had driven a need for increased capacity and that the healthcare system across Cambridgeshire & Peterborough needed to change in order to provide more services closer to home without the requirement for travel to Addenbrookes. Approximately 30k houses had been sent information as part of a consultation exercise and approximately 100 responses had been received. As a result of comments received from the Ely Cycling Campaign, the secure cycle storage had been moved to a better location and over 100 secure cycle spaces were included in the application. At the reserved matters stage a more comprehensive travel plan would be undertaken but they had worked closely with the Local Highways Authority who had no objections.

Cllr Every endorsed the wide consultation exercise that had taken place and thanked the applicants for their efforts. Cllr Downey asked for further details about the secure cycle storage and asked if there was any data regarding staff cycle use. Mr Dickson repeated that, following comments received from the Ely Cycling Campaign, the cycle parking had been moved from a peripheral location to a position between the car park and the entrance, and stated that they would be happy to continue to work with them on that, although the other issues raised about cycle routes were off-site and therefore not in the NHS Trust's remit. He did not have any data on staff cycle usage but hoped that the provision of secure cycle storage would encourage staff to cycle and there would be the opportunity to extend the storage if needed.

The Chairman invited Cllr Bailey to address the Committee, as permitted under Council Procedure Rule 19.1. Cllr Bailey stated that Cambridgeshire had recently been granted Integrated Care Status and she outlined the importance of localised health and care systems, highlighting the Cambridgeshire County Council 'Neighbourhood Cares' pilots in Soham and St Ives, and the 'Happy at Home' project for social care. She stated that fully integrated health and social care worked best if locally based and run, and in order to do that high-quality facilities needed to be available locally. The redevelopment of the Princess of Wales Hospital as a modern health centre would enable more services to be delivered locally and avoid the need for residents to travel to Addenbrookes, Hinchingsbrooke and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The new hospital would retain its existing services and add new diagnostic services and day surgeries, as well as a full Urgent Care service. In addition, a future planning application from the County Council would be submitted for an on-site Care Suites building, as a modern alternative to a care home, with the inclusion of the re-provided Welney Rehabilitation Ward. She agreed with the Case Officer summary in paragraph 8.2 of the report that this was a very important and much-needed facility. She thanked Palace Green Homes (part of East Cambs Trading Company) for its co-operation with the NHS regarding a land swap arrangement, and cited the facilitation of the hospital redevelopment as a key motivation in the District Council's purchase of the ex-MOD housing site.

Cllr Stubbs thanked Cllr Bailey for her work on the project and reminded Members that the Minor Injuries department at the hospital had been at risk of closure in

recent years. Cllr Bailey confirmed that the hospital re-development would secure its future.

Following the Chairman's invitation to make any further comments, the Officer informed Members that the County Council had not yet considered the recently-submitted Travel Plan but Condition 20 in Appendix 1 required the submission of a Travel Plan, which the County Council would be consulted on. Regarding the issue of secure cycle storage, there would be the opportunity to consider this at the reserved matters stage. Cllr Stubbs asked the Officer for further detail about the bus stop provision on site and was shown a diagram illustrating the drop off point and turning circle at the front of the proposed new building.

The Chairman then opened the debate by stating his enthusiasm for the hospital re-development which he believed would be beneficial to so many people in the Ely and wider area. He thanked all those whose years of hard work had brought the project to this stage and he proposed the Officer's recommendation for approval subject to the conditions in Appendix 1 of the report. Cllr Every agreed and seconded the proposal, adding that the development would be good for all East Cambs residents, not just those in Ely. She commented that it was an exceptionally positive step since in recent memory petitions had been organised to save the Minor Injuries Unit on the site from closure. She cautioned that the application was purely for outline permission and it came with conditions, but she believed it to be the beginning of an exciting development. Regarding the bus links to the hospital site, she spoke of previous collaboration between City of Ely Council and East Cambs District Council to increase the frequency of the buses.

Cllrs Wilson, Brown, Jones and Stubbs all spoke in favour of the application, with Cllr Stubbs adding her thanks to everyone who had organised petitions together with the City, District, and County Councils working collaboratively to stop the closure of the Minor Injuries Unit.

It was resolved unanimously:

That planning application ref 21/00160/OUM be APPROVED subject to the recommended conditions detailed in Appendix 1 of the Officer's report.

15. 21/00231/FUL - THE OLD PADDOCK, 48B GREAT LANE, REACH, CAMBRIDGE, CB25 0JF

Emma Barral, Planning Officer, presented a report (W13, previously circulated) recommending approval of an application seeking permission for the construction of a single storey side and rear extension and a swimming pool, subject to the conditions detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

Members were shown various site plans and aerial photographs to illustrate its position to the west of Reach, outside the development framework and approximately 55m from the established settlement boundary. Land between the settlement boundary and the site was in residential use as a garden and was mostly screened by a mature hedge. Floorplans were used to show the current dwelling and the proposed extension which would be constructed in materials to match the existing building. The Officer explained that the application had been called in to Committee by the Ward Councillor due to the site's location at the entrance to

Reach from the fens, the possible impact of the proposed swimming pool on the nearby waterway, and the impact on neighbouring trees.

The host dwelling had been constructed following approval of application ref 16/01008/FUL, the double garage had been permitted by planning application ref 17/02027/FUL which had been allowed at appeal. Condition 14 of 16/01008/FUL had specified that the dwelling could not be extended in any way, nor could any structures be erected within the curtilage of the dwelling. In 2020 the applicants had sought the removal of that condition, Officers had recommended refusal, and in January 2021 the Inspector had instead re-worded the condition to be more precise about the types of development that would not be permitted.

The main considerations for the application were deemed to be:

- **Visual amenity** – the proposed single storey side and rear extension would be modest in size and scale, would form a subservient addition to the dwellinghouse, and would not be overly visible from the public highway. The proposed swimming pool would also be modest in size and scale and would be low-lying. The proposal was not considered to result in harm to rural openness in the edge of settlement location. The materials would be acceptable by virtue of matching the existing dwellinghouse. The proposal was therefore considered to comply with Policy ENV2 of the Local Plan 2015.
- **Residential amenity** – the proposed extension and swimming pool would not result in any harm to neighbouring amenity in terms of overbearing nature, loss of privacy, loss of light or similar given the distances retained and the modest size and scale of the extension. The closest neighbouring dwellinghouse was over 50m away and screened by existing landscaping, therefore no harmful overlooking or loss of privacy would occur. The proposal was therefore considered to comply with Policy ENV2 of the Local Plan 2015.
- **Trees and landscaping** – the applicants had submitted a Tree Survey Report and the Trees Officer had no objections; conditions had been added in Appendix 1 of the report to require an Arboricultural Method Statement and a tree protection plan prior to development commencing.
- **Drainage** – the Agent had confirmed that surface water would be taken to a soakaway and had provided further details regarding swimming pool maintenance. The Internal Drainage Board had stated that they had no objections, subject to conditions confirming the soakaway had sufficient capacity and detailing the swimming pool drainage. The proposal was therefore considered to comply with Policy ENV8 of the Local Plan 2015.

In summary, the Officer informed Members that the proposal was considered to comply with all relevant policies and would not have a detrimental impact on residential amenity for nearby occupiers, or on the visual amenity of the nearby area. The Parish Council's concerns regarding drainage and trees had been addressed by way of conditions as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

The Chairman then invited the applicants, Neville and Cristine Fletcher, to address the Committee. Mr Fletcher thanked the Officer for her report and, referring to the concern regarding the visibility on a back route into the village, he emphasised that they did not want to blight any views into or out of the village. The design deliberately positioned the bulk of the building to the rear and subservient to the house and the materials used would be the same as those of the existing building. He questioned whether the strong views of the Parish Council and Ward Councillor were widely held, given the lack of objections received, and reminded Members

that the nearest neighbour had written in support of the application and the Trees Officer had not registered any concerns. He stated that the swimming pool would be the fourth in the village and there had been no issues with the others. Mrs Fletcher emphasised their care both for the views and setting and for the environment, detailing the many trees, shrubs and hedges they had planted since moving to the village and their use of an air source heat pump and solar panels. She stated that, having been in the village for two years, they had settled there and intended it to be their home forever.

Cllr Jones asked the applicants for more information regarding the soakaways and the site's position in relation to Wicken Fen. Mr Fletcher clarified that the existing soakaway would be insufficient so a new larger one would be installed and he demonstrated the approximate distances involved between the dwelling, the drainage ditch, and the edge of Wicken Fen.

On the invitation of the Chairman, the Democratic Services Officer read aloud the following statement provided by the Ward Councillor, Cllr Cane.

“My main concerns about this application are:

- *The objection from the IDB, which needs to be fully resolved before this application can be considered. This waterway feeds into Reach Lode which, in turn, feeds into Wicken Fen. It is vital that that waterway is not contaminated in any way because that could adversely impact the flora and fauna at the National Trust's Wicken Fen site.*
- *The building going so close to the boundary hedge. The tree report has some cut and paste from a report to a London Borough, so it is unclear how much relates to this site and how much to the site in London. The concern is that the hedge will be damaged over time both by the building itself and by the inevitable pruning etc to prevent damage, leaf litter and shadowing to the building.*
- *The emerging Neighbourhood Plan marks this out as an important entrance to the village with a completely rural aspect from the road and the many public rights of way on the fens. Enlarging the footprint of the existing building will damage this entrance.*

I therefore ask the Committee to refuse this application.”

The Chairman asked the Officers if they had any further comments and the Planning Team Leader drew Members' attention to the proposed conditions in Appendix 1, specifically conditions 4 and 5 regarding tree protection measures, and condition 6 regarding surface water disposal and drainage of the swimming pool to protect long term water quality.

The Chairman then opened the debate. Cllr Brown informed Members that he had visited the area recently and he supported the Officer recommendation to approve the application. Whilst he understood the Parish Council's concerns regarding views, his personal opinion was that the scale of the extension was not sufficient to refuse the application. Cllr Stubbs agreed and seconded Cllr Brown's proposal on the grounds that the conditions in the appendix of the Officer's report alleviated her concerns. Cllrs Jones and Hunt commented that they had been concerned

about the potential drainage issues but the proposed conditions and the further information provided in the presentations had been satisfactory.

It was resolved unanimously:

That planning application ref 21/00231/FUL be APPROVED subject to the recommended conditions detailed in Appendix 1 of the Officer's report.

16. 21/00304/FUL - 8 THE BROOK, SUTTON, ELY, CAMBRIDGESHIRE CB6 2PU

Angela Briggs, Planning Team Leader, presented a report (W14, previously circulated) on behalf of the Case Officer. The report recommended refusal of an application to demolish an existing conservatory and construct a two storey and single storey rear extension.

Site plans and aerial photographs were shown to illustrate that the existing dwelling was situated towards the front of a long plot located within the development envelope of Sutton. Photographs showed both the property and the surrounding residential area which contained a variety of designs and styles of building. Floorplans and elevations detailed the proposed design of the extension and its relationship with the host dwelling.

The application had been called in to Committee by the Ward Councillor on the grounds that insufficient weight had been given to the reasoned justification for the details of the application.

The main considerations for the application were deemed to be:

- **Visual amenity** – the proposed extension would be constructed using different materials from the host dwelling; three new materials would be added to the existing palette and would be at odds with the existing materials. It was considered that the ground floor brickwork would be a poor match against the existing property and the first-floor cladding would also relate poorly to the host dwelling and street scene. In terms of size, the ground floor extension would be larger than the current conservatory that would be demolished, and there would also be the addition of the first-floor extension. The extension would therefore add considerable bulk and massing to the dwelling and was not considered to be in keeping with the scale of the host property. The proposed materials would exacerbate the harm. Having been reduced in size, the proposed porch was considered to be acceptable. Overall, the proposal was considered to be contrary to Policies ENV1 and ENV2 of the Local Plan 2015 and the District Design Guide SPD.
- **Residential amenity** – due to the separation from the boundaries to the two neighbours it was not considered there would be significant harm from overshadowing, loss of light, or overlooking. The proposal was therefore considered to comply with Policy ENV2 of the Local Plan 2015 in respect of residential amenity.
- **Other matters** – highway safety and parking would be unaffected by the proposals and the development would have no significant impact on the biodiversity of the site. The fabric first approach to sustainability was considered to comply with Policy CC1 of the Climate Change SPD and Policy ENV 4 of the Local Plan 2015.

In summary, the Officer stated that the proposal was recommended for refusal because it would cause harm to the visual amenity of the area by virtue of the excessive depth and scale of the extension relative to the original house, the excessive bulk and mass of the extension, and the use of materials that were not cohesive with or complementary to the existing property.

On the invitation of the Chairman, Jamie Palmer addressed the Committee as the agent for the applicants. He agreed with the Officer that new developments should relate sympathetically to existing structures and surrounding development, but drew Members' attention to the many different building styles in evidence along The Brook and also commented that the new porch would be the only real indication of the application from the street scene. He stated that many gardens contained outbuildings and, due to the sizes of the plots, most dwellings were long rather than wide; there was also a staggered development line to the rear and therefore the proposed extension would not result in a dwelling longer than others, nor would it occupy much of the large garden. Regarding the discussion about suitability of the proposed materials, he reminded Members that the existing flat roof conservatory and asbestos outbuildings would be removed and the new extension would be constructed from better quality materials. He also noted that both Ely Museum and recent barn conversions at Ely Waterside, both highly visible and within conservation areas, had recently used similar cladding against traditional building materials. Whilst recognising that personal circumstances did not constitute material planning considerations, he mentioned that one of the applicants had two degenerative health conditions and the purpose of the extension was to provide a lifelong home with more flexibility in preparation for the future need for wheelchair access and single-storey living. Finally, he reminded Members that no objections had been received from neighbours, the Parish Council, the Ward Councillors, or other important consultees.

Cllr Jones asked the agent if there was any benefit to using the proposed construction materials rather than matching those of the existing dwelling. The agent replied that it was the applicants' preference and that block work and asbestos would be removed in the demolition of existing structures so, in terms of the number of different materials used, overall the change would not be significant. In answer to a question from Cllr Stubbs, he explained that they had not sought any pre-application advice because they had not expected the application to be contentious. Cllr Hunt asked whether a smaller extension had been considered and the agent responded that, although Officers had suggested a reduction in scale, the open-plan nature and downstairs space were essential to the purpose of providing long-term accessible accommodation.

The Chairman then invited Cllr Lorna Dupré to speak as the Ward Councillor for Sutton. She confirmed that her reasons for calling the application into Committee were as detailed in paragraph 5.1 of the report, and she drew Members' attention to the site photographs that she had circulated prior to the meeting. She reminded Members that there had been no concerns expressed by the seven neighbours or the Parish Council, and that the Officer's recommendation for refusal focussed on Policies ENV1 and ENV 2 of the Local Plan and the Design Guide SPD with regard to the additional bulk and mass and the proposed materials. Focussing on Policy ENV1, she contended that it was fundamentally an aesthetic issue; the surrounding area was largely residential, the proposed extension would not step beyond the line of built form and would be sited in a large garden with limited public views, and there was no significant detriment to residential amenity. Regarding Policy ENV2

and the Design Guide SPD, she stated that the proposal was an innovative and creative modern design which would be sited in an area with an existing variety of local styles and designs and there was no requirement within Policy ENV2 to directly reference local styles. The Design Guide SPD stated that the original building should be clearly legible and predominant but did not specify sizes; Cllr Dupré argued that the nature of the site, with the original building being almost all that would be visible to the public, ensured that this requirement would be met. She also highlighted that the terrace in which the property was situated comprised three far-from-uniform dwellings. Finally, she commended the development of another lifetime dwelling for the area and reminded Members of the agent's comments regarding the extra space required to accommodate the future accessibility and equipment needs of one of the applicant's degenerative health conditions.

Cllr Wilson questioned whether the extension would make the dwelling larger than the surrounding properties. Cllr Dupré responded that there was no uniformity since all the houses had different footprints. The building's footprint would increase but would not be significantly out of character for the area and since the houses had very long gardens it would not be disproportionate within the plot. Cllr Hunt thanked Cllr Dupré for the photographs that she had circulated in advance and commented that they had prompted him to visit the site.

The Chairman then opened the debate. Cllr Ambrose Smith stated her agreement with the Ward Councillor, against the Officer recommendation and in support of the application, and proposed that the application should be approved. She stated that the proposed extension would not cause harm, would look more considered than the existing structure, would improve the interior, and the street already appeared to have many styles and traditions of buildings. The applicant could discuss materials with the officers. Cllr Downey agreed and added that the photographs already appeared to show multiple window styles, porches and mix of dwellings in the area. He commented that he believed that the applicants' personal circumstances could be considered as a material planning consideration since the proposed design was directly related to accommodating a physical disability. He seconded Cllr Ambrose Smith's proposal that the application be approved on the grounds that the mass and materials were sufficiently cohesive and complementary to the host dwelling. He also highlighted the lack of objections from neighbouring residents.

Cllr Brown commented that due to the size of the proposed extension he could understand the Officer's recommendation but he believed the case had been made as to why it should be permitted. He felt that the materials palette was a matter of subjective choice as to whether it was deemed attractive or not and there were examples of other properties in the District with varied palettes of this nature. Cllrs Every and Jones agreed and added that no objections had been received from neighbours or from the Parish Council. Cllr Wilson commented that many East Cambs villages had a range of very different styles of homes and the proposal would produce a better interior for the applicants. He believed that objections would have been received if it was thought to be detrimental. Cllr Hunt informed Members that he had initially supported the Officer's opinion regarding the very large extension but, having driven to the site that morning, it was clear to him that it would be barely visible from the road.

Cllr Stubbs agreed with other Members that the need for the extension had been demonstrated, but she agreed with the Officer that the scale was too large.

It was resolved with 9 votes in favour, 1 against, and 0 abstentions:

That planning application ref 21/00304/FUL be APPROVED on the grounds that the mass and materials are sufficiently cohesive and complementary to the existing host dwelling.

It was further resolved:

That the Planning Manager be given delegated authority to impose suitable conditions.

17. PLANNING PERFORMANCE REPORT – APRIL 2021

Rebecca Saunt, Planning Manager, presented a report (W15, previously circulated) summarising the performance of the Planning Department in April 2021. She drew Members' attention to the high number of applications received in April compared to April 2019 and explained that the April 2020 number was very low due to the lockdown. Similarly, when comparing the number of Enforcement complaints received it was important to remember that building sites were closed in April 2020.

Cllr Hunt commended the Planning Department for the excellent professionalism of its Officers, as evidenced by the appeals decided in its favour.

It was resolved:

That the Planning Performance Report for April 2021 be noted.

The meeting concluded at 4:04pm.