

**MINUTES**  
of the  
**PLANNING COMMITTEE**  
held on 5 March 2024 at 7pm

Present:

Councillor J. Sosin (Chair)  
Councillor S. Dobson (Vice Chair)

Councillors J. Armstrong, S. Hall, R. Hyland, J. Lardge, R. Lee, E. Sampson, A. Thompson,  
A. Thorpe-Apps, and C. Tron

Also Present:

Councillor M. Steel

### 1. Chair's Announcements

For the benefit of the public, the Chair explained the arrangements for the meeting.

### 2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Pappa and Wilson.

### 3. Declarations of Interest

All Members were reminded that they must disclose any interests they knew they had in items of business on the meeting's agenda and that they must do so at this point on the agenda or as soon as they became aware of the interest. If the interest was a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest they were also obliged to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of the meeting. Any declarations are recorded in the relevant minute below.

### 4. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 5 December 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### 5. Public Question Time

Public questions and statements were asked on Items 6 and 7 and are detailed under the relevant item. [The statements submitted in advance can be viewed via this link.](#)

## 6. 23/01654/FUL – Strategic Growth Site 7A, Moulsham Hall Lane, Great Leighs, Chelmsford, Essex

The Committee considered an application for the formation of a temporary construction vehicle access from Moulsham Hall lane to facilitate the future development of Strategic Growth Site 7A. The Committee heard that the proposed temporary access would enable initial access in advance of the construction of a new roundabout, enabling preparatory works offline to the new roundabout and access road which would serve Growth Site 7A. The Committee was informed that the regrettable loss of a Category A oak tree could be compensated through other planning applications as it would be lost in any event and that highway safety could be suitably maintained subject to compliance with conditions. The Committee heard that the principle of the application was acceptable, as was the visual impact and highway safety, along with no negative affect to the bridleway and that given the circumstances, the tree loss was acceptable, therefore the application was recommended for approval.

The Committee heard from the applicant who highlighted the importance of the application as it would shorten the development programme, enabling the earlier delivery of market and affordable homes. They also informed the Committee that it would more efficiently facilitate the construction of the main roundabout and spine road, in turn enabling the wider development to proceed, subject to those approvals. They summarised that they had amended the proposals in response to Essex County Council feedback and there had been no other objections.

In response to questions from the Committee, officers stated that they felt the environmental impact of the application was a neutral one. This was because despite the loss of the tree, the works would facilitate a quicker process for large infrastructure, the application was temporary and that the area would form part of a landscaped area through future applications. Officers also referred to future applications, which would have the opportunity to increase biodiversity and counter the loss of the oak tree, whilst noting that the tree was not currently preserved. Officers also responded to a point raised about the roundabout being redesigned with the tree staying as a place maker in the centre of it. They stated that the informal highways response had required a wider access to allow HGV's to exit and enter simultaneously. The Committee heard that they were being asked to have confidence in officers' pre-application discussions and that alternative options had been explored with Highways, but there were restrictions with the proximity of the new mini roundabout and the existing on the A131.

**RESOLVED** that the application be approved, subject to the conditions detailed in the report.

(7.04pm to 7.26pm)

## 7. 23/01916/PIP Permission in Principle – Land Adjacent White Cottage, South Street, Great Waltham, Chelmsford, Essex

The Committee considered an application that sought to establish the principle of development for a dwelling house on the site which was located outside of the Defined Settlement of Great Waltham and fell within the Great Waltham Conservation Area, which was also considered to form a part of the setting of nearby grade II listed buildings. The Committee heard that the application was considered to be contrary to national and local planning policies on the grounds that it was within the rural area outside of the Defined Settlement boundary, resulted in the adverse impact on the character and beauty of the rural aera, and had an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of South House, a grade II listed building. The Committee were also informed of two previous refusals

on the site and one dismissed at appeal, which was a material planning consideration. Officers also detailed that they did not feel the site was an infill plot, the visual impacts could not easily be mitigated and there would be harm to heritage assets. Therefore, the application was recommended for refusal. It was noted that the application had been called in at the request of a local Ward Member so that the principle for development on the plot and its impacts could be considered.

The Committee heard from the applicant who highlighted the local benefit of their client being able to downsize and free up a larger home for a family in the village. They referred to anti social behaviour at the site which had consistently affected the character and beauty of the area. They also stated that the site would eventually become overgrown and full of rubbish, or it could provide a suitable and sympathetic new dwelling in the village. They stated that they would work closely with the Council for a suitable development and that their client understood the importance of ecological concerns. The Committee also heard that their client had been approached by large housing developers seeking access routes for bigger developments, but instead they wanted to create an in keeping and compliant dwelling for a downsizing property.

The Committee also heard from a local ward member who felt the site was an anomaly in the area because of differences in the defined settlement boundary and conservation area around the property and that the net result, was this site being the only gap in dwellings on South Street. They informed the Committee that a suitable dwelling would not detract from the character of the area or the flow of housing on that side of South Street and felt a development similar to White Cottage would maintain the character of the area. They also referred to the site currently being used as a dumping ground for rubbish and anti social behaviour, which was not enhancing the character of the area. They also informed the Committee that as a local resident they failed to see how the intrinsic character and beauty of the area would be adversely impacted. The Committee also heard that no objections had been made by the Parish Council or anyone living in the village and 1 & 2 bedroom homes were clearly required in the village. They felt that the granting of the PIP, would allow the applicant to work with the Council to establish an acceptable dwelling and the application represented a much needed small dwelling to increase housing stock in the rural village.

In response to the points raised, officers stated that every application had to be determined within currently adopted policies. They reemphasised to the Committee the previously covered issues with the application and added that they would not have any control or influence over what would be proposed on the site if the PIP was granted. They informed the Committee that this could be for a 2,3 or 4 bed property rather than the small property that had been referred to. It is the principle of development which is unacceptable, the previous appeal was for a traditional cottage style dwelling and this did not overcome the issues.

In response to questions from the Committee, officers stated that it was not a relevant planning consideration as to who owned the land, the failed appeal was a material consideration and that in their view, nothing had changed since that appeal in terms of planning policy for a different conclusion to be reached. Officers also stated that they don't canvass for comments from local residents, but the application had been advertised via the usual processes and officer decisions were based on planning policy rather than a referendum of local views.

Members of the Committee expressed views about the significant impacts the development would have on the rural area and highlighted that there were simply too many issues with the site for it to be an acceptable development. Members also highlighted that going against multiple planning policies would set a dangerous precedent.

**RESOLVED** that the application be refused for the reasons detailed in the report, with the exception of reason 5 which had been removed.

(7.28pm to 7.58pm)

## 8. Planning Appeals

RESOLVED that the information submitted to the meeting on appeal decisions between 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023 and 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024 be noted.

The meeting closed at 8pm.

Chair