



EAST
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning Committee
held in the Council Chamber, The Grange,
Nutholt Lane, Ely on Wednesday, 4th April 2018
at 2.00pm

P R E S E N T

Councillor Joshua Schumann (Chairman)
Councillor Christine Ambrose Smith
Councillor Derrick Beckett
Councillor Paul Cox
Councillor Lavinia Edwards
Councillor Mark Goldsack
Councillor Elaine Griffin-Singh (Substitute for Councillor Bill
Hunt)

Councillor Mike Rouse
Councillor Stuart Smith

OFFICERS

Julie Barrow – Senior Planning Officer
Zoe Boyce-Upcraft – Planning Assistant
Tim Driver – Planning Solicitor
Richard Fitzjohn – Planning Officer
Janis Murfet – Democratic Services Officer
Andrew Phillips – Senior Planning Officer
Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

6 members of the public

176. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Sue Austen,
David Chaplin and Bill Hunt.

It was noted that Councillor Griffin-Singh would substitute for
Councillor Hunt for the duration of the meeting.

177. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

178. MINUTES

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 7th March 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

179. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made the following announcements:

- On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman wished Julie Barrow, Senior Planning Officer, a happy birthday;
- The Chairman welcomed Zoe Boyce-Upcraft, Planning Assistant, to her first meeting of the Planning Committee;
- Agenda Item No 5 (17/00893/FUM, Land South of Blackberry Lane, Soham), had been withdrawn from the Agenda and would come back to Committee at a later date;
- The new Conservation Officer, Patricia Craggs, would be working full time for the Authority from August 2018, but she was contactable as of now.

180. 17/00893/FUM - LAND SOUTH OF BLACKBERRY LANE, SOHAM

Planning application reference 17/00893/FUM was withdrawn from the Agenda.

181. 17/01094/OUM - LAND WEST OF REACH ROAD, BURWELL & 18/00155/OUM - SITE TO NORTH MEADOW VIEW INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, REACH ROAD, BURWELL

The Chairman proposed and the Committee agreed that as agenda items 6 and 7 related to the same parcel of land, both items would be taken together. However, the vote would be taken separately for each application.

Richard Fitzjohn, Planning Officer, presented two reports (reference S275 and S276, previously circulated) which sought outline planning permission for the change of use of land to a B1 (business) use, with associated B1 business units, a new vehicular access with Reach Road and landscaping. The matter of access was being considered as part of these applications, with appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved.

On a point of housekeeping, Members were asked to note that if granted permission, an additional condition relating to boundary treatments would be imposed on each application.

The site comprised approximately 2.7 hectares of uncultivated agricultural land located on the southern side of Reach Road, directly adjacent to the Meadow View Business Park. The majority of the site fell within Flood Zone 1, but the south eastern corner fell within Flood Zones 2 and 3. The eastern boundary of the site was bordered by Reach Road and the western boundary, farmland. There was a public right of way which ran

adjacent to the site. The nearest residential dwelling was located approximately 50 metres, and Burwell Castle (a scheduled monument), approximately 300 metres east of the site. The closest listed buildings were situated approximately 500 metres from the site.

The Planning Officer reminded the Committee that the site had been allocated for B1/B2 use within Policy BUR2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 and Policy BUR.E1 of the Submitted Local Plan 2017.

It was noted that the applications had been brought to Planning Committee at the request of the Planning Manager due to the high level of public interest in the application site, mostly generated by the withdrawn applications for gas powered generators (reference 17/01071/FUL and 17/01072/FUL).

A number of illustrations were displayed at the meeting, including a map, an aerial image, an indicative layout of the proposal and a plan showing the access and new footpath.

The main considerations in the determination of the application were:

- Principle of development;
- Character and appearance of the area and heritage;
- Traffic and transportation;
- Residential amenity;
- Flood risk and drainage;
- Archaeology;
- Ecology and trees; and
- Energy efficiency and BREEAM.

Members were reminded that Policy EMP1 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 sought to retain all existing employment sites or allocations for B1, B2 or B8 uses. Furthermore, Policy LP8 of the Submitted Local Plan 2017 stated that employment sites would be reserved for B1, B2 and B8 uses. The application sites were allocated for B1/B2 employment uses within Policy BUR2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 and Policy BUR.E1 of the Submitted Local Plan 2017.

Speaking next of the character of the area and heritage, the Planning Officer said the proposed development would be prominent in views towards the Conservation Area from the Devil's Dyke and would be evident in views towards the west from the earthworks within Burwell Castle. However, Historic England had stated that the degree of harm which would be caused to the significance of the heritage assets would be moderate and should be mitigated by limiting height and attention to materials at the reserved matters stage. It was therefore considered that the proposal would cause less than substantial harm to the heritage assets and this would be outweighed by an allocated employment site being brought forward.

With regard to traffic and transportation, the Plan showed details of the proposed new access and public footpath which would extend from the application site to the south-east where a crossing point would be installed linking pedestrian access to the existing footpath on the opposite side of Reach Road. The applicant had carried out speed surveys and submitted a Transport Assessment as part of this application. The County Transport Assessment team were satisfied that the proposal would have a negligible impact on the surrounding highway network and the Local Highway Authority were satisfied with the proposed footpath and the highway safety aspects.

In connection with residential amenity, it was considered that the proposed development would not cause any significant harm due to the separation distance from the nearest residential property and the nature of B1 uses.

The application site was predominantly located within Flood Zone 1, but part of the south east corner of the site was located within Zones 2 and 3. The Committee noted that B1 uses were classed as 'less vulnerable' and therefore acceptable within Flood Zones 2 and 3 (Planning Practice Guidance). The Lead Local Flood Authority had no objections to the proposed surface water strategy set out within the submitted Flood Risk Assessment, subject to their recommended conditions set out within paragraph 5.11 of the Committee report. Details of foul drainage could be secured by condition. It was therefore considered that the proposal would not cause any significant flooding and drainage issues.

Cambridgeshire County Council did not object to the application subject to an archaeological investigation being conducted prior to the commencement of development. County Archaeology continued to recommend that an archaeological condition be imposed on any planning consent granted so that the prehistoric and medieval remains were properly investigated and recorded in an approved mitigation scheme prior to their loss through construction impacts.

In terms of ecology and trees, Members noted that the application site comprised uncultivated agricultural land with species-poor hedgerow and trees and ditched filled with slow flowing water. However, the site was of ecological value and mitigation measures and compensatory planting should be provided; this could be secured by planning conditions.

The Trees Officer supported the application as it sought to retain the majority of the existing boundary vegetation. A tree protection plan had been submitted and its implementation could be secured by condition.

A BREEAM pre-assessment tracker and action list had been submitted with the application which stated that the proposal was targeting a BREEAM 'VERY GOOD' rating. This could be secured through planning condition in order to ensure that the development complied with policy ENV4 of the Local Plan. Achieving the rating would also help to ensure that the proposed development would accord with Policy LP24 of the Submitted Local Plan 2017.

In summary, planning application reference 17/01094/OUM was recommended for approval, subject to an additional condition relating to boundary treatments.

The Planning Officer next presented planning application reference 18/00155/OUM, saying that this application site comprised approximately 0.9 hectares of uncultivated agricultural land on a different part of the same parcel of land as detailed in 17/01094/OUM. The illustrations, main considerations and issues were the same as for that application.

In terms of planning balance, it was considered that the proposal would provide additional B1 space within the District, increasing employment space and opportunities for job creation. The proposed B1 use fell within the B1/B2 uses for which the site was allocated. Additional public footpath provision along Reach Road would improve pedestrian safety.

Officers considered that the scheme would not create any significant detrimental impacts which would outweigh the benefits of the proposed development, and it was therefore recommended for approval, subject to the recommended conditions and an additional condition regarding boundary treatments.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Ms Jane Crichton, agent, addressed the Committee, saying that she was quite content with the Officer's report. She did not have anything to add to what had already been said, but she would be happy to answer questions.

Councillor Edwards expressed concern that a number of boundary trees and sections of hedging were to be removed to facilitate the proposed vehicular access to the site and Ms Crichton replied that it was intended to retain as much of the hedging as possible.

With regard to 18/00155/OUM, Councillor Beckett wished to know where, from the south, would be the nearest place people would walk from, as the site seemed to be going further out into the countryside. The Planning Officer stated that he was not sure how far the site could be viewed from in terms of distance, however there was a Public Right of Way adjacent to the site and the whole site formed part of an allocated site. The Planning Manager added that the site was in line with the allocation site and adjacent industry.

In response to a question from Councillor Rouse, the Planning Officer confirmed that most of the objections received had related to the withdrawn applications for gas power generators (17/01072/FUL and 17/01072/FUL refers), and not this application.

Councillor Beckett proposed that the Officer's recommendation to approve planning application 17/001094/OUM be supported and the motion was seconded by the Councillor Rouse. When put to the vote,

It was resolved unanimously:

That planning application reference 17/01094/OUM be APPROVED subject to the recommended conditions as set out in the Officer's report, with any changes delegated to the Planning Manager and the imposition of an additional condition relating to boundary treatments.

It was next proposed by Councillor Beckett and seconded by Councillor Rouse that the Officer's recommendation to approve planning application 18/00155/OUM be supported. When put to the vote,

It was resolved unanimously:

That planning application reference 18/00155/OUM be APPROVED subject to the recommended conditions as set out in the Officer's report, with any changes delegated to the Planning Manager and the imposition of an additional condition relating to boundary treatments.

182. 17/02002/FUL – LAND NORTH OF CAM DRIVE, ELY, CB6 2WR

Julie Barrow, Senior Planning Officer, presented a report (S277, previously circulated) which sought consent for the construction of a three storey, 66 bed residential care home for older people, together with associated car park, access and landscaping.

The proposed 'L-shaped' buildings would have elevations facing the Isle of Ely School and the proposed development to the south. The space around the building would serve as a resident's garden and the scheme was developed in a configuration which enabled the care home to provide general residential and residential dementia care. Its plan layout and internal arrangement allowed the home to be split into the separate care requirements.

The site was located to the west of The Isle of Ely School and formed part of the North Ely development. The land to the south of the site was allocated for mixed use as part of the wider scheme and the land to the south west and south east was currently being developed by Hopkins Homes for residential purposes.

It was noted that the application was being presented to Planning Committee as it formed part of the strategic urban extension of Ely, known as 'North Ely'.

A number of illustrations were displayed at the meeting. These included a map, an aerial view of the location, the elevations of the proposal, a site plan showing the car parking, garden areas and the dementia unit, the site layout, and the internal floor plans.

The main considerations in the determination of the application were:

- Principle of Development;
- Visual amenity;
- Residential amenity;
- Access and parking; and
- Flood risk and drainage.

The principle of development was well established by the grant of outline planning approval for residential led development of up to 1200 homes with associated employment and community uses – including a care home or extra care home although this was not the care home envisaged by the outline approval. With this scheme sitting alongside The Isle of Ely

School, the proposed local centre and the Hopkins Homes residential development, it was considered that the combination of uses would help to establish a real sense of community and provide a mixed use development that would cater for the needs of all sections of the community.

In terms of visual amenity, Members noted that the application site lay within the Urban Village development type, as set out in the North Ely SPD. The care home had been designed to reflect its prominent position on the North Ely development and complement the adjacent school and residential development. The applicant proposed to create garden areas on the key frontages to allow some visual permeability through the scheme and encourage residents to interact with the surrounding areas. Formal tree planting was proposed on key boundaries to match the tree planting around the school and to ensure continuity between the Downham Meadow Character Area and the adjacent Cam Grove Character Area. It was considered that the scheme would enhance this key gateway area of the wider development and complement its surroundings.

In connection with residential amenity, the Senior Planning Officer said that the internal layout of the care home was based upon the applicant's extensive experience of delivering such schemes and there would be a generous amount of open space around the building for the benefit of future residents. The care home would be separated from the Hopkins Homes development by the internal road system within the wider development and the two schemes did not give rise to any concerns regarding overlooking, privacy or appearing overbearing. It was possible that the two schemes might be constructed alongside one another and both developers would be required to adhere to a Construction Environmental Management Plan to ensure the amenity of future residents was protected.

The main access would be via the Spine Road and the construction access would be to the south west of the site. The submitted Travel Plan set out that the site was accessible by walking, cycling and public transport, and following amendments made during the course of the application, was now deemed to be acceptable.

A total of 20 car parking spaces would be provided on site, of which two would be laid out to mobility specifications. It was noted that based on the staffing levels proposed by the applicant, there would be a shortfall of 4 parking spaces. However, the applicant was an experienced care home provider and had based the layout for this development on its knowledge and experience. They were confident that the number of spaces proposed would be adequate and given the high sustainability credentials of the site, it was anticipated that other means of transport would be utilised.

With regard to flood risk and drainage, it was noted that the site was located in Flood Zone 1. A site-wide Surface Drainage Strategy had been approved for the Endurance Estates side of North Ely and all development within this area was expected to comply. The applicant had confirmed that the detailed drainage system for the care home would be designed in accordance with the Strategy and this would be dealt with by a condition.

The Committee noted that NHS England had raised concerns that the proposed development would have a significant impact on primary

healthcare provision in Ely. The applicant responded, stating that residents were likely to come from within a 3 mile radius of the site and would therefore already be registered with a GP practice in the area. The care home would provide a substantial element of care, becoming an additional support service for local doctors and medical services. NHS England had also requested a financial contribution towards IT infrastructure but the applicant had advised that its own hi-tech IT systems could link to the primary care facilities. It had been agreed that a condition could be imposed on any grant of planning permission requiring the applicant to liaise with NHS England and ensure that the appropriate IT systems were put in place. The Council's Strategic Planning Team had also confirmed that the Princess of Wales Hospital site had been allocated to enable redevelopment and reorganisation of healthcare facilities; this should provide a good opportunity to improve healthcare provision to North Ely residents and further afield.

Speaking of sustainability standards, Members noted that the applicant intended to construct the care home to BREEAM 'Very Good' standards and implement renewable energy technologies and deliver in excess of 15% of the home's predicted energy requirements.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Ms Joanne Sutcliffe, agent, addressed the Committee and made the following points:

- A planning condition had been agreed requiring liaison with NHS England to ensure appropriate IT systems were put in place;
- The residents of the care home were likely to be from the local area and already registered with a GP;
- The County Council's car parking standards were a maximum figure, and a C2 use of this size would be a maximum of 25 spaces, including staff;
- Staff who drove to work could park on the highway outside of peak hours;
- Operationally, it was not in the applicant's interests to underprovide parking;
- The applicant was looking forward to providing a facility for the elderly.

Ms Sutcliffe then responded to comments and questions from Members.

Councillor Rouse asked Ms Sutcliffe to tell the Committee more about LNT Care Developments. She said that the company was a leading care home developer and the Chairman was very passionate about what he did. There had been 110 care homes constructed since 2000, and all those years had led to an ultimate design and construction. The nearest home was located in Huntingdon and another in Peterborough had been sold to Anchor.

Councillor Goldsack said he was perturbed by the proposed number of parking spaces. The home would want 100% occupancy, and taking into account the number of visitors, staff and professionals, he believed 10 – 12 spaces would be taken up by staff; he did not want there to be issues in the

future. Ms Sutcliffe agreed that this was a valid point. There would be a maximum of 16 staff on site at any one time, and as staff were usually local, some would likely walk, cycle, use public transport, taxis or car share. Councillor Goldsack replied that he still felt 20 spaces would not be enough because there would need to be parking available for other services coming on site.

Ms Sutcliffe responded, saying that the residents would not have cars and visitors usually came in the evenings. The applicant had carried out much research and it was not in the company's interests to underprovide parking. Of the 110 homes constructed, possibly only one had had problems with parking. She reiterated that many of the staff would use public transport.

Picking up on this latter point, Councillor Beckett said that Huntingdon and Peterborough were larger than Ely and they had more provision for public transport. Ely was a very rural area and public transport was not very good. He then asked Ms Sutcliffe to define what sort of residents would be living in the care home and she replied that it varied according to the operator. They were usually people who could no longer live at home but did not need nursing care; this facility would have less intensive use than a nursing home and it would provide only residential and dementia care.

Councillor Ambrose Smith expressed concern about transport. Living in Littleport, she knew that a large number of residents worked in the care sector and as their jobs were not well paid, many of them drove to work. It was likely that a significant number would apply to work in this facility and so would need to run cars. Ms Sutcliffe replied that if Members preferred, the applicant would be happy to agree a condition to provide more parking, with it being reviewed after a year.

Councillor Cox did not consider there to be a real issue with parking as there was the possibility to expand and besides which, the applicant knew what they was doing.

Councillor Rouse welcomed the development and proposed that the Officer's recommendation for approval be supported. He thought the application site to be a very good position for the home, and said that Members should not get hung up on parking as other local homes operated with what they had. He hoped the scheme would bring forward the community centre and shop because if people wanted public transport, the whole of the area would have to be developed.

Councillor Goldsack commented that on reflection, the proposal should be looked at within the context of the development of North Ely; as part of the bigger picture it was compelling.

Councillor Beckett said it was good to see the application come forward, as this was the sort of facility needed in the District. He suggested that consideration be given to the provision of soft parking and that if the home was to be sold on, overflow parking should be conditioned.

The Planning Manager reminded Members that there was already a condition relating to hard landscaping. She suggested and it was agreed that that further discussions be held with the applicant regarding the treatment of the grass areas.

Councillor Ambrose Smith seconded the motion for approval and when put to the vote,

It was resolved unanimously:

That planning application reference 17/02002/FUM be APPROVED subject to the expiry of the advertisement in the Cambridge News (expiration date 5th April 2018) and subject to the recommended conditions as set out in the Officer's report.

It was further resolved:

That the Planning Manager be given delegated authority to impose a suitable condition relating to hard landscaping.

183. 17/02205/FUL – LAND NORTH WEST OF ELECTRICITY SUB-STATION, WEIRS DROVE, BURWELL

Richard Fitzjohn, Planning Officer, presented a report (S278, previously circulated) which sought full planning permission for a 49.9MW battery storage facility, bridge and associated infrastructure.

The proposal included a 3 metre high close-boarded fence along the eastern boundary, in addition to 2.5 metre high palisade fencing and 2.4 metre high weldmesh fencing along other boundaries which were mostly situated behind the bund and hedging within the site. The proposal also included a new vehicular access with a clear space concrete bridge over The Weirs watercourse.

It was noted that planning permission was being sought on a temporary basis for 25 years.

The application site was located along Weirs Drove, to the west of the main settlement of Burwell and outside of the established development framework. It comprised an open agricultural field which was bordered on the north and west sides by a watercourse. Whilst the site and surrounding area was predominantly rural in nature, there were two large electricity substations within close proximity to the site to the north-west and south-east and large electricity pylons located to the west.

Members noted that the application had been called in to Planning Committee by Councillor David Brown due to the nature and siting of the proposed development.

A number of illustrations were displayed at the meeting. They included a map, an aerial view outlining the site, the proposed layout and landscaping, and some elevations of the main structures and containers. There were also street scene views of the proposed development and the bunding, hedging, fencing and access gates, giving an indication of the likely visual impact of the development.

The main considerations in the determination of this application were:

- Principle of Development;

- Character and appearance of the area;
- Noise quality and environmental pollution;
- Residential amenity;
- Traffic and transportation;
- Ecology;
- Archaeology; and
- Flood risk and drainage.

Policy ENV6 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 specifically related to renewable energy development and stated that proposals for renewable energy and associated infrastructure would be supported, unless their wider environmental, social and economic benefits would be outweighed by significant adverse effects that could be remediated and made acceptable. Policy LP24 of the Submitted Local Plan 2017 stated that proposals which supported the growth of the renewable and low energy sector will be supported.

The proposed development would support increasing reliance on renewable energy forms by providing a quick and flexible back-up energy source to the Grid at times of high energy demand, contributing to ensuring a reliable energy supply across the Grid. The principle of development was therefore acceptable in accordance with policies ENV6 and LP24.

The Committee was next shown a series of photographs to illustrate the character and appearance of the location of the site and the impact of the proposed scheme. The Planning Officer stated that the proposal would erode the unspoilt nature of the site and create detrimental harm to the character and appearance of the area. However, the visual impact of the development would be mitigated to some extent by a 2 metre high bund with a 1.5 metre high hedge on top which would surround large sections of the site and provide some screening of the development.

Members were reminded that there were large electricity substations located within close proximity to the site to the south and to the west which had large buildings, containers and structures that already eroded some of the rural landscape in this area. There were also very large electricity pylons located within close proximity to the site which further reduced the visual sensitivity of the rural character and appearance of the area. In this respect, the proposed development would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area which weighed against the application.

A Noise Impact Assessment was submitted with the application and reviewed by the Council's Environmental Health department who agreed that, in operation, noise would not have an adverse impact at the nearest properties. However, the predicted noise levels might change over time as equipment aged and as large scale battery technology was relatively modern, there were not a lot of existing sites or prolonged noise data to use for predictions. Conditions were recommended to mitigate any noise impacts on residential properties and to require regular monitoring by the site operator. The proposed development would also include bunding, acoustic

fencing and hedging to further mitigate noise impacts on the nearest residential properties.

With regard to residential amenity, the application site was distanced more than 200 metres from the closest neighbouring properties. At such a distance, the only potential impact would be noise; and this was considered to be acceptable, subject to the conditions set out in the Officer's report.

It was noted that there would be a new access at Weirs Drove, with a clear span bridge crossing The Weirs watercourse to provide an entrance into the site. The Local Highway Authority (LHA) did not have any objections and it was therefore considered that the proposed development would not create any significant detrimental impacts on highway safety or the local highway network.

In terms of ecology, the proposal would affect a small area of land which was of low ecological value. The Environment Agency had no objections to the proposal, providing the applicant adhered to the mitigation measures identified within the Ecological Assessment.

Speaking next of archaeology, the Planning Officer stated that the application site lay within an area of high archaeological potential. Cambridge Archaeology did not object to the development proceeding but considered that the site should be subject to a programme of archaeological investigation, secured by condition. Given the high potential for archaeological finds, it was considered reasonable to append a condition to any grant of planning permission requiring an investigation to be carried out prior to the commencement of any development.

The application site was located in Flood Zones 2 and 3, and due to the specific locational requirements of the proposed development and the fact that the development would not be manned, it passed the Sequential and Exception tests. The application was supported by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), including a SuDS strategy which demonstrated that surface water drainage could be successfully dealt with on the site as part of the proposed development. A detailed surface water drainage scheme would be secured by condition. The Environment Agency did not have any objections to the application but strongly recommended that the mitigation measures proposed in the FRA be adhered to.

The Planning Officer concluded by saying that on balance, it was considered that the harm to the character and appearance of the area would be outweighed by the sustainable energy benefits of the proposed development by supporting reliance on renewable energy forms and the benefits to the local and wider population of a more reliable energy supply. The noise and residential amenity impacts could be made acceptable through planning conditions, as could those relating to traffic and transportation, flood risk and drainage, ecology and archaeology.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Ben Moore, applicant, addressed the Committee and made the following comments:

- He was a developer and one of the founders of the business, which operated throughout the UK, Italy and Canada;

- Battery storage was needed because there were big changes in the electricity grid, with big core power stations being taken off;
- There was a need for energy storage facilities and as more renewables came on, there would be less reliance on fossil fuels;
- Using battery storage made more sense for the grid because it would be more controllable. The alternative would be to build more pylons and infrastructure, and this would be expensive;
- Electric vehicles coming on line would place more of a strain on the grid, but this method of storage would make it more resilient;
- The location had been chosen because it was very rare to get a supply point with a substation nearby. The storage facility needed to be close to these locations and there were huge substations in close proximity;
- It would be possible to pull down power from the national grid and put it into the local system;
- The company was very keen to use revenues for local projects such as community centres, youth groups and 'Meals on Wheels', and had already spoken to the community about this.

Councillor Edwards had two queries: she wished to know if there would be anyone on site to monitor the facility, and if the battery would leak into the watercourse if it overheated. Mr Moore replied that the site would be remotely monitored 24/7. The technology was well known with hundreds of facilities worldwide; each had inbuilt fire suppression and was constructed to contain pollutants.

Councillor Ambrose Smith asked if the technology would be outdated after the 25 year lifespan and whether the company intended clearing the site at the end of the 25 years. Mr Moore said that cells would be removed and replaced with current technology after 8 – 9 years; this was done all the time. With regard to the clearance of the site, if battery technology was still the best, the company would come back to the Local Planning Authority.

Councillor Rouse wondered if this was new or trialled technology and Mr Moore explained that it was not new as such, but had been refined to be economically viable. He continued, saying that the distribution network was interconnected so that where possible, the grid could be regulated locally.

Councillor Beckett expressed concern about containment of the hazardous chemicals within the facility, as the ditch at the site fed into Burwell Lode. Mr Moore replied that there were protocols to ensure containment and he went on to explain how the containers were designed.

In proposing that the Officer's recommendation for approval be supported, Councillor Goldsack thanked the Planning Officer and Mr Moore for providing Members with the information necessary to help them try to understand a complicated subject and make an informed decision.

The Chairman reiterated that this was an issue of local, national, and international importance for the future not least because it could help solar farms to come forward.

Councillor Beckett reminded Members that they had a duty of care not to pollute the land or waterways and should not be granting permission just because they were happy with what they had been told. He was concerned that water could run off the base into the watercourse and he requested that a condition be added to address the request made by the Environment Agency regarding the prevention of pollution. The Planning Manager and Case Officer confirmed that there was a condition on the Officer's recommendation requiring secondary containment as recommended by the Environment Agency

The Chairman said he understood Councillor Beckett's concerns but the point had been made that the units were sealed; it was all about looking at the planning balance.

Councillor Rouse seconded the motion for approval. When put to the vote, it was declared carried, there being 8 votes for and 1 abstention. Whereupon,

It was resolved:

That planning application reference 17/02205/FUL be APPROVED subject to the recommended conditions as set out in the Officer's report.

184. 18/00137/FUL – 80 BARTON ROAD, ELY, CB7 4HZ

Zoe Boyce-Upcraft, Planning Assistant, presented a report (S279, previously circulated) which sought permission for a double garage and single storey link to the dwelling, following the demolition of two existing outbuildings.

The site was located on a corner of Barton Road, within the City of Ely and within the Conservation Area.

The application had been called in to Planning Committee as it concerned the home of a Council Member. In order to maintain transparency, it was considered that delegated authority would not be appropriate in the determination of this application.

A number of illustrations were displayed at the meeting. They included a map, an aerial view, photographs of the street scene, a block plan of the existing, the layout of the proposal, and elevations.

The Committee noted that the main considerations in the determination of this application were:

- Impact on Residential Amenity;
- Visual Amenity and Conservation Area; and
- Parking Provision.

Given its scale and position, it was considered that the bulk and siting of the proposal would not cause significant loss of light or have an overbearing impact on the neighbouring property to the north. The development was therefore considered to comply with Policy ENV2 of the Local Plan 2015 in respect of residential amenity.

Members noted that the Conservation Officer was consulted on the application and considered that there would be no harm to the Conservation Area that would arise from the proposal.

Whilst the scheme was a large double garage, it would be at a noticeably lower height and appear subservient to the dwelling. Officers considered that the site could accommodate the development without appearing cramped and it was therefore not considered to be out of scale.

The proposal would improve the parking situation on site, as the outbuildings could not currently be used for parking. A minimum of two parking spaces were being retained, and this complied with Policy COM8 of the Local Plan 2015.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Colin Every, applicant, spoke in support of his application. He said that when costing the proposal, there had been complications with the ground conditions and this had resulted in a more modestly revised application.

Councillor Beckett thought it to be a very good plan which would fit in well in the area; he duly proposed that the Officer's recommendation for approval be supported.

Councillor Rouse seconded the motion, commenting that the application had only come to Committee because Mr Every's wife was a District Councillor. It was a straightforward application and should be approved. When put to the vote,

It was resolved unanimously:

That planning application reference 18/00137/FUL be APPROVED subject to the recommended conditions as set out in the Officer's report.

185. PLANNING PERFORMANCE REPORT – FEBRUARY 2018

The Planning Manager presented a report (S280, previously circulated) which summarised the planning performance figures for February 2018.

The Department had received a total of 145 applications during February which was a 23% decrease on February 2017 (188) and a 15.2% decrease from January 2018 (171).

Targets were being achieved with the exception of 'Other', and the Planning Manager said that she was looking to improve on this one. The targets set by the Authority were much higher than those from Government and this was to provide the best possible customer service.

There had been 3 valid appeals received and 7 appeals decided. The majority of the appeals had been dismissed and the Planning Manager reiterated that work on appeals was taking up a great deal of Officer time.

Members were reminded that the Public Enquiry would commence on 17th April and run for six days.

It was resolved:

That the Planning Performance report for February 2018 be noted.

The meeting closed at 3.40pm.