



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 September 2019 at 3.15pm.

PRESENT

Cllr Bill Hunt (Chairman)
Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith
Cllr Sue Austen
Cllr David Brown
Cllr Lavinia Edwards
Cllr Simon Harries (Substitute for Cllr Matt Downey)
Cllr Alec Jones
Cllr Josh Schumann
Cllr Lisa Stubbs (Vice Chair)
Cllr John Trapp
Cllr Gareth Wilson

OFFICERS

Maggie Camp – Legal Services Manager
Angela Briggs – Planning Team Leader
Janis Murfet – Democratic Services Officer
Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager
Angela Tyrrell – Senior Legal Assistant
Russell Wignall – Legal Assistant

IN ATTENDANCE

Approximately 8 members of the public

26. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Matt Downey.

It was noted that Cllr Harries would substitute for Cllr Downey for the duration of the meeting.

27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

28. **MINUTES**

Further to Minute No. 21 (18/01435/OUM – Site East of Clare House Stables, Stetchworth Road, Dullingham), the Chairman said that Cllr Alan Sharp had requested that two comments be added to the draft Minutes, one made by Councillor Wilson and the other by Councillor Ambrose Smith:

- Councillor Wilson – *‘The point was also made that if planning permission was refused and the application was appealed, the Authority could potentially be liable for costs and the Committee did not have the budget for this.’*
- Councillor Ambrose Smith – *‘They built on agricultural land in Littleport, so what was the difference with building on stud land.’*

A paper showing the proposed amendments was tabled and Councillors Wilson and Ambrose Smith confirmed that they were content for the comments to be included in the Minutes. Whereupon,

It was resolved:

That subject to the agreed amendments, the Minutes of the meeting held on 7th August 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

29. **CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman said he was pleased to announce that Richard Fitzjohn, Senior Planning Officer, had recently become a father.

On behalf of the Committee he congratulated Mr Fitzjohn and his partner on the birth of their son.

30. **19/00519/FUL – 51 CANNON STREET, LITTLE DOWNHAM, CB6 2SS**

Angela Briggs, Planning Team Leader, presented a report (U52, previously circulated) which sought consent to retain and refurbish the dwelling at 51 Cannon Street and the construction of four 3 bedroom dwellings, three to the rear and one dwelling fronting White Horse Lane (adjacent to No.7).

Members noted that drawings had been amended; in Condition 1 version F, PL101 and PL102 had been superseded by G. The garage elevations PL02-05 had been superseded by A. If the application was granted permission, conditions 8, 14 and 22 would be revised to reflect the amendments.

The site comprised a vacant plot of land once used as an orchard. It was located just to the south of Little Downham’s development boundary, which also formed the boundaries of the rear gardens of 49A, 49 and 51

Cannon Street. These neighbouring dwellings occupied elevated positions in respect of the application site, with downward sloping mature gardens and hedging growth. Part of the eastern boundary of the site was demarcated by White Horse Lane; to the south was open farmland and to the west of the site were small scale agricultural buildings and residential ancillary structures.

It was noted that the application had been called in to Planning Committee by Councillor Anna Bailey, due to its planning history and concerns from neighbours.

A number of illustrations were displayed at the meeting, including a site location plan, aerial photograph, layout of the proposal, elevations, photograph of the site and a view of the street scene.

Members were reminded of the site history, and the Planning Team Leader reiterated that this was a relevant matter. The first application was submitted in 2017 for 7 dwellings (Ref: 17/00667/FUL); the application was refused and appealed. The appeal was dismissed on the grounds as set out in paragraph 7.3 of the Committee Report;

Following the Inspector's decision, another application (18/00775/FUL) was submitted in 2018 for 6 dwellings. It was called in to Planning Committee and deferred to allow further discussions regarding the Ecological Surveys, with particular regard to the alleged presence of Great Crested Newts on or near the site. The application was brought back to Planning Committee in February 2019, where it was refused, against Officer recommendation. The reasons for refusal were detailed in paragraph 7.4 of the Committee report. It was noted that an appeal was currently pending for this application.

The current application amended the proposal by removing the two plots fronting Cannon Street, retaining and refurbishing the host dwelling (51 Cannon Street) and included additional ecological reports to cover Great Crested Newts and Reptiles.

The main considerations in the determination of the application were:

- Principle of Development;
- Residential Amenity;
- Visual Impact;
- Highway Safety & Parking;
- Trees;
- Ecology; and
- Flood Risk & Drainage.

In terms of the sustainability of the site, Members noted that it was adjacent to the Little Downham Development Framework with good pedestrian links to the village. It was therefore considered to be in a sustainable location.

In connection with residential amenity, the scheme had been amended to remove two of the plots fronting Cannon Street. More space would be created between the existing buildings and 51 Cannon Street would be retained. There would be sufficient separation distances to avoid overbearing and the development would not cause any significantly harmful overlooking.

The Planning Team Leader reiterated that Plot 5 remained unchanged and was not a reason for refusal on the last application in relation to residential amenity.

It was considered that with regard to visual amenity, the proposal offered improvements to the scheme by the deletion of the two dwellings along the Cannon Street frontage and the retention of the existing host dwelling. The rear three plots would utilise the site topography with a minimal impact on the street scene and with existing built form on either side of the site, housing would not appear incongruous. Plot 5 appeared as a traditional in-fill and related well with the surrounding dwellings.

Speaking next of highway safety, the Planning Team Leader said the Local Highways Authority (LHA) had raised no concerns regarding the proposal. The scheme would be served by a new access from Cannon Street, and there would be sufficient parking and turning on-site. The site provided policy-compliant levels of off-street parking and visitor parking was shown on the plans; it was therefore considered that the development would not increase on-street car parking along Cannon Street.

The Committee was reminded that ecology was an important consideration and that the previous refusal had included a reason based on the uncertain adequacy of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal submitted with that application. This application included a Reptile Survey and a Great Crested Newt & Reptile Impact Assessment dated June 2019. It was noted that environmental DNA (eDNA) was found in two nearby ponds which concluded positive for Great Crested Newts, although none were found during the survey. The proposal would also provide on-site habitat enhancements including a nature corridor, rough wildflower grass, hibernacula, pond and wood pile. An additional recommendation would be the inclusion of 'Hedgehog Highways' in the bottom of fences of the gardens in the south of the site. The Wildlife Trust had accepted the conclusions of both surveys and raised no objections to the proposed biodiversity enhancement scheme.

The application was also accompanied by an Arboricultural Report and having assessed it, the Council's Trees Officer concluded that it was acceptable. He recommended a condition requiring soft landscaping to include some historical reference to the orchard; a condition had therefore been appended and amended to include a reference to the apple trees.

Members noted that the site was located within Flood Zone 1. No comments had been received from the Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA), although the previous drainage scheme, considered by the Planning Inspector, was adequate. A condition was recommended to ensure that a full drainage strategy (including foul water drainage) was submitted and it would be scrutinised by the LLFA to ensure that it could be implemented.

Referring to other material matters, the Planning Team Leader said that no comments had been received from the County Council in respect of mineral safeguarding as it was not considered commercially viable to extract the mineral from this relatively small site. A Construction Environment Management Plan would be secured by condition, as would an Energy Strategy.

The County Council Archaeology Team had identified the application site as having archaeological significance and had recommended a condition to require a Written Scheme of Investigation. A condition was appended to ensure this was submitted to safeguard any potential archaeology on the site.

The layout plan had been amended to show the turning heads clear of the car parking to allow refuse vehicles to be able to turn and exit in forward gear.

The Planning Team Leader concluded her presentation by saying that the issues raised in the previous refusal had been overcome and the application was therefore recommended for approval.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Keith Aggett, accompanied by Mr Francis Cusick, addressed the Committee and made the following remarks:

- He was also representing Sheila Mott;
- He had spoken at the Planning meeting in February and he felt this application was not materially different to the previous one;
- It was out of character and would harden the transition between the edge of the village and the open countryside;
- It would be harmful to traffic and wildlife and would cause flooding issues;
- Numbers 37 and 39 were mitigated by hedging, but contrary to what was stated in paragraph 4.1 of the Committee report, there was not a single hedge on the subject site;
- At February's Committee meeting the principle objection was that this was backland development. It was strongly opposed by the local residents;
- There was no demonstrable need for these dwellings as work had commenced on 27 other dwellings in the village;
- There were factual errors in all the incarnations of the application and none had been challenged;
- The presumption in favour of sustainable development should not apply. Quoting from the Planning Inspector's Appeal Decision, he said that the area behind 51 Cannon Street '*currently softens the edge of*

the village and provides a visual bridge between the more built up street scene of Cannon Street and the open countryside beyond. Thus its undeveloped appearance contributes positively to the character of the area by providing a soft and informal transition from village to countryside'

- The adverse impacts of the scheme would still outweigh the benefits and due consideration should be given to the longer term. Members should support the views of the local community.

Councillor Harries asked Mr Aggett to point out which factual errors in the Officer's report had caused the most difficulty. Mr Aggett replied that the hedges were not there and there had been much discussion on sustainability; it was the view of the local community that the site must be properly sustainable.

Councillor Jones had noted during the site visit that not much of the orchard was left and he asked when the trees had been removed. He also wished to know how long the storage units had been there. Mr Cusick said that in both cases, it was 2 – 3 years ago, when the site was purchased by the developer.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Jason Constable, applicant, addressed the Committee and made the following comments:

- He thanked the Case Officer for all her help with the application;
- At the Committee meeting in February 2019, approval had been lost by one vote;
- Since then the issues raised in the surveys had been addressed and the two proposed properties at the front of the site had been removed and he had gone above and beyond to meet the requirements;
- Some of the things said by the previous speakers were incorrect – there is backland development within the area;
- He was proud of being Ely born and bred. Most of his workers were too, and they lived in the area. Some of his contractors were from Little Downham and by having local workers, it meant they did not have to travel very far. This was unlike national developers whose workforce tended to be from outside the area;
- This project would put money back into the area. He had gone to the extreme to set the site out so it would create habitats and soften the edges of the village, and to please everyone.

Councillor Harries said he understood Mr Constable's point about using local resources but noted that objectors to the scheme said it was inappropriate development and the houses were not needed. Mr Constable replied that this was their view; he believed there was demand for houses and

he was putting his own money into the scheme and would not flog a dead horse. Little Downham was a pretty village and a desirable location but it had been ruined over 30 years by infill in the centre.

Councillor Brown asked Mr Constable if he would withdraw the ongoing appeal on the previous application if this application was approved; Mr Constable said he might give it consideration.

Councillor Wilson sought clarification regarding the boundaries between the houses and the Planning Team Leader explained that the vertical black lines shown on the Powerpoint slide were sectional, not boundary lines. Mr Constable then stated which properties had fences and which were open, and added that post and rail fencing would define the boundaries.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Marilyn Oldfield, Chairman of Little Downham Parish Council, addressed the Committee and made the following points:

- She was not going to repeat the Parish Council's previous comments, but its concerns had not been allayed by the changes to the application;
- The main concern was density and the development behind Cannon Street;
- There would be excessive vehicle movements; the land had been sprayed and shrubs and undergrowth had been cleared;
- The remaining fruit trees are dying;
- The wildlife had now probably gone;
- The Parish Council was aware of the need for housing but this backland development was not essential to the village.

Councillor Ambrose Smith thought the houses on the lower portion of the site seemed very nicely situated and that they would attract considerable interest. She also felt that there needed to be a measure of control over the countryside, with the grass being cut and the trees trimmed. Councillor Oldfield agreed, but said that the area had been decimated. Little Downham was a very desirable area, but the bus services were not good and this proposal would increase traffic levels.

Councillor Harries said he did not know Little Downham and sought clarification regarding the current use of the application site. Having walked over the land on the site visit, he noted that it was close to being wasteland and the apple trees were in a bad condition. He asked Councillor Oldfield whether she and the other objectors were suggesting that the orchard was sustainable and saying that the state of land was the fault of the developer. Councillor Oldfield replied that the slide of the aerial view showed it had once been a market gardening area with vegetable poly-tunnels.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Anna Bailey, Ward Member for Downham, addressed the Committee and made the following comments:

- She welcomed some of the improvements, especially the house being retained, the removal of one unit and the assessments. However, she remained concerned about Plot 5;
- To the rear of the properties on Cannon Street were gardens and hedging, which give way to fields and this area was on a natural ridge with open views to Ely;
- As the local Member, she remained concerned that this proposal was backland development;
- She understood the Officer's report and that the application had been looked at on its merits and she noted that there would be a net gain in biodiversity, as required by the NPPF;
- There had previously been an issue with the retention of orchard trees in private gardens. Condition 19 dealt with soft landscaping, but she did not think that it adequately addressed the issue. She thought that if the application was granted permission, there should be protection in perpetuity;
- The Planning Inspector's comments and concerns had not been addressed; Plots 2, 3, and 4 presented a hard edge and would cause significant harm;
- With Plot 5 being two storey, it would be overbearing because of the topography and would be out of keeping with the character of the area and the adjacent bungalow;
- The proposal was contrary to Policies ENV1 and ENV2.

The Planning Team Leader reminded the Committee that Conditions 8 and 22 addressed biodiversity and soft landscaping issues.

The Planning Manager added that Condition 19 required a scheme of maintenance for a minimum period of 10 years from last occupation, so Members could review this and make amendments to the time period.

Councillor Trapp asked Councillor Bailey if she considered No. 5 White Horse Lane to be backfill and she replied that White Horse Lane was a drove in its own right.

Councillor Harries felt there had to be a balance. He saw a natural edge to the village and good views which could mask and mitigate any housing but on the other hand, the people of Little Downham did not want housing there.

Councillor Bailey responded, saying the scheme would set a precedent and the location was outside the development envelope. This was the natural edge of the village and the community wanted to retain it.

At this point, the Planning Manager interjected to read from a section of the Planning Inspector's report (paragraph 11 refers): *'Nevertheless, there is built development either side of the appeal site with farm buildings to the south west and White Horse Lane to the east ... Thus, housing within the central part of the appeal site need not appear as an incongruous intrusion of development into the countryside.'*

The Chairman queried whether there was only one visitor parking space and the Planning Team leader confirmed this to be correct. He then asked about the responses from the 14 neighbouring properties and was advised that all were against the proposal.

Councillor Schumann drew Members' attention to paragraphs 33 and 35 of the Inspector's report which suggested that significant weight should be given to the conflict with Policies ENV1 and ENV2 of the Local Plan and paragraphs 17 and 58 of the National Planning Policy Framework. With that in mind, he asked why it had not been given significant weight in respect of the current application. The Planning Manager replied that the previous application was for a larger number of dwellings whereas this one was for less and it was felt that the conflict had been overcome.

Councillor Wilson wished to know who would be responsible for maintaining the pond and landscaping; the Planning Team Leader stated it would fall to the residents of the properties. Condition 22 required details of a biodiversity management plan which would outline an overall suitable strategy for the site.

Councillor Harries said there seemed to be real polarisation regarding the scheme. On the one hand he did not want to refuse a sensitively designed scheme, but on the other, residents were strongly against it.

Councillor Schumann agreed that this was a very difficult, finely balanced case. However, he believed that paragraph 11 of the Planning Inspector's report provided a decision in that the development would erode the natural edge of the village. In the light of this, he was minded to refuse the application.

A number of Members expressed their support for the scheme.

Councillor Ambrose Smith believed it to be sensitively designed.

Councillor Wilson noted he rarely saw a proposal with such large gardens and the biodiversity issues had been addressed and while there was a beautiful view, the loss of a view was not a material consideration. The Inspector raised concerns with much more development and the developer had reduced the number of dwellings. The proposed houses would be within

the natural boundary and there would be lots of gaps between the proposed dwellings. He felt a refusal would be difficult to justify at appeal.

Councillor Trapp remarked that the survey showed eDNA for Great Crested Newts, so maybe the site was not so desolate. The issue of backfill was reduced by the development along White Horse Lane. On the whole, he was in favour of granting approval.

Taking up on Councillor Wilson's point, Councillor Schumann stated there was an appeal already lodged for this site and he believed that refusing this application would hold very little risk. If an appeal was lodged and was unreasonable, it would be found at that stage. The point being contested was that backland development at the back of the site was unchanged.

Councillor Harries said he would vote for approval, but he was not convinced by the biodiversity arrangements. He wondered how anyone could be sure that residents would maintain the landscaping and how this would be monitored. The Planning Manager assured Members that Enforcement would investigate if complaints were received in relation to non-compliance with conditions.

Councillor Wilson said that in Haddenham, land needing maintenance was passed to the Parish Council and he thought the Parish Council would be better placed to deal with the pond. The Planning Manager replied that it would not normally be done for a small development such as this.

The Chairman supported Councillor Schumann's views, saying that the character of the area was being threatened; the undeveloped edge was a positive feature and the application would have an adverse impact on the countryside. There were already problems with car parking and this would cause congestion as only 2 spaces per dwelling and 1 visitor space would make it difficult to park. It was overdevelopment and to increase the load here would be irresponsible.

It was proposed by Councillor Schumann and seconded by the Chairman that the Officer's recommendation for approval be rejected and that the application be refused.

When put to the vote, the motion was declared carried, there being 6 votes for and 5 votes against.

It was resolved:

That planning application reference 19/00519/FUL be REFUSED for the following reasons:

- The scheme would be contrary to the Development Plan;
- It would be out of keeping and would significantly harm the character and appearance of the undeveloped area, eroding the open land to the edge of the village.

At this point, Councillor Schumann offered his apologies to the Chairman, saying that he did not like having to leave a meeting early, but today he would have to do so. He left the Chamber at 4.35pm.

31. 19/00544/FUL – SITE SOUTH OF 7 WHITE HORSE LANE, LITTLE DOWNHAM

Angela Briggs, Planning Team Leader, presented a report (reference U53, previously circulated) which sought consent to erect one 3 bedroom dwelling on land adjacent to No. 7 White Horse Lane. The dwelling would be 1½ storeys with a single storey wing to the rear, and accessed from White Horse Lane. There would be off-street parking for two cars, bin storage and the proposal would incorporate on-site biodiversity enhancements, comprising a hibernaculum and a wood pile area as part of a comprehensive soft landscaping scheme.

Members were asked to note a typographical error in paragraph 7.30 of the report; a condition requiring a CEMP was not included as it was considered too onerous for a single dwelling.

The site was located south of No. 7 White Horse Lane, just outside of the development framework of Little Downham and outside the Mineral Safeguarding Area; it was accessed from White Horse Lane, a single track lane, and it sloped down from Cannon Street. It was characterised by detached dwellings on either side of the track and had variety in terms of design and appearance.

It was noted that the application had been called in to Committee by Councillor Anna Bailey due to the concerns raised by neighbours.

A number of illustrations were displayed at the meeting, including a map, aerial view, the proposal in the south east of the site, elevations, proposed floor plans, and photographs of the site taken from various viewpoints.

The Planning Team Leader stated that there was no significant planning history for this site alone. However, as the site formed part of a broader development proposal, the history of the larger site was relevant. The current application included additional ecological reports to cover Great Crested Newts and Reptiles.

The main considerations in the determination of the application were:

- Principle of Development;
- Residential Amenity;
- Visual Impact;
- Highway Safety & Parking;
- Trees;
- Ecology; and

- Flood Risk & Drainage.

Members noted that the Council could not demonstrate 5 years of housing land supply and therefore the tilted balance was triggered and the proposal had to be carefully assessed against the three over-arching objectives: social, economic and environmental roles.

With regard to the social role, the proposal was adjacent to the Little Downham Development Framework, with good pedestrian links to the village. It was therefore considered to be in a sustainable location. In terms of the economic role, it would create short term employment opportunities during the construction phases and in connection with the environmental role, the proposal would bring forward on-site biodiversity enhancements.

Speaking next of residential amenity, the Planning Team Leader stated that the proposed dwelling would be positioned roughly in line with the adjacent dwelling at No. 7 White Horse Lane and centrally towards the front of the site. It would be 13 metres from the flank wall of No. 7 White Horse Lane and 13 metres from the frontage of 5 White Horse Lane. This was more than the 10 metres recommended figure stated in the Design Guide SPD and related to the window-to-window relationship. It was acknowledged that the outlook of Nos. 4 and 5 White Horse Lane would be altered by the proposed dwelling. However, it was considered that the proposed dwelling would not be over-bearing and would not cause significant over-looking. Members were reminded that the dwelling did not form part of the reasons for refusal on the previous application (Ref: 18/0775/FUL) and the design had not changed.

It was considered that in relation to visual amenity, the dwelling was acceptable. It would not detract from the character of White Horse Lane and would be a traditional design in keeping with this part of the village. It would also not be dominant within the street scene.

The Highways Authority had not made any specific comments on this proposal, although the dwelling was acknowledged in the partner application reference 19/00519/FUL. In connection with parking, there was sufficient space for two cars to be parked on site. Turning would require vehicles to back out onto the Lane but this was an existing situation and it was not considered reasonable to refuse the application on this basis.

In terms of ecology and trees, this application included a Great Crested Newt and Reptile Impact Assessment, with a Reptile Survey; the latter concluded that no reptiles were found. There would be on-site biodiversity improvements including a hibernacula and wood pile for reptiles along the western boundary of the site and 'hedgehog highways' were also encouraged into the bottom of fences of gardens in the south of the site to improve connectivity. This would tie in with the wildlife corridor proposed on the larger site, adjacent.

The application was accompanied by an Arboricultural Report due to the fruit trees on the site. The Council's Trees Officer had assessed the report and concluded that it was acceptable, subject to a condition to include fruit trees within the soft landscaping plan.

Conditions were recommended securing a biodiversity management plan, biodiversity implementation, tree protection, soft landscaping (site-wide and for the biodiversity enhancement areas) and maintenance, boundary treatments, and recommendations from the Reptile Survey and Great Crested Newts and Reptile Impact Assessment. Members were reminded that if permission was granted, work had to stop immediately if Great Crested Newts were found and the relevant licence would have to be obtained from Natural England.

The Committee noted that no comments had been received from the Local Lead Flood Authority. The previous larger scheme considered by the Planning Inspectorate (application reference 17/00667/FUL), had concluded that the submitted drainage system was adequate, but a condition was recommended to request details of surface water and foul water drainage.

With reference to other material matters, the Planning Team Leader said that no comments had been received from the County Council in respect of mineral safeguarding. A restriction on construction times and the burning of waste on site would be conditioned. An Energy Strategy would also be secured by condition so as to be consistent with the larger site.

The County Council Archaeology Team had identified the application site as having archaeological significance and had recommended a condition to require a Written Scheme of Investigation. A condition was appended to ensure that this was submitted to safeguard any potential archaeology on the site.

In connection with the provision of bins, the plans indicated an adequate waste collection area for the proposed dwelling, to the front of the site.

The Planning Team Leader concluded her presentation by saying that the proposal would act as a transition between the rural and the urban. The benefits of the scheme were considered to outweigh the level of harm caused, and the application was therefore recommended for approval.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Francis Cusick addressed the Committee and made the following points:

- He was speaking on behalf of local residents and they were pleading with the Committee to reject the application;
- The site had always been agricultural and orchard land, and it was outside the development plan;
- The surveys were done outside of the framework time and they should have been done by a competent individual at the appropriate times;
- The house proposed was too large and would cause overshadowing;

- There was no on-street parking available and no parking for family or friends. The property would generate a minimum of 3 vehicles;
- In stormy weather, water ran down the street like a river; this caused a flood risk for No's 4 and 5 White Horse Lane;
- White Horse Lane was in a poor state of repair, it was not suitable for construction vehicles and it could not be accessed by the bin lorries;
- This was the third application and he believed the developers were treating residents and the Council with contempt.

Councillor Ambrose Smith asked how many parking spaces Mr Cusick had. He replied that he had 3 spaces and a garage.

Councillor Trapp noted that a 'special' bin lorry was used for refuse collections, and he said he did not think that one extra house would make much difference. Mr Cusick responded by saying that the access onto Cannon Street was both difficult and dangerous.

The Chairman asked Mr Cusick if he was saying that another building in that location would increase the flow of water down the road when it rained heavily. Mr Cusick replied that it would, and would pose an increased risk of flooding for No's 4 and 5 White Horse Lane.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Jason Constable addressed the Committee. He said there was no much else he could say in respect of this application except that there would be no flood risk because percolation tests would be carried out as part of the build and the drainage would be built in accordance with what the Structural Engineer states is necessary. Most of the houses on this road were also part of the original grounds of the houses on Cannon Street.

Taking up on the point about flooding, Councillor Trapp asked what happened when it rained heavily. Mr Constable replied that the water soaked into the ground. The percolation tests would be done and then storm crates would be put in to lessen the risk of flooding. There would be no more risk of flooding than there is now.

Councillor Jones wished to know what would happen about the corridor at the back of the development and the protection for wildlife if the application was granted permission. Mr Constable said that there would be two corridors, along with a hibernacula and a woodpile.

In response to a question from Councillor Trapp about construction traffic accessing the site, Mr Constable said it would make sense to use the entrance by 51 Cannon Street. In doing so, it would keep traffic along White Horse Lane to a minimum.

Councillor Jones next asked Mr Constable why he had submitted two separate planning applications and was told that it was on the advice of his architect; he also wished to see a return on his asset.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Marilyn Oldfield, Chairman of Little Downham Parish Council, addressed the Committee and made the following points:

- She would not repeat the Parish Council's concerns as they were already well documented;
- Their concerns had not been allayed, as vehicles would still not be able to park or turn;
- Being realistic, there could be some form of development here, but the Lane was quite steep. The maximum should be a single storey dwelling so that it fitted in and did not overshadow the neighbouring properties;
- The proposed house would dominate the area and block out the views of No. 5.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Anna Bailey, Ward Member for Downham, addressed the Committee and made the following comments:

- She had already outlined her concerns last time;
- She accepted the principle of development but shared the Parish Council's concerns;
- The topography was such that the proposal would have an overbearing nature on No. 7 and it would be out of keeping with No. 5;
- She believed it would be reasonable to have some development on the site.

Councillor Trapp queried the topography of the site as it was his impression that 5 White Horse Lane was rather high and he wondered how the height of the proposed dwelling would compare to that of No. 5. The Planning Team Leader replied that No's 4 and 5 were set lower than the proposed house and both would be two storeys high.

Councillor Brown stated that if this was a standalone application, it would not be anywhere near Planning Committee.

Councillor Jones did not think the dwelling would be much higher than a bungalow and that given the distance between No's 4 and 5, any overbearing would be minimalised; he was therefore in favour of granting approval.

It was duly proposed by Councillor Brown and seconded by Councillor Trapp that the Officer's recommendation for approval be supported. When put to the vote, the motion was declared carried, there being 8 votes for and 2 votes against.

It was resolved:

That planning application reference 19/00544/FUL be APPROVED subject to the recommended conditions as set out in the Officer's report.

32. PLANNING PERFORMANCE REPORTS – JULY 2019

The Planning Manager presented a report (U54, previously circulated) which summarised the planning performance figures for July 2019.

Members were reminded that the figures were set by the Authority rather than being national targets.

It was noted that the Department had received a total of 210 applications during July 2019, which was a 1% increase on July 2018 (207) and a 23% increase from June 2019 (171).

The Planning Manager said that 7 valid appeals had been received, (including one for 51 Cannon Street, Little Downham) and 3 had been decided, with 2 having been dismissed and 1 allowed.

Members noted that an Enforcement Notice had been served on a barber's shop in Littleport in connection with the fitting of a Upvc window. This was a follow up Notice which had been issued to cover all eventualities and it was possible that, in time, the case might proceed to prosecution if the Notice was not adhered to.

In response to questions from Councillors Trapp and Wilson, and for the benefit of newer members of the Committee, the Planning Manager explained that validating an application occurred at the beginning of the process and determination at the end. Members also noted that 'DIS' stood for discharge of condition applications, and 'NMA' was non material amendments.

Whereupon,

It was resolved:

That the Planning Performance Report for July 2019 be noted.

33. PLANNING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY – 6 MONTH FEEDBACK

The Planning Manager presented a report (U55, previously circulated) which provided an overview of the responses received to the Planning Customer Satisfaction Survey carried between January and July 2019.

It was noted that the questions were set by the Planning Advisory Service and the report had been put together by Lucy Flintham, Office Team Leader, Development Services.

1736 questionnaires were emailed within the six month period to agents, applicants and members of the public and 215 responses were received, equating to a 12% response rate.

The report set out the positive and negative feedback received and the Planning Manager said the adverse comments would be discussed at team meetings in order to find ways to improve the service.

The Action Plan, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, gave details of the actions to be taken, progress, the target completion and the date of completion. It was noted that if any processes changed, the people who had highlighted issues would be informed.

Members would receive future Survey results every six months and they would also be shared with agents.

The Chairman said that Members were very lucky to have such a very high quality of Officers in the Authority, and he offered his thanks to the Planning Team. He concluded by acknowledging that rather a long time had been taken over the first of today's applications, but it was entirely right to give it full service and examination.

It was resolved:

That the 6 month feedback from the Planning Customer Satisfaction Survey be noted.

The meeting closed at 5.17pm.