



East Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a Meeting of the Planning Committee

Held at The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely, CB7 4EE at 2:00pm on
Wednesday 4 June 2025

Present:

Cllr Chika Akinwale
Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith
Cllr Christine Colbert
Cllr Lavinia Edwards
Cllr Mark Goldsack (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Keith Horgan (substitute)
Cllr Bill Hunt (Chair)
Cllr James Lay
Cllr Alan Sharp
Cllr John Trapp
Cllr Ross Trent
Cllr Christine Whelan

Officers:

Patrick Adams – Senior Democratic Services Officer
Maggie Camp – Director Legal
David Morren – Strategic Planning and Development Management Manager
Dan Smith – Planning Team Leader

In attendance:

Justin Bainton – Agent

ECDC Comms

1. Apologies and substitutions

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Martin Goodearl. Cllr Keith Horgan attended as a substitute for Cllr Goodearl.

2. Declarations of interest

Cllr Mark Goldsack declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in agenda item 5, 24/00924/RMM, as a County Councillor and a member of the Assets and Procurement Committee of the Cambridgeshire County Council, which discusses the business of the applicant. However, the Committee had not yet met and, having taken legal advice, he believed that he was able to participate in the debate and vote. However, he requested that his interest be noted.

Cllr Christine Whelan declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in agenda item 5, 24/00924/RMM, as a County Councillor, who had not been part of any discussions on this matter and had no predetermined views.

3. Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings held on 7 May 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

4. Chair's announcements

The Chair announced that Dan Smith, Planning Team Leader, was leaving the Council. He had worked for this authority for the last seven years and the Chair wished him all the best for the future.

5. 24/00924/RMM – Millstone Park, Newmarket Road, Burwell

Dan Smith, Planning Team Leader, presented a report (AA8, previously circulated) recommending approval for the layout, scale, appearance and landscaping of 61 dwellings on Millstone Park, Newmarket Road, Burwell. He explained that one of the planning conditions in Appendix 1 was unnumbered and did not have a paragraph providing a reason for the condition. The Committee agreed to give delegated powers to the officers to correct this.

Justin Bainton, agent for the applicant, made the following statement:

“This application has been submitted for a reserve matter scheme for 61 new homes at Millstone Park, Burwell. This proposes to deliver a thoughtfully designed and policy compliant phase of development. The homes will sit as part of an already approved outline scheme and bring forward high-quality, well-planned housing that responds directly to the Council’s housing objectives. One of the most important points to highlight is the housing mix and affordability, all 61 homes in this phase will be affordable, significantly exceeding the policy requirement of 40%. There will be a mix of 1, 2, 3 and 4 bed homes, offering options for individuals, couples and families. The Council’s strategic housing team have confirmed that the proposed mix aligns with the local need in Burwell and the wider district. That includes a substantial proportion of shared ownership of 30%, helping more people to move on to the housing ladder. This over delivery of affordable housing represents a lasting benefit to the local community at a time when there is a need for genuinely affordable housing.

“In terms of design, this is a high-quality scheme, with careful attention given to layout, landscaping and street character. Homes have been designed in a traditional style that are laid out along attractive tree-lined streets, open spaces and play provision. Properties along the eastern edge have a more informal character, responding positively to the rural setting and landscape context. At a density of around 28 homes per hectare, excluding the large open space to the east, the phasing represents a low density, landscape led approach, suitable for its location. It provides an effective transition between the more compact earlier phases in the countryside to the east, without compromising

the overall housing delivery. Importantly, no objections have been raised by statutory consultees. The local highways authority, lead local flood authority, environmental health, Anglian Water and others all find the proposals to be acceptable. Minor layout comments raised during the consultation process have been addressed through amendments. The scheme has been adjusted, with close collaboration with officers, to resolve detailed design points. The drainage strategy has been reviewed and accepted. The landscape scheme is well integrated and the biodiversity enhancements include native planting and habitat features that will improve the ecology value of the site. The open space will also provide distinct areas of formal equipped play space and connecting footpaths. The scheme also completes the central village green. All homes will be constructed to meet current building regulations and have high efficiency standards, including the use of air source heat pumps.

“In summary this application delivers much needed housing, through a well-designed landscape led scheme that aligns to local plan policy. It provides a strong mix of house types, responds positively to the site setting and has drawn no objections from statutory consultees. We fully support the officer’s recommendation to approve and hope that members will do the same.”

The Chair invited Members to ask questions to the agent.

Cllr Chika Akinwale welcomed the plan to make all the housing in the development affordable. It was noted that 40% of the homes on the other parts of the settlement would be affordable. She asked whether there would be accessible play areas that all the children living on the site could use. Justin Bainton confirmed that there would be a toddler’s play area, a children’s play area and a youth play area for the residents on this part of the development. Additional play areas would be available in the wider settlement. He explained that the exact design of play areas had not yet been agreed but the equipment would be accessible to disabled children.

It was noted that a travel plan would be provided for the entire settlement.

It was unclear when development on the site was likely to commence.

Cllr John Trapp asked why the site had tandem parking, instead of side by side parking. Justin Bainton explained that tandem parking was the most efficient way of designing the site, it was used in other areas of the development and it complied with the planning standards. Cllr Christine Colbert questioned whether there was sufficient parking for the properties on the site, as some households had three or four cars. Justin Bainton explained that it was a planning requirement to provide two parking spaces per unit and this was consistent with both local and national guidance. He reported that ecology enhancement was one of the aims of the scheme and it could consider hedgehog preservation.

Cllr Alan Sharp acknowledged that the verges were not going to be adopted by the local highways authority and he asked if the housing provider would take over responsibility for this, as residents in affordable housing might not be able

to avoid a service charge for this. Justin Bainton agreed to report this concern to the applicant.

In response to Cllr Sharp, Justin Bainton explained that Section 106 payments had been made for the construction of Footpath and cycleway to the south of the development. Work on this transport link was now the responsibility of the relevant local authority.

Cllr James Lay expressed concerns regarding the efficiency of air source heat pumps and Cllr John Trapp suggested that ground source heat pumps should have been considered. Justin Bainton replied that air source heat pumps were compatible with the proposed units and had been successfully installed at similar sites.

Cllr Bill Hunt suggested that the housing density was too high, and this meant that two homes only had one parking space. Justin Bainton replied that those homes were the smallest one bed units on the site and so only had a single parking space allocated.

It was noted that the two local members had made no objections to the application and that the officer's recommendation was for approval.

The Chair invited the Planning Team Leader to respond to the comments raised. He explained that 25% of the first 100 units in phase 1 had a minimum requirement of 25% affordable houses, whilst the rest of the homes on the site had a minimum requirement of 40% affordable houses. This application proposed to greatly exceed the minimum requirement by having 100% affordable homes.

Members were invited to ask questions to the officer.

In reply to Cllr John Trapp, the Planning Team Leader explained that the open space had not been included for the calculation of housing density, which was consistent with the other phases in the whole development. He added that the application complied with the Council's Supplementary Planning Document on car parking. The Council's policies did not prohibit tandem parking and this had been agreed for other sites.

In reply to Cllr Keith Horgan, the Planning Team Leader explained that whilst the plans did not use all the available land allocated for housing, this was of no consequence as the layout of the scheme, its public spaces and the housing design were all of high quality.

In reply to Cllr James Lay, the Planning Team Leader explained that the number of houses being proposed in the application did not exceed the number in the master plan for this specific site. The Committee may have to make future decisions with regards to homes on the wider site, taking into account pressures on current infrastructure.

In reply to Cllr Chika Akinwale, the Planning Team Leader reported that prior to the 101st dwelling, land to the south of the development would have to be handed over to the parish council for use as a sports pitch and a sport hub.

In reply to Cllr Christine Colbert, the Planning Team Leader reported that the Council had a hedgehog recovery strategy and this would be taken into consideration as part of the scheme's biodiversity strategy. The County Council would need to decide whether it would be prepared to adopt roads with trees, as these would require maintenance.

In reply to Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith, the Planning Team Leader confirmed that the small blocks on the plan were sheds, which were primarily there for cycle storage.

The Committee moved into debate.

Cllr Mark Goldsack stated that the application complied with the Council's planning policies and so he would be voting in favour of the application. Cllr Chika Akinwale and Cllr Lavinia Edwards agreed with Cllr Goldsack.

Cllr John Trapp criticised the design of the application, which he considered was not making the best use of the available space. He stated that he would not be supporting the application.

Cllr Keith Horgan suggested that whilst improvements could arguably be made to the design of the site, this was not a sufficient reason to hold up the development by refusing planning permission. Cllr James Lay agreed, stating that the Council would not be able to successfully defend its decision at appeal, should it decide to refuse the application.

Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith welcomed the fact that all the homes would be affordable housing, although she would prefer some of the dwellings to be bungalows, as many residents found stairs difficult.

Cllr Alan Sharp expressed his opposition to tandem parking and he hoped that the issue regarding who would be responsible for the maintenance of the grass verges and the trees on the site would be resolved. However, the application conformed to the Council's policies and so should be approved.

Cllr Mark Goldsack proposed and Cllr Chika Akinwale seconded the amended recommendation in the report. A vote was taken and with 11 votes in favour and 1 against.

It was resolved:

to **approve** planning application 24/00924/RMM, subject to the conditions set out in Appendix 1 and with delegated powers given to the Planning Team Leader to add a reason to the unnumbered planning condition listed between conditions 7 and 8 in Appendix 1 and to renumber the conditions accordingly.

6. Planning performance report – April 2025

David Morren, Strategic Planning and Development Management Manager, presented a report (AA9, previously circulated) summarising the performance of the Planning Department in April 2025.

In response to a question from Cllr Chika Akinwale, the Strategic Planning Development Management Manager explained that the Council had a negotiation protocol which it relied on when liaising with developers. Officers could request additional information but, in keeping with Government guidance, the Council did not want to unnecessarily delay the planning process.

The Strategic Planning Development Manager agreed to consider Cllr James Lay's suggestion that reasons for refusing planning applications be included in the report.

It was resolved unanimously:

That the Planning Performance Report for April 2025 be noted.

The meeting concluded at 3:30 pm.

Chair.....

Date.....