

Western Area Planning Committee

MINUTES OF THE WESTERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5 JULY 2023 AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Christopher Newbury (Chairman), Cllr Bill Parks (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Trevor Carbin, Cllr Andrew Davis, Cllr Edward Kirk, Cllr Pip Ridout, Cllr Jonathon Seed, Cllr David Vigar, Cllr Gordon King (Substitute) and Cllr Mike Sankey (Substitute)

Also Present:

Cllr Johnny Kidney

34 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Councillor Suzanne Wickham, who was substituted by Councillor Mike Sankey.
- Councillor Stewart Palmen, who was substituted by Councillor Gordon King.
- Councillor Ernie Clark

35 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 June 2023 were considered. Following which, it was:

Resolved:

The Committee approved and signed the minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 June 2023 as a true and correct record.

36 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

37 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no specific Chairman's announcements.

38 **Public Participation**

The Chairman explained the rules of public participation and the procedure to be followed at the meeting.

There were no questions or statements submitted by Councillors or members of the public.

39 **Planning Appeals and Updates**

The Chairman invited Kenny Green, Development Management Team Leader, to update the pending and determined appeals as per the appeals report included within the Agenda Pack.

The appeal decision for application PL/2021/07458 was highlighted and Members were given a brief overview of the history associated with the application site in which the applicant had continued unauthorised works despite Wiltshire Council refusing planning permission, having the subsequent appeal dismissed and there being an enforcement notice in place.

Councillor Trevor Carbin sought further information on a pending appeal within Staverton to which officers advised there continues to be backlog of appeals with the Planning Inspectorate. However, the committee was reassured that once start date letters are received, the Council's planning appeals team seeks to inform all stakeholders expeditiously.

Following which, it was:

Resolved:

The Committee noted the appeals report for the period 27 April 2023 to 23 June 2023.

40 **PL/2022/09147: Meadow View Farm, Bradford Leigh**

Public Participation

Kelly Pritchard, local resident, spoke in objection to the application.

Ann Haber, local resident, spoke in objection to the application.

Sarah Goodwin, local resident, spoke in objection to the application.

Tom Sadler, agent for the applicant, spoke in support of the application.

Councillor Bella Walker, Chair of South Wraxall Parish Council, spoke in objection to the application.

Councillor Steve Siddall, Chair of Holt Parish Council, spoke in objection to the application.

The Chairman highlighted that an error had been made on the opening page of the original report that had been circulated within the initial publication of the agenda which had mistakenly stated that the application site lay within Holt Parish. Following the initial publication of the committee agenda, the Local Member, Councillor Johnny Kidney, quickly brought this matter to the attention of officers who rectified the error and subsequently republished the agenda confirming that the site is located within the Parish of South Wraxall. Reference was also made to Appendix 1 of the report which included the appeal decision with regard to application PL/2021/11357.

The Senior Planning Officer, Steven Sims, introduced the report which recommended that the application for the erection of an agricultural worker's dwelling and associated works be approved subject to conditions.

It was noted that prior to the committee meeting, a Member site visit had been undertaken, with the case officer being present.

Key material considerations were identified including the existing and proposed agricultural practices and the applicant's submitted agricultural need; the principle of development/Wiltshire Council's 5-year housing land supply; the impact on the openness of the Green Belt; landscape visual impacts; impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents; drainage issues; highway issues; and ecology issues.

Attention was drawn to a late representation that had been submitted via email which contained comments and photos in respect of the use of the agricultural barns and fields forming part of the applicant's landholding.

Members of the Committee then had the opportunity to ask technical questions of the Planning Officer.

Details were sought on where the public right of way was located within the application site due to discrepancies identified between the Ordnance Survey Maps and Wiltshire Council's Rights of Way Team's Definitive Maps. Questions were also asked about how long calves would spend inside the barn after being born, the calving herd was questioned as well as planning history of the site. The recent appeal decision and the agricultural need for a worker's dwelling was also subject to Member questions and Members also queried what constituted "very special circumstances" in the context of the Green Belt.

Members of the public then had the opportunity to present their views to the Committee as detailed above.

The Unitary Division Member, Councillor Johnny Kidney, then spoken in objection to the application.

A debate followed where the harm caused by the loss of Green Belt land, inconsistencies between the information provided by the applicant and local residents in respect of the farming practices and activities taking place on the application site, and relevant planning history were discussed.

Other issues raised included site visits and opinions made by relevant officers and external consultants, and the subjective nature of what could be considered a "very special circumstances".

During the debate, a motion to refuse planning permission was moved by Councillor Trevor Carbin and was seconded by Councillor Pip Ridout. Following a vote on the motion, it was:

Resolved:

The Committee REFUSED planning permission, against officer recommendations, for the following reasons:

- 1) The NPPF sets out that very special circumstances will not exist unless the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm is clearly outweighed by other considerations. In this case, the other considerations in favour of the proposal would not clearly outweigh the harm identified. Therefore, the very special circumstances necessary to justify the proposal do not exist and the development is contrary to the development plan and the Framework in particular paragraphs 147, 148 and 149 of the Framework.
- 2) The proposed development, by reason of its siting, scale, design and visual impact, would detract from the rural character of the area and would result in the urbanisation of the rural landscape and diminution of the Green Belt. The proposed development therefore fails to conserve and where possible enhance landscape character or relate positively to its landscape setting and is contrary to Core Policies 51 and 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

41 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 3.00 - 4.50 pm)

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