

PLANNING COMMITTEE



WEDNESDAY, 16 OCTOBER 2024 - 1.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor C Marks (Vice-Chairman), Councillor S Imafidon and Councillor E Sennitt Clough, Councillor S Clark (Substitute) and Councillor P Murphy (Substitute)

APOLOGIES: Councillor D Connor (Chairman), Councillor I Benney, Councillor Mrs J French and Councillor P Hicks,

Officers in attendance: David Rowen (Development Manager), Tim Williams (Senior Development Officer), Stephen Turnbull (Legal Officer) and Jo Goodrum (Member Services & Governance Officer)

P41/24 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes of the 21 August and 18 September 2024 were signed and agreed as an accurate record.

P42/24 F/YR23/0245/O LAND SOUTH OF 250 DRYBREAD ROAD, WHITTLESEY ERECT UP TO 175 X DWELLINGS (OUTLINE APPLICATION WITH MATTERS COMMITTED IN RESPECT OF ACCESS)

Tim Williams presented the report to members and drew attention to the update report that had been circulated.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Georgina McCrae, on behalf of the applicant. Ms McCrae stated that the application was originally submitted in November 2022 and seeks outline planning permission for up to 175 new homes with access in detail and all other matters reserved for future consideration. She advised that over the last 2 years Allison Homes has worked constructively with officers and statutory consultees, including the Highways Authority, Natural England, the IDB, LLFA and the Town Council to reach the scheme before members today.

Ms McCrae stated as outlined in the officer's report and presentation the development will provide 175 new homes in a sustainable location including a minimum of 20% affordable housing helping to address the shortfall of affordable delivered within the District in recent years, already being in discussions with the Housing Officer to ensure the detailed proposals provide for up-to-date local need. She advised that 3.6 hectares of new publicly accessible open space will be created, which is equivalent to over one-third of the site and provides areas for play, habitat creation and allows a smooth transition into the open countryside to the north and east.

Ms McCrae expressed the view that there will be a significant net gain in on-site biodiversity delivered with a predicted 13.8% increase in on-site habitats and 90% increase in hedgerows. She made the point that there would be financial contributions of £2,000 per plot which will be payable towards the NHS, East of England Ambulance and education services.

Ms McCrae referred to highways and that a package of mitigation measures equivalent to around £250,000 have been agreed to mitigate the impact of the development, including a 3 metre

footway/cycleway which will be extended to the site providing a safe connection to and from the primary school and wider networks, a series of passing places along Drybread Road to the north and east to improve access to the A605 and welcome travel packs will be provided to all new residents which will include the provision of bus and cycle vouchers to encourage sustainable travel. She feels, as concluded in the officer's report, that the proposal is considered sustainable development and would accord with the Development Plan when taken as a whole, there are no outstanding objections from technical consultees and it is considered, subject to the detailed design at reserved matters stage, the site has potential to deliver a high-quality living environment for both future and existing residents.

Ms McCrae hoped members would be able to support the application in line with the officer's recommendation.

Members asked questions of Ms McCrae as follows:

- Councillor Sennitt Clough referred to the cycleway, with it passing invariably several roads coming onto Drybread Road that are quite busy and asked what mitigating factors would be put in place to protect children that are crossing Victory Avenue/Coronation Avenue and a series of busy roads that feed into Drybread Road? Ms McCrae responded that the cycleway is an extension of an already agreed cycleway which is being constructed at the moment, with the details having been agreed with the Highway Authority and they are extending from the corner on the south-west of the development up to the access point and then within the site so the proposals do not cross those existing roads that were mentioned.
- Councillor Sennitt Clough expressed her confusion as she heard in the presentation that the cycleway would go from the site to the school. Ms McCrae responded that it extends onto the existing which would connect into the school, with the works to the school approved as part of a previous development to the south which is being constructed at the moment and they would connect on to this so the improved connectivity to the school would be extended to this site. Councillor Sennitt Clough clarified that the cycleway will just be for the length of this development up to the corner of Drybread Road and then connect onto anything that is being delivered by another development. Ms McCrae stated that this is correct, it is being delivered by Allison Homes on an earlier site.
- Councillor Sennitt Clough referred to the passing places and asked if it is Allison Homes' view that the cars exiting this proposed site will turn both left to go down Drybread Road and right, Drybread Road out to the A605 and there is not a preferred direction of travel for the residents exiting this site? Ms McCrae responded that the Transport Assessment suggests that cars will come out of the site and turn left down Drybread Road, which was a long conversation with the Highways Authority in that they did not necessarily want to be encouraging people to turn right by delivering passing places and the number of passing places was reduced. Councillor Sennitt Clough requested clarification that it suggests that vehicles are turning left and in her report she said they were going to add more passing places for vehicles that are turning right to access the A605, asking if this is correct? Ms McCrae confirmed this to be correct, which is at the request of the Highways Authority to mitigate the impact of the development and they have agreed to deliver. Councillor Sennitt Clough asked how many passing places are being created as she believes there are only a couple along there currently? Ms McCrae responded that on the northern boundary of the site there will be two new passing places and when you turn the corner going down to the A605 they are agreed on an existing permission of 3 passing places. Councillor Sennitt Clough stated that knowing the area as she does she would struggle to see along that northern section how the drainage ditches would be overcome and also her concern would be that passing places only possibly allow for a couple of cars at any one time and there would be a backlog, it is a busy road as it is with a Whittlesey gridlock with people using it as a cut through and she would be concerned that passing places would not adequately mitigate the build-up of traffic.
- Councillor Imafidon referred to mention of working with IDBs, making the point with living in the Fens it is known how it floods and drainage is a major concern. He asked Ms McCrae to

elaborate how they have worked with IDBs? Ms McCrae responded that the site sits within an area controlled by an IDB, none of the ditches surrounding the site are IDB controlled so it has been a lot of work with the LLFA but the North Level Drainage Board have been consulted and confirmed that they have no objections to the proposals. She stated that the site is in Flood Zone 1 so it is technically at the lowest risk of flooding, the surface water is managed on site through a combination of swales, permeable paving and an attenuation basin and outfalls at a controlled rate to the north-east of the site at 12.5 litres a second which is agreed with the LLFA and IDB. Ms McCrae advised this is designed to cater for a 1 in a 100 year storm event plus the 40% for climate change. She added that they will have to get formal consent from the IDB for any outfalls or any impact on their managed ditches that they outfall into.

- Councillor Murphy referred to on plan the top of the site showing a play area and public open space and asked if there would be a management company to run this area or would it be left to the Council to run? Ms McCrae responded that the Section 106 Agreement as drafted at the moment is flexible, they have been in discussions with the Town Council as to whether they want to take any of this area. She stated that a management company can be set up and that tends to be what happens on lots of their sites where council's do not want to take it but commuted sums are allowed for if council's do want to take this area on. Councillor Murphy made the point that his portfolio includes play areas and the Council do not take over responsibility for any play areas now, it is up to the Town Council if they want to or a management company, which is the easiest way.
- Councillor Murphy asked when development starts on the site will there be a wheel cleaning vehicle? He referred to there being numerous problems at the other end of Whittlesey near the Aldi store, with the Council taking a lorry along there and finishing up taking 10 tonnes out of the gutters on the roadside and if vehicles are being cleaned onsite it is a lot better than coming out and putting it on the roads. Ms McCrae responded that there will be wheel cleaning facilities and they will be secured as part of the Construction Management Plan.
- Councillor Imafidon referred to the play areas and public open space and asked in the case that the Town Council does not take them on and there is a management company to look after them who is going to pay for this, is it the residents through a service charge? Ms McCrae responded that it would be set up as a resident management company with a service charge fixed so anyone buying those properties know what that service charge is and they become directors of that management company. She added that Allison Homes will look after that public open space until it is completed and transferred. Councillor Imafidon stated that his question is will you make the residents aware of this before they purchase the properties? Ms McCrae confirmed this to be the case.
- Councillor Marks referred to mention of highway and off-site works, with Whittlesey plagued at the moment with a lot of traffic problems and asked when the off-site works will be carried out, before they start to build? Ms McCrae responded that she believes the conditions are drafted for them to be completed before any homes are occupied so they will be delivered early and it may be that enabling works are being carried out on site while the 278 works are being delivered. Councillor Marks expressed the concern that with passing place there are lorries and HGVs travelling both ways.
- Councillor Marks referred to the question from Councillor Murphy about wheel wash facilities and asked if there will also be a road sweeper within the agreement as well? Ms McCrae responded that they do put road sweepers as standard within their Construction Management Plan.
- Councillor Marks asked what the build out programme is for affordable homes v private homes and over what period? Ms McCrae responded that it is difficult to give a timescale at outline but their intention is to have a reserved matters application submitted and approved as soon as they can and start delivering on site. She stated that they do look as standard to deliver affordable housing quite early on in the development and they deliver a lot of sites partnered with registered providers, with 20% being a minimum and they often seek to increase that with some additional affordable housing if registered providers are interested.
- Councillor Sennitt Clough referred to the officer mentioning the triple SI sites, Bassenhally

Pits and the Nene Washes, and this development is proposing a significant amount of houses so there is going to be a lot more people potentially wandering down there may be with dogs and what can they do to preserve those triple SI sites from any kind of ecological damage as there are some rare species on those sites. Ms McCrae responded that as part of the two-year application process they have undertaken a lot of work on this and a full Habitat Regulation Assessment has been prepared, submitted and assessed, which included a recreational pressure assessment on those sites and that resulted in changes to the development framework to increase the areas of open space on site to provide alternative walking routes, with loops throughout the site to provide opportunities for dog walkers to stay on site rather than walking up to those other sites. She added that they also met with the RSPB who managed these sites to see if there is anything they can do to work with them and they did not feel there was an issue as it nearly a 2km walk on mainly a road with no footpath. Councillor Sennitt Clough expressed the view quite a lot of people do walk down there with their dogs because it is a quite road and a dead end.

Members asked questions of officers as follows:

- Councillor Sennitt Clough stated that Whittlesey is at gridlock, it is facing an unprecedented amount of traffic chaos from a number of different factors and asked how can it possibly get round this problem with an extra 175 properties that are being proposed. She made the point that whichever way they turn out onto Drybread Road they are going to go onto the A605 and cross the bridge that has a lot of structural problems, with the B1040 flooding for a significant amount of time and asked how this is going to be dealt with, how are these people going to get to work or to school wherever it is they are travelling to along the A605? Jez Tuttle, from Cambridgeshire County Council Highway Authority, stated that Whittlesey is a very challenging place in terms of transport and at present they do not have a scheme which gives an overall solution to this problem, there is not a wider Whittlesey scheme that may come forward in the future and with these planning applications it is about demonstrable harm and they have to look at whether the harm is significant enough for each individual application to allow them to raise an objection and if the harm can be reduced to an acceptable level by looking at methods of encouraging active travel then they cannot refuse an application. He acknowledged that there is a bigger problem overall in Whittlesey but because they are looking at smaller applications that are not bundled up as one they have to look at them individually and individually the harm is not significant enough for them to say they object. He stated that one of the things they usually do if they have a scheme or if they know something is in the pipeline they can get finance towards it but here there is not a scheme. He made the point that there was a potential scheme to look at the 2 roundabouts in Whittlesey, an active travel scheme to get people across those roundabouts by walking or cycling, but his understanding is that scheme was not brought forward.
- Councillor Sennitt Clough stated that she did not quite catch what he said regarding something may come forward and asked what was it he said? Jez Tuttle responded that he knows there are potential areas that are being looked at and Whittlesey and the A605 is flagged up as a potential area of interest so that is why he could say that something may come forward and it is going to be whether this is considered to be higher up in the list than something else across the County.
- Councillor Marks stated that it is known that Whittlesey has got a problem but these houses would not be built tomorrow so is it known what the programme is for the repairs and timeframe on the bridge and the second bridge by the Dog and Doublet which also cause problems after flooding with there still be traffic lights here. Jez Tuttle responded that he does not have that information about the bridge, he knows it is being worked on by one of the County's teams but he is happy to find this information out and send it to members. Councillor Marks stated that it would have been useful to have had that information today. Councillor Sennitt Clough asked for the information to be provided as she would find it useful as a Whittlesey ward councillor. Jez Tuttle agreed to make enquiries and report back.
- Councillor Sennitt Clough referred to Policy LP7 which states that development of an urban extension must be planned and implemented in a coordinated way through an agreed

overarching broad concept plan that is linked to the timely delivery of key infrastructure and she feels that what she has just heard is that Allison Homes and Highways do not have a timeline, which she finds concerning in relation to this policy. She asked for clarification on this policy. David Rowen responded that this site is not considered to be an urban extension given that it is under 249 dwellings and is classed as a windfall site on the edge of the town rather than a strategic allocation identified within the Local Plan requiring the provision of a Broad Concept Plan. He added that the size of the application does not fall within that requirement of the policy.

- Councillor Sennitt Clough stated that the point remains the same that everything needs to tally up in terms of development planning implementation and that is still very necessary and particularly with other developments that are in the pipeline. David Rowen responded that it does and that is part of the consideration that has been given to this application in terms of highways and delivery of infrastructure through the Section 106 package but because this site, and the one that is subject of Item 6 on the agenda which is closely located, are both individually below the 249 windfall threshold in the Local Plan they have to “wash their own face” and not do a great deal more. Councillor Sennitt Clough stated she understands this but for her the problems remain.
- Councillor Murphy stated that it is a busy road and it is a nuisance with the bridge but by the time these houses get built that bridge will hopefully be repaired. He added that he is responsible for refuse and recycling and the refuse vehicles when they do the collections on a Tuesday morning early get called everything because they have a job to do but they are only there an hour per week. Councillor Murphy made the point that some of what is happening with the traffic is being talked up and not thought out.
- Councillor Marks referred to the Section 106 monies and he has seen the e-mail from Councillor Boden and asked would it be possible for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to agree it at the time of distribution? David Rowen responded that if that is what the committee wants to do when it comes to making a decision then that is possible. Councillor Marks asked that this can be conditioned and it was confirmed that it could.

Members made comments, asked questions and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Sennitt Clough stated that she takes issue with what Councillor Murphy said about the traffic issues being talked up as last Friday it was bumper to bumper from Whittlesey through Pondersbridge and out back onto the A605 where the crane place is, there was an accident, the B1040 was open but all it takes is a slight hold up. She made the point that when the B1040 was flooded for the past 2 weeks the queues from the bridge went all the way to the Kellivision roundabout and it does impact people’s lives with people trying to get to work, trying to get to school and it is a huge issue and not talked up at all, it is the reality of everyday life in Whittlesey.
- Councillor Marks stated that he lived in Ramsey for a number of years and used to travel to Thorney and Boston and Whittlesey has always had a problem before even the flyover was there it had the railway gates and he has known it stacked back to Stanground on numerous occasions. He expressed the view that the overpass has helped, the flooding at the Dog and Doublet cannot be overcome but he does not personally believe that by feeding in these vehicles over a period of time that it will make that much difference by adding more vehicles and causing more traffic problems. Councillor Marks expressed the opinion that once the bridge is repaired that will help matters and people do find different ways from Whittlesey to go into Peterborough.
- Councillor Murphy made the point that the flooding happens every year so it is one of things that cannot be stopped and it is known that it will occur. He referred to mention of accidents and they do happen everywhere.
- Councillor Sennitt Clough stated that Councillor Murphy has missed her point in terms of accidents as they do happen unfortunately but all it takes is a slight hold up on an already heavily congested road to cause more chaos than an ordinary smooth flowing road. She agreed that Whittlesey has always been a problem with traffic, she has lived here for three years but has seen a notable increase since the two developments built on the A605 and

she does not think it is fair to say that people should find alternate routes through other smaller villages such as Pondersbridge because that is just relocating the problem elsewhere and other villages are having to suffer the traffic.

Proposed by Councillor Murphy, seconded by Councillor Marks and agreed that the application be GRANTED as per the officer's recommendation.

(Councillor Sennitt Clough declared, under Paragraph 2 of the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters, that a member of Whittlesey Town Council's Planning Committee published two posts on a community Facebook page encouraging residents to lobby her over this application and due to this action she was lobbied but she has not discussed the applications with anyone. She advised that she also lives in the vicinity of the application site, but she is open-minded and is not biased or pre-determined on this application)

P43/24

F/YR23/0705/O

LAND NORTH OF 271 - 311 EASTREA ROAD, WHITTLESEY

ERECT UP TO 249 X DWELLINGS (OUTLINE APPLICATION WITH MATTERS COMMITTED IN RESPECT OF ACCESS) AND THE FORMATION/WORKS TO 2 X ACCESSES

Tim Williams presented the report to members and drew attention to the update report that had been circulated.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Michael Braithwaite, the agent. Mr Braithwaite stated he is a Chartered Town Planner working with Robert Doughty Consultancy as agent for the applicant Rose Homes EA Ltd based in Whittlesey and he is accompanied by Dino Biagioni, the Managing Director of Rose Homes. He stated that the application is for 249 dwellings on the edge of Whittlesey and as officers have stated the development is in accordance with the Local Plan which allows development of up to 249 dwellings on sites on the edge of larger settlements such as Whittlesey unless the benefit of development is outweighed by the harm.

Mr Braithwaite expressed the view that the development will ensure that housing supply for Whittlesey, and specifically in Fenland, is met into the future, with the targets set in the Local Plan as officers said in the previous debate being a floor not a ceiling. He stated that although in outline the application would accord with national and local policies regarding meeting housing need, providing open space, affordable housing, an appropriate drainage strategy within the site, preserve and enhance ecology and diversity including the safeguarding of the Nene Washes in line with its designation as a European national important site.

Mr Braithwaite expressed the opinion that the development is not at a risk of flooding and will not raise the risk of flooding elsewhere, the surface water drainage system will be managed on site to maintain discharge at existing predicted greenfield levels that will discharge into the wider IDB network and discussions have taken place through the creation of the development with the IDB, LLFA and the Environment Agency on the surface water drainage strategy. He stated that highway safety will be maintained, with a number of pre-application discussions being held with the Highway Authority to try and agree the approach and have continued in a positive fashion throughout the application process.

Mr Braithwaite expressed the view that the residents of the development would have access to the existing jobs and services provided by Whittlesey and the wider area including but not restricted to the new supermarket to the south. He referred to the Neighbourhood Plan which sets out the issue of potential coalescence with Eastrea and provides a buffer zone to the east of Drybread Road.

Mr Braithwaite stated that they are aware of the range of objections made to the application both

from statutory consultees in the past and local members of the public regarding highway safety, impact on local services including health care and education, loss of open countryside and agricultural land, impact on the amenity of existing residents, impacts on heritage but through the application process the applicant has provided further information including a report on the extensive archaeological investigations, assessment of the potential impact on the Nene Washes, a range of highway improvements to the surrounding road network to ease vehicular and pedestrian traffic in this problematic area, with the statutory consultees withdrawing their objections subject to the submitted information and the information on the imposition of conditions and Section 106 requirements proposed by officers. He stated that the conditions set out a number of obligations including early agreement before reserved matters is submitted for a phasing plan to gauge when various aspects of the development will take place, key aspects of the provision and management of open space and off-site highways provision, which are defined in the conditions.

Mr Braithwaite hoped members would approve this policy compliant application for 249 dwellings, which would reduce the pressure to bring forward allocations through the emerging Local Plan.

Members asked questions of Mr Braithwaite as follows:

- Councillor Sennitt Clough asked him to elaborate on the highway improvements and pedestrian safety where it is situated on the A605 opposite the new supermarket. Mr Braithwaite responded that a range of highway improvements include the new access road, off-site junction improvements and widening of the junctions as set out in the report and promoted and agreed by the Highway Authority.
- Councillor Sennitt Clough asked if there will be an additional pedestrian crossing to allow access to the supermarket? Mr Braithwaite responded that there is no additional crossing being provided over the main road.
- Councillor Murphy asked how long it would take to build out 249 dwellings? Mr Braithwaite responded that there are many different answers to this question, most of it is dependent upon how quickly the houses are built as sold and it can be assumed that a development of 249 dwellings will come forward at probably 40 plus a year. Councillor Murphy stated that it would be several years to complete as they take a long time to do and you tend to forget the timescales. Mr Braithwaite stated that there is a need to agree a phasing plan and then submit the reserved matters application so it is probably going to be 18 months to 2 years before development starts and you probably looking at a 5 year development programme.
- Councillor Murphy asked about a wheel wash facility and road sweeper as the development near Aldi left the road in a terrible state. Mr Braithwaite responded it would be good practice for the developer and it will be covered by the Construction Management Plan, which needs to be agreed by the Council.
- Councillor Murphy stated that he cannot see any open spaces on this development and asked if there is any? Mr Braithwaite responded that there is open space which is spread around the site referring to the indicative layout shown on the screen, which will be multifunction areas and also tries to echo the requirements of the drainage strategy as well as picking up on an opportunity to provide circuits to walk around the site for those people to exercise within the site rather than being stuck at end of a cul-de-sac and not being able to wander around the site. Councillor Murphy asked if they would expect a management company to look after these areas? Mr Braithwaite responded that his client preference is for there to be a management company but if it did go to the Town Council the terms would need to be agreed with them but he does not think this is likely.
- Councillor Imafidon asked for an elaboration on the surface water arrangements, provisions to mitigate flooding and any arrangements with the IDBs or Anglian Water? Mr Braithwaite acknowledged that it was a key issue, the development would discharge water into the IDB system that ultimately discharges into the Nene Washes so there is a great need to make sure that the quantity and quality of water is controlled within the site so it does not lead to overwhelming the drainage system or polluting the Nene Washes. He added that there have been discussions with the IDB as part of the production of the drainage strategy that has been submitted.

- Councillor Imafidon asked what has been put in place or is being put in place? Mr Braithwaite responded that there are a range of measures included and it is an in-principle approach that would yet need to be agreed in detail. He stated that they are looking at roadside swales which serve to filter out and control the water rather than putting them into a drain which gets it off the site as quickly as possible and there will be a system as shown on the indicative plan of ponds within the layout to make sure the swales discharge into that system and get controlled on the way out and there are various mechanisms which manage the discharge, with the drain not just going out of a pipe at the north-east corner but it will be one controlled discharge point.
- Councillor Marks stated that one of the biggest concerns along here is vehicles waiting to get onto site, especially HGVs. He asked, if planning permission is granted, what mitigation is there and also regarding parking overnight, where will these be parked as there is no local parking for HGVs as far as he is aware and are curfew times being put on? Mr Braithwaite clarified that did this refer to during the construction phase and stated that these will be matters covered by the Construction Management Plan and it is generally expected that there would be a compound on site for parking. He added that access arrangements need to be agreed as part of that mechanism and parking off-street allows the wheel cleaning measures to be provided.
- Councillor Sennitt Clough referred to the way forward seeming to be through management companies and there was a neighbouring development where several of the residents have complained about the way in which they have been let down by a management company. She asked how they would ensure that the management company is reputable and ultimately ensure that the residents, as much as they can, are looked after for the money that they put into the management company? Mr Braithwaite responded that residents will be directors of the management company once it is fully up and running, it will be set up by Rose Homes in the first instance and then handed over to the residents to manage themselves. He added that the same could be said for any other form of management as well if it was managed by the Town Council or the District Council there might be issues.
- Councillor Sennitt Clough reiterated the issue of pedestrian and cyclist safety, she is not sure what school, whether it is New Road or Alderman Jacobs, that this development site will feed into but if it is New Road then there will be a large number of primary school aged children crossing the road and she is concerned about the safety of those children travelling to school. She asked if there are any mitigating factors regarding the safety of children travelling to school? Mr Braithwaite responded that it is the Highway Authority that will be able to deal with these issues but they are looking at highways improvements, such as formalising the crossing points on the road whether it is the dropped kerbs or the tactile paving to make sure that the crossing is more obvious and safe, arrangements to the junctions, which will all be set out in the Transport Assessment and the Road Safety Audits that have already been submitted.
- Councillor Sennitt Clough stated that she is not certain from the map whether the access road comes out directly opposite the road to the new Aldi and asked for more information on this as there are potentially two roads coming out onto the A605 from opposite directions? Mr Braithwaite responded that the junctions are staggered and then the highway engineers ensure that there are spaces for queuing traffic to get in and out of the different junctions. He added that there is the proposal to reduce the speed limit to make sure that traffic is travelling at 30mph on this stretch of Eastrea Road.
- Councillor Murphy asked if it would be more beneficial to have a crossing here as it is exactly opposite Aldi, there are 249 houses, people are not going to take their cars across the road to go into Aldi, they are going to walk across the road and it will also slow down the traffic along this stretch of road. Mr Braithwaite responded that this is a question about what is beneficial and what is required to charge upon a developer and it might be straying back into the wider schemes for Whittlesey. He hopes that many people will walk to Aldi and cross the road but the provision of this is beyond the remit of what could be required to provide for this development.

Members asked officers the following questions:

- Councillor Murphy asked if it would be beneficial to provide a crossing here as it so close to Aldi? Hannah Seymour-Shove, Cambridgeshire County Council Highways Officer, responded that as part of the access proposals there will be a pedestrian refuge crossing across the A605 within the vicinity of access as well as a relocated refuge as part of the development to the south. She made the point that there is already an existing Toucan crossing at the southwest corner of the site which will facilitate crossing on routes to schools. Councillor Murphy questioned whether the road was wide enough for a refuge and is it not easier to put in a Zebra crossing? Hannah Seymour-Shove responded that there is one refuge to the east of the eastern access to the Aldi access and then there is another refuge between the access to the BDW site to the south and this site. Councillor Sennitt Clough asked for clarification that if the new proposed refuge will be to east of Aldi? Hannah Seymour-Shove confirmed this to be correct.
- Councillor Marks asked on a traffic survey have they worked out or have figures on who will turn left and head towards Guyhirn as opposed to turning right to go Whittlesey? Hannah Seymour-Shove stated that this would have been conducted as part of the baseline surveys but she does not have that information to hand. Jez Tuttle added that as far as he can recall it was approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ going towards Peterborough and $\frac{1}{4}$ going towards March as Peterborough is the biggest draw going from all the residential developments in Whittlesey.
- Councillor Marks asked on the conditioning of the Section 106 monies could they be the same as the previous application? David Rowen responded that the resolution on the previous application did not change the recommendation or wording of the resolution but if members want to alter the proposal so there is a degree of consultation between officers and members over the allocation of the Section 106 money that is within the committee's gift to do that.
- Councillor Marks referred to the boundary of Coates and Whittlesey and the field and asked if he was right that there is a parade of houses opposite Aldi and then there is a defined barrier by the roadway into the new development? Jez Tuttle responded that there is an existing row of well-established houses south of the site but north of Eastrea Road and Drybread Road going north to south will provide a well-defined boundary, with the green buffer being the fields to the east of Drybread Road and there is an industrial area to the south of Eastrea Road.
- Councillor Sennitt Clough stated that she is not confident in the safety aspect of what has been presented and asked what surveys were undertaken and she wants to ensure that they were in person and not desktop surveys and for how long and for which periods of time that road was visited? She added that she is referring to the proposed site where it enters onto the A605 and also the existing entrances/exits onto the A605 from the supermarket and new estates on the other side of the road and how it all comes together, what it looks like terms of how busy it is now and the proposed site factoring in the 249 houses so she wants to know how the surveys were undertaken, when they were undertaken and all the information related to that in terms of how busy it is already and how 249 houses might impact that street scene as it is. Jez Tuttle responded that as part of the application and the many changes that are going onto that road due to Aldi and the new estates to make sure that all the accesses could be properly implemented safely they undertake a Road Safety Audit, which is undertaken by an independent consultant or Cambridgeshire County Council and it consists of a desktop survey first where they look at the traffic flows and proposed traffic flows from all the accesses. He continued that a site visit is undertaken as part of the audit and they look to see how the accesses will interact with each other and the conditions on the road speeds and flows and then they come up with a series of recommendations, which may be that an access requires moving or reduction of the speed limit. Jez Tuttle stated that these recommendations get taken forward and they will say to the applicant that they need to consider the recommendations, there is a process that follows where they have a discussion about what recommendations can be dealt with now or what can be left to the detailed design. Councillor Sennitt Clough asked if the surveys took place in peak times? Jez Tuttle responded that he believes the surveys were for 12 hours but they

concentrate on the peak hours as this is known when the worst congestion is.

- Councillor Marks asked for clarification on the agent saying the speed will be reduced to 30mph, however, Councillor Sennitt Clough referred to it already being 30mph? Hannah Seymour-Shove responded that she believes as part of the access proposals that the 30mph speed limit would be extended to cover over the access. Councillor Marks questioned if this was over both accesses? Hannah Seymour-Shove responded that it would be all the way to Eastrea village.

Members made comments, asked questions and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Sennitt Clough expressed the view that there will be an impact on the green buffer and it will impinge on the current layout and while Drybread Road is conveniently being used as a boundary between Whittlesey and Eastrea it is essentially a country lane and the layout will forever be changed by this proposed development so she feels this green buffer will be compromised. She expressed concerns about the safety layout of the road and does not feel fully confident that those have been resolved. Councillor Sennitt Clough stated that she needs to be sure that if the officer recommendation is supported that there is confidence going ahead that the safety issue is resolved and how the issues can be mitigated of the green buffer by taking action such as planting more trees and making it greener as it is going to be forever changed.
- Councillor Murphy made the point that there is change everywhere, he used to live next to an open field at one stage but it has been built on and now he lives in the middle of a town, and he feels it is an ecological fact that it is going to happen. He feels that members need to have the mindset that this will happen, it cannot be stopped and why should it be stopped as housing is needed and he feels the proposal should be supported.
- Councillor Sennitt Clough stated that there is a danger of it becoming a philosophical discussion about change if members are not careful and just because change happens does not necessarily make it right. She reiterated that her concerns were about the fundamentals and how they impact material considerations with regards to this application in relation to the safety and the green buffer zone.
- Councillor Marks expressed the view that safety has to be taken into consideration, however, this is an application that is compliant, with Highways being the experts and members should go with what they say. He asked if committee was happy that it be conditioned that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman deal with the Section 106 money via the Head of Planning?
- Councillor Sennitt Clough stated that members represent residents and this is the opportunity to act on behalf of residents in Fenland to make sure that all the safety procedures are in place, she would rather do this than sit back quietly and say well Highways know what they are doing, lets make sure that all safety considerations have been put in place rather than give them carte blanche to go ahead.
- Councillor Marks stated that he accepts what Councillor Sennitt Clough is saying, however, he is no expert in road safety and he does not believe any councillors are and that is why Highways are consulted and members should be led by those experts.
- Tim Williams referred to Councillor Sennitt Clough's comment about the eastern boundary making the point that the plan shown on screen is purely indicative but as mentioned in the report at 10.28 there are views into the site from the east, which is the juxtaposition between the development and countryside so he has said that some of the open space and landscaping could be increased along that eastern edge and that is stating what they would expect in the reserved matters application so there is greater landscaping than is shown in the indicative plan.

Proposed by Councillor Murphy, seconded by Councillor Imafidon and agreed that the application be GRANTED as per the officer's recommendation to include that the allocation of Section 106 monies be in conjunction with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

(Councillor Sennitt Clough declared, under Paragraph 2 of the Code of Conduct on Planning

Matters, that a member of Whittlesey Town Council's Planning Committee published two posts on a community Facebook page encouraging residents to lobby her over this application and due to this action she was lobbied but she has not discussed the applications with anyone. She also lives in the vicinity of the application site, but she is open-minded and is not biased or pre-determined on the application)

P44/24

F/YR24/0276/F

GAULTREE FARM, HIGH ROAD, GUYHIRN

ERECT 7 X DWELLINGS (4 X 3-STOREY 4-BED AND 3 X 2-STOREY 3-BED) AND THE FORMATION OF A NEW ACCESS, INVOLVING THE DEMOLITION OF EXISTING DWELLING AND OUTBUILDINGS

David Rowen presented the report to members and drew attention to the update report that had been circulated.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Shanna Jackson, the agent. Mrs Jackson expressed the view that Guyhirn over the years has evolved to become what can be considered as a commuter settlement, particularly along Gull Road where there are very big £500,000 houses which are occupied by London commuters. She feels this has sadly resulted in local people being brought out of the village with limited opportunities for lower cost family homes and this scheme presents an excellent opportunity to provide lower cost family homes within the heart of the village which can be delivered straight away.

Mrs Jackson made the point that the scheme has been recommended for refusal for various reasons, which include the principle, form and character, residential amenity, highway and flood risk issues. She stated that with regards to the principle, form and character, paragraphs 10.3 and 10.8 of the committee report state that the four plots to the front are acceptable in principle and officers also acknowledge that there is development in-depth elsewhere within the village, the issue, therefore, lies with the three in-depth dwellings but, in her view, there are many examples of development in-depth within the area, such as Nene Close, Glebe Gardens, Spencer Drove and Hillcrest Drive, with the proposal extending no further into the countryside than these developments and will extend no further than the curtilage of other dwellings within the vicinity of the site and despite the development not strictly being infill development there would be no character harm only benefits to be gained by providing lower cost housing within a sustainable location.

Mrs Jackson referred to residential amenity comments which are noted, however, the views from the rear bedroom windows towards garden areas would be obscured by the single-storey rear projections on the dwellings, which, in her view, is no different to any other estate situation anywhere else within the District. She expressed the opinion that the scheme is not cluttered, there are patios around the dwellings which may give a deceptively cluttered impression of more buildings but is actually quite spacious and there is opportunity to provide landscaping to soften the appearance of the buildings and parking areas and they would be happy to accept a condition to this effect.

Mrs Jackson referred to an objection on parking due to the garage spaces falling slightly smaller than the prescribed standard, however, in her view, the Local Plan also states that lesser parking provision may be accepted in central locations with good transport links. She stated that, given this site is within the built up settlement of Guyhirn, it is in a sustainable location where future residents can walk or cycle to amenities as well as catch public transport to go further afield, therefore, in her opinion, this could be an instance where lesser parking provision is acceptable but there are also no objections from the Highway Authority and they have no concerns about the potential for parking on the public highway as a result of the perceived shortfall of parking spaces.

Mrs Jackson stated that they have submitted a sequential test which demonstrates that there are no alternative sites available in Guyhirn which could have accommodated the proposal, however, these results have been dismissed because of the in-depth nature of the development, which, in her view, is unfair. She expressed the opinion that the submitted documents prove that the sequential test is passed and, therefore, the exceptions test applies, with regard to the exceptions test she feels the proposal meets both of the criteria because the Flood Risk Assessment demonstrates that the scheme is technically acceptable and the development comprises the delivery of housing within a sustainable location which can be provided in the very short term, which is a distinct community benefit.

Mrs Jackson hoped members could see the benefits of the scheme and are able to grant planning permission.

Members asked questions of Mrs Jackson as follows:

- Councillor Sennitt Clough asked if she heard rightly that there would be on-street parking? Mrs Jackson responded that the development would generate the need for 14 parking spaces, four of those are proposed garages but because the garages fall slightly lower than the standards in the Local Plan they cannot be counted so it could be perceived that the shortfall would go on the street but Highways have not commented on this and have no concerns so, in her view, there is no fear of on-street parking. Councillor Sennitt Clough referred to the huge number of HGVs that pass down that road to the anaerobic digester plant, she has lived on that road and knows it and she does not think on-street parking would be ideal.
- Councillor Sennitt Clough referred to mention that residents could walk or cycle to amenities and asked what amenities could they walk or cycle to? Mrs Jackson responded that there are the playing fields, the local school, a pub with a restaurant and bus stops. Councillor Sennitt Clough stated that when amenities was mentioned she was thinking shops and larger amenities.
- Councillor Imafidon stated that he knows the road well and the property does need to be taken down it is an eyesore and there is a telescopic frog lift in the rear garden. He asked if the developer would consider reducing the number of units and what is the response to the fact that under LP3 it does not constitute an infill? Mrs Jackson responded that policy LP3 is a settlement hierarchy, it directs development and categorises Guyhirn as a small village where infill only is appropriate, with the spirit of the policy being to ensure there is no encroachment into the open countryside so it is pushing new development into sustainable areas and, in her view, whilst the houses to the rear would not necessarily meet the definition of infill they are still complying with the spirit of the policy as they are not encroaching any further into the countryside than other development in the area plus they are still all within the curtilage of the existing dwelling. She added that if members felt that 7 dwellings were too much they could have a look at it but she is conscious this would be a different application.
- Councillor Murphy referred to 5.8 of the officer's report regarding refuse vehicles and made the point that 7 properties is 14 x 240 litre bins and also food waste when it comes into being in a year that is another 7 more food caddies and a 26 tonne lorry takes a lot of turning, it would have to turn round in a development such as it, it cannot reverse out and needs a lot of space. He asked if this had been taken into consideration? Mrs Jackson responded that there is tracking on the drawings which shows turning for vehicles and she understands what is being said about the size of the refuse vehicle but would be happy to accept a condition for a Refuse Strategy whether it be a private collection or arrangement. Councillor Murphy stated that it needs to come back to the Council to see whether it can be undertaken as he does not think it is realised how much room is needed.
- Councillor Marks expressed concern about the size of the plot compared to what is being proposed to be placed on it and that the garage sizes are being reduced which results in a property where you are unable to get car doors open. He stated that if people are unable to park in the garage they are going to park roadside and then there would be a highway issue

and asked how much the garages are going to be reduced by? Mrs Jackson responded that the Local Plan requires garage spaces to be 3 x 7 to be counted as a space and the drawings show the garage spaces to be 5.9 x 2.8 so it is 1.2 metres shorter and 20cm narrower than required by the Local Plan. She expressed the opinion that the only issue she can see with the garage spaces is where there are four-bedrooms proposed because a four-bedroom property would generate the need for an extra parking space so those units, she believes, would still have two parking spaces and it is the third space that is the issue which is the one that is the garage. Mrs Jackson expressed the view that a family home with children, is it likely that the children would have a car maybe or maybe not, but there are still two parking spaces for a couple as normal and it is whether that third space is essential. Councillor Marks stated that he still maintains that they are trying to get too much onto a plot that it almost becomes greed in what is trying to be achieved.

- Councillor Marks referred to the mention that there are lots of £500,000 homes in the village which locals cannot buy and asked is the developer going to apply a covenant that these are only for local families? Mrs Jackson responded that this is not the intention but, in her view, the nature of the buildings which are smaller family homes would dictate that families could only afford those types of dwelling.

Members made comments, asked questions and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Sennitt Clough made the point that the information on bins raises a point that she probably would not have considered. She feels the number of houses on this site is too many, she does not have any issues with site itself but the number is 1-2 too many.
- Councillor Imafidon agreed with the comments of Councillor Sennitt Clough which is why he raised the question about a reduction in numbers. He expressed the view that it is a prominent site, there are no highway issues with it being a straight road not far from The Oliver Twist pub and far from the bend leading to the A47 and he feels something should be undertaken on the site, the house on it now does not look very good and the site looks untidy and needs developing but 7 is too many.
- Councillor Clark agreed with everything that has been said and there should be smaller number of dwellings.
- Councillor Marks agreed and feels that officers have got the recommendation correct as there is too much being pushed in to a small space.

Proposed by Councillor Imafidon, seconded by Councillor Sennitt Clough and agreed that the application be REFUSED as per officer's recommendation.

P45/24

F/YR24/0303/F

WOODLAND, SOUTH OF ST LEONARDS CHURCHYARD, GOREFIELD ROAD, LEVERINGTON

ERECT 2 X DWELLINGS (2-STOREY, 4-BED), INCLUDING FORMATION OF AN ACCESS

David Rowen presented the report to members.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Kevin Salter, the applicant, and Chris Walford, the agent. Mr Salter stated that he represents the company that owns the land, with the whole of land shown yellow and outlined in red on the displayed plan being acquired in 1998, which was a huge problem as the site was overgrown, vandalised and had anti-social behaviour. He advised that they tried to work very closely with all the authorities, the Parish Council, the local councillors, local residents and the then Tree Officer who agreed that he could not do anything until they started working closely with him.

Mr Salter stated that the site was derelict after the former rectory on the yellow site was burnt down in the mid-1990s prior to that the previous owner had got planning consents including this land for a high density residential development and the conversion of the former Chapter House, with that

company going into liquidation it was brought by his company from the Anglo Irish Bank and they have tried to pursue a sensible planning application but one that works to enhance the Conservation Area, with the former development proposals, in his view, being severely detrimental to the Conservation Area. He advised that a scheme was produced with all these different authorities input for a low density five-unit scheme, which was developed and called Chapter Gardens, which, in his view, is a prime example of how to turn around a problem site.

Mr Salter stated that policy at that time was that you could only get five dwellings off a shared driveway and which is why the scheme was produced, which works very well. He advised that the other land was kept back, which he is unsure of as to why, with various suggestions of what could happen on it but over the last 20 years it has become a nightmare of a site and has become badly vandalised.

Mr Salter expressed the view that the trees are mostly Grade C trees, he has worked closely with the Tree Officer and any works have been in accordance with applications or advice received, with the Tree Officer recommending on a previous planning application removal of all the trees so although there are TPOs on some of those trees most of those trees have been supported by the Tree Officer to have them removed. He referred to Paragraph 72 of Subsection 2 of the NPPF which encourages local authorities where Conservation Areas can be enhanced and this is all they are seeking to do here, it is not about getting money from two houses, it is to bring that site to a remediated site, they have a remediation plan as part of the planning application which would deal with all the problem sites within the trees and the replanting of the boundaries with native hedgerows and species.

Mr Walford reiterated that of all the trees on site that are to be removed for the development, with the majority of them having pre-existing consent for removal, which leaves two that have not and those two have been confirmed in the Tree Officer's report to be affected by Ash dieback and are in poor condition. He stated that the Tree Officer's recommendation for approval in terms of trees was very much on the basis that the loss of the trees was not detrimental to the development.

Mr Walford stated that he has lived in Leverington for 24 years and his house looked onto The Glebe and he can vouch for the coming and goings on the site, with it being a run through from the sports field from The Glebe and it has always been a problem area, with antisocial behaviour, fires and the Police called. He feels the best way, like a Listed Building, is to give it families to love it and maintain the area, which he can only see as an enhancement over and above what it is there now and where it is heading, with it being well screened so they are not changing any of the perimeter and the trees there are staying.

Members asked questions of Mr Salter and Mr Walford as follows:

- Councillor Imafidon stated that he knows this area very well and he knows the Grade I Listed church itself has been under attack by vandals. He commended Mr Salter on what they did on the previous site, recognising that it is not an easy task to take on a site like that. Councillor Imafidon asked why two units and why not one as looking at other developments near the site they are quite spacious? Mr Salter responded that there is a development cost, it is going to cost an enormous amount of money to remediate that site and by the time they have got the infrastructure and the grandtrack road, which is a permeable surface and a no dig road which will not be seen from Gorefield Road, reinforced and then filled with gravel or grassed and takes up to 40 tonnes in weight, there is a significant cost to service the land so it would not be viable to build one house on this site. He added that it is primarily about remediating a problem site which has got worse over the last 20 years and has cost an enormous amount of money and problems, with a solution being found for the development that became Chapter Gardens and he wants a solution here as well. Councillor Imafidon sympathised and understood what he is trying to do.
- Councillor Clark stated that as this site lies within her ward she knows there has been anti-

social behaviour and she asked if The Glebe is owned by the church? Mr Salter confirmed this to be correct by the Diocese of Ely. Councillor Clark continued that she has looked through the report and cannot see any consultation with them or the church's Parochial Council? Mr Salter responded that they first approached the Diocesan Board many years ago, probably 20 years ago, to ask if there would be any potential to get an access across The Glebe field and the answer was no and this continued for a number of years until 2016 they said yes and they have an agreement that if they get planning consent they will grant an access across that land. He stated that the Parochial Church Council have a rent on that land and do not have a right of tenure but they are not going to spend legal fees on getting the access if planning permission is not forthcoming and there is an agreement that states if they can get permission they will grant an access. Councillor Clark stated that she has had issues with that piece of land because the school is close and as everyone is aware parking outside schools is horrendous and it was suggested to the Diocese that this land could be turned into car parking but it was refused so she is questioning why they would give them access? Mr Salter responded that is because he is having to pay for it and it is a considerable amount of money, he referred to case law where you have ransom strip or no access to your land and if somebody grants you access to their land you have to pay them the 50% uplifting value between what you say it is worth now which is nothing and what it would be worth with planning consent, working out what the deductible costs are and basically they end up with 50% of the net value as a contribution for allowing an access across the land. Councillor Clark reiterated that she is aware the anti-social behaviour has been bad and there have been special meetings at the village hall with the Police due to this and vandalism and she believes there has been several fires on the land in the past. Mr Salter stated that one of the neighbours who has been keeping a watch on the site for him ever since he has lived there has filmed over his fence some instances and it is horrendous.

- Councillor Sennitt Clough expressed concern about some of the comments made from Leverington Parish Council about the cemetery and whatever it is that is being dug out they have said there will be some damage and she understands that there are some Commonwealth War graves in the cemetery so they do not want the cemetery being disturbed unnecessarily. She asked what if any disruption there will be to the cemetery from the development? Mr Salter responded that it is a no dig road, it is a minimal scrape of the surface and the depth of the road is no more than the width of the table he is sitting at so it will not be seen. He added that there is an established hedgerow between this and the graveyard and in terms of distance it is probably 12-15 feet away from the nearest grave. Mr Salter stated that, in comparison, if you look across the road at what the Parish Council have done for their new graveyard which is going to cover all the allotment area, they have put a solid hard road into the new graveyard area behind the church which is going to have hundreds of graves in it and is 2 foot from the headstones of people's graves with no protection so his development is going to be nowhere near anybody's graves. He made the point that Chapter Gardens is a no dig road, although it is brick paviour as grand tracks was not about then.
- Councillor Sennitt Clough questioned that the hedgerow would remain? Mr Salter confirmed this to be correct.
- Councillor Marks how the site is accessed now to upkeep it? Mr Salter responded that they have a longstanding agreement with Jolliffe's, the agent for the Diocesan Board, to allow them access through an existing gateway opposite the school and when they have accessed it, it is with small machinery and they have removed anything by hand.
- Councillor Marks referred to two homes instead of one and made the point that the trees are fairly substantial, it is quite a tight area and he is concerned about the shading from the trees. He asked would it not be better for one home in the middle as opposed to the two and also in relation to access and turning circles by the homes themselves? Mr Salter responded that economically it would not be viable for one dwelling, especially with construction costs for building a house going through the roof and there is very little profit in a four-bedroom house after all the costs have been taken into account. He referred to the

trees and they already have consent from Fenland to crown a number of the trees and in further investigation there will be probably more tree removal, with there being permission already to remove a number of trees and with the remediation plan they would not be providing trees as big as what is on site currently and it will just be hedgerow. Mr Salter stated that the Conservation Officer in his report refers to an established protected hedgerow on the eastern boundary of the site but there is not one there and never has been but this development proposes one.

- Councillor Marks stated that as a Conservation Area he is really concerned to hear that some trees are going to be crowned and that some other trees may be removed, making the point that this is Conservation Area where the street view when you see the church and the graveyard is the character of the village and whilst it might be a piece of waste ground permission may be given to put two houses on this land and he is not convinced that it will match in with the Conservation Area. Mr Walford referred to the loss of light to the gardens of these properties and stated that Chapter Gardens is a very successful development that has worked with the trees and with the character of the area. Councillor Marks made the point that there is a lot more space around these properties compared to this proposal. Mr Walford responded that there is still a lot of trees though and he feels that if you buy a plot here when you arrive you are going to see there is a lot of trees here and that it is a beautiful site that just needs a bit of love and care and you are buying a property with a lot of trees that will cause some shadowing but he does not think this is detrimental to the development, it can still be an enhanced site and a lovely place to live, with them being south facing gardens albeit with some trees on site. He referred to turning and that there is tracking on the site for emergency vehicle turning and the plan would not be to bring refuse lorries on site because there would be a roadside collection, with there being 4 spaces per house with turning clear of the parking area for emergency vehicles and the waiting on the road is also adequate for these vehicles, with the road system designed mainly for root protection and there will not be any damage to trees even if someone is driving on it and it dissipates any weight.
- Councillor Marks expressed concern about further trees being removed. Mr Salter responded that the remediation plan that forms part of the planning application sets out what the proposal is for the existing trees that have permission to be removed, those that have permission to be crowned and what they intend to do with the boundaries, with the boundaries being a real mess and causing a lot of light not getting into the site so it is more undergrowth removal.

Members asked officers questions as follows:

- Councillor Murphy asked that when there is TPO and there is consent to remove the tree, is there a time limit? David Rowen responded that he believes it is two years. Councillor Murphy asked if this site is over those two years or not? David Rowen responded that from the planning history works to trees were deemed as exempt in 2020 and 2022 so yes the two years looks to have been exceeded. Councillor Murphy asked that the trees cannot be taken now unless the applicant applies again? David Rowen responded that would appear to be the case and made the point that works to trees that are protected by a TPO if they are deemed as exempt works can be undertaken without formal consent being granted because of the urgency of the situation but there is a requirement in the Tree Regulations that the trees are replaced on a like for like basis and as part of any approval that is granted for works to TPOs that is usually subject to a condition that replacements trees are to be provided so it is not normally the case that works to remove trees are just granted there is usually something that requires replacement.
- Councillor Murphy asked if the permission is out of date does the tree revert back to a TPO tree? David Rowen responded that it remains a TPO tree until such time as it has been removed and if the works have not been undertaken within the requisite period then there is no consent in place to do those works. He referred to the comments made by Mr Salter and even if there is approval or was approval in place for those trees to be removed there would be an expectation and a mechanism to have replacement trees planted so it is not the case

that the Council has just accepted trees being cleared from the site there is an expectation that the trees would go back if the removal was deemed necessary.

- Councillor Marks questioned that there could be a possibility that the TPO works has now expired as the 2 years has passed so is there a need to have another report from a Tree Officer before planning permission is granted? David Rowen responded in relation to the current application he does not think that is necessarily material to the determination of the proposal, with the Tree Officer commenting on the application and has not raised objections to the loss of the trees per se but the Council's Conservation Officer has raised concerns in on the loss of the trees and the introduction then of the built form on the site and the overall impact. He does not feel that the issue of the loss of trees precludes the committee making a decision on this application today but in terms of the weight the committee can potentially give to the arguments being put forward by the applicant about the effect of the permissions that are in place for the removal of trees on site is diminished by the time issue that Councillor Murphy picked up on.

Members made comments, asked questions and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Sennitt Clough expressed the view that the grounds for refusal are not that substantial, she thought initially there were some issues with it being in a Conservation Area and the heritage aspect but feels that all those questions have been answered in such a way as to convince her that this is a good application, being satisfied with the responses from the applicant and agent.
- Councillor Imafidon stated that he personally knows the site and has been contacted by locals and residents about the problems they have on the site, not just vandalism of the Listed church but with squatters, alcohol and drugs and some other anti-social behaviour and the impacts that the near derelict site is having on the local community, with elderly people being afraid to walk around that area. He understands the conservation concerns of the site, the TPOs and the Listed Building but he feels something needs to be undertaken with this site.
- Councillor Marks stated that there is concern within the village and he has concerns over the trees and he is not sure it sits well having two properties in that small area, with the developer having put next door five dwellings in a lot larger area and he would be more comfortable with one property as opposed to two. He recognises the financial side but usually somebody who wants to build a property like this will find a way round, it may become a bit more of an expensive property. Councillor Marks stated that the site does need something doing with it but he feels two properties is one too many.
- Councillor Clark stated that anti-social behaviour in that area is not good and she agrees that one property would be preferable, with her concern being the trees.
- Councillor Sennitt Clough stated that when she thinks about the opportunity to build one property or two, the one property may be a substantially bigger more expensive property but two properties might be slightly cheaper and offer the opportunity for locals to purchase these properties and stay in the area.
- Councillor Marks stated that he agrees, however, it needs to be taken into consideration that this is a Conservation Area and the look of two properties as opposed to one is in the "eye of the beholder" and committee just turned one down at Guyhirn for 7 properties in a small space so it could be argued that committee has denied 7 families housing. He still believes that one would be better than two.
- Councillor Imafidon stated that Leverington is an area where people like to live so he thinks the developer can make it work with either one or two but there is a need to do something with the site. He acknowledged that it is a Conservation Area but from the other development of 5 houses undertaken previously it has been seen how they have been built sympathetically and it was difficult for him to find the site, even knowing the area, and unless you are actually looking for it you will not notice them as the five dwellings blend in. Councillor Imafidon expressed the view that what you do notice is the Church, the vandalism, the graves and the war memorial, he is aware it is a Conservation Area and the importance of preserving Conservation Areas but something needs to be undertaken on

that site otherwise it is just going to get worse, it is making people's lives misery with anti-social behaviour, with drugs and alcohol issues next to a school which should not be taking place around children.

- Councillor Marks agreed that something is needed on the site, however, is the solution two properties in a Conservation Area with the tree and the shading issues.
- David Rowen referred to members talking a lot about the issue of anti-social behaviour and the officer's report does reflect on this and members need to remember when making a decision that the committee is here to deal with the issue of appropriate land use and not to deal with relatively short-term issues of anti-social behaviour, which could be addressed through other mechanisms, such as community policing. He finds it interesting when talking about anti-social behaviour that reference has been made to vandalism at the church but the church is not this application site so is there going to be an argument put forward that there needs to be houses built in the churchyard to address the anti-social behaviour taking place here. David Rowen stated in relation to the impact of this application, the site is within a Conservation Area, it is also within the setting of the church which is a Grade 1 Listed Building so the highest standard of Listed Building and, therefore, that has a more sensitive setting and greater consideration should be given to the impact of that setting as identified by the Council's Conservation Officer. He made the point that the verdant character of this site and the openness of The Glebe all contribute to the character of the Conservation Area, the setting of the church and the overall significance of those heritage assets and consequently substantial or significant harm is identified to those heritage assets, with the recommendation being to refuse the application.

Proposed by Councillor Clark, seconded by Councillor Marks to refuse planning permission as per the officer's recommendation which was not supported by a majority on a vote.

Proposed by Councillor Sennitt Clough, seconded by Councillor Imafidon and agreed that the application be GRANTED against officer's recommendation, with conditions delegated to officers to apply.

Members do not support the officer's recommendation of refusal of planning permission as they do not feel the application would be detrimental or cause harm to the Grade 1 Listed Church or the heritage features within the Conservation Area.

(Councillor Clark declared that this application lies within her ward but she will approach the application with an open-mind)

P46/24

F/YR24/0342/F

51 MARKET PLACE, WISBECH

FORMATION OF 2 X STUDIO FLATS ON THE FIRST AND SECOND FLOOR INCLUDING CHANGE OF USE OF PART OF GROUND FLOOR (FOR ACCESS TO FLATS)

David Rowen presented the report to members.

Members asked questions of officers as follows:

- Councillor Marks referred to the recent approval of single living in containers and that officers were going to find out the area of the container, is it on par with this proposal? David Rowen responded that this was the application site at Mill Close in Wisbech, which was an application submitted by a Housing Association to be occupied by the Ferry Project as transitional housing for people that were previously homeless and the internal size of those units was about 25 square metres, however, those units did also have an area of external veranda which could be used as amenity space and also had access to communal garden facilities. He expressed the view that in comparison with the nature and detail of the accommodation and its access to amenity space there is a significant difference with this

proposal.

Members made comments, asked questions and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Sennitt Clough expressed the view that the officer's recommendation is correct, it is far too restricted floor space.
- Councillor Imafidon agreed, it needs something but quality accommodation is needed in Wisbech and if this is approved it would not be quality living.

Proposed by Councillor Imafidon, seconded by Councillor Sennitt Clough and agreed that the application be REFUSED as per the officer's recommendation.

(Councillor Imafidon declared, under Paragraph 14 of the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters, that he is a member of Wisbech Town Council but takes no part in planning. He further advised that he lives in proximity to the application site but remains impartial and will approach the application with an open-mind)

**P47/24 F/YR24/0532/O
LAND SOUTH EAST OF 190 WYPE ROAD, EASTREA
ERECT UP TO 2 X DWELLINGS (OUTLINE APPLICATION WITH MATTERS
COMMITTED IN RESPECT OF ACCESS)**

David Rowen presented the report to members.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Lee Bevens, the agent. Mr Bevens referred to item 1.2 and that his client has two previous applications approved along Wype Road for 4 bungalows in total going as far back as 2019 and whilst policy LP3 means that only infill development is accepted the scheme looks to continue ribbon development form on this side of Wype Road and will be the last two bungalows applied for by his client. He expressed the view that members have previously agreed that the previous bungalows approved followed the general pattern of development along Wype Road, which is ribbon or frontage development and he disagrees with officers that this proposal would fail to respect the core shape and form of the settlement by virtue of following this linear pattern along Wype Road.

Mr Bevens understands that some locals have raised the issue of a footpath but the extent of the adoptable footpath is on the opposite side of the road outside of No.127 Wype Road and should any development be approved on that side of the road then the adoptable footpath would be extended further along Wype Road providing additional pedestrian safety. He referred to item 1.3 and they do not believe the site is contrary to policy LP12, the site is adjacent to the existing developed footprint of the village being the two large detached bungalows to the north-east and the two bungalows currently under construction and they do not feel it would have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside as the dwellings proposed would be single-storey in height and reflect nearby dwellings.

Mr Bevens expressed the view that the proposal is of a scale and location that is in keeping with the established form of Wype Road and will extend the linear features but in a manner which is proportionate to the small village of Eastrea and will provide two bungalows offering a wider choice of housing. He stated that officers refer to policy LP16 in their recommendation and the site does retain the hedgerow to the front of the site, which would be reinforced in a future reserved matters application and this could be conditioned.

Mr Bevens expressed the opinion that the scheme will improve the character of the local area and does not adversely impact on the street scene. He referred to the slide on the presentation screen, which is an uploaded image from the forthcoming Whittlesey Bypass Consultation, with the site marked in red, which shows the northern and southern bypass options and should the favoured southern bypass come forward this area of Eastrea will be well placed to access that infrastructure

and the associated benefits.

Mr Bevens expressed the view that the proposed scheme will offer well designed bungalows which will meet local demand, with Environmental Health and Highways raising no objection and the site falling within Flood Zone 1 and is the last section of that run before it enters into Flood Zones 2 and 3. He stated that the scheme next door has just sold one of the completed bungalows and there is strong interest in the second bungalow which is just coming out of the ground, which shows the strong demand for this type of product in this area.

Mr Bevens asked members to reconsider the recommendation for refusal and approve the proposal based on the local support for the scheme and the points he has outlined.

Members asked questions of Mr Bevens as follows:

- Councillor Sennitt Clough asked for confirmation that the site is within Flood Zone 1? Mr Bevens confirmed this was correct and that at the bottom of the site, the next piece of land down starts to go into Flood Zones 2 and 3 so as it approaches the railway line and the Sustrans route that runs alongside the bottom of the land it is in Flood Zones 2 and 3 and this would be the last development proposed by his client.

Members asked questions of officers as follows:

- Councillor Sennitt Clough stated that the image on the screen is very much out of date on the strategic outline business case for the relief road, those two routes have not been agreed and this should not have any impact on committee's decision today. David Rowen responded that it is not an image provided by officers but one that has been provided by the agent. He stated that the relevance of that to the decision members are making today is that it is a very long-term project that will be a number of years before it comes to fruition and is immaterial to the determination of an application for these two dwellings.

Members made comments, asked questions and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Marks stated from memory committee approved the previous bungalows and said no further development but this application has now come along and he feels it will mirror what is already present and it does give the road the end point, especially as it goes into Flood Zones 2 and 3. He stated whilst visiting the site he saw on the lamppost or telegraph pole a yellow notice advertising that there is an application for 3 across the road so it is coming to the end of the village and as long as there are no further developments along there, these are the last two, he would support this application.
- Councillor Sennitt Clough asked for clarification that Councillor Marks said he would be supporting? Councillor Marks confirmed that he would happily support this proposal as long as this is the last development along this side of the road.
- Councillor Sennitt Clough agreed and feels there is a need for bungalows in the area and if this proposal is in the same style as the ones that are already in existence they provide a nice outlook on entry to the village. She stated her only concern was the risk of flooding, she knows the road quite well and if this was the last development along here then she would also support it.

Proposed by Councillor Murphy, seconded by Councillor Imafidon and agreed that the application be GRANTED against officer's recommendation, with authority delegated to officers to apply conditions.

Members do not support officer's recommendation of refusal of planning permission as they feel that the proposal is acceptable in terms of amenity impact and highway safety, it does not harm or is detrimental to the character of the countryside and the site lies in Flood Zone 1.

(Councillors Clark, Marks, Murphy and Sennitt-Clough declared that they know Councillor Mrs Laws who has links to the applicant but will approach the application with an open-mind)

(Councillor Imafidon declared, under Paragraph 2 of the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters, that he had been lobbied on this application but would keep an open-mind)

P48/24 **CONFIDENTIAL - PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The confidential minutes of the meeting of 21 August 2024 were signed and agreed as an accurate record.

(Members resolved to exclude the public from the meeting for this item of business should it need to be discussed on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972)

4.37 pm

Chairman