

Minutes of a Meeting of the Planning Committee - North held in the Sedgemoor Room, Bridgwater House, King Square, Bridgwater, TA6 3AR, on Tuesday, 9 July 2024 at 2.00 pm

Present:

Cllr Kathy Pearce (Chair)
Cllr Matthew Martin (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Brian Bolt
Cllr Hilary Bruce
Cllr Bob Filmer
Cllr Pauline Ham
Cllr Mike Murphy
Cllr Brian Smedley

Cllr Alan Bradford
Cllr Ben Ferguson
Cllr Tony Grimes
Cllr Alistair Hendry
Cllr Gill Slocombe

12 Apologies for Absence - Agenda Item 1

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There were no apologies as all committee members were present.

12 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 2

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The following Councillors declared an interest in applications on the agenda:

Councillors Kathy Pearce, Brian Smedley and Gill Slocombe declared a non-registrable interest in Application 08/24/00030 as they were members of Bridgwater Town Council but had taken no part in any discussions on the application. Councillors Pearce and Smedley were also the Division Members for that area.

Councillors Hilary Bruce, Alistair Hendry and Bob Filmer declared an other registrable interest as they were members of the Axe Brue Drainage Board but had take no part in any discussions on these applications.

Councillors Bob Filmer and Tony Grimes declared a non-registrable interest in applications 49/23/00003, 24/22/00042, 24/23/00026 as they were the Division Members for those applications but had taken no part in any discussions on those applications, councillor Filmer also confirmed he had been part of the referral process on 2 of the applications.

Councillor Matt Martin declared a non-registrable interest in the following applications as he was the Division Member but had taken no part in any discussions on these applications: 07/23/00014 and 33/24/00004.

Councillor Martin also declared a pre-determination in application 50/24/00021 as he made comments on this application and would therefore leave the room during

the consideration of the HRA and the planning applications.

12 Public Question Time - Agenda Item 3
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Details of public speaking are captured under the minutes of the appropriate application.

13 Habitat Regulations Assessment for Planning Application 50/24/00021 Land
0 At, Combe Batch, Wedmore, Somerset, BS28 - Agenda Item 4

The committee were presented the Habitats Regulation Assessment for the planning application at the land at Combe Batch, Wedmore. Members of the committee agreed that the concerns of the parish council had been assessed and that there would be no adverse impacts that would not be mitigated via the conditions attached to the planning application.

Councillor Filmer proposed that the assessment be endorsed and this was seconded by Councillor Grimes.

Resolved:

That the Habitats Regulation Assessment Report originally dated 11th September 2020, updated in June 2023 and 21st May 2024 be endorsed by the Planning North Committee, as the competent authority. In reaching the decision to agree the Habitats Regulation Assessment, the Council considers that the proposed development would not have an adverse impact on the integrity of a European site.

Unanimous

13 Planning Application 50/24/00021 Land At, Combe Batch, Wedmore, Somerset,
1 BS28 - Agenda Item 5

The Planning Officer introduced the application with the assistance of a powerpoint presentation. They updated the committee with additional information to their written report as follows:

- 2 additional letters received from local residents stating their concern with the landscaping and footpaths.
- A letter of support for the proposal had also been received.

They also went through the proposal explaining the reasons for the previous refusal and the amendments made with this application which it was considered addressed those refusal reasons.

The committee heard from 5 local residents and their comments included:

Agreed with the Conservation Officer as there would be an impact on the 3 Listed Buildings adjacent to the development

Suggest no real change to previous refusal reasons with an adverse impact on the Conservation area.

Highway access with pedestrian access should be upgraded, road was narrow and visibility poor with many HGVs using the road. Parking occurs on Wells Road which also leads to poor visibility.

Consider that more Affordable Housing was needed in Wedmore, there had been a substantial increase in the surrounding villages with no evidence to back up the application.

Neighbourhood Plan to influence plans for Wedmore, sites allocated for development and this was not one of the 25 sites highlighted, Housing Needs survey did not reflect Plan.

The Parish Council then spoke to the committee confirming that they considered that this application should meet the Biodiversity Net Gain principle and that the proposal would lead to the removal of ancient hedges and habitats for animals, and off-site mitigation would not help and there would still be an adverse impact on habitats in the area.

The committee were addressed by the agent for the application who confirmed that this application sought to address the previous refusal reasons, the design had been amended including the reduction in height of 6 dwellings, 3 semi's instead of terraces and doors and windows changed. The design included smaller properties as requested by the Affordable Housing officers and design elements accords with the local vernacular.

Members received clarification from the Planning Officer in response to comments from speakers; these points included:

- The Conservation Officer had considered the new designs and was satisfied
- The new application met WED3 and TB3also
- The Housing Needs Assessment had been independently assessed, it provided details, it had recently been revised with new people joining the register. The properties had been reduced in size as per the HNA and therefore the application met the needs of the local people.
- Biodiversity Net Gain had been achieved with the HRA confirming that land needed off-site to meet the needs detailed.
- Highways – a Road Safety Audit had been undertaken by an independent assessor, confirming that access was acceptable and that the increase in vehicles would not be significant.

During discussion, Members considered that the development was now in keeping with the local design, although the green roofs for the contemporary self build properties were interesting but accepted the rationale.

There were some concerns raised with the trans-location of the hedgerow and confirmation was given that landscaping and planting triggers were included within the S106 agreement.

It was confirmed that the proposed play area would be agreed and fenced with details agreed within the S106 agreement.

At the conclusion of the debate, it was proposed by Councillor Hendry and seconded by Councillor Pearce to approve the application subject to the conditions contained within the Officer's report and the signing of the S106 agreement (with the assurance that the hedgerows would be protected during the translocation process).

Resolved:

To Grant Permission subject to the conditions detailed within the Officers report and the completion of a Section 106 Agreement.

Unanimous

13 **Planning Application 49/23/00003 Warehouse and Premises, Notting Hill Way,**
2 **Weare, Axbridge, Somerset, BS26 2JU - Agenda Item 6**

Councillors Bolt and Hendry left the committee before the consideration of the remainder of the following applications.

The Planning Officer introduced the application to the committee with the aid of a power point presentation. She updated the committee explaining that a letter received from a local resident expressing concern of HGVs and the impact on the nearby school.

The Parish Council spoke on the application and confirmed that there needed to be mitigation for the increase in traffic especially as the roads are narrow and the school being nearby; they also requested that there needed to be refuge spaces on the hill and some areas on the road should be widened.

The agent addressed the committee making the following points including that the business had 180 employees and the applicants wished to enhance the site buildings and modernise the facilities. They also wished to change the movement of traffic by changing the parking and manoeuvring of vehicles with the opening of the previous access for safety. It was noted that there had been no objections from statutory consultees.

During discussion the committee heard from the Highways Authority who had no objection to the proposals but in respect of the amendments requested by the Parish Council, it was considered that they wouldn't be reasonable for the business

to fund the amendments.

During debate, the Members commented that although, there were concerns relating to the HGVs and the nearby school, the planning application would not impact them and that the Construction Management Plan takes into account school hours.

Following the debate, Councillor Martin proposed and Councillor Ham seconded the approval of the application.

Resolved:

To Grant Permission subject to the conditions detailed within the officer`s report.
(For 10, Against1)

13 **Planning application 07/23/00014 Land On The West Side Of, Vole Road, Mark,**
3 **Highbridge, Somerset - Agenda Item 7**

Councillor Ham left the committee before the start of the remainder of the applications on the agenda.

The planning Officer introduced the planning application with the aid of a powerpoint presentation.

The committee were addressed by the agent for the application confirming that this would be for a permanent base for the family, there had been no objections from local residents and was well screened, there were also flood mitigation measures included.

In response to questions from Members, it was confirmed that the landscaping would include trees outside of the fencing and hedgerows with species to be agreed via condition. Access to the rhyne network would be from outside of the site.

At the conclusion of the debate, Councillor Slocombe proposed that the application be granted approval and this was seconded by Councillor Filmer.

Resolved:

To Grant Permission subject to the conditions detailed within the Officer`s report.
(Unanimous)

13 **Planning Application 08/24/00030 27 Ashleigh Avenue, Bridgwater, Somerset,**
4 **TA6 6AU - Agenda Item 8**

The Planning Officer introduced the application to the committee with the aid of a

power point presentation, there were no updates to his written report.

During discussion, varying views were made by Members. There were concerns expressed by the local Members that it was considered that the application should be refused on the grounds of cumulative effect on parking and therefore against Policy 25. This was proposed the reason for the proposal by Councillor Smedley to refuse permission and this was seconded by Councillor Pearce. Further debate followed with Officers stressing that there were no objections from statutory consultees including the Highways Authority therefore Councillor Pearce withdrew from seconding Councillor Smedley's proposal.

After further discussion by the committee including a discussion on whether to defer the application, it was proposed by Councillor Slocombe to grant permission and this was seconded by Councillor Bradford.

Resolved:

To Grant Permission subject to the conditions detailed within the Officer's report.

(For 7, Against 3)

13 **Planning Application 24/22/00042 Rookery Manor, Edingworth Road,**
5 **Edingworth, Weston-super-mare, Somerset, BS24 0JB - Agenda Item 9**

The planning officer introduced the application to the committee with the aid of a powerpoint presentation. There was an update to his written report as Condition 6 would be removed as Condition 8 repeats with more detail.

The committee were addressed by a representative of the Parish Council who considered that this application was not needed, with Affordable Housing being provided through the development at East Brent and this would take the total of homes higher than the 12 on the Affordable Housing Needs Assessment. There were 12 registered homes within Edingworth but there were 73 park homes where the residents have claimed permanent residency. It was also considered that the application did not meet Policies CO1 and CO3 nor were there any play spaces provided within the application.

The agent then addressed the committee explaining that the application was to convert the hotel to 9 residential units, he also confirmed that the hotel was not connected to the park homes site. He stated that this was a brownfield site, it would need minimal alterations and there would be internal amendments only into 3 bed apartments.

During the debate, the Planning Officer confirmed that there were on-going enforcement investigations, but this was separate to this proposal.

During discussions, there were varying views expressed by Members including an adverse impact on the hamlet of Edingworth, no nearby facilities and therefore the site was not sustainable, also flood risk was an issue. It was explained by the Officers that this was for the conversion of an existing building and that the proposal had met the sequential and exceptions test and that there would be mitigation measures in place.

At the conclusion of the debate, it was proposed by Councillor Murphy and seconded by Councillor Pearce that the application be approved subject to the conditions detailed on the Planning Officer's report and the deletion of condition 6, however the vote was lost (For 4, Against 5, Abstention 1).

Councillor Martin then put forward that the application be refused for not meeting Policy due to over-development of the local area and being in an unsustainable location.

Resolved:

To Refuse Permission for the following reasons:

The proposal for the conversion of the existing building to 9 self-contained residential dwellings would result in an overdevelopment of the existing small hamlet of Edingworth taking into account the present density and scale of the settlement. As such the provision of 9 dwellings within this location would be out of keeping and unsustainable with the size and built form of the locality, which is a significant distance from existing services and facilities to serve such an increase in residential occupants. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies S2, CO1 and D2 of the Sedgemoor District Local Plan.

The information submitted to support the planning application is of insufficient quality to fully assess the visual impact of the development on the site and surrounding area and therefore the Authority is unable to confirm the proposal would result in a high quality development as required by Policy D2.

(For 5, Against 4, Abstention 1)

13 **Planning Application 24/23/00026 Land And Property At, Rookery Manor,**
6 **Edingworth Road, Edingworth, Weston-super-mare, Somerset, BS24 0JB -**
Agenda Item 10

Before the start of the next applications, it was proposed by Councillor Pearce and seconded by Councillor Martin that the committee continue to consider the last 2 applications and the Appeals Reports.

The Planning Officer introduced the application to the committee with the aid of a powerpoint presentation, there were no updates to his written report.

The agent addressed the committee explaining that this was a revised application and not connected to the hotel building. The application reduced the number of units from the previous application, it was considered that there would be no adverse impact on surrounds and that landscaping was conditioned.

Councillor Bradford proposed a site visit to look at the site and impact on surrounding area and from the motorway, however there was no seconder and so the proposal was withdrawn.

At the conclusion of the debate, Councillor Murphy proposed that the application be refused on the grounds of noise and visual impact on the residents and that it was considered that there were insufficient details to demonstrate whether the mitigation measures would be fit for purpose; this proposal was seconded by Councillor Filmer.

Resolved:

To Refuse Permission for the following reasons:

The proposed cabins would be situated to the south of the existing accommodation, which is contained within the existing east and south boundaries that enclose the holiday site. Due to the proposed development projecting beyond the established layout of the existing development and into the adjoining field, the proposed cabins would become visually prominent within the landscape, which is located within a countryside setting. Taking into account the scale of the proposal site and the number of cabins proposed there would be a detrimental impact on the landscape character of the immediate locality and the wider countryside. The cumulative effect when viewed with the existing development would cause a visual harm to the area that could not be adequately mitigated and therefore would be contrary to Policies CO1, D2 and D17 of the Sedgemoor Local Plan.

The location of the proposed cabins would not be screened by the existing permitted bunding and insufficient information has been submitted with regards to any further bunding being proposed as part of the development. As a result there insufficient information to confirm that the proposal would not result in a

detrimental impact on the amenity value of the cabins from noise and disturbance generated by the adjacent motorway. As such the proposal would not contribute to an improvement in the quality of the tourism offer or the image of the area as a tourism location. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policies D2 and D25 of the Sedgemoor Local Plan.

(Unanimous)

13 **Planning Application 33/24/00004 Larches Barn, The Causeway, Mark,**
7 **Highbridge, Somerset, TA9 4QF - Agenda Item 11**

The Planning Officer introduced the application with the aid of a powerpoint presentation.

The committee agreed with the consultees and the Parish Council and considered that there would be an adverse impact on the character of the building.

Councillor Filmer proposed that the application be refused and this was seconded by Councillor Grimes.

Resolved:

To Refuse Permission for the following reason:

The existing dwelling is a small rural building that has been converted sensitively to residential use with regard to its simple form and rural character. The proposed single storey rear extension by its siting, massing and appearance would result in an incongruous design that is out of keeping with the existing rural building and is contrary to adopted policy which states any extension must not affect the character or significance of these rural buildings. The location changes the linear form to a L shaped form as well as the introduction of a mis-match roof style will result in incongruous design that fails to comply with Sedgemoor's Adopted Planning Guidance Note on the Conversion of Agricultural Buildings, Policy D2 of the Local Plan (LP) and paragraph 139 and 209 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

(For 8, Abstention 1).

13 **Appeal Reports - Agenda Item 12**
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That the committee noted the reports as detailed within the agenda for the Appeals Received and Appeal Decisions for June 2024.

(The meeting ended at 6.49 pm)

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CHAIR