

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

**Minutes of the meeting of the Development Committee held on Thursday, 29 May 2025
in the Council Chamber - Council Offices at 10.00 am**

Committee Members Present: Cllr P Heinrich (Chairman) Cllr R Macdonald (Vice-Chair)

Cllr M Batey	Cllr A Brown
Cllr P Fisher	Cllr A Fitch-Tillett
Cllr M Hankins	Cllr V Holliday
Cllr P Neatherway	Cllr J Toye
Cllr K Toye	Cllr A Varley
Cllr L Vickers	

Members attending: also Cllr Ringer (Item 8 only)
Cllr Cushing (item 9 only)

Officers in Attendance: Assistant Director for Planning (ADP)
Development Manager (DM)
Lawyer
Development Manager Team Leader (DM-TL)
Senior Planning Officer (s) (SPO)
Democratic Services Officer (s)

1 CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained how he would manage the meeting.

2 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

3 SUBSTITUTES

None

4 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 23rd, January 6th February and 2nd May were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None

6 ORDER OF BUSINESS

The meeting would run in accordance with the agenda.

7 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Paterson declared an interest in relation to item 11 (as he was the Applicant) and would leave the Chamber and not participate in the debate.

8 SHERINGHAM - PF/24/1229 - ERECTION OF 41 RETIREMENT LIVING APARTMENTS WITH ASSOCIATED ACCESS, CAR PARKING, LANDSCAPING, ANCILLARY FACILITIES, AND ASSOCIATED WORKS AT LAND AT, THE ESPLANADE, SHERINGHAM, NORFOLK

Officers report

The DM-TL presented the report, highlighting the changes to the site location plan since the matter was considered by the Committee on the 6th March 2025. The Committee was shown the site location plan, the proposed site plan, elevations and street scenes and comparisons with the extant permission. The DM-TL explained to the Committee the planning balance and recommendation, referring in particular to paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF. The recommendation was for approval subject to conditions and a S.106 agreement.

Public Speakers

Wendy Setchfield-objecting
Roger Venables- objecting
Rachel Clare- (Agent)

Local Member

Cllr Ringer spoke on behalf of Cllr Withington. He raised concern over the scale, density, mass and height of the proposals, believing them to be out of character and inconsistent with the locality. The impact of the mass and density of the proposals was significant for the residents of Upcher Court.

Cllr Ringer suggested policies EM2, EM4 and EM8 were not met by this application and urged the Committee not to allow poor past decisions to set a precedent. Further concern was raised over parking, access and existing congestion. The loss of the iconic view to the War Memorial was of particular concern. He expressed disappointment that the proposed S. 106 agreement made no reference to green space particularly as the proposals have no affordable housing element.

Members debate

- a. The ADP advised the Committee that, unlike at the meeting of the 6 March 2025, the Committee were now able to make a sound decision given the changes to the red line site plan. He confirmed that the Committee was able to consider all matters at this meeting and that his view was that the matters was finely balanced but that he supported the recommendation made.
- b. The Chair and Cllr J Toye noted the importance of the meaning of “well designed” and its relevance to this decision. The ADP provided clarification - that this mainly referred to the footprint of the building, its scale and appearance and relationship to adjoining land and buildings.
- c. Cllr K Toye and Cllr Brown raised issues surrounding the extant permission and

number of units compared to this proposal, with Cllr Brown noting the previous application was during a period when the area had a 5 year land supply. Cllr Paterson asked for guidance regarding the appropriate weight that should be given to the lack of a 5 year supply of land. The ADP provided the Committee with information as to the relevance of paragraph 11 (d) NPPF in this circumstance.

- d. Cllr Holiday raised concerns whether this development would be utilised by residents already local to the area and Cllr Hankins supported the need for desirable high density residential accommodation. The ADP made it clear that if the application was approved it wouldn't be personal to the applicants-anyone could build it out.

Cllr Paterson proposed and Cllr Hankins seconded the recommendations

It **WAS RESOLVED** by 12 votes in favour and 2 against

That Planning Application PF/24/1229 be approved in accordance with the Officers recommendations.

The Committee adjourned at 11.06 and reconvened at 11.17.

9 FAKENHAM - PF/24/2418 - DEMOLITION OF EXISTING PAVILION, EXTENSION OF THE EXISTING LEISURE CENTRE PROVIDING A NEW 4 LANE 25M COMMUNITY SWIMMING POOL AND A CIRCA. 55 STATION FITNESS SUITE, REFURBISHMENT OF THE EXISTING STUDIO SPACES AND CHANGING AREAS AT FAKENHAM SPORTS & FITNESS CENTRE, TRAP LANE, FAKENHAM

Officers report

The SPO-JB presented the report and brought the late submission by the County Council (Highways) to the attention of the Committee. The Committee was provided information including site location plan and proposals, elevations, and further information regarding the main issue which was raised by the County-which was parking. The County Council's adopted standards would require 40.5 spaces for the new swimming pool plus other spaces for the other facilities assessed on "individual merit". The current proposal is for 58 car parking spaces. The recommendation is for approval subject to conditions, delegating to the ADP the final wording of those conditions, taking into account the recent submissions from Highways.

Local Member

Cllr Cushing expressed his strong support for this Application. He noted that local residents had been vocal supporters of this proposal for which there had been cross party support. He recognised the vital importance of giving children, in particular, access to a swimming pool to allow them to learn to swim and the locality and connection to the local school would facilitate that. He believed the site was a prime site for this facility. He was mindful of the parking challenges and asked that the number of spaces be maximised.

Members Debate

- a. The DM advised the Committee that the comments from Highways were a material consideration but were not an objection. He confirmed that the existing facility does not currently meet policy requirements in terms of parking spaces and suggested to the Committee that their consideration was whether the deficiency in car parking outweighed the benefits of the scheme in general and suggested that further spaces could be provided.
- b. Cllr Paterson, Cllr Vickers, Cllr Fitch-Tillett and Cllr Varley all expressed strong support noting the considerable benefits of the proposal with Cllr Varley also noting its good sustainability credentials.
- c. Cllr Fitch-Tillett reminded the Committee of the necessity of children learning to swim, particularly given that Norfolk unfortunately experienced a very high number of drownings.
- d. The ADP asked for clarification on the number of car parking spaces the Committee was seeking and both Cllr Paterson and Cllr Vickers confirmed that they were proposing and seconding the recommendation on the basis that as many car parking spaces as possible were secured, leaving it to the discretion of the ADP to finalise the number obtained..

Cllr Paterson proposed and Cllr Vickers seconded the recommendation.

It **WAS RESOLVED** unanimously

That Planning Application PF/24/2418 be Approved in accordance with the Officers recommendation.

10 **SOUTH RAYNHAM - PF/25/0091 - INSTALLATION OF 2.408MW OF GROUND-MOUNTED SOLAR PV AND 2.392MW OF BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SOLUTION (BESS) ON LAND KNOWN AS SANDPITS. LAND AT UPHOUSE FARM, SWAFFHAM ROAD, SOUTH RAYNHAM**

Officers Report

The DM-TL presented the report to the Committee, bringing the main issues to the Committee's attention. The presentation included details of the location, proposed layout and landscaping. The recommendation was for approval subject to conditions.

Public Speakers

Stuart Laws – Applicant.

Members Debate

- a. Cllr Paterson and Cllr Varley expressed support for a well thought out and sustainable scheme.
- b. The Chair, Cllr Vickers, Cllr K Toye and Cllr Holliday all raised concerns relating to the loss of good agricultural land and the wider issue of food security. Cllr

MacDonald acknowledged it was positive that the panels were raised to continue to allow grazing.

- c. Cllr Hankins and Cllr J Toye brought up matters relating to the 40 year limit and the removal of equipment, Cllr J Toye seeing it as a positive that the land was not permanently lost.
- d. Cllr Brown was happy to support the application and was pleased to note the condition regarding fire safety.

Cllr Paterson proposed and Cllr Varley seconded the recommendation.

It **WAS RESOLVED** by 12 votes in favour with 2 abstentions

That Planning Application PF/25/0091 be approved in accordance with the Officers recommendation.

Cllr Paterson left the Committee at 12.06

11 DILHAM - PF/25/0610: INSTALLATION OF 36KW GROUND MOUNTED SOLAR PV ARRAYS AT DILHAM HALL HONING ROAD, DILHAM FOR CLLR L PATERSON

Officers Report

The SPO-RA presented the report including the site location and photographs and took the Committee through the main issues. The recommendation was for approval subject to conditions.

Member Debate

- a. Cllr J Toye, Cllr Varley and Cllr Brown expressed their support for the proposal.
- b. Cllr Holliday asked for clarification regarding the minimum height of the hedgerow and the SPO-RA confirmed that this was to benefit the wider landscape.
- c. The Chair noted the isolated nature of this area and the height of the panels to allow cattle to graze.

Cllr J Toye proposed and Cllr Varley seconded the recommendation

It **WAS RESOLVED** by 12 votes in favour and 1 abstention

That the Planning Application PF/25/0610 be approved in accordance with the Officers Recommendation.

Cllr Paterson rejoined the meeting at 12.13 and the DM left the meeting.

12 HEMPTON- PF/21/3314 - DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDING AND

ERECTION OF 3 NO. TWO-BED DWELLING HOUSES, AT LAND BETWEEN 13 & 19, SHEREFORD ROAD, HEMPTON, FAKENHAM

Officers Report

The DM-TL took the Committee through the report, identifying the main issues and providing information on the site location plan, the proposed plan, elevations, site photographs. The Committee was informed that the proposals were contrary to policies SS1 and SS2 but given the lack of a 5 year supply of land paragraph 11(d) of NPPF was relevant and that there was a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The recommendation was for approval subject to conditions.

Public speakers

Mark Banham-Applicant

Members Debate

- a. Cllr Paterson, Cllr Vickers and Cllr Varley all expressed their support for a scheme reusing an existing developed site and with smaller, more affordable properties. Cllr Varley asked if the use of PV panels could be the subject of conditions (the Applicant indicated they would accept this) and the ADP confirmed this could be a condition.
- b. The ADP indicated that this application was a development in the countryside and therefore a recommendation for approval was finely balanced, however factors such as a development for 3 small properties tipped the recommendation in favour of approval, he drew the Committees attention to the relevant parts of the report.
- c. Cllr Brown acknowledged that this application was more unusual than might first be seen. Cllr Holliday expressed discomfort in the suggestion that this should be approved outside policy. Cllr Vickers suggested that this was a site where common sense suggested that the proposals represented both an improvement on what was there currently and provided much needed housing.

Cllr Varley proposed and Cllr Vickers seconded the recommendation

It **WAS RESOLVED** unanimously

That Planning Application PF/21/3314 be approved in accordance with the Officers recommendation.

The DM rejoined the Committee at 12.37

13 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE UPDATE

The DM presented the report to the Committee noting that performance exceeded both local and national targets.

Cllr Vickers queried when the time commenced for applications and the ADP confirmed that validating applications was subject to some delays, but this did not

impact on applicants rather the time the team had to deal with the matter.

The Committee considered the report on S.106 agreements and thanked Officers for obtaining a £20,000 contribution to pedestrian safety on the High Kelling scheme.

14 APPEALS SECTION

The DM confirmed 27 planning and 12 enforcement appeal cases, with the Inspectorate recently issuing 4 decisions which had all been dismissed. The ADP brought the Committees attention to a very recent decision at Wells-Next-the-Sea which had been decided in favour of the Appellant.

The Committee closed at 12.46

Democratic Services Officer note

The members of the Committee decided (by 13 votes for and 1 against) to recommend to the Full Council that all future Development Committee meetings should commence at 9.30 am.

The meeting ended at 12.46 pm.

Chairman