

# PLANNING COMMITTEE



**14 JANUARY 2015 - 1.00PM**

**PRESENT:** Councillor A Miscandlon (Chairman), Councillor M G Bucknor, Councillor D Hodgson, Councillor B M Keane, Councillor Mrs K F Mayor, Councillor P Murphy, Councillor Mrs F S Newell, Councillor C C Owen, Councillor D R Patrick, Councillor T E W Quince, Councillor W Sutton

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor D Stebbing (Vice-Chairman)

Officers in attendance: G Nourse (Head of Planning), S Manley (Planning Performance Manager), R McKenna (Principal Solicitor - Litigation and Planning), Mrs K Brand (Senior Development Officer), Ms R Norman (Senior Development Officer), Mrs S Jackson (Senior Development Officer), Miss S Smith (Member Services and Governance Officer)

## **P73/14      MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 10 DECEMBER 2014**

The minutes of the meeting of 10 December 2014 were confirmed and signed.

**\* FOR INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL \***

## **P74/14      F/YR14/0886/RM MARCH - LAND SOUTH WEST OF QUEEN STREET CLOSE - ERECTION OF 6 X 3-STOREY, 3-BED DWELLINGS WITH BALCONY TO FRONT AND INTEGRAL GARAGE AND 4 X 3-STOREY, 2-BED DWELLINGS**

Members considered 1 Email of objection.

The committee had regard to its inspection of the site (as agreed in accordance with the Site Inspection: Policy and Procedure (minute P19/04 refers)) during its deliberations.

Officers informed members that:

- The Police Architectural Liaison Officer has reviewed the revised landscaping scheme and no longer objects to the proposal.

Proposed by Councillor Owen, seconded by Councillor Patrick and decided that the application be:

**Granted, subject to the conditions reported.**

*(Councillors Keane, Owen and Quince stated that they are Members of March Town Council, but take no part in planning matters)*

**P75/14**

**F/YR14/0856/F**

**ELM - LAND NORTH WEST OF WALES BANK JUNCTION, BEGDALE ROAD - CONSTRUCTION OF 3.5MW (MAX) OUTPUT SOLAR ENERGY FARM, TO INCLUDE THE INSTALLATION OF GROUND MOUNTED SOLAR PANELS, ANCILLARY PLANT, 2.0M HIGH SECURITY FENCING, 19 X POLE MOUNTED 3.5M HIGH CCTV CAMERAS AND A 3.0M HIGH POLE MOUNTED PADCON MONITORING CAMERA**

Members considered 1 letter of comments and 2 letters of objection.

The committee had regard to its inspection of the site (as agreed in accordance with the Site Inspection: Policy and Procedure (minute P19/04 refers)) during its deliberations.

Officers informed members that:

- Fenland District Council (FDC) Trees has no objections to the proposed landscape measures as specified in the application. The proposal for group planting of native trees within the hedgerow at set distances will aid in breaking up the outline of the site whilst maintaining the open character of the area. The use of species rich grassland/wildflower within the site is welcome and will significantly improve the biodiversity of the site. It is appreciated that the protective fence will be prominent until the hedge develops, however the use of larger stock is not recommended as it is likely to be slow to establish and more failed plants will be expected;
- Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) have responded that the proposed road improvement works are acceptable in principle. They request a condition to secure the details of the highway improvement works;
- Officers have noted the comments received from the consultees. The additional condition requested by CCC Highways is considered reasonable and necessary in order that the proposal does not disrupt the free flow of traffic within the vicinity of the site so that it does not have a harmful impact on highway safety. The proposed highway works include the widening of carriageway at three different places along Redmoor Lane and Begdale Road. The proposal will therefore result in long term improvements to the local highway network;
- The additional condition:
  - Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, details in the form of large scale drawing detailing levels, drainage and construction shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority for the following highway improvements:
    - Carriageway widening to Redmoor Lane to 6.5m for a length of 48m from the Redmoor Lane/Begdale junction;
    - Carriageway widening to Begdale Road to 6.5m for a length of 45m east of the Redmoor Lane/Begdale junction fronting the property known as Ponderosa;
    - Carriage widening to Begdale Road to 7.0m for a length of 35m located 100m west of the site entrance to the development hereby approved;
    - The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the commencement of development on site. Reason - To ensure that the highway network is adequate to cater for the proposed development in the interests of highway safety in accordance with policy LP15 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.
- Councillor Bucknor requested clarification on the comment in the letters of objection "No issues with the panels even though live closest to them". Officers confirmed that they would clarify;
- Councillor Patrick asked if this was Grade 3 land, officers confirmed it is.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Mr Tufnell, the Applicant. Mr Tufnell informed members that he works for the Development and Planning Department of Electric UK. He informed members that the proposal is for 3.5 megawatts to generate electricity at the site North of Begdale Road, providing the equivalent of 1,020 homes of electric, offsetting 2,090 tons of carbon dioxide per year. Mr Tufnell stated that the site is developed to be of the highest quality solar panels, that will be frameless in thin film, will be set in a secure site, will be well screened from all directions and landscaped. Mr Tufnell stated that the closest resident lives 95 metres south of the site and the applicant has worked extensively with the residents during the pre-application and planning process and have extended the fence line boundary to the south to avoid the risk of Travellers, with the attractive appearance and planting, screening the site from residents.

Mr Tufnell stated that trees and hedgerows planting will be north, west and south and the visual impact assessment shows that the site will be entirely screened within 5 years. He pointed out the misconception that solar farms cause permanent and irreversible loss of agricultural land and gave the commitment that by legal agreement and finance will ensure the decommissioning and will return the land to its current condition. Mr Tufnell pointed out that the land has not been farmed for the last three years, it has been used for illegal grazing for horses by local Travellers. He pointed out that Natural England did not wish to comment on the scheme.

Mr Tufnell stated that through Big60Million Ltd there is a big commitment to the environment through the provision of a drainage culvert to the east of the site, intention to measure diversity and to establish a nature reserve on the site, with bee hives and a habitat for hedgehogs, birds and protected species. Mr Tufnell requested that the committee support the scheme, he pointed out that they had requested the 30 year option for the site but would accept 25 year if the committee were to grant the application.

Councillor Hodgson asked Mr Tufnell for his opinion on noise of converters. Mr Tufnell responded that the inverters had been tested from different distances in isolated conditions and answered that 10 metres is within the environmental health limit and there is no noise effect on this site.

Councillor Patrick commented that any noise would be generated throughout the day, there would be no noise during the day and he was happy with this.

Councillor Keane made reference to comments from Middle Level Commissioners and asked Mr Tufnell if their suggestion of bunding would be installed. Mr Tufnell confirmed that design requirements were being discussed and the use of swales was being suggested.

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

- Councillor Sutton asked for clarification regarding what the road improvements were by showing this on screen. Officers responded that the Highways Officer was in attendance. The Highway Officer explained that there would be 30-35 metres of road widening along Redmoor Lane to aid two way vehicle flow to the intersection, two more sections are proposed on Begdale Road, the first up to the junction of the property of Ponderosa, to 6.5 metres for 35 metres and another on the corner of the access. Councillor Sutton commented that where the two roads join with a really sharp bend towards Friday Bridge and asked if any improvement were proposed for this area. The Highways Officer confirmed that there are existing highways issues in this area and this is being discussed with third party landowners which is outside the applicants control;
- Councillor Patrick commented that he lives close to this area, he had no interest to declare, and said that this was a very good location and agreed that any improvements are welcome. Highways confirmed that a construction management plan would be in place to control HGVs to the site;

- Councillor Miscandlon commented that the timescale on road improvements was contained on the second page of the update '*in accordance with the approved details prior to the commencement of development on site*'.

Proposed by Councillor Patrick, seconded by Councillor Bucknor and decided that the application be:

**Granted, subject to the conditions reported, subject to a further additional condition for highway improvements:**

- **Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, details in the form of large scale drawing detailing levels, drainage and construction shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority for the following highway improvements:**
- **Carriageway widening to Redmoor Lane to 6.5m for a length of 48m from the Redmoor Lane/Begdale junction;**
- **Carriageway widening to Begdale Road to 6.5m for a length of 45m east of the Redmoor Lane/Begdale junction fronting the property known as Ponderosa;**
- **Carriage widening to Begdale Road to 7.0m for a length of 35m located 100m west of the site entrance to the development hereby approved;**
- **The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the commencement of development on site. Reason - To ensure that the highway network is adequate to cater for the proposed development in the interests of highway safety in accordance with policy LP15 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.**

**P76/14**

**F/YR14/0875/F**

**NEWTON - LAND EAST OF ROSHAMARA, 326 HIGH ROAD - ERECTION OF 4 X 2-STOREY 3-BED DWELLINGS**

Members considered 2 letters of objection.

The committee had regard to its inspection of the site (as agreed in accordance with the Site Inspection: Policy and Procedure (minute P19/04 refers)) during its deliberations.

Officers informed members that:

- North Level Internal Drainage Board have no comments to make with regards to this application;
- Following receipt of amended plans the Local Highway Authority commented as follows:
  - The visibility splays would need to have no obstruction above 0.6m which could be covered by an appropriately worded condition;
  - The footway improvements to the site frontage facilitate safe pedestrian access and will help achieve the necessary visibility splays;
  - No objections to the revised plans in principle;
  - Recommend conditions as follows:
  - Prior to the first occupation of the development the proposed on-site parking/turning shall be laid out in accordance with the approved plan and thereafter retained for that specific use. Reason - to ensure the permanent availability of the parking/manoeuvring area, in the interests of highway safety;
  - Prior to the first occupation of the development any gate or gates to the vehicular access shall be set back a minimum of 6m from the near edge of the public highway. Any access gate or gates shall be hung to open inwards. Reason - in the interests of highway safety;

- The vehicular access from High Road shall be laid out and constructed in accordance with a detailed scheme to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development. Such a scheme shall include the provision of a metalled/sealed surface from the existing carriageway edge with associated drainage provision. The access shall then be constructed in accordance with the approved detailed and thereafter retained in perpetuity. Reason - in the interests of highway safety;
- Prior to first occupation of the development hereby approved, visibility splays shall be provided as shown on the approved plan and shall be maintained thereafter free from any obstruction exceeding 0.6m above the level of the adjacent highway carriageway. Reason - in the interests of highway safety;
- Prior to the commencement of development a detailed scheme for the construction of a 1.8m wide footway shall be provided along the frontage of the development site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such footway and any associated drainage to be constructed to the specification of the County Council and completed prior to first occupation of the development. Reason - in the interests of highway safety;
- Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved adequate temporary facilities shall be provided clear of the public highway for the parking, turning, loading and unloading of all vehicles visiting the site during the period of construction. Reason - to minimise interference with the free flow and safety of traffic on the adjoining public highway;
- These conditions will replace conditions numbers 2, 3 and 4 on pages 45 and 46 of the Agenda.

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

- Councillor Quince asked officers if the view of the elevations on screen showed shiplap boarding in use as he was not in favour of this. Officers confirmed that there is a small area proposed between the rear and sides and confirmed that a 'materials' condition could be included within Condition 9.

Proposed by Councillor Patrick, seconded by Councillor Quince and decided that the application be:

**Granted, subject to the conditions reported, subject to the replacement of conditions 2, 3 and 4 on pages 45 and 46 of the report, recommended by the Highway Authority:**

- **Prior to the first occupation of the development the proposed on-site parking/turning shall be laid out in accordance with the approved plan and thereafter retained for that specific use. Reason - to ensure the permanent availability of the parking/manoeuvring area, in the interests of highway safety;**
- **Prior to the first occupation of the development any gate or gates to the vehicular access shall be set back a minimum of 6m from the near edge of the public highway. Any access gate or gates shall be hung to open inwards. Reason - in the interests of highway safety;**
- **The vehicular access from High Road shall be laid out and constructed in accordance with a detailed scheme to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development. Such a scheme shall include the provision of a metalled/sealed surface from the existing carriageway edge with associated drainage provision. The access shall then be constructed in accordance with the approved detailed and thereafter retained in perpetuity. Reason - in the interests of highway safety;**

- Prior to first occupation of the development hereby approved, visibility splays shall be provided as shown on the approved plan and shall be maintained thereafter free from any obstruction exceeding 0.6m above the level of the adjacent highway carriageway. Reason - in the interests of highway safety;
- Prior to the commencement of development a detailed scheme for the construction of a 1.8m wide footway shall be provided along the frontage of the development site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such footway and any associated drainage to be constructed to the specification of the County Council and completed prior to first occupation of the development. Reason - in the interests of highway safety;
- Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved adequate temporary facilities shall be provided clear of the public highway for the parking, turning, loading and unloading of all vehicles visiting the site during the period of construction. Reason - to minimise interference with the free flow and safety of traffic on the adjoining public highway;
- A suitable condition be included to address materials used within Condition 9.

(Councillor Sutton declared a Non-Pecuniary Interest in this application, by virtue of his nephew being mentioned by name on this application)

**P77/14**      **F/YR14/0935/F**  
**PARSON DROVE - 331 MAIN ROAD - ERECTION OF A DETACHED CAR PORT TO FRONT OF EXISTING DWELLING**

The committee had regard to its inspection of the site (as agreed in accordance with the Site Inspection: Policy and Procedure (minute P19/04 refers)) during its deliberations.

Officers informed members that:

- The Parish Council object to the application as they consider that the location of the proposed car port will have a detrimental effect on the street scene as it is too close to the road and will also have an adverse effect on the amenity of the neighbouring property;
- North Level Internal Drainage Board have no comment to make in respect of this application.

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

- Councillor Miscandlon informed members that it was at his request that this application was placed on the agenda, pointing out that this is the first one of these applications that affects the streetscene within this area and could affect the visual impact of the area;
- Councillor Bucknor asked officers to confirm what was built in front of number 323 on Main Road shown on the Location Plan. Officers confirmed that garages had been built in front of other properties on this road.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs Mayor, seconded by Councillor Sutton and decided that the application be:

**Granted, subject to the conditions reported.**

**P78/14**      **APPLICATION TO DESIGNATE A NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA (PARSON DROVE PARISH COUNCIL)**

Members considered the receipt of an application from Parson Drove Parish Council to designate a neighbourhood area, in accordance with procedures contained in the adopted Fenland District Council Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) - June 2013.

Officers informed members that:

- there is a map of the proposed Neighbourhood Area within the Parish boundary for Parson Drove;
- the proposal cannot be refused, can only be amended and officers recommended acceptance of the Neighbourhood Area.

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

Proposed by Councillor Miscandlon that in planning law this proposal can only be recommended for acceptance or amendment and it was agreed by majority vote that:

1. **Parson Drove Parish Council's application to designate a neighbourhood area be approved without amendment (Option A) Granted;**
2. **The neighbourhood area is not designated as a business area.**

1.35pm

Chairman