

APPLICATION NO: F/YR15/0640/F

SITE LOCATION: Land South of St Mary's View, Wisbech Road, March

UPDATE

An email has been received from Councillor Count in support of the application and the Chairman will read this out.

An e-mail has also been received from the agent identifying some minor inaccuracies within the Officer's Report to the Committee. Taking each point in turn:

Loss of agricultural land – The Committee report refers to the agricultural land as being mostly Grade 1 with an element of Grade 2, which is incorrect. An Agricultural Land Classification Report was submitted to the Town Council in September 2015 following their initial concerns. This has confirmed that around 78% of the land is classified as being Grade 3a with the remaining 22% being Grade 3b.

Case Officer comments: *According to the NPPF Grade 3a and higher (i.e. Grades 1 and 2) are all classified as being the best and most versatile agricultural land. Therefore the assessment in relation to this planning application remains valid and some of the best and most versatile agricultural land would continue to be lost. Officer's conclusion here is that the loss of this land is acceptable.*

Consultation Responses – The agent considers that the level of detail within the report given to the objections letters received is significantly disproportionate to the level of detail given to the 290 letters of support including from local businesses in the area who submitted independent letters.

Case Officer comments: *The Committee Report refers to 290 proforma style letters. Some of these (around 50%) provided reasons for supporting the scheme but these were not particularly comprehensive. In addition there have been local businesses, including G's Beetroot Ltd who has lodged letters of support; they suggest that the proposal should be approved owing to: the benefits of the new roundabout; new employment; revenue; competition and new facilities. Officers have considered these comments in arriving at their recommendation.*

Other Matters - In addition, and following the publication of the Report, Costa Coffee has submitted a letter which expresses their interest in the site as a drive-through facility. The letter states that this would not be at the expense of the town centre outlet.

Copse Planting – The agent has agreed that the planting of the copse to the north of the site is to be secured by way of a Section 106 Obligation and that it shall be planted in the first planting season after the commencement of the phase 1 works.

Case Officer comments: This is agreed.

Conditions – FULL application

No. 6 – hours of use for the retail units. Following discussions with the agent and the Council's Environmental Health Officer these are now suggested to be from 08.00 until 22.00 hours.

***Case Officer comments:** The precise re-wording of this condition is currently being finalised and in accordance with the recommendation on page 33 of the Agenda it is recommended that Officers be given delegated authority to finalise the condition.*

No. 7 – hours of deliveries. Following discussions with the agent and the Council's Environmental Health Officer the condition is no longer considered to be necessary and is therefore proposed to be removed.

***Case Officer comments:** The comment of the Environmental Health Officer are noted and it is considered that there is no longer any justification for this condition.*

Conditions – OUTLINE application.

No. 9 – hours of deliveries. Following discussions with the agent and the Council's Environmental Health Officer the condition is no longer considered to be necessary and is therefore proposed to be removed.

***Case Officer comments:** The comment of the Environmental Health Officer are noted and it is considered that there is no longer any justification for this condition.*

Changes to Officer Recommendation

Officers have been reviewing whether or not the application requires referral to the National Planning Casework Unit. Paragraph 022 (Reference ID: 21b-022-20140306) of the NPPG and the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009 requires the referral of certain types of applications to the National Planning Casework Unit should the Local Planning Authority be minded to approve the application. In this case a referral may be required as the amount of floorspace exceeds the 5,000 square metre threshold in this out-of-centre location. Further discussions are to take place with the National Planning Casework Unit in this regard and it is therefore recommended that Officers be given delegated authority to refer the application if necessary.

Resolution: Remains as approval as detailed on page 33 of the Agenda with the inclusion of the updated planning conditions and the potential referral to the National Planning Casework Unit as per this update.