

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 September 2013 at 3.30 pm

Present:

Councillor A F Knight	Chairman
Councillor I Melhuish	Vice Chairman
Councillor G S Dowding	Councillor A P Hadley
Councillor B Heywood	Councillor E May
Councillor C Morgan	Councillor S J Pugsley
Councillor D D Ross	Councillor M A Smith
Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew	Councillor K H Turner

Officers in Attendance:

Planning Manager – Andrew Goodchild
 Deputy Planning Manager - Kenneth Taylor
 Principal Planning Officer - Elizabeth Peeks
 Planning Officer – Lisa Bullock
 Committee Administrator – Sarah Wilsher
 Legal Advisor - Martin Evans - Mendip DC

P043 Apologies for Absence

There were apologies for absence from Councillor K M Mills and Councillor L W Smith.

P044 Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held on 29 August 2013 - circulated with the Agenda be confirmed as a correct record following the insertion of the letters “LBC” next to the site address: Townsend Farm, Main Road, Carhampton, Minehead, TA24 6HH on application 3/05/13/007. Proposed by Councillor E May and seconded by Councillor K Turner and all present voted in favour.

P045 Declarations of Lobbying

Name	Min No	Ref No	Application	Persons Lobbying
All Councillors	P048	3/21/13/083	Land adjoining The Maples, Ellicombe Lane, Alcombe	Objectors
Six Councillors	P048	3/28/13/005	Land at Aller Farm	Objectors
Cllr A F Knight	P048	3/32/13/025	Bullen Drove, Stogursey	Supporter

P046 Declarations of Interest

Name	Min No	Ref No.	Personal or Prejudicial	Action Taken
Cllr A Trollope-Bellew	P048	3/28/13/005	Personal – Friends of Quantock Hills AONB and Chair of AONB JAC	Spoke and voted
Cllr A Trollope-Bellew	P048	3/32/13/025	Prejudicial – close contacts with applicant	Left the Chamber
Cllr C Morgan	P048	3/32/13/025	Personal and Prejudicial – knows estate manager and owns property near site	Spoke and Left the Chamber
Cllr G S Dowding	P048	3/28/13/005	Personal – See site from property and Friends of Quantock Hills AONB	Spoke and voted
Cllr A F Knight	P048	3/21/13/077	Prejudicial – close association with nearby business	Left the Chamber
Cllr S J Pugsley	P048	3/28/13/005	Personal – Vice President of Somerset Gardens Trust	Did not speak or vote

P047 Public Participation

Min No.	Reference No.	Application	Name	Position	Stance
P048	3/05/13/006	Townsend Farm, Main Road, Carhampton	Mrs P Gubbings	Local Resident	Objecting
P048	3/05/13/006	Townsend Farm, Main Road, Carhampton	Mr P Humber	Local Resident	Supporting
P048	3/05/13/006	Townsend Farm, Main Road, Carhampton	Mr M Frost	Agent	Supporting
P048	3/05/13/006	Townsend Farm, Main Road, Carhampton	Mr P Friend	Applicant	Supporting
P048	3/21/13/083	Land adjoining The Maples, Ellicombe Lane, Alcombe	Mr K Marsh	Local Resident	Objecting
P048	3/28/13/005	Land at Aller Farm	Mr R Urquhart	Monksilver Parish Council	Objecting
P048	3/28/13/005	Land at Aller Farm	Dr J Swan	Sampford Brett Parish Council	Objecting
P048	3/28/13/005	Land at Aller Farm	Mrs S Meneilly	Local Resident	Objecting
P048	3/28/13/005	Land at Aller Farm	Mr R Umner	Applicant	Supporting
P048	3/32/13/025	Bullen Drove, Stogursey	Mr R Stone	Agent	Supporting
P048	3/32/13/025	Bullen Drove, Stogursey	Cllr C Morgan		

P048 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Other Matters

Report Five of the Planning Team dated 18 September 2013 (circulated with the Agenda). The Committee considered the reports, prepared by the Planning Team, relating to plans deposited in accordance with the planning legislation and, where appropriate, Members were advised of correspondence received and subsequent amendments since the agenda had been prepared.

(Copies of all letters reported may be inspected in the planning application files that constitute part of the background papers for each item).

RESOLVED that the recommendations contained in Section 1 of the Report be approved (in so far as they relate to the above), including, where appropriate, the conditions imposed and the reasons for refusal, subject to any amendments detailed below:

Reference Location, Proposal, Debate and Decision

3/05/13/006 Townsend Farm, Main Road, Carhampton, Minehead, TA24 6NH
Erection of 25 dwellings and conversion of barn to 10 dwellings with associated works including vehicular access, garages, parking and landscaping

Objections raised by the speaker included:

- Lack of direct safe pedestrian access from the site to the village – pedestrians, including children, would have to either walk alongside the main road or through Carantoc Place to the possible annoyance of the residents of Carantoc Place.
- No bus stop proposed on site.
- Flooding currently occurs at both ends and in the middle of Winsors Lane and there is an underground leat which runs beneath most of the Lane. The proposal will exacerbate the situation. Are the flood management proposals sufficient to prevent flooding to existing properties?

Supporting comments raised by the speakers included:

- There is a flood relief outlet on the land opposite to Winsors Lane which is usually full of debris – if cleared this would help alleviate the flooding situation.
- Flooding/drainage conditions will need to be satisfied prior to the start of commencement.
- The parking proposed is adequate and there is a public car park close to the development. Also Park Lane can be used for parking as very few motorists currently use it.
- The existing bus stops for schools are not on the main road. The current public bus stop is served by a pedestrian crossing and pedestrians can walk through Carantoc Place and other public roads rather than walk along the A39.
- County Highways have not asked for a bus stop on the site.
- The junction of the A39 with Winsors Lane is sufficient for the traffic.
- The proposal meets planning policy in terms of affordable housing and even provides more affordable housing than the limit cited in the Supplementary Planning Document on Planning Obligations.
- The proposal fulfils a local housing need and will enable local people to remain in the area.
- The Passive house provides a high standard of energy efficiency.
- The site is wholly sustainable for a residential development.
- There is a lengthy history of planning permissions already on the site.
- The application for Listed Building Consent for the proposal (3/05/13/007) has been granted and the barns will be safeguarded by these permissions.
- Measures have and will be taken to provide for protected species.

The Members debate centred on the following issues:

- Lack of a play/communal area on the site.
- Lack of a good pedestrian access.
- Vehicles not being able to turn right onto the A39.
- Whether a bus stop could be located on the site.
- The development being long-awaited by the local community.
- The good level of affordable homes being provided which will help to meet local need.
- The high quality of the standard of construction.
- Parking and access not being ideal but County Highways are satisfied.
- Water discharging onto the highway will be prevented by a drainage scheme conditioned by a County Council drainage engineer.
- Disappointment that the three houses facing the road are not stone to match existing residences.

The Deputy Planning Manager confirmed that the finish to the external walls on the roadside elevation could be changed by a condition or by the submission of an amended plan.

Councillor Turner proposed and Cllr Morgan seconded that the application be **APPROVED**, subject to the materials on plots 1 – 3 being altered so that timber boarding was not included. Delegated authority was granted to the Planning Manager to approve the application subject to the submission of an amended plan detailing the change in materials to plots 1-3 or to secure the change via a planning condition. Delegated authority was granted to the Planning Manager to approve the application and negotiate the S106 agreement and any alterations to the planning conditions required.

All present **VOTED IN FAVOUR.**

Reference Location, Proposal, Debate and Decision

3/21/13/077 The Beach Hotel, The Avenue, Minehead, TA24 5AP

The proposal is to change the use of the building from a hotel and pub to a mix of four distinct but interrelated uses: hotel accommodation and ancillary uses, a "flexible use" area for the holding of various functions and community uses, short-term rented cluster accommodation and flexible accommodation.

Cllr Knight withdrew from the meeting and Cllr Melhuish took the Chair for this application and proposed that Cllr Hadley be appointed as Vice-Chair. Cllr Turner seconded the proposal and all present voted in favour.

The Members debate centred on the following issues:

- Securing the future of the Hotel.
- Supporting and assisting young people.
- Providing apprenticeships and training for college students.
- Providing accommodation for students and young people.
- Cluster accommodation can be accessed independently from the hotel accommodation.
- As a Victorian building energy efficiency would be a problem.
- The ground floor community space being an asset.

Councillor Ross proposed and Cllr May seconded that the application be **APPROVED** in accordance with the officers recommendation.

All present **VOTED IN FAVOUR**.

Cllr Knight rejoined the meeting as Chair.

Reference Location, Proposal, Debate and Decision

3/21/13/083 Land adjoining The Maples, Ellicombe Lane, Alcombe, Minehead, TA24 6TR

Outline planning application for the erection of a single dwelling with access from Ellicombe Lane

Objections raised by the speaker included:

- Ellicombe Lane is very narrow – 2.7m wide and there are no footpaths, making it dangerous for pedestrians.
- Ellicombe Manor were not consulted.
- The proposal will affect Listed Buildings along Ellicombe Lane.
- The proposal is outside the development limit and abuts Exmoor National Park.
- Ellicombe Lane has flooded six times in the past 13 years.
- Delegated authority should not be given and the Committee should determine this application alongside application 3/21/13/084.
- The existing hedge is considered as helping to detract the effect on Listed Buildings, yet it is proposed to remove the hedge in the proposal for 3/21/13/084.

The Members debate centred on the following issues:

- There is space for 6-8 houses on the site, including an affordable element. It could be an extension of the proposal for 3/21/13/084.
- Could be determined more easily alongside 3/21/13/084.
- Walking distance to shops not excessive.
- Ellicombe Lane not an ideal highway for traffic and pedestrians.

- Problems of accessing the site.
- Would like the house to have been affordable.
- The application should be considered on its own merits and not linked with 3/21/13/084.

Cllr Turner proposed that the application be REFUSED on the grounds of under-development of the site. The Deputy Planning Manager advised that although under-development of the site was a material planning consideration, this site was next to the Exmoor National Park and a single dwelling was in keeping with the immediate area of low density housing. He therefore advised against the reason for refusal. The Solicitor added that it would be difficult to defend this reason in the event of an Appeal.

Cllr Ross seconded Cllr Turner's proposal as the site was not sustainable and the access was dangerous. The Planning Manager advised that on the basis that Cllr Ross' reason was in direct conflict with Cllr Turner's proposal and reason it was not appropriate for Cllr Ross to 2nd Cllr Turner's proposal, Cllr Ross withdrew his secondment. No other seconder for Cllr Turner's proposal came forward.

Cllr Ross proposed that the application be REFUSED on the grounds of unsustainability of the site. This proposal was not seconded.

Cllr Pugsley proposed and Cllr Trollope-Bellew seconded that the application be **APPROVED WITH DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO DETERMINE THE APPLICATION FOLLOWING THE EXPIRY OF THE CONSULTATION PERIOD** in accordance with the officers recommendation.

Seven of those present **VOTED IN FAVOUR.**

Four of those present voted against.

Reference
3/28/13/005

Location, Proposal, Debate and Decision

Land at Aller Farm, East of Woodford and North of Monksilver, Williton, TA4 4HH

Erection of a solar PV development and associated works to include the installation of ground based racking systems and mounted solar panels (max 3m high), power inverter stations, transformer stations, sub station and comms building, fencing and associated access gates and CCTV security cameras mounted on free standing support poles.

Objections raised by the speakers included:

- Due to the topography of the landscape the proposal will be visible from miles around.
- The proposal is about the size of a village on the crown of the hill and is inappropriate.
- The national energy policy guidelines state that the setting needs to be taken into account when considering a large scale solar development.
- The principle of renewable energy is supported but this development would be in the wrong area – it is widely visible and the land is producing a good arable crop.
- The land is designated as grade 3 for agricultural purposes and has a grade 1 view.
- It takes years to produce good growing land.
- The land is not used for sheep or cattle grazing as suggested it could be.
- The proposal will not provide employment or training.
- The Government will not provide compensation for the detrimental impact of the proposal.

- The applicant has given no reasoned justification for the site, particularly since the initial reason of the proximity to overhead lines is no longer applicable since they cannot take the extra load.
- An assessment of alternative locations has not been provided.
- A brownfield site would be more appropriate.
- The footpaths will be affected, particularly the Coleridge Way.

Supporting comments raised by the speaker included:

- Electricity for the local community will be provided – 2,681 homes, twice the size of Williton.
- There will be opportunities to use local suppliers during the construction works and some maintenance work will be required.
- The proposal meets Devon's requirements for solar farms, which are the requirements that Exmoor National Park Authority use.
- The development is a passive, low profile installation which will only be a small part of the panoramic view.
- Happy to meet any planning conditions as imposed and to undertake a geo-physical survey to ascertain if any archaeological remains.
- Community Benefits to Sampford Brett Parish Council.

Prior to the Committee's debate, The Planning Manager advised that the offer of community benefits to Sampford Parish Council from the applicant was not part of the application and should not form part of the Committee's consideration.

The Members debate centred on the following issues:

- Visibility issues.
- In winter with less foliage the development will probably be more visible.
- The considerable impact the development will have on the countryside.
- The scale of the proposal.
- Why is it proposed to locate the panels on such a high site?
- The land has produced a good crop of wheat during a poor growing year.
- The land will not be good grazing land as the grass beneath the panels will die and weeds will grow.
- The value of the ground after 25 years.
- Will the glare of the panels be prevented by fencing?
- Will the CCTV cameras require special lighting if no lighting is proposed for the development?
- Has the carbon footprint been considered in relation to the transport of the solar panels to the site from their place of manufacture?
- Tourists may see the solar panels as a tourist attraction.
- In principle in favour of PV panels and green energy.
- Solar panels should be on buildings and brownfield sites.
- Do TGC Renewables Ltd have a contract with Western Power. They have applied for a number of sites across the country.
- The Government states that solar farms should not override environmental protection.

Towards the beginning of the debate Cllr Morgan proposed that the application be REFUSED or DEFERRED. He then left the Chamber.

Cllr Turner seconded the proposal for refusal, but as Cllr Morgan was not present for the whole debate the proposal could no longer stand and thus could not be seconded.

Cllr Turner proposed that the application be **REFUSED** as recommended as well as on the grounds of loss of agricultural land. The Solicitor advised that each reason for refusal had to stand on its own merits if the application went to Appeal. The technical information available to the Committee indicated that the land was Grade 3b agricultural land which the Council's own policy indicated was suitable for development. He therefore urged caution in adding a reason for refusal on the grounds of loss of agricultural land. Cllr Turner removed this additional reason for refusal from his proposal.

Cllr Turner proposed and Cllr Trollope-Bellew seconded that the application be **REFUSED** as recommended.

All present **VOTED IN FAVOUR.**

Reference
3/32/13/025

Location, Proposal, Debate and Decision
Bullen Drove, Stogursey, TA5 1QD

The retention of spoil (approximately 10,000 tonnes) on Bullen Drove.

Supporting comments raised by the speakers included:

- The proposal was part of the improvement scheme to Knighton Farm. It was decided to keep the spoil on the site in order to improve The Drove rather than cause inconvenience, noise, vehicle movements, expense, etc. by taking the spoil away.
- It was not the applicants' intention to cause aggravation or upset or to do anything without the necessary permissions.
- The consultees have no problems with the proposal and Public Rights of Way state that the work could improve the footpath.
- The foundations for the barns were dug deep in order to decrease the visibility of the barns.
- The work done by applicants will improve the viability of Knighton Farm which has lost much land to the Hinkley Point development.
- The work was undertaken with the best of intentions.

The Members debate centred on the following issue:

- The proposal will improve Bullen Drove in the long-term.

Cllr May proposed and Cllr Melhuish seconded that the application be **APPROVED** in accordance with the officers recommendation.

Nine of those present **VOTED IN FAVOUR.**
There was one abstention.

Reference
3/32/13/028

Location, Proposal and Decision
Hinkley Point C, Hinkley Point Road, Stogursey, TA5 1UF

Variation of condition 3 (relating to time limit to infill trenches) in respect of planning permission 3/32/12/046 (Retention of two temporary trial trenches to create a new trial trench approximately 72m x 82m and approximately 5m deep).

Cllr Turner proposed and Cllr Trollope-Bellew seconded that the application be **APPROVED** in accordance with the officers recommendation.

All present **VOTED IN FAVOUR.**

Reference
3/37/08/036

Location, Proposal, Debate and Decision

Commercial units and land to rear, The Mill, Anchor Street, Watchet, TA23 5QE

Conversion of commercial units into 10 residential units, erection of a 70 bedroom care home, redesigned access and associated works

The Members debate centred on the following issue:

- Extensive discussions have taken place over time with Watchet Town Council.
- A care home is needed in Watchet.
- Why was the buggy store deleted from the plans?

The Principal Planning Officer explained that it was accepted in 2011 that a buggy store would not be needed.

Cllr May proposed and Cllr Pugsley seconded that the application be **APPROVED** in accordance with the officers recommendation.

All present **VOTED IN FAVOUR.**

P049 Exmoor National Park Matters

Cllr S Pugsley gave a report on matters relating to West Somerset considered at the last meeting of the Exmoor National Park Planning Committee.

He reminded the Committee that West Somerset Council had decided to register as an interested party in relation to the planning application for the Atlantic Array (an offshore wind farm of 240 turbines off the North Devon coast). Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA) had registered as they felt the development would have a very significant impact on the National Park since it would be seen from the whole of the west side of north Devon and Exmoor National Park. They would be working with other parties and in their own right to object to the scheme.

The Planning Manager responded in that West Somerset Council supported the Exmoor National Park Authority but after talking to David Wyborn, Planning Manager with ENPA, it was recognised that whilst the National Park would be affected, the part of West Somerset covered by West Somerset Council as the Local Planning Authority would not be significantly affected by the Atlantic Array. It was agreed that the Council would work with the ENPA but as the Local Planning Authority they would take forth the objections in terms of visual impact. It was therefore not appropriate for West Somerset Council to register as an interested party.

Cllr Trollope-Bellew asked whether the Atlantic Array would be visible from the top of Beacon Hill. The Planning Manager replied that he had gone through the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and it did not include any visible viewpoints from anywhere in the West Somerset Local Planning Authority area.

P050 Delegated Decision List

The Deputy Planning Manager answered questions arising from the report.

P051 Appeals Decided

Cllr Turner enquired as to whether the caravan (mobile home) was still in situ at West Shute Farm. The Planning Manager replied that the caravan was still on site, but as a small agricultural building had been applied for and prior approval was not required it was hoped that this would remove any reason for keeping the caravan.

The meeting closed at 7.09 pm