
Development Control Panel

Report of the meetings held on 18th April, 23rd May
and 20th June 2005

Matters for Decision

1. PROPOSED DEPARTURES FROM THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

(a) Residential Development (1.3 hectares), land off Bydand Lane and rear of Park Crescent, Little Paxton

Reproduced as Appendix A are details of an outline application for proposed residential development on land currently occupied by industrial and warehouse buildings located off Bydand Lane and rear of Park Crescent, Little Paxton. The application also seeks approval of two means of access from Bydand Lane and adjacent to No. 9 Park Crescent. Siting, design and landscaping matters are reserved for subsequent consideration. As the site comprises 1.3 hectares, it is estimated that it would accommodate some 40 dwellings.

Although in conflict with Local Plan policy and a technical departure from the Development Plan in terms of unit numbers, the Panel has acknowledged that the location of the site has to be assessed against national, regional and local planning policy which promotes the re-use of previously developed land in accessible, sustainable locations for residential purposes particularly where a relationship to a major identified growth area, such as St Neots, can be demonstrated. Although the site is currently in employment use, the Panel has received information which has concluded that existing small businesses could find alternative premises within the locality of St. Neots. As the St. Neots area benefits from a number of existing employment locations and commitments, the Panel, having regard to national planning policies, recognised that it would untenable to seek to retain the site for employment purposes. The Panel also have concluded that the proposed use for the site is acceptable as it would not give rise to a net increase of traffic on the network in peak hours. If the application is approved, a Section 106 Agreement, supported by the Advisory Group will secure affordable housing, open space and play equipment and a contribution towards nursery, primary and secondary school provision. Negotiations are continuing with the applicant regarding the potential for a contribution towards health facilities within Little Paxton. In the light of national

policy guidance, Development Plan policy and other material considerations, the Panel

RECOMMEND

- (i) that subject to conditions to be determined by the Head of Planning Services to include details of estate roads to prevent highway links through the site, the Council approve the application for residential development on land off Bydand Lane and rear of Park Crescent, Little Paxton;**
 - (ii) that, in the event that approval from the Council is forthcoming, the Government Office for the Eastern Region be requested to consider approval of the proposal and the Director of Operational Services authorised to advertise the application as a departure from the Local Plan; and**
 - (iii) that, should the Government Office be minded to approve the application, the Director of Central Services be authorised to enter into an Agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to secure contributions towards affordable housing, open space and education.**
- (b) Residential Development (1.3 hectares), land west of the Peoples' Church, Moorhouse Drive, Huntingdon**

The Panel has considered an outline application for residential development of 1.5 hectares of Council owned land in Moorhouse Drive, Oxmoor. The site currently comprises public open space with a play area and is known locally as Spider Park. The site forms an integral part of a major re-generation programme for Oxmoor implemented by a partnership of public bodies, the voluntary sector and local residents. Further details of the proposed development are enclosed at Appendix B hereto.

Material to the Panels' deliberations was the Oxmoor Action Plan adopted by the Council as Interim Policy Guidance in 2003. The plan identifies several potential key sites which by their development for residential purposes will provide support for the community and generate necessary funding to allow other improvements to take place. Having regard to the principal issues involved, the Panel has concluded that the loss of open space is acceptable given existing provision on Oxmoor and the intention to establish both a new improved park at Coneygear Road and to re-locate the play area, currently Spider Park, to an adjacent public open space closer to St Johns C Of E school. The Panel has concluded that the provision of additional housing is acceptable, that the

submission of a comprehensive development brief will ensure a high quality scheme which should help to reduce crime and resolve social issues and that details relating to residential amenity, drainage, parking and access can be managed, with care, at reserved matters stage.

Given also the contributions towards affordable housing, open space, education and the Huntingdon Market Town which will result from the associated Section 106 Agreement and the re-generation benefits of the scheme to the Oxmoor, the Panel

RECOMMEND

- (i) that, subject to conditions to be determined by the Head of Planning Services to include those listed in paragraph 7 of Appendix B hereto, the Council approve the application for residential development, on land west of the Peoples' Church, Moorhouse Drive, Huntingdon;**
 - (ii) that, in the event that approval from the Council is forthcoming, the Government Office for the Eastern Region be requested to consider approval of the proposal and the Director of Operational Services authorised to advertise the application as a departure from the Local Plan; and**
 - (iii) that, should the Government Office be minded to approve the application, the Director of Central Services be authorised to enter into an Agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to secure contributions towards affordable housing, open space, education and the Huntingdon Market Town Strategy.**
- (c) Residential Development (5.4 hectares), land north-east of Huntingdonshire Regional College, California Road, Huntingdon**

An outline application for residential development of 5.4 hectares located north-east of Huntingdonshire Regional College in California Road, Huntingdon also has been considered by the Panel. Details of the proposal are contained in Appendix C. Whilst the proposed development is a technical departure from the Local Plan, the Panel has acknowledged that their conclusions in respect of the development at Moorhouse Drive, Huntingdon (see item No 1 (b) ante also are pertinent to this application. Therefore, and mindful of the weight which should be accorded to the Oxmoor Action Plan, the Panel has concluded that the proposed loss of open space and the principal of additional housing at this location are acceptable. Members also are satisfied that the effect on

residential amenity, highway safety and drainage could be overcome at reserved matters stage. However, the Panel has recognised that the Planning and Design Statement submitted with the application is not as comprehensive as it should be so has requested that an additional condition be imposed to require that a more detailed development brief be prepared prior to the submission of any application for reserved matters. Having noted that a Section 106 Agreement would secure contributions towards affordable housing, open space, education, off-site footpath/cycleway provision and the Huntingdon Market Town Strategy, the Panel

RECOMMEND

- (i) that, subject to conditions to be determined by the Head of Planning Services to include those listed in paragraph 7 of Appendix C hereto and to the receipt of an amended Planning and Design Statement, the Council approve the application for residential development on land north-east of Huntingdonshire Regional College, California Road, Huntingdon;**
- (ii) that, in the event that approval from the Council is forthcoming, the Government Office for the Eastern Region be requested to consider approval of the proposal and the Director of Operational Services authorised to advertise the application as a departure from the Local Plan; and**
- (iii) that, should the Government Office be minded to approve the application, the Director of Central Services be authorised to enter into an Agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to secure contributions towards affordable housing, open space, education, off-site footpath/cycleway provision and the Huntingdon Market Town Strategy.**

Matters for Information

2. PATHFINDER HOUSE, HUNTINGDON – PLANNING AND URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

The Panel has endorsed the content of the Urban Design Framework (UDF) for Pathfinder House, Huntingdon. Given that it is the purpose of the UDF to offer guidance on architectural and design quality and options for redevelopment of the land currently occupied by Pathfinder House, the Panel has expressed a preference for the site

to comprise a mixed development of dwellings, offices and shops to reflect the existing uses within the ring road and that it should seek to create a sense of community for that part of the town and complement the setting of St. Mary's Church and the Papworth Trust's new centre in Hartford Road. Above all, as a major site and asset in the town centre, the Panel were of the view that the District Council should maximise its potential value. These representations have been forwarded to the Cabinet.

**3. WEST OF STUKELEY ROAD, HUNTINGDON –
URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK**

The Panel has welcomed the opportunity to comment on a draft Urban Design Framework (UDF) which will lead to the comprehensive development of several areas of land to the west of Stukeley Road, Huntingdon. Having endorsed the content of the UDF, the Panel drew attention to its importance given the various landowners involved in that location and the intention of the guidance to promote access arrangements by the achievement of improved and good quality pedestrian and cycle links from Huntingdon Town Centre and St. Peter's School through to Stukeley Meadows residential area. The representations of the Panel on the UDF have been forwarded to the Cabinet.

4. BEST PRACTICE ADVICE – USE OF GRAMPIAN CONDITIONS

To meet current Government application handling targets and to expedite the determination of all planning applications, the Panel have been acquainted with best practice advice issued by the Planning Officers' Society which encourages the use of appropriately worded restrictive or Grampian conditions. In practice, use of the Grampian conditions would result in the provision of the same level of physical works or contributions to community infrastructure by the applicant or developer but the delivery mechanism for ensuring the provision of such requirements will be post rather than pre the actual planning decision. Having been assured that a breach of any subsequent Grampian condition would be pursued as priority by the Enforcement Team, the Panel has, in light of the best practice advice, endorsed the use of Grampian conditions in appropriate circumstances.

5. DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

Over three meetings the Panel has determined a total of 35 applications of which 26 were approved, 8 refused and one deferred for clarification of details relating to landscaping and the height of the proposed new dwellings.

**6. DEVELOPMENT CONTROL ACTIVITIES –
1ST JANUARY – 31ST MARCH 2005**

The Panel has considered a statistical report on the performance of the Development Control Section of the Planning Division over the period 1st January – 31st March 2005.

P G Mitchell
Chairman