
Development Control Panel

Report of the meetings held on 17th July, 21st August
and 18th September 2006

Matters for Information

**8. SHOP FRONT AUDIT:
RAMSEY CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Panel has considered the content of a shop front audit of premises in the Great Whyte and High Street, Ramsey undertaken as part of the emerging conservation area management plan for Ramsey. The audit will be used to identify premises which might benefit from support under the Shop Front Improvement Grant programme and also will inform planning decisions and highlight unauthorised signs or lighting arrangements prompting enforcement action where necessary.

Although endorsing the content of the document, the Panel has drawn attention to the absence of any reference to disabled access as an important criteria for shop front design, particularly given the implementation of the Disability Discrimination Act and has received an undertaking that reference will be made to this effect in the final text of the document.

**9. CAMBRIDGE SUB REGION GYPSY/
TRAVELLER NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

A summary of the key findings of a Needs Assessment relating to gypsies and travellers in the Cambridge Sub Region has been presented to the Panel. The Needs Assessment will inform a review of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) in relation to the provision of gypsy and traveller caravan sites in the Eastern Region. Ultimately, the RSS will specify the number of pitches required within each planning authority area but not their locations. Work also has begun on the preparation of a gypsy and traveller site development plan document (DPD) which will contain site specific proposals for gypsies and travellers in the district for the period to 2021. The Panel has acknowledged that the Needs Assessment will form important evidence in this respect and will allow the DPD to proceed in advance of the outcome of the RSS policy review. Having discussed several issues arising from the Needs Assessment, it was acknowledged that training for the Panel should form an essential part of the programme for preparation and inclusion of the DPD in the Council's local development scheme.

10. PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE SCHEME OF DELEGATED POWERS IN RESPECT OF ENFORCEMENT ISSUES

Approval has been given to a series of proposed amendments to the powers delegated to Officers by the Development Control Panel in respect of enforcement action. The operational changes will enable the Head of Planning Services to respond more quickly to enforcement issues as they arise under the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

11. DCLG CIRCULAR 01/2006 – GUIDANCE ON CHANGES TO THE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL SYSTEM

The Panel has endorsed the content of a response by the Head of Planning Services to circular 01/2006 published by the Department for Communities and Local Government on changes to the operation of the development control system. The response makes reference to five specific issues which will have implications for the development control service relating to the use of local development orders, changes to the outline planning permission and reserved matters process, the requirement for design and access statements to accompany certain applications, increased powers to control internal floor space additions such as mezzanines and changes to the decision period for major planning applications.

12. ST NEOTS CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY REVIEW CHARACTER ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

As part of the consultation process, the views of the Panel have been invited on the content of a draft boundary review, character assessment and management plan for the St Neots Conservation Area. The exercise has been undertaken in response to best practice guidance published by English Heritage and Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) criteria which requires a review and update of conservation area policies and documents on a five year programme. The boundary review will result in an amalgamation of the existing conservation areas in St Neots, Eynesbury and Eaton Socon and the character assessment will be used as a guide for planning matters in the maintenance of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Having endorsed the content of each document the Panel has recommended that they be adopted as Council policy by the Cabinet.

13. DESIGN CODES DOCUMENT FOR LAND EAST OF THE RAILWAY, ST NEOTS

For the first time, the Panel has had the opportunity to comment on a Design Codes Document which, in this instance, is for land east of the railway, St Neots. The document will provide guidance to prospective developers on how individual plots of land should be developed and will assist in the determination of reserved matters applications on the Loves Farm site. The Panel has endorsed the content of the Design Codes Document which will speed up the

negotiations between the District Council and developers when applications are submitted.

**14. DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PROGRESS REPORT –
1ST APRIL – 30TH JUNE 2006**

The Panel has received a statistical report on the performance of the Development Control section over the period 1st April – 30th June 2006.

**15. PROPOSED ARTICLE 4 (1) DIRECTION TO REMOVE PERMITTED
DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS – LAND WEST OF MIDDLEMARSH
FARM, SAWTRY**

On the advice of the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister the Panel has agreed to take appropriate action to respond to a commercial proposal to sub divide 5.57 hectares of agricultural land into 159 plots on land west of Middlemarsh Farm, Sawtry. The fragmentation of land in this manner can lead to serious breaches of planning control and substantial deterioration in the character and appearance of the countryside. The sub division of the plots can take place as permitted development without the need for any formal consent. However, as the sub division of the land at this location could cause severe, demonstrable and potentially irreversible harm to the character, appearance and openness of this sensitive rural landscape, the Panel has agreed to make appropriate Orders under Article 4 (1) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, the effect of which will be to withdraw certain development rights with immediate effect pending confirmation or cancellation by the Secretary of State. The order also will require an application to be made for planning permission for development proposals which can then be determined on their merits.

16. DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

Over three meetings, the Panel has determined a total of 39 applications of which 19 were approved, 15 refused and 5 deferred.

D B Dew
Vice Chairman