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EASTERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 9 OCTOBER 2024

Present: Cllrs David Tooke (Chair), Duncan Sowry-House (Vice-Chair), Alex Brenton, Toni Coombs, Scott Florek, Spencer Flower, Barry Goringe, David Morgan, Andy Skeats and Bill Trite

Apologies: Cllrs Beryl Ezzard and Hannah Hobbs-Chell

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

Elizabeth Adams (Development Management Team Leader), Lara Aintree (Senior Lawyer - Regulatory), Victoria Chevis (Planning Officer), Kim Cowell (Development Management Area Manager (East)), Joshua Kennedy (Democratic Services Officer) and Megan Rochester (Democratic Services Officer).

11. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Goringe made a declaration in respect of agenda item 6, he stated that he was a councillor for this ward as well as chairman of the Parish Council in which there is a separate planning committee of which he was not a member. Therefore, he did not consider himself to be pre-determined and would consider the application on its own merits.

12. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 4th September were confirmed and signed.

13. Registration for public speaking and statements

Representations by the public to the Committee on individual planning applications are detailed below. There were no questions, petitions or deputations received on other items on this occasion.

14. Planning Applications

Members considered written reports submitted on planning applications as set out below.

15. P/FUL/2023/05479 - Unit 5, The Barn, Little Lions Farm, Lions Hill, Ashley Heath, BH24 2EU

The Case Officer informed members that a petition had been received in support of the application with 2,500 signatures and an additional letter in support from Wildlife Rescues.

With the aid of a visual presentation including plans and aerial photographs, the Case Officer identified the site, explaining that it lies in statutory Green Belt and is adjacent to protected Dorset Heathlands. The Case officer described the proposal, constraints and relevant planning policies to members. Photographs of the site and proposed floor plans and elevations were shown. The Case Officer informed members that in terms of the NPPF, the proposed extensions to the barn including the attached external pens represented disproportionate additions to the barn so was not appropriate development in the Green Belt. The site is in close proximity to protected heathland and Natural England had been consulted. Natural England has raised objection due to heathland proximity and the risk of harm from dogs being walked on the heathland. A management plan had been submitted as part of the application identifying use of the site and the Castleman trailway for dog exercising and no walking of dogs on the heath. Members were advised that an Appropriate Assessment had identified the potential for likely significant impacts from the proposal on protected heathland and that these could not adequately be mitigated by the management plan due to difficulties on enforcement so the proposal was contrary to policy and could not be approved.

The Case Officer also identified the impacts on neighbouring amenity specifically impacts on the amenity of occupants of nearby dwellings from noise. A management plan had been submitted to address noise concerns for the nearest dwellings and it was judged that this would be appropriate and could be secured by condition. Traffic movements, flood risk and drainage assessments were also highlighted.

To conclude, the Case Officer recognised the benefits of the proposal but noted that the development represented inappropriate development in the Green Belt which was required to be given great weight in the planning balance. Although the benefits of additional outdoor space for the charity compared to its existing premises were recognised, these were not judged so special as to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and other arising harm. There were no imperative reasons of overriding public interest that would justify approval of the scheme which was likely to result in harm to the integrity of protected Dorset Heathland. Therefore, the officer recommendation was to refuse.

Public Participation

Mr Hicks was a neighbour to the site and spoke in objection to the proposal. He highlighted the impacts including pollution of the Moors River System which would arise if members were minded approving. He was concerned that there would be an increase in noise and traffic movements on the heathland as well as highlighting the flood risk and need for site access on neighbouring land in times of flooding. Mr Hicks highlighted a previous advertisement by the charity which promoted the use of outside enclosures for dog training and exercise which contributed to his concerns regarding additional noise pollution. The public objector noted that the site was adjacent to the Dorset Heathlands and only 200

metres from the Moors River which was another site of special scientific interest in close proximity. He felt this should have also been another consideration and members should be minded to support the officer recommendation to refuse.

Mr Chapman spoke in support of the proposal. He provided members with some background regarding the history of the charity and the need for it. Without the charity, it would have resulted in the in pounding of dogs. The charity also provided services to the community such as food and veterinary support to those struggling. By allowing the application, it would mean that the charity would be able to gain more land which would provide greater space to help the socialisation of dogs and better training to help rehoming. Mr Chapman also highlighted that risk management assessments had been carried out as well as health and safety checks. It was a well-managed charity, and he hoped members would overturn the officer recommendation and support a much-needed charity which provided a safe environment for dogs in need.

The agent spoke on behalf of the applicant who was seeking to create a larger base for the charity. He highlighted the need for services rehoming dogs as there was a strong need. Mr Osborn spoke about the collaboration between the planning department and the applicant, who provided additional information where requested. He strongly disagreed with the reasons for refusal and was disappointed that there was no definition of what was considered to be disproportionate. If approved, the proposal would result in a net reduction and would not cause harm to the Green Belt. There would not be an impact on the heathland as dogs would not be walked there. It was a required site providing extensive land and a management plan would require dogs to be walked on leads at all times. Mr Osborn felt that the applicant had done everything correctly and had listened to the concerns, however, was pleased to note that there was a lot of support which was shown in the petition. The agent hoped members would overturn the officer recommendation and support the proposal.

Members questions and comments

- Clarification regarding the scale of the proposal as well as the number of neighbouring properties.
- Figures of the existing footfall on the Special Scientific Interest site.
- Confirmation regarding public rights of way on the SSSI.
- Questions whether a planning condition could enforce dog proof fencing around the site.
- Cllr Trite felt that there was a serious need for the proposal and strongly approved of the use. However, he noted that members should always be protective of the countryside and the Green Belt and although it was a necessary use, it was unfortunately in the wrong place.
- Members referred to the officer report and noted the comments in objection received from Natural England.
- Cllr Sowry-House recognised the work of the charity and supported their work. However, he noted that there were only 14 areas of Green Belt, with only one of those on the south coast, therefore, it was imperative to protect it.

- Members praised the work of the charity and felt that the work that they were doing was commendable, however, the location was wrong and hoped they would continue to look at expanding their charity.
- Questions regarding whether the petition impacted any of the report detail.
- Query regarding the impacts on the Moors River.
- Comments made regarding potential for external users coming to use the site for agility and sought clarification on the impact of this on the area and Green Belt.
- The key element was the impact on heathland.

Having had the opportunity to discuss the merits of the application and an understanding of all this entailed; having considered the officer's report and presentation; the written representatives; and what they had heard at the meeting, a motion to **APPROVE** the officer's recommendation to **REFUSE** planning permission as recommended, was proposed by Cllr Spencer Flower, and seconded by Cllr Duncan Sowry-House.

Decision: To refuse in line with the officer's recommendation.

16. **P/FUL/2023/02520 - Land Adj to 142 Ringwood Road, Longham, Ferndown**

With the aid of a visual presentation including plans and aerial photographs, the Planning Officer identified the site within the Green Belt and beyond the village infilling area and explained the proposal and relevant planning policies to members. The planning designations were highlighted, particular detail was given to the site's susceptibility to ground water flooding. Photographs of the street frontage, existing and proposed layout plans as well as views looking towards the site from the allotments. Members were also provided with details of each proposed dwellings ground floor layout, the roof plans and both front and rear elevations and the inclusion of solar panels was noted. The Case Officer advised that there would have been a reduction in scale of the dwellings during the application process. Together, both dwellings if approved would be in keeping with the street scene. Neighbouring amenity would not be harmed. Due to the site's proximity to the village of Longham, access to facilities in Ferndown and the opportunity to benefit from the Green Belt village infill exception the principle of the development was considered to be acceptable. The scale, design and impact on the character and appearance of the area were acceptable subject to conditions. Impacts on protected habitats were acceptable as mitigation could be secured via CIL. Dorset Council highways team were satisfied with the use of the pre-existing site access and issues regarding access for emergency vehicles had been resolved. The recommendation was to grant subject to conditions.

Public Participation

Mr Moir spoke on behalf of the applicant. He explained that the applicant had engaged with the town council to seek their views of the proposal and was pleased to see the letters of support submitted. There were no highways dangers and access were considered to be acceptable. The proposal represented limited infilling which was currently occupied by storage buildings which did not make a

valuable contribution to the Green Belt. If approved, it would have created optimal use of the site as well as ensuring the units were well designed. It would not have resulted in harm, and it was within a sustainable location. The agent reiterated that it would not affect the amenity of neighbouring properties. He hoped members would support the recommendation.

Members questions and comments

- The recycling centre was over 1km to the south so the two dwellings would not be affected.
- Members noted the parish council objections, however, queried whether they were based on material planning considerations. This was clarified.
- Comments regarding whether there were pedestrian crossings near to the site.
- Clarification regarding site access.
- Private arrangements for refuse vehicles collection
- Sustainable location and the inclusion of solar panels was welcomed.

Having had the opportunity to discuss the merits of the application and an understanding of all this entailed; having considered the officer's report and presentation; the written representatives; and what they had heard at the meeting, a motion to **APPROVE** the officer's recommendation to **GRANT** planning permission as recommended, was proposed by Cllr Spencer Flower, and seconded by Cllr Toni Coombs.

Decision: To grant planning permission for the reasons set out in the officer's report.

17. P/FUL/2024/00324 - Land at Oak tree Paddock, Bachelors Lane, Holtwood, Wimborne

With the aid of a visual presentation including plans and aerial photographs, the Planning Officer identified the site and explained the proposal and relevant planning policies to members. The proposal was to convert a disused former stable block to a 4-bedroom dwelling.

Members were informed that objections had been received from Holt Parish Council regarding impacts on the Green Belt. Photographs of the site and the existing and proposed plans were shown. The Planning Officer outlined the relevant planning constraints including the position within the Green Belt and outside the settlement boundary. The Area of Great Landscape Value was also identified. There was a correction in the officer report in which it had stated that there were no windows in the northwest elevation, as it was identified that there was one small window proposed and rooflights. The majority of the rear and west elevations were blank to maintain the relationship between the dwelling and the land beyond. Members were also shown images of the existing outbuilding and were informed that the proposed changes would have enhanced the setting of the area. In consultation with the highways team, it was identified that one single dwelling would not resulting a material increase in traffic movements compared to the lawful use. Regarding sustainability, air source heat pumps were proposed with a condition for noise mitigation. The principle of development was acceptable,

and highways was also acceptable subject to conditions. A tree protection condition was proposed. Although the unsustainable location was contrary to policy KS2, and the proposal represented an isolated dwelling in the countryside it could benefit from the exceptions at paragraph 84 of the NPPF. The recommendation was to grant subject to conditions set out in section 18 of the report.

Public Participation

The agent spoke in support of the application. She referred to the Local Plan which was largely silent of the matter of conversion of rural buildings, so turned to national planning policy for guidance. The NPPF was clear that existing buildings within the Green Belt could have been converted provided that they were of permanent and substantial construction. A structural engineer was consulted early on, and it was confirmed to be the case that the building was suitable for conversion. The design was of a light touch to acknowledge the former use of the building by retaining the style of the openings and work as much as possible and practical with the existing features of the building. The bedrooms had external shutters emulating the existing style of the barn doors and the open plan kitchen which would have allowed the living space to benefit from the attractive outlook over the paddock.

Ms Travers stated that there was no material increase in height, width or depth to the building so that the openness and spaciousness of the Green Belt was preserved. The agent noted that they were proposing to clad the existing white painted concrete walls in a timber larch. This was to give the building a softer appearance in its landscape setting, particularly in relation to any views towards or from Horton Tower. There was no need for the removal of any trees or hedging on the site. Additional hedging was proposed to help soften boundaries and boost biodiversity. Ms Travers noted comments raised in the representations and highlighted services including water and waste collection. It was a modest proposal that was designed to settle quietly into a well screened site, the principle was in line with current planning policies. The agent requested the committee to support.

Members questions and comments

- Members noted that there had been no objections received from Natural England and concluded that there was no harm to the heathland within 5km of the site. Mitigation had been secured by structure levy.
- Clarification regarding impacts of light spill on dark skies.
- Informative note to recommend blinds or similar be fitted to rooflights.
- Confirmation regarding separation distances between hedging and the dwelling.

Having had the opportunity to discuss the merits of the application and an understanding of all this entailed; having considered the officer's report and presentation; the written representatives; and what they had heard at the meeting, a motion to **APPROVE** the officer's recommendation to **GRANT** planning

permission as recommended, was proposed by Cllr Toni Coombs, and seconded by Cllr Andy Skeats.

Decision: To grant planning permission for approval with the informative note to recommend blinds or similar be fitted to rooflights.

18. **P/FUL/2024/02697 - Barn opposite Old Quarry Close, Worth Matravers**

With the aid of a visual presentation including plans and aerial photographs, the Planning Officer identified the site and explained the proposal and relevant planning policies to members. Site photographs which identified the barn curtilage, front and rear elevations as well as the proposed site plan were shown. Members were informed that the proposal was 4 miles south of Swanage and although it was close to Worth Matravers, it was outside and not adjacent to the settlement boundary so not in a sustainable location. Reference was made to the NPPF paragraph 84, that did not support isolated dwellings, and the building was understood to be in use for storage so it could not benefit from the exception for redundant or disused buildings. The planning designations were noted, and the Parish Council objections were highlighted. The officer's presentation also included a 3D view comparison which identified that there was no harm to neighbouring properties, and it had acceptable access and sufficient off-road parking. Details of the existing and proposed floor plans were outlined with members being informed that the overall mass would be reduced, and light spill would be reduced to acceptable levels by design and condition so there would be no harm to the National Landscape. To conclude, although acceptable in other respects including affordable housing provision via commuted sum to be secured by legal agreement, the proposal's position in a location outside the settlement and isolated from services was considered to be unacceptable. PINS had confirmed the Council's Annual Housing Land Supply was more than 5-years, so the titled balance did not apply. The officer recommendation was to refuse.

Public Participation

The agent hoped members would depart from the officer recommendation. He explained that it was an underutilised site which no longer had an active use. Mr Spiller felt that the existing building was capable of being repurposed and noted it was particularly prominent. The design would transform the appearance of the proposal, and a good use of materials had been considered. He opined that any technical issues had been addressed and noted that there had been no objections from residents. Mr Spiller also referenced that the Ward Councillor had been consulted and sought comfort with the inclusion of an affordable housing contribution. He felt the proposal site would have benefit if approved and hoped members would overturn the officer recommendation and grant permission.

Members questions and comments

- Members sought confirmation regarding the use of nearby buildings as well as clarification regarding the location of affordable housing on site photographs.

Having had the opportunity to discuss the merits of the application and an understanding of all this entailed; having considered the officer's report and presentation; the written representatives; and what they had heard at the meeting, a motion to **APPROVE** the officer's recommendation to **REFUSE** planning permission as recommended, was proposed by Cllr Toni Coombs, and seconded by Cllr Spencer Flower.

Decision: To grant planning permission for the reasons set out in the officer's report.

19. **P/FUL/2024/02407- 51 North Street, Wareham, BH20 4AD**

With the aid of a visual presentation including plans and aerial photographs, the Planning Officer identified the site and explained the proposal and relevant planning policies to members. Photographs of the street scenes and existing and proposed ground floor plans were shown. The presentation identified that the proposal was within the designated town centre of Wareham and within the settlement boundary and Wareham Conservation Area. If approved, the proposal would not change the frontage of the property, therefore there would be no impact on the existing street scene and the contribution made to the Conservation Area. Objections had been received from Wareham Town Council who sought to retain retail use in line with the Wareham Neighbourhood Plan. However, it had been identified that the building had not been in commercial use for some time and the internal arrangements limited opportunities for viable use of the space as a shop or for alternative Class E uses. Officers were satisfied that if approved, the loss of the retail use in this location at the northern extent of the town centre would not cause harm to the viability of the town centre. No other harm had been identified; therefore, the officer recommendation was to grant subject to conditions set out in the report.

Public Participation

The applicant explained her strong desire to live and bring up her son in Wareham. She was previously advised that it would have been unlikely that she'd receive issues with the submitted application as neighbouring properties had finished identical works and was therefore surprised that objection had been received from the town council. Ms Frost discussed the history of the site and explained that she was the third owner who hadn't wished to use the proposal for retail use. The applicant expressed her desire to maintain the historic building and preserve the historic essence. If the proposal was to turn back to its original form, it would have harmed the viability of building. Ms Frost hoped the committee would support the officer recommendation.

The Local Ward member spoke in support of the proposal and noted that the other Local Ward member was also in favour. He felt that the proposal should be supported as set out in the officer report. He highlighted that the area was a mix of residential and commercial uses and therefore residential use was not unique and would be in keeping with the town. Cllr Holloway felt that the proposal was a good way of reusing and redeveloping the existing space which had been empty for some time. As a ward member who had considered the proposal carefully, he offered his support.

Members questions and comments

- Noted that the demand for small retail units had dropped off.
- Members felt that the proposal was interesting and understood why the site was not viable for business use.

Having had the opportunity to discuss the merits of the application and an understanding of all this entailed; having considered the officer's report and presentation; the written representatives; and what they had heard at the meeting, a motion to **APPROVE** the officer's recommendation to **GRANT** planning permission as recommended, was proposed by Cllr Alex Brenton, and seconded by Cllr Toni Coombs.

Decision: To grant planning permission for the reasons set out in the officer's report.

20. **P/FUL/2024/02944 - Moors Valley Railway, Moors Valley Country Park, Ashley Heath, Ringwood, BH24 2ET**

With the aid of a visual presentation including plans and aerial photographs, the Planning Officer identified the site and explained the proposal and relevant planning policies to members. Members were informed that the proposal was before them as it was on Dorset Council owned land. The officer identified the Green Belt, and that the proposal was within 5km of Dorset heathlands. There were no concerns regarding ground water flooding as it was an existing building. There were no changes proposed to the floor plans. Members were shown images of the existing and proposed elevations. Officers were satisfied that the proposal benefited from the Green Belt exception to inappropriate development because it was an alteration to an existing building that did not materially change the volume and scale. The design was acceptable and subject to a condition requiring a construction management plan to avoid harm to the Moors River System SSSI, the officer's recommendation was grant subject to conditions set out in the officer report.

Public Participation

There was no public participation.

Members questions and comments

- Members noted that it was a well-used site, and approval would enhance the property and improved its functions.

Having had the opportunity to discuss the merits of the application and an understanding of all this entailed; having considered the officer's report and presentation; the written representatives; and what they had heard at the meeting, a motion to **APPROVE** the officer's recommendation to **GRANT** planning permission as recommended, was proposed by Cllr Barry Goringe, and seconded by Cllr Bill Trite.

Decision: To grant planning permission for the reasons set out in the officer's report.

21. **P/FUL/2024/03747 - Bere Regis Primary School, Southbrook, Bere Regis, BH20 7DB**

With the aid of a visual presentation including plans and aerial photographs, the Case Officer identified the site and explained the proposal and relevant planning policies to members. Members were informed that the proposal was on Dorset Council owned land and towards the south of Bere Regis. The proposed location of the temporary classroom was identified, noting the separation distances to the nearest residential property. If approved, it would allow for a functional building with educational purposes. There was no harm to the character of the area and limited visibility from the street scene. The principle was acceptable and had community benefits without causing harm to amenity. The officer recommendation was to grant subject to conditions set out in the officer report.

Public Participation

There was no public participation.

Members questions and comments

- Members were pleased to see the success of the school building and wanted to support the expansion.

Having had the opportunity to discuss the merits of the application and an understanding of all this entailed; having considered the officer's report and presentation; the written representatives; and what they had heard at the meeting, a motion to **APPROVE** the officer's recommendation to **GRANT** planning permission as recommended, was proposed by Cllr Toni Coombs, and seconded by Cllr David Morgan.

Decision: To grant planning permission for the reasons set out in the officer's report.

22. **Urgent items**

There were no urgent items.

23. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business.

Decision Sheet

Duration of meeting: 10.00 am - 12.46 pm

Chairman

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