

NORTHERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 27 MAY 2025

Present: Cllrs Richard Crabb (Chair), David Taylor (Vice-Chair), Barrie Cooper, Les Fry, Carole Jones, Rory Major, Val Potheary, Belinda Ridout, James Vitali and Carl Woode.

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

Lara Altree (Senior Lawyer - Regulatory), Hannah Smith (Development Management Area Manager (North)), Kathryn Melhuish (Conservation and Design Team Leader), Alex Skidmore, John Miles (Democratic Services Officer) and Megan Rochester (Senior Democratic Services Officer).

66. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Sherry Jespersen.

67. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made at the meeting.

68. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd April 2025 were confirmed and signed.

69. 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.

70. P/LBC/2025/01068, Benville Bridge, Benville Lane, Corsecombe, Rampisham, Dorset.

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. Benville Bridge was a grade II listed structure, built in the early 19th century and contributes to the local historical landscape. The proposal sought to repair the bridge's structure through repointing, brick repair, crack stitching and a scour/relay of the road surface over the span. There would be little change to the existing character and appearance of the bridge and the repairs would help to preserve and protect the listed structure and ensure it is fit for purpose.

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 Les Fry, and seconded by Cllr David Taylor.

Decision: To grant planning permission *with conditions* for the reasons set out in the officer's report and in the appendix.

71. **P/RES/2024/07321, Land At E 377825 N 113305, A357 Access to Woodlands Farm to Glue Hill, Rolls Mill, Sturminster Newton.**

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. Photographs of constraints in the area, the proposed site and road layout were shown. There would be a robust planting scheme, retaining most of the hedge rows and a mix of larger and smaller trees. The application was for reserved matters following the grant of Outline Planning Permission, and the committee would only consider appearance, landscaping, layout and scale. There would be 40% affordable housing and 13% of which affordable rent. The materials on the site reflect the local area with a mix of slate tiles.

Public Participation

Mr Mason spoke against the application and explained that residents of Sturminster Newton did not hold any animosity towards the applicants. He said there was a lack of due process, transparency and the decision was controversial and there were multiple reasons why the outline application could be challenged at this late stage. He added that there were clear breaches to process and procedure and there was a failure to recognise the scale and impact on the hamlet of Sturminster Newton. He informed that there was a lack of proactive and inclusive engagement with the community. There was disregard for the policies and protections and a significant level of local objections that the local people should have been aware of in the first place.

Ms Lewis spoke against the application and raised concerns about the Council's neglect of professional and statutory duty to not have its local plan in place. She urged members to hasten their pace of work on this and to put it in place much sooner than the present target date of May 2027. She questioned the validity and integrity of work of the officer decision to approve the outline planning permission as the decision for members to delegate the decision was made out of the blue and with no explanation. She asked members to revisit the outline planning permission decision and afford it a proper democratic process. She added that the layout was inappropriate and notably the spacing of the proposed housing estate and the external appearance of the properties.

Ms Wardell spoke against the application and was a part of the Ramblers Dorset Area Footpath Secretary. She spoke about what the Ramblers do, which is to help everyone enjoy the pleasures and benefits of walking and to enhance and protect the places where people walk. She referenced DEFRA Circular 1/09 section 7

advice to local authorities on recording, managing and maintaining, protecting and changing public rights of way. She raised concerns about the diversion of footpath N53/46 and that the proposed route of the diverted path is predominately along estate roads/footways. She submitted that there was an alternative option which would run north from the access point in the south of the development, then head west between dwellings 23 and 27, to the perimeter green buffer zone shown on the coloured site layout, then north along that to the access point. The Senior Ranger has also stated that "The diverted PRow should not follow the estate footways, but through the perimeter 'buffer zone'".

Mr Bullock (Agent Associate Partner (Planning)) spoke in support of the application. He explained that the site already benefitted from outline planning permission and therefore the principle of residential development of up to 48 dwellings alongside the position and form of the access has been fixed. He highlighted that the Cllrs decision today was on matters reserved namely appearance, layout, landscaping and scale only. The site provides 40% affordable housing which equates to 19 units positioned within an attractive and well considered site where the affordable housing is tenure blind. He highlighted why this application and decision mattered as the affordable Housing Need across Dorset has increased to 3,219 homes per year. This is over 100% more dwellings than the average number of homes delivered in Dorset every year since 2001 at around 1,600 dwellings. These figures are Dorset specific and are people who live in the communities that Cllrs represent.

Cllr Donaldson informed that he thought it was disappointing that the developers were not able to put the roads into an adoptable state, and he would have preferred to see the roads adopted. It had been suggested that any tree work not protected by TPO and works permission would need to be accepted by a Dorset Council officer. He would like to see Dorset Council tree officers to be spoken to before any tree works and the planting of trees to avoid any damage to buildings and roads. He expressed concerns about traffic management on the main road and about the access and possibility of light shining into nearby buildings. He had concerns about the lack of a continuous footpath on the southern side and would like to see some sort of bollard at the bottom of the hill to prevent high speed traffic.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 and resumed at 12:02.

The Senior Lawyer reminded the Committee that the Planning Committee was not a public meeting but a meeting to which the public was invited, all attendees must comply with the ruling of the Chair and must not interrupt the meeting or cause undue disturbance. Members of the public were given the opportunity to make representations and register to speak at the Committee in accordance with the proper process.

Members questions and comments

- **Cllr Jones asked questions about the layout of development and landscaping.**
- **Cllr Potheary queried about the footpath alteration and was concerned about painted brick. She added that materials should be good quality.**

- Cllr Taylor asked how the footpath access was being kept open and about tree protection orders for the existing trees on the site. He raised concerns about dark skies in the area.
- Cllr Ridout commented that there was no stone as material and that painted brick did not look right and how visible would this be in the landscape. She said that there was an absence of chimneys which would add some character to the application.

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 Potheary, and seconded by Cllr Vitali

An amendment was made to condition 6 set out below:

6. The development hereby approved shall be completed in accordance with the submitted Biodiversity Plan (BP) prepared by GE Consulting (signed and certified by Dorset Council 20/05/2025).

Reason: To mitigate impacts on ecology and provide enhancements biodiversity.

Condition 10 was added by the Committee subject to granting the application:

10. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order) (with or without modification) no increase in height or enlargement(s) to the roofs of the dwellinghouses, referred to as Plots 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25 on the approved plans hereby approved, as permitted by Class A, Class AA, and Class B of Schedule 2 Part 1 of the 2015 Order (as amended), shall be erected or constructed.

Reason: To protect the rural, edge of settlement character of the locality.

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

Informative note footpaths:

The applicant's attention is drawn to the comments provided by Dorset Council's Senior Ranger in respect of this application and in particular the need for the footpath crossing the application site to be diverted by legal order and for that order to be confirmed before any works obstructing the path are commenced. The applicant should acquaint themselves with the full comments made which are available to view on the Online Planning Register at <https://planning.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=410861>.

72. Urgent items

There were no urgent items.

73. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 10.00 - 11.30 am

Chairman

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