

Meeting **PLANNING AND RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE**

Date **Tuesday 26 July 2022 (commencing at 2.00pm)**

**Membership****COUNCILLORS**

Richard Butler (Chairman)  
Jim Creamer (Vice-Chairman)

Mike Adams	Nigel Moxon - Apologies
Andre Camilleri	Philip Owen - Apologies
Robert Corden	Francis Purdue-Horan
Sybil Fielding	Sam Smith
Paul Henshaw - Apologies	Daniel Williamson
Andy Meakin	

**OTHER COUNTY COUNCILLORS IN ATTENDANCE**

John Wilmott

**SUSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Pauline Allan substituted for Paul Henshaw  
Tom Smith substituted for Philip Owen  
Tracey Taylor substituted for Nigel Moxon

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Pete Barker – Chief Executive's Department  
Steven Eastwood Snr – Chief Executive's Department  
Sally Gill – Place Department  
Jaspreet Lyall – Chief Executive's Department  
David Marsh – Place Department  
Matthew Neal – Place Department  
Jonathan Smith – Place Department  
Jan Witko – Place Department

**1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 JULY 2022**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 July, having been circulated to all members, were taken as read and were confirmed, and were signed by the Chairman.

## **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Henshaw (medical/illness), Councillor Moxon (medical/illness) and Councillor Owen (other reasons).

## **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **4. DECLARATIONS OF LOBBYING**

There were no declarations of lobbying.

## **5. CONSTRUCTION OF AN OFFICE BUILDING AT TOP WIGHAY FARM**

Mr Marsh introduced the report which considered a planning application for the erection of a County Council office building, drainage and access infrastructure, including new highway, on land to the east of the A611 at Top Wighay Farm north of Hucknall. Mr Marsh informed members that the key issues related to the provision of sustainable travel/transport links and the scale, siting, design and impact of the development.

Mr Marsh informed Committee that a request to defer the application had been received from County Councillors Dave Shaw, Lee Walters and John Wilmott. The Councillors argue that the application should be deferred because of the uncertainty around the future use of County Hall and the consequences this may have on the future use of the offices at Top Wighay Farm. Mr Marsh stated that the details of any changes that may come out of a review of the County Council's property portfolio are not yet known and do not form part of the application before committee today. Members need to consider the issues in the application before them, detailed in the officer's report, and determine the application accordingly. Mr Marsh informed Committee that officers did not consider that there was a need to defer determination of the application but that ultimately this was a matter for Members to consider and decide.

Following Mr Marsh's introduction, it was confirmed that further funding had been made available for the 141 bus service that would allow it to run for another year. It was confirmed that an express bus service also served the site.

Matthew Neal, on behalf of the applicant, was then given the opportunity to speak and a **summary** of that speech is set out below:

- This application is for an exemplar office base which will improve the authority's ability to deliver services to the community.
- It will provide a quality working environment for our employees.
- It is a key element in the authority's wider approach to its estate which aims to improve service delivery and be more environmentally-friendly.

- This development will allow the authority to exit expensive leased accommodation and move towards an owned accommodation model of estate management.
- Sensitive services relating to children and adults will be provided and it is important therefore that the accommodation is fit for purpose.
- Secure areas will be provided where confidential discussions can take place and allow co-located service providers to exchange information.
- General meeting rooms and training spaces will also be provided.
- This building will be an environment exemplar and be a benchmark for the rest of the authority's estate and will include such features as solar shading, PVs and a green travel plan.

Councillor John Wilmott, as a Member of an adjacent division, was then given the opportunity to speak and **a summary** of that speech is set out below:

- This development has a long history and many things have now changed.
- Covid has hit and many plans have now changed including the introduction of hybrid working which has led to offices being half empty.
- Costs have increased significantly.
- It is not possible to assess the impact traffic will have in the area as no figures have been provided by the Council in terms of staff numbers or details of proposed services. The traffic figures in the report are based on guesswork and therefore the application is contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework.
- In my opinion the application is also contrary to the Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2026
- The transport system in the area will be made worse by this development. Bus services are unreliable – bus companies are cancelling services because of a shortage of drivers.
- The train and tram station is 2.5km from the site which is an unacceptable walking distance.

- Ashfield District Council have officially objected to the application – the local infrastructure will not cope and there is no 106 agreement, or any other agreements in place, to fund improvements to that infrastructure.
- The Council seems to be adopting a car-borne approach which relies on upgrading the roads and goes against County Council policies.
- The development will generate a significant number of extra cars in the area which will exacerbate problems at junctions which are already at capacity, at the Badger Box for example.
- There are no improvements planned to the cycle or pedestrian infrastructure.
- It is unclear how health care provision will be provided for staff in the offices and those in the wider development.
- We have objected to the development on many previous occasions, and I ask Committee to reject the application for the havoc it will cause in Hucknall and the surrounding villages.

Members then debated the item and questions were responded to as follows:

- Section 25 of the Localism Act 2011 allows for Members to cast a vote at a prior meeting concerning a development without this being regarded subsequently as an indication of bias or pre-determination on the part of those Members.
- The wider development of this site, including traffic issues, have been considered and approved by Gedling Borough Council. This development has been further supplemented by a transport statement which considers trip generation and is based on the square meterage of the building. The traffic impact on the area would have been estimated by the consultant and this estimate would have been considered by officers prior to submitting the application.
- The traffic figures in the report are taken from the final, full application and not from the outline application where the figures are different.

Councillor Williamson welcomed the environmental credentials of the development but stated that a more robust traffic survey was required and moved an amendment to the motion, which was seconded by Councillor Meakin, requesting that the decision on the application be deferred until such a survey had been undertaken.

The amendment was put to the vote and was not carried.

Members continued to debate the item and questions were responded to as follows:

- The conditions concerning ecology refer specifically to the application site. If the wider development does not progress the ecological impact of the development will need to be reassessed.
- The route of the 141 bus service does not pass directly by the site, but the site is served by the 'Threes' service which has a 30 minute frequency and if the application is approved extra bus shelters will be provided.

The meeting was adjourned briefly at this point and when proceedings recommenced Mr Marsh recapped so that no Members missed what had been said.

Members continued to debate the item and questions were responded to as follows:

- If the application is approved, it is hoped that the building will be completed by Autumn/Winter 2024. Conditions will ensure that bus access will be provided.
- The use of brise soleil in the construction of the building will not affect window cleaning as this will be undertaken by pole. It will be possible to access the whole of the outside of the building via a cherry picker if required.
- More work is needed on the provision of touch down areas but these have been provided in other county council buildings.
- If the application is approved, the development will provide 1000 high quality, highly paid jobs in the local community.
- Condition 15b specifies the location of gates to allow the passage of mammals through the perimeter fencing on the north and western boundaries of the office site.
- There is no planting on the roof – the whole of the roof is taken up by plant relating to solar power.
- The building design is targeting the Building Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) classification of 'excellent', a rating achieved by only 10% of office buildings.
- There will be approximately 124 trees planted on site in addition to hedges and shrubs.
- Charging for electric cars is future-proofed through the provision of ducting which will allow the installation of further sockets when required.
- More bus provision will be triggered by the occupation of the planned housing estate, as per the Section 106 agreement..

- The positive effects of the development will be felt throughout the County, not just in the south, as a result of the location of the building in the middle of the County.
- Committee is not usually provided with details of the insides of buildings but the building will provide office accommodation not too dissimilar to typical modern offices.

On a motion by the Chairman, duly seconded, it was:

**RESOLVED 2022/041**

That planning permission be granted for the purposes of Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 subject to the conditions set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

The meeting closed at 3.30pm

**CHAIRMAN**