

Cllr Grenville Chamberlain, SCDC

Cllr Steve Rose, Hardwick Parish Council

Planning Case Officer:

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11 November 2016

Dear Cllrs Chamberlain and Rose,

Town and County Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

Proposal: Erection of new community facility

At: Hardwick Recreation Ground

I am writing following our meeting on 28 October 2016. This letter summarises our discussion and includes my recommendation on the most appropriate of the options that we reviewed.

Recommendation:

In relation to the 4 sites that we discussed, my view is that the location of the Scout and Guide Hut and land to the north of this (currently occupied by the skate park) would be the best location for the new building. It would be essential to preserve the amenity of neighbouring residents and there is a property immediately to the north of that site. My view would be that the northern section of any new building should be set off the common boundary with that property and should be single storey in height, to prevent unreasonable overlooking into or overshadowing of the neighbouring property.

Site constraints

All of the sites discussed are located within the village framework and are part of the recreation ground site. The site is currently designated as a Protected Village Amenity Area (PVAA) and is proposed to be classified as Local Green Space in the emerging Local Plan.

Relevant Planning History:

S//2296/04/F – erection of 3 metre high acoustic fencing on the northern boundary of the skateboard park site – approved

S/1915/83/F – installation of car park for 18 cars - approved

S/0639/83/D – erection of sports pavilion – approved.

Assessment:

The four sites that we considered were:

1. Land north of the Scouts and Guides Building (location of the existing skate park)
2. Land to the south of the Sports and Social Club, west of the hedge

Continued ...

3. Land to the south of the Sports and Social Club, east of the hedge, adjacent to the hard surfaced pitches
4. Redevelopment/ extension of the social club site.

I have made comments on each of these potential options below:

1. Land north of the Scouts and Guides Building (location of the existing skate park)

The main issue here would be the impact on the amenity of the neighbouring property to the north. There is also the issue of the replacement/relocation of the skate park. In relation to residential amenity, the rear elevation of the property to the north is approximately 18 metres north of the common boundary with the recreation ground. I note that there is an acoustic fence on that boundary but given that the intervening distance is the rear garden of that property, my view is that any new building would need to be set off the boundary and the northern element of the building no more than single storey in height, to prevent unreasonable overshadowing and overlooking and to reduce the impact of noise. One further measure to consider would be a management plan for the building, limiting the hours of opening. We would condition that no external lighting would be installed without approval and obviously would seek to restrict external lighting adjacent to the northern boundary of the site.

The other option would be to include the Guide and Scout Hut within a new building. This would allow for a potentially larger replacement building and achieve satisfactory separation between the northern elevation of the building and the northern boundary fence. Again, the northern element should be single storey.

Consideration would need to be given to the relocation of the skateboard park. One option discussed was relocating it to the area in front of the children's play area and from my point of view this would seem a viable option and would retain a sense of containment of the sports facilities. As I said when we met, if the proposal was to replace the skateboard park with a larger indoor community facility, I think there would be an argument to say that although one community facility is being lost, it would be replaced with another one. Supporting evidence of the need for the additional indoor space should be provided with the application to substantiate this case.

The key issue with this option would be to ensure sufficient car parking spaces exist on site to serve the capacity of the new building. In accordance with the standards in the LDF, 1 car parking space is required per 8 square metres of floor space and 1 cycle stand per 25 square metres. A planning application would need to include sufficient space to meet these standards. As discussed on site, this could include part of the parking area already at the recreation ground but obviously sufficient spaces also need to be retained for the sports pavilion and the Scout and Guide hut (if the latter is to remain separate). As such, additional parking may be required and we looked at an area to the north of the skateboard park that may be suitable for this.

2. Land to the south of the Sports and Social Club, west of the hedge

The main issue with this location, as I outlined on site is that this would reduce the area for car parking within the recreation ground and I am not sure that there is a logical place to fully compensate for this loss as the space that we looked at is at the northern end of the site. A building in this location is also likely to require removal of some of the planting on the eastern boundary of the site, which would not be the case with the first location, making this second option less preferable.

3. Land to the south of the Sports and Social Club, east of the hedge, adjacent to the hard surfaced pitches

The main issues with a building on this site are considered to be the potential removal of boundary planting (on the western boundary) and the fact that this location is more open to public views along Egremont Road. As a result, a building on this location would not in my view retain the sense of containment of buildings at the centre of the recreation ground and is therefore less favourable than the first option.

Continued ...

4. Redevelopment/ extension of the social club site.

It would appear that this site has less potential than the site to the north in terms of the amount of space. There would not be an objection to increasing this to a two storey building but I would have thought it would be more financially viable option to erect a new building.

I hope you find the contents of this letter useful. If you have any further questions, please contact me on the details at the top of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

David Thompson
Principal Planning Officer
Development Control

Disclaimer:

- The above advice is given for purposes relating to the Town and Country Planning Acts and for no other Council function
- The advice is given without reference to statutory or other consultees, except where stated. The comments of such consultees may affect the advice given
- The advice is given on the basis of the information that you have supplied. The Local Planning Authority will not be responsible for any errors resulting from inaccuracies in that information
- The Local Planning Authority is required to perform within government targets with respect to processing planning applications. You are therefore advised to conclude your pre-application discussions before submitting a planning application
- The advice given may subsequently be affected by external factors (e.g. new government guidance, local appeal decisions) which could result in a different view being subsequently put forward
- Planning policies are periodically reviewed and updated. The advice given relates to the policy framework at the time the advice was given
- The Local Planning Authority seeks to provide the best advice possible on any enquiry received. However, the advice given does not bind the authority to any particular decision on any planning application that may subsequently be submitted which will be the subject of the publicity and consultation.
- **Appendix 1 - List of information required to validate an application (to be read in conjunction with the main body of this letter)**

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Ms Gail Stoehr
Clerk to the Parish Council
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17th November 2016

Dear Ms Stoehr

PLANNING APPLICATION S/1694/16/OL

LAND WEST OF GRACE CRESCENT, HARDWICK

FORMAL RESPONSE TO PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS ON APPLICATION

Please see below a formal response by Hill to the Parish Council's objection to the above planning application.

Transport

The site location has been assessed as part of the application process with travel distances to locations within the village and further afield calculated by the appointed transport consultants, average walking or cycling speed have been applied to this to arrive at the stated travel distances. In our opinion, the scale and range of local facilities at Hardwick, together with the stated proximity to both those local facilities and others nearby constitutes a sustainable location within the village and South Cambridgeshire for the development proposed. It is also worth noting that this location was considered a sustainable location for 28 affordable houses when the 2006 Grace Crescent development was granted permission. Notwithstanding this, the application includes measures to further improve the sustainability of the location, which in turn will provide benefits to existing residents. This package of measures will be secured through a secured within the S106 Agreement. With regards to transport improvements, these can be summarised as follows:

- Upgrading of the footpath between Blue Lion Public House and St Mary's Church
- Street lighting south of St Mary's Church to remove gap in current street lighting
- Restructuring of the existing 2 and 8 Bus Routes to create a new more frequent service (Please find attached the proposed revised route and draft timetable).

The upgrading of the footpath and the introduction of the street lighting will improve connectivity between the application site and the Village Shop, Primary School and Recreation Ground and increase the attractiveness of the route for people to walk and cycle safely.

The restructured Route 28/28A has been discussed with both the County Council and Go Whippet and will provide an hourly service at peak times. The bus would travel south through Hardwick along Cambridge Road/Main Street and will stop in close proximity to the application site at Portway Road and provide a direct service to the facilities in Comberton and Cambridge City Centre as well as the significant employment locations on the western edge of Cambridge. The journey time from the site to Drummer Street would be approximately 35 minutes and this would provide a realistic alternative form of transport to the private car. This new Route 28/28A would replace the existing Go Whippet service that operates in the southern part of the village. Please find attached a copy of the proposed restructured route.

It is relevant to point out that the recommendations for the City Deal Cambourne to Cambridge route have been released and the preferred route from Cambourne to Madingley Mulch roundabout involves the introduction of an off-road busway that would run to the south of Hardwick (alongside the public bridleway) adjacent to the application site. Whilst the details of the proposals are still in their infancy, the majority of Hardwick is shown as part of the catchment for this service and so inevitably a stop must be provided for at the southern end of Hardwick, further enhancing the sustainability of this location. The City Deal board also agreed in principle to explore a segregated cross country super cycleway running close to or through the key villages between Bourn Airfield and the M11. It seems highly likely to us that would be likely to run alongside the new busway in much the same way that as the existing busway to St Ives.

Traffic

The proposed application will significantly improve safety within The Pastures and Grace Crescent. The proposed access junction within Grace Crescent was deemed acceptable to County Highways to support the development as proposed. However following public comments the scheme was amended to introduce a dedicated, off-carriageway car parking bay to overcome residents' concerns over on-street car parking in this location and improve highway safety. The design and suitability of the access has been guided and agreed with the Highways Authority at Cambridgeshire County Council.

With regard to the impact of the proposal on the build-up of traffic on Cambridge Road by the primary school and village shop, this point was specifically raised by the applicant at a pre-application meeting with the county highways officer who confirmed the calculations of the submitted transport assessment that the proposed development will not lead to a significant increase in traffic on Cambridge Road. As outlined within the Transport Statement that accompanied the application, the proposed development is expected to generate a total of 42 vehicles (2-way flow) at this location in the AM peak hour, equivalent of 1 vehicle every 1 ½ minutes. This is minimal and importantly the development will not significantly increase vehicular movements within the village. Interestingly, the Highways Authority commented that the current parking in this area acts as a beneficial traffic calming measure and that the removal of it would likely increase vehicular speeds in the area and potentially increase concerns over safety.

Bridleway access

We acknowledge that the bridleway can be wet and muddy. However, that is not a reason not to allow development. The intention in connecting to it is to improve opportunity for access for people to the countryside for recreation.

Sustainable developments

Within the Village Classification Report (June 2012) Hardwick is classified as a Group Village and has a wide range of services and facilities. It is important to point out that this report only assessed those villages in the District with populations in excess of 2,000 people. The report therefore looked at 23 villages, whereas there are in fact over 100 villages in South Cambridgeshire. We feel Hardwick represents a sustainable location for further growth and the development will help maintain remaining services and facilities and provide for affordable housing to meet local needs – as recognised by paragraph 2.22 of the adopted Local Plan.

As set out earlier, the proposed development will enhance public transport within the southern part of the village which we consider is a further positive aspect. Whilst there is no secondary education within Hardwick, bus stops providing direct access to Comberton are located within 150m of the application site. We note that the Parish Council disagrees with the Planning Statement's suggestion that an additional point should be awarded to Hardwick for having direct access by bus to a secondary school. Our reason for drawing attention to that is that it is specifically part of the District Council's methodology, although seemingly the Village Classification Report did not award a point to Hardwick when in fact it does have direct public transport access to a secondary school.

The frequency of public transport will also be increased with the introduction of the new bus route along Cambridge Road/ High Street. The nearest Doctors surgery is located within Comberton and the new restructured 28/28A bus route will provide a frequent service to Comberton that will stop in close proximity to the surgery.

A number of initiatives to encourage sustainable transport usage within the area will also be promoted within the Travel Plan that will be secured within the S106 Agreement. The Travel Plan will set out transport impacts, establishes targets and identifies a package of measures to encourage sustainable travel. The 98 new households will also be provided with a six month season ticket to further encourage the use of the bus service.

Community facilities within the village will be significantly improved with the introduction of a new 250m² community building on the Recreation ground and this will be secured within the S106 Agreement. The Trustees of the Hardwick Community Association have confirmed that they would be prepared to relinquish their interest in the community rooms at the Primary School in exchange for a facility substantially in accordance with that proposed.

In summary Hardwick is one of the more sustainable villages within the District and represents a suitable location for to meet the pressing need for new homes. There are a number of benefits associated with the application including; 39 affordable dwellings, new areas of open space, new community building, improved pre-school accommodation, and transport improvements.

Open Space

The Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP) is to be located in close proximity to the site entrance and not adjacent to the attenuation pond. The area around the attenuation pond provides for a well landscaped multi-functional green space, acting as an opportunity for informal open space and an area for ecological enhancement providing an area for future residents and the wider community to enjoy. The drainage feature will be designed in accordance with relevant safety regulations, the detail of this design would be progressed as part of a reserved matter application. The application

site is not large enough to accommodate additional sports pitches, however allotments for the use of the village have been proposed within the masterplan. The introduction of the allotments is a response to a need identified by local residents and it is proposed that the Allotment Society within the village will take on the management of these.

Health

With regard to healthcare, NHS England has confirmed that they have no funding and do not intend to operate a satellite surgery in Hardwick. The nearest surgery is Comberton and the application will improve connectivity with this with. The proposed restructured bus route 28/28A will travel south along Cambridge Road/ Main Street to Toft and Comberton, stopping in close proximity to the surgery before returning to St Neots Road via Long Road. A contribution towards healthcare is proposed as part of the application and it is proposed that the identified £50,000 contribution could be spent locally within Hardwick. We recognise the village's desire to see health services within the village. Such a decision can only be taken by the health commissioning groups or GP practices. We are aware that there are examples of practices which operate flexible services in rural areas. We consider that there could be an opportunity in bringing forward the new community building that discussions take place with health commissioning groups and/or GP practices about accommodating some form of facility within the new community building, such as a nurses or practice room which might operate on a part time basis. We consider that the proposed S106 health contribution could be allocated towards this.

Affordable Housing

The ACRE study in 2013 identified a need for 44 affordable homes at Hardwick. That need will have increased further since then as house prices have continued to rise and far fewer homes have been built in South Cambridgeshire than are needed. The application provides a total of 39 affordable homes (40%) which is welcomed by the Parish Council and will help to address both the immediate local need and shortfall within the District. Hill would support the S106 including provision for affordable homes to be offered first to people from the village in need. We consider that the application site is presently within a sustainable location and there are a number of benefits associated with the application that will further enhance the sustainable credentials of the site.

Capacity of Primary School and Pre School network

The County Council has confirmed that there is capacity at the Primary School to accommodate the needs of the development and based on the current demographic forecasts for Hardwick there would be no basis to seek capital contributions towards additional primary school capacity.

There is however a need arising from the development to make provision for Early Years within the village and the current facilities are contained in temporary port cabin structures which are reaching the end of their useful life. We understand that it is the local preference that the Early Years provision be accommodated at the primary school. We consider therefore, that there is an opportunity to re-provide the existing community space currently within the primary school as part of a larger new community building elsewhere in the village, freeing up the existing community rooms at the Primary School for conversion to Early Years accommodation. That approach can be secured through the S106, with Hill funding the costs of conversion.

In order to facilitate that approach, the trustees of the Community Trust in line with the requirements of the 1978 Agreement have stated they are prepared to terminate their interest in the community rooms at the primary school and consider that the provision of a new 250m² Community building provided at the recreation ground would represent “reasonably suitable alternative accommodation” in the form of the new has been provided as a substitute. Hill have proposed that this application be brought forward at the same time as a reserved matters application. All costs associated with the community building, including design fees and planning application fees have been allowed for within the project costs and will be secured through the S106 agreement. We understand that the County Council is also content with this approach, although has yet to confirm their estimate of conversion costs.

Wastewater

Pre-application engagement has taken place with Anglian Water and they have confirmed that capacity for the development is available in the local network. This pre-app enquiry is appended to the Flood Risk Assessment (Appendix B) and should alleviate any concern regarding the capacity of the foul network in the area.

Application Benefits

The on-site and off-site benefits associated with the application can be summarised as follows:

ON-SITE	OFF-SITE
On-site playspace (LEAP)	Restructured Route 28/28A Bus Route
Allotments	New Community Building
Formal and informal open space	Contribution towards Healthcare
Connection with public bridleway	Referee Changing Block at Recreation Ground
Car parking layby within The Pastures	Upgrading of footpath between Blue Lion and St Mary’s Church
39 affordable homes	Street lighting south of St Mary’s Church
Approximately 421 construction jobs	Play equipment within Grace Crescent
59 market homes	Improved Pre-school accommodation

Heads of Terms to inform the S106

Based on discussion to date, Hill proposes the following provisions form part of a S106 agreement. Where those are to be provided off-site, the table includes the proposed financial contribution. Where those are provided on site as part of the development, the table sets out the equivalent

value of providing it on-site. This table will be used as the basis for the S106 Agreement that will accompany the planning application. Officers at South Cambridgeshire District Council have confirmed that these contributions are CIL compliant and can be secured within the S106 Agreement.

VILLAGE BENEFIT	On-site provision: Equivalent cost	Financial Contributions
LEAP, allotments, formal and informal open space	£275,000	
Open space maintenance	£153,060 (over 10 years)	
Car parking layby The Pastures	£100,000	
Public transport (Bus route subsidy)		£200,000
Bus season tickets		£29,400
Implementing the Travel Plan		£49,000
Community Building		Up to £608,000
Conversion of existing community rooms – estimated by Hill. Awaiting confirmation from County		£60,000
Referee Changing Room Block		£30,000
Healthcare		£50,000
Footpath Improvements		£40,000
Street Lighting		£15,000
Play equipment Grace Crescent		£30,000
Libraries & Lifelong Learning		£6,518.57
Total Contributions:		£1,645,978.50
Contribution per dwelling (98):		£16,795.70

Summary

In summary, we consider that given the location of the site and the very significant benefits the development would bring, that the proposals constitute sustainable development. The site is well located in relation to key services and facilities and importantly will not have an adverse impact on surrounding highway infrastructure or environment. The obligations proposed through the S106 Agreement will not only mitigate the impact of the proposal on local infrastructure, but provide improved facilities for the village as a whole. There are major on-site and off-site benefits associated with the application which will be for the benefits of the residents of Hardwick. We hope that the above provides sufficient information to enable the Parish Council to reconsider its objection and replace that with support for the application.

Should you have any queries or require any clarification please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



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Associate

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