

Minutes: Delegation meeting 25th August 2026

Agenda

- Time: 11am to 12:30pm
- Meeting held: via Teams

Attendees:

Cllr Anna Bradnam (Chair of Planning Committee), Cllr James Rixon (Vice Chair of Planning Committee), Toby Williams (Development Manager), Phoebe Carter, Tom Chenery.

Main issues to consider:

- Relevant material planning considerations raising significant planning concerns
- Significant implications for adopted policy
- The nature, scale and complexity of the proposed development
- Planning history
- Degree of public involvement

Development

26/01053/FUL – Land South of Stanton Mereway Willingham

Demolition of existing building and the erection of a stable block, menage and car park. Change of use from agricultural land to equestrian use. Case Officer Phoebe Carter

Reason for Inclusion

Parish requested

Willingham Parish Council recommend refusal of the application and would re-iterate its previous comments, being:

1. The Council noted that some of the information/replies on the email chain with the Planning Officer, submitted on the Planning Portal, were incomplete. The document which the Council referred to was titled AGENT EMAIL REGARDING PROPOSAL DETAILS.
 2. The Council further noted that plans had been submitted to the Planning Portal of stables, however stables were not mentioned in the wording of the application.
 3. Within Section 2 of the Preliminary Ecological Assessment and Biodiversity Net Gain Report, submitted on the Planning Portal, the Council notes items which could indicated possible contamination of the site which may require extensive works to ensure the land is safe for the use of animals.
 4. The Council noted under the British Horse Society Welfare Guidelines, each individual horse should have an average pasture of 1-1.5 acres for grazing and
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exercise. The Council were concerned the number of stables shown on the plan was more than needed for the size of the land (around 3.2 acres).

The Council was concerned the application appeared misleading for what the applicant appeared to be endeavouring to achieve.

The Council would further add:-

1. The Council did not believe that a square menage is a standard shape.
2. The Council noted that the latest report from the Ecology Officer stated that there was insufficient information.
3. The Parish Council had been made aware of objections of nearby residents who are active in the equine community.

Called in by Cllr James Hutchcraft (20 August 26)

I support referral of this application to the Planning Committee for determination due to the significant planning concerns raised by Willingham Parish Council and the public interest demonstrated through multiple objections from local residents.

The Parish Council has consistently maintained objections to the proposal and has identified a number of matters which, in its view, warrant more detailed public scrutiny. These include concerns regarding incomplete information submitted during the application process, uncertainty surrounding the inclusion and intended use of stables which are shown on submitted plans but are not clearly described within the application itself, and questions relating to possible contamination identified within the submitted ecological documentation.

Concerns have also been raised regarding the relationship between the size of the site and the number of stables proposed, citing established equine welfare guidance and questioning whether the proposal fully reflects the scale and nature of activities ultimately intended on the land.

Furthermore, it has noted that the latest ecology consultation response concludes that insufficient information has been provided and has questioned whether the proposed ménage is of a standard design. The Council and myself have also been made aware of objections from nearby residents with experience and involvement in the equine community, whose views raise additional material considerations that merit proper examination.

Given the number and breadth of concerns raised by both the Parish Council and local residents, together with the questions regarding the adequacy and completeness of the information submitted, I believe there is a strong case for the application to be considered through the public and transparent process of a Planning Committee meeting. Referral would allow all relevant issues to be fully

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debated and enable both supporters and objectors to have confidence that the application has received appropriate democratic scrutiny before a decision is made.

Discussion

The case officer presented the application and summarised the nature of the representations made, including those reasons for Committee's consideration given by Cllr Hutchcraft and the Parish Council.

Relevant material planning considerations raising significant planning concerns

Whilst several representations from third parties have been received, the planning issues raised were not considered to be significant in scope or impact beyond the immediate locality and not of a nature to warrant consideration by planning committee. Issues of horse welfare are not direct planning matters of consequence to any decision-making process or policy. The alleged future intentions of the applicants is not a material consideration. There is no evidence of a previous use having caused contamination or that this would in any event impact on the proposed use for equine purposes (not being a sensitive end use). There is no objection from Environmental Health. The application had been amended to reduce the size of the stables original number of stables from 5 down to 3, then down to one stable and address consultee comments.

Significant implications for adopted policy

The proposal does not seek to challenge whether any of the policies in the local plan are up-to-date. This is an equine use which is a rural use compatible with the location. The latest NPPF would not alter the Council's approach to dealing with the proposal. The application has no implications for adopted policy.

The nature, scale and complexity of the proposed development

It represents a minor form of development and is neither of a scale or complexity to warrant referral to planning committee.

Planning history

There is no relevant planning history.

Degree of public involvement

This is a relatively rural location and whilst the number of objections received has triggered consideration by the Delegation Panel (including from the Parish and District Cllr), the proposal itself does not appear to have resulted in representations from a significant wider populace. The degree of public involvement does not warrant referral.

Decision

Do not refer to Planning Committee

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Development

26/02364/FUL – 70 Lambs Lane Cottenham (Phoebe Carter)

Erection of 3 No. detached dwellings with associated vehicular access, private gardens, and landscaping (retrospective application)

Reason for Inclusion

Parish requested / number of objections

The Parish Council notes that this is a new planning application rather than an application to vary a condition attached to the existing permission (25/03798/FUL). Whilst applicants are entitled to submit a fresh application, the Local Planning Authority must determine it on its own planning merits and should not simply regard the change as a minor amendment.

This application seeks to remove one of the defining characteristics of the development that was previously approved, namely that the dwellings would be delivered as custom/self-build homes. That requirement formed part of the planning balance and the public benefits of the original scheme.

The applicant has chosen to implement the existing permission and commence construction before seeking a second consent for conventional market housing. In effect, the applicant seeks to retain all of the benefits arising from the original approval whilst removing one of its key planning obligations. The Parish Council considers this to be contrary to the principles of a fair and transparent planning system.

If the Local Planning Authority considers that the custom/self-build requirement is no longer necessary after development has commenced, it risks sending a clear message that applicants may secure planning permission by offering policy-compliant benefits and subsequently seek a fresh permission to remove them. Such an approach would significantly undermine confidence in the planning system and diminish the weight that can be afforded to similar commitments in future applications.

The Council has seen no robust planning evidence demonstrating why the approved custom/self-build scheme is no longer capable of delivery. The application appears to be driven primarily by commercial preference rather than by any overriding planning justification. Commercial expediency should not outweigh the planning considerations that informed the original decision.

The planning officer's report for application 25/03798/FUL explicitly states that the custom/self-build provision helped justify the recommendation for approval, and references the Council's duty to support custom and self-build housing. Self build was mentioned as a key consideration and that 'it is a material consideration in the determination of the application and weight needs to be given to the delivery of self/custom build dwellings should the Council have a shortfall in delivery'.

Furthermore, 'Officers are mindful that several planning appeals have been determined in recent years which have attributed weight to the provision of self-build plots because of the shortfall in delivery of self-build dwellings. The provision of self-build dwellings can be given weight in the planning balance if there is a need and

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providing it is secured through a condition. A condition is therefore considered necessary and reasonable to secure the development as self-build dwellings'.

Biodiversity

In the decision notice for the original application under 'Biodiversity Net Gain Informative' it states that 'the application is for self-build dwellings and therefore would not meet the requirements for the statutory biodiversity net gain of 10%. It is noted that the Ecology Officers has requested to apply the Statutory Net Gain Permission however this scheme would not meet this requirement. A condition would instead be attached to ensure that the dwellings meet the requirements of self-build'.

The Parish Council is particularly concerned that the original planning permission benefited from the exemption from the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements because the development was proposed as custom/self-build housing.

The current application seeks permission for the dwellings to become conventional market housing. This fundamentally changes the nature of the development and removes the basis upon which the BNG exemption was originally available.

Had the proposal originally been submitted as a standard residential development, it would not have qualified for the self-build exemption and would have been required to comply with the statutory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements. The applicant has therefore already benefited from a significant planning advantage by obtaining permission as a custom/self-build scheme.

Granting permission for conventional market housing without requiring compliance with the Biodiversity Net Gain legislation would result in the applicant retaining the benefit of an exemption that was only available because of the original custom/self-build proposal. This would be inequitable to other developers who are required to deliver BNG and would undermine the purpose of the statutory exemption.

The Parish Council therefore requests that the Local Planning Authority carefully considers whether the proposed development remains eligible for any Biodiversity Net Gain exemption. If it does not, the application should not be approved unless it fully complies with the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements, including the submission and approval of all necessary biodiversity information.

More broadly, the Council considers that this application illustrates why it should be refused. The applicant has already obtained planning advantages associated with a custom/self-build development, including exemption from Biodiversity Net Gain requirements, and is now seeking to remove the very characteristic that justified those advantages. This would undermine confidence in the planning system and create an undesirable precedent whereby applicants could secure planning benefits through one form of development before subsequently seeking permission for a materially different scheme.

For the reasons given the Parish Council strongly opposes the application, and should the Officer be minded to approve, then we would like it to go to Committee.

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Representation from Cllr Eileen Wilson (email 20 August 26)

Erection of 3 No. detached dwellings with associated vehicular access, private gardens, and landscaping (retrospective application)

I believe this application should be put before the Planning Committee. My reasons are that the original application was for custom/self-build homes and, given the recognised need for more self-build homes in South Cambridgeshire this was a factor that would have been considered when weighing up the planning balance. The developers have since gone ahead to build market homes. Had this been the proposal in the original application, the planning balance would not have included the need for custom/self-build homes in South Cambridgeshire and the application would have been considered on its own merits as a development of market homes. In which case, the application for this development should be determined on its own merits as an application for market homes. There is the added concern that applications proposing the provision of custom/self-build homes that are then changed to market homes could undermine the efforts taken by Greater Cambridge Shared Planning to support more custom/self-build home opportunities. Planning Committee members should be afforded the opportunity to discuss the altered application.

Discussion

The case officer presented the application and summarised the nature of the representations made, including those reasons for Committee's consideration given by Cllr Wilson, which were read out verbatim within the meeting and also the representations from the Parish Council.

Relevant material planning considerations raising significant planning concerns

The planning issues raised were not considered to be significant in scope or impact beyond the immediate locality and not of a nature to warrant consideration by planning committee. Whilst the Parish comments cited the positive weight that was attached to the self / custom build element of the proposal being removed from the current scheme, the officer report to that proposal did not cite the self / custom build nature as a determinative factor in granting permission. The permitted scheme was not reliant on the self-build aspect. The Council could not insist through policy that this part of the proposal is retained. This is particularly considering the location of the proposal being, firstly, within the development framework and, secondly, the proposal being a replica in size, design and scale to the permitted scheme. Concerns raised regarding commencement of development did not amount to a breach of planning permission as all necessary planning conditions had been discharged on the latest permission. The principle of developing the site for the purposes sought is not reasonably capable of challenge.

Significant implications for adopted policy

The proposal does not seek to challenge whether any of the policies in the local plan are up-to-date. The scheme does not trigger a wide array of policies or create any doubt as to which policies are engaged for decision making purposes. The planning concerns, including the scheme's compatibility with adopted policy, are not considered significant and do not warrant referral. The latest NPPF would not alter the Council's approach to dealing with the proposal. The need for BNG would be established on a

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separate basis to the host permission relative to existing guidance and if required secured via condition.

The nature, scale and complexity of the proposed development

It represents a minor form of development constituting 3 dwellings of modest scale within the framework boundary identical to an extant permission in terms of design, siting, scale. It does not warrant referral to planning committee.

Planning history

There is no complex history on this site which indicates committee's consideration is necessary. The history assists the consideration of the proposal and simplifies the approach to matters of density and siting relative to boundaries etc.

Degree of public involvement

The proposal itself does not appear to have resulted in representations from a significant wider populace. The degree of public involvement does not warrant referral.

Decision

Do not refer to Planning Committee

Development

26/02089/FUL – Pheasants Grove Milton Road Impington

Reason for Inclusion

Third party group objections

We have received a group objection (17 different addresses under a joint document).

Discussion

Relevant material planning considerations raising significant planning concerns

Whilst several representations from third parties have been received, the planning issues raised were not considered to be significant in scope or impact beyond the immediate locality and not of a nature to warrant consideration by planning committee. The objections appeared to raise existing concerns with the drainage of the roadway which is not the applicant's responsibility to remedy.

Significant implications for adopted policy

There are no significant implications for policy arising.

The nature, scale and complexity of the proposed development

It represents a minor form of development for an access which is very similar to a previous permission. It is neither of a scale or complexity to warrant referral to planning committee.

Planning history

The adjoining plot has permission for a house, which has been implemented and is likely extant demonstrated through an associated Certificate of Lawfulness. That permission, if ever fully implemented, would have to secure any necessary access arrangements arising on its own terms. This application does not seek to amend a

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related residential permission but instead improve the existing access. There is no objection from the Local Highway Authority.

Degree of public involvement

The number of objections received has triggered consideration by the Delegation Panel. Having understood those objections, they are not constituted in a manner by which the Committee could have any control over wider improvements to this part of the road. The flooding exists and there is no evidence the proposal would exacerbate it. This criterion is not triggered.

Decision

Do not refer to Planning Committee