

## **Belchford & Fulletby Parish Council**

**Notes of the Extra Meeting of the Council held at Belchford Village Hall on Tuesday 28 April to discuss an application for outline planning permission for the development of land to the rear of Hillview, Main Road, Belchford.**

### **Public Forum**

The public forum was well attended. Those member of the public who attended were invited by the Chair to comment on the planning application that was the subject of the Extra Meeting.

Mr Philip Proctor, the father of the Applicant, read a prepared speech, in which he explained his family's long association with Belchford, the history of the site and the reasons why his family would like to obtain outline planning permission for the site to be developed.

Mr Richard Black also spoke. He expressed reasons why he objected to the proposed development, making reference to Policies set out in the Neighbourhood Development Plan and the Local Plan.

### **Councillors Present**

Jill Newby (Chair), Ian Goodall (Vice Chair), John Smith (Vice Chair), Paul Morris, Paul Barnes, Katy Hockham, Jake Fixter and Peter Thompson.

### **Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Miranda Brown and Nancy Sorenti. Their apologies were accepted.

### **Chairman's Remarks**

The Chair opened the Council's discussion of the application for Outline Planning Permission for the construction of four houses on land to the rear of Hillview, Main Road, Belchford, by saying that this was the application to come before the Council since Belchford and Fulletby Parish Council's Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) became a legally influential document. She stressed that the Council would consider the application on its merits in the light of Planning law and regulations, including any relevant policies embodied in the NDP.

### **Planning Matters: To discuss and respond to planning application: Application reference 00483/26/OUT**

Each Councillor present was invited to comment on the application. A constructive discussion concluded with a resolution, proposed by Ian Goodall and supported by all the Councillors, that the Council would object to the application as submitted currently for the following reasons.

## 1. Layout

- a. Boundary issue – The application was not clear on the status of the proposed BNG area, as one drawing in the submitted application suggests that the applicant is seeking permission to develop a significantly larger area than that suggested in the indicative layout plan included in the same document. Statements elsewhere in the application suggest that statutory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements would be satisfied by the clearing of debris from an area toward the north of the application site, but within the red line boundary.
- b. Housing mix – The application merely indicated that a mix of market houses was possible with heights of 1.5 to 2 storeys. The land is elevated from the road and so the proposed housing would dominate the street scene. The application was not clear on what was proposed. The Parish Council favour smaller, more affordable homes which are lacking in the village. [NDP Policy BF6: Housing Type was referenced]
- c. It is the Parish Councils view that this application for four houses will significantly increase housing density in the eastern part of Belchford and will therefore have a detrimental impact on light and views. In addition, the rear gardens for plots 3 and 4 are extremely small. [NDP Policy BF4: Settlement Density was referenced]

## 2. Access

- a. Potential secondary access to adjacent land: The indicative layout plans showed a double parking space on the application site's boundary, which could be viewed as potential access to further development in future, promoting 'development creep'. This compounds the already tight spacing in that area. [NDP Policy BF3: Protected Local Green Spaces; NDP Policy BF4: Settlement Density; NDP Policy BF5: Development Design were referenced]
- b. There is no access (pedestrian or vehicular) to the proposed BNG area on the submitted plans. [Policy BF5: Development Design]

While it was resolved that the Parish Council would object to the current application, it was agreed that the Parish Council fully supports the principle of appropriate development of this brownfield site and would particularly favour an amended application that adequately addresses the issues above and other NDP policies, for which the Council would offer the following guidance, referring to the NDP:

- Policy BF8: Commercial Development – The applicants' former business provided local jobs and services and its loss is keenly felt in the area. There is a scarcity of commercial land for appropriate business development in the area and the Parish Council would favour a strong element of commercial provision in any proposal for this site.

- Policy BF3: Protected Local Green Spaces - The Parish Council felt that the allocation of a sizeable proportion of the area to BNG was laudable, but that this area was not adequately defined and protected in the proposal. This needs to be addressed so that future developers do not use outline planning permission to extend development and reduce the BNG area. The Parish Council considers it to be vital that the developer makes a written commitment to landscape the BNG. Some form of public access would be viewed favourably.
- Policy BF6: Housing Type – All recent housing development has been of red brick and pantiles, but older properties are more varied. The Parish Council would favour a wider variety of houses, in both design and cost, to encourage a diverse range of families into our village.
- Policy BF7: Sustainable Design – As stated in the NDP, the Parish Council expects that an element of sustainability be built into every planning proposal.
- Policy BF9: Dark Skies – The area enjoys rare dark skies with a lack of street lighting. The Parish Council aim to protect this through the NDP which requires that any planning proposal incorporates measures to protect our dark skies.