

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

PLANNING CONTROL COMMITTEE

**MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES,
LETCWORTH GARDEN CITY, SG6 3JF
ON THURSDAY, 19TH JUNE, 2025 AT 7.00 PM**

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors: Nigel Mason (Chair), Emma Fernandes (Vice-Chair), Ruth Brown, Ian Mantle, Bryony May, Caroline McDonnell, Louise Peace, Tom Tyson, Martin Prescott, Clare Billing, Dave Winstanley and Val Bryant.*

In Attendance: *Amy Cantrill (Trainee Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer), Paul Chaston (Senior Planning Officer), Faith Churchill (Democratic Services Apprentice), Sam Dicocco (Principal Planning Officer), Shaun Greaves (Development and Conservation Manager), Arhamna Jafri (Locum Planning Lawyer), James Lovegrove (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager), Henry Thomas (Planning Officer) and Melissa Tyler (Senior Planning Officer).*

Also Present: *At the commencement of the meeting approximately 17 members of the public, including registered speakers.*

Also in attendance was Councillor Claire Winstanley as a Member advocate.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 2 minutes 2 seconds

There were no apologies for absence.

2 MINUTES - 3 APRIL 2025 AND 15 APRIL 2025

Audio Recording – 2 minutes 16 seconds

Councillor Nigel Mason proposed, and Councillor Ian Mantle seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meetings of the Committee held on 3 April 2025 and 15 April 2025 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

3 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – 3 minutes 9 seconds

There was no other business notified.

4 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – 3 minutes 15 seconds

(1) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be recorded.

- (2) The Chair drew attention to the item on the agenda front pages regarding Declarations of Interest and reminded Members that, in line with the Code of Conduct, any Declarations of Interest needed to be declared immediately prior to the item in question.
- (3) The Chair clarified matters for the registered speakers.
- (4) The Chair advised that Section 4.8.23(a) of the Constitution applied to the meeting.
- (5) The Chair advised that the order of the agenda had been changed to that published and would be considered in the following order Agenda Item 6, Agenda Item 9, Agenda Item 10, Agenda Item 7 and Agenda Item 8.
- (6) The Chair advised that should proceedings continue at length, there was a Constitutional procedure to make the item under consideration at 10.30pm the final item, with any remaining items to be deferred to the meeting of the Committee scheduled for Thursday 17 July 2025.

5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 6 minutes 12 seconds

The Chair confirmed that the registered speakers were in attendance.

6 24/02214/FP LAND ON THE NORTH WEST SIDE OF GREEN LANE, ASHWELL, HERTFORDSHIRE, SG7 5LW

Audio recording – 7 minutes 10 seconds

N.B. Cllr Tom Tyson declared an interest in this item due to being the Member Advocate Objector and moved to the Public Gallery.

The Senior Planning Officer provided a verbal update on matters relating to Application 24/02214/FP and advised that:

- The Highway Authority had thoroughly reviewed previous applications and have deemed this current application acceptable.
- The objections from the Parish Council were that the changes in the new application did not address the concerns set out in their previous letter of objection.

The Senior Planning Officer then presented the report in respect of Application 24/02214/FP supported by a visual presentation consisting of plans and photographs.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Ruth Brown
- Councillor Louise Peace
- Councillor Clare Billing
- Councillor Ian Mantle

In response to questions, the Senior Planning Officer advised that:

- It would be possible to add a condition to prevent development into the roof spaces without further planning permission.
- The Waste team had been consulted and were content with the access waste vehicles would have to properties.

- Details on the bin storage facilities to be provided were covered by Condition 16, including the arrangements for the mid-terrace dwelling.

The Chair invited Mr William Rogers to speak against this application. Mr Rogers thanked the Chair for the opportunity and provided the Committee with a verbal presentation, including that:

- The position of the Highways authority was neither to approve or refuse the application, but their lack of position did not mean that there was no impact on residents.
- Green Lane was private with no public access which meant Highways were not a statutory consultee on this application.
- Green Lane was previously at capacity for vehicles and this would become a severe issue with further development.
- Despite this being a different site, access was still a key consideration with this application.
- Previous applications were rejected and nothing was changed.

The Chair thanked Mr Rogers and invited Ms Jill Powell to speak against this application. Ms Powell thanked the Chair for the opportunity and provided the Committee with a verbal presentation, including that:

- The applicant was aware of objection letters but had not addressed these.
- She had lived on Green Lane since 1956, and for the last 10 years had worried about traffic between houses 3, 5 and 7.
- This development was unsustainable.
- Increased traffic would create an unusable road.
- Residents walk into the village and with an increase in traffic, there were concerns about safety.
- Online shopping had increased, and delivery vehicles travel fast creating an additional hazard.
- The proposals would create an issue for access for emergency vehicles. Even as amended, the bottle neck created was unworkable for residents.

The Chair thanked Ms Powell and invited Mr Mathew Lee to speak against this application. Mr Lee thanked the Chair for the opportunity and provided the Committee with a verbal presentation, including that:

- This is the third time that a planning application has been proposed on this lane, the last two were refused.
- As this was not an adopted Highway, the County Council were not required to formally comment on this application, but they had noted that were it adopted an objection would have been submitted.
- Parking issues in Green Lane had caused a bottle neck for vehicles.
- Photos of the lane during bin collection had been submitted as part of the consultation process and demonstrated the congestion at these times.
- Access to Green Lane was unsafe and had been unchanged from previous applications, which would be especially dangerous for children.
- He believed claims that things have changed were not true, the only change was location from east to west.

The Chair thanked Mr Lee and invited Councillor Tom Tyson to speak against this application. Councillor Tyson thanked the Chair for the opportunity and provided the Committee with a verbal presentation, including that:

- He called in the item due to supporting the objections of the community.
- The Neighbourhood Plan stated that development density should match that of the surrounding area of the proposed development, which this did not.

- The benefits of the development do not outweigh the cost of urbanising effects of 7 houses on the edge of a village which backed onto farmland.
- The Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan sought to ensure traffic generation did not adversely affect safety and the response to previous refusals show that this development does increase harm.
- The manoeuvring needed to navigate parked cars and delivery vans was extensive, this created a risk to pedestrians and cyclists.
- The passing bay increased the road width to 4.7 metres which would make it tight for a waste vehicle and a large car to pass each other.
- He agreed with the members of the Parish Council and urged the committee to refuse the application.

The Chair thanked Councillor Tyson and invited Ms Mandy Owen, as agent to the applicant, to speak in support of this application. Ms Owen thanked the Chair for the opportunity and provided the Committee with a verbal presentation, including that:

- The applicant worked with officers at NHDC and HCC for 18 months on the proposal.
- Due to the lack of 5 year housing land supply, the Council would need to approve the proposal, unless the impacts significantly and demonstrably outweighed the benefits.
- The proposal is recommended by the Councils officers.
- There would be 7 2 to 4-bedroom houses, which would fit within the requirements under the Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan.
- There would be generous space between dwellings and the proposal was compliant with the parking policy of the adopted Local Plan.
- The houses would have electric vehicle charging points.
- Previous applications referred to by objectors were on the opposite side of Green Lane and therefore there was no relevant planning history for this application and site.
- Improvements and upgrades of the lane, including the widening of the lane, meant there would be safe access for emergency vehicles and there were no concerns raised by the County Council regarding risk to pedestrians.
- In legal terms there was nothing to stop the right of access being enhanced as land controlled by applicant.
- The application represented a policy compliant scheme, as assessed by officers and consultees.

The following members asked questions:

- Councillor Caroline McDonnell
- Councillor Martin Prescott
- Councillor Louise Peace

In response to questions, Ms Owen advised that:

- One of the three-bedroom houses had a bedroom on the ground floor and would therefore be accessible for disabled residents.
- The point regarding history of the site was just clarification that previous applications were at a different site and therefore HCC objections were not relevant to this application.
- Due to proposed installation of heat pumps, the solar panels were unnecessary.

The Chair thanked Ms Owen for her presentation.

Councillor Ian Mantle proposed to grant permission, with the removal of Condition 13. This was seconded by Councillor Emma Fernandes.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Martin Prescott
- Councillor Ruth Brown
- Councillor Louise Peace
- Councillor Val Bryant

The following points were raised as part of the debate:

- The report was detailed but Members needed to be satisfied with the access arrangements and any road widening should happen before any work was commenced.
- The roof space could be converted, and a condition should be added to remove permitted development of this space to make house larger than needed.
- Waste storage was still a concern.
- 5-year housing supply argument would be affected by Baldock master plan so would these houses be needed.

The Chair confirmed with the proposer and seconder that two additional conditions relating to pre-commencement highways work and the removal of permitted development rights were acceptable. Having been proposed and seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That application 24/02214/FP be **GRANTED** planning permission subject to the reasons and conditions set out in the report of the Development and Conservation Manager, with the removal of Condition 13, the renumbering of the remaining conditions, and the addition of Conditions 20 and 21, as follows:

'Condition 20

Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 as amended no development as set out in Classes B and C of Part 1 of Schedule 2 to the Order, (or any subsequent Statutory Instrument which revokes, amends and/or replaces those provisions) shall be carried out without first obtaining a specific planning permission from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: Given the nature of this development, the Local Planning Authority considers that development which would normally be "permitted development" should be retained within planning control in the interests of the character and amenities of the area and to comply with Policy D1 and/or Policy D3 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031.

Condition 21

Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, the approved three pedestrian refuges and two vehicle passing bays shall be fully constructed in accordance with the approved details outlined in the Transport Statement (dated February 2025). Thereafter, the passing bays and pedestrian refuges shall be retained, maintained in a good state of repair, and kept free from obstruction at all times in perpetuity, to ensure the safe and efficient operation of the private road.

Reason: To ensure adequate access for vehicles and pedestrians and to maintain highway safety in accordance with Policy T1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031.'

N.B. Cllr Tom Tyson returned to the chamber at 20:02.

7 25/00012/FP 25 MILESTONE ROAD, HITCHIN, HERTFORDSHIRE, SG5 2SZ

Audio recording – 1 hour 1 minute 30 seconds.

N.B. Cllr Nigel Mason declared an interest in this item due to being a Hitchin Oughton Ward Councillor and had previously made comments on this application and therefore left the Chamber for the duration of the item. For this item, Cllr Emma Fernandes took over as Chair.

N.B. Cllr Claire Billing declared an interest in this item due to being the Member Advocate Objector and moved to the Public Gallery.

The Senior Planning Officer gave an update following a site visit stating that the applicant had decided to divide the garden into two sections following a visit from the Hertfordshire CYP Placement Officer, with one section being provided for the annexe to the property, which was envisioned would host an older child, who would require more independence.

The Senior Planning Officer presented the report in respect of Application 24/00012/FP supported by a visual presentation consisting of plans and photographs.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Dave Winstanley
- Councillor Val Bryant
- Councillor Ruth Brown
- Councillor Louise Peace

In response to questions, the Senior Planning Officer advised that:

- Including the semi-independent annex there would be three residents.
- All the residents would be under the age of 18.
- For the three residents there would always be a minimum of two members of staff.
- The residence was currently labelled C3b residential dwelling and was applying to become C2.

The Chair invited Mr Simon Brooks to speak against this application. Mr Brooks thanked the Chair for the opportunity and provided the Committee with a verbal presentation, including that:

- He and his family lived next door to number 25, and he also represented other neighbours on Milestone Road.
- When the original application for C3 was submitted last year, it had been advised that this would be like living next to a normal family. However, the reclassification to C2 could mean young people from prison or youth detention centres.
- The changes to the garden had already been completed, which gave the impression that the applicant thought planning permission would definitely be given.
- The dwelling was in the middle of the road that has elderly people and was located close to a school and nursery and there were concerns as to what measures had been put in place to keep other residents safe.
- There were concerns as to whether the community would be informed if residents had prior convictions. The property looked like it had been changed to increase security, and there were concerns of the property becoming secure unit.
- Concerns about an increased crime rate had been raised by police.
- Care properties had become a lucrative business, what would be given back to the community.
- There were risks that the community would like to be addressed.
- He was worried about dangerous young people being next door to his children.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Val Bryant
- Councillor Tom Tyson

In response to questions, Mr Brooks advised that:

- The letter from the Crime Prevention Design Advisor had the reference number CPD 111652024.
- There had been a lack of communication from Social Services regarding change of use.

The Chair thanked Mr Brooks and invited Councillor Claire Billing to speak against this application. Councillor Billing thanked the Chair for the opportunity and provided the Committee with a verbal presentation, including that:

- That she supported the principal of the property and believed that children in care should benefit from the same opportunities as other young people, but the Council had a duty to make sure that dwellings such as this were safe for the community they were placed in.
- Herts Police crime prevention services could not support the application in its current form and recommended that the applicant engage with the crime prevention service.
- The application was originally for two young people but had increased to three.
- Local families were worried about their own children, especially as there is nothing to prevent noise from the property impacting on neighbours.
- There needed to be transparency and safeguards for a residence such as this.

The Chair thanked Councillor Billing and invited Mr Alvin Osei-Tutu, as Applicant, to speak in support of this application. Mr Osei-Tutu thanked the Chair for the opportunity and provided the Committee with a verbal presentation, including that:

- He was co-owner of the property which already has planning permission for C3b.
- The change to C2 was to allow for shift work and would require enhancements on the current safeguarding situation.
- He had many years of experiences in residences which provided care services.
- The application was not for an institution, but a home for young people aged 8-18 where they could heal and grow.
- The company would be employing trauma informed carers employed and would look to acquire an Ofsted accreditation.
- Noise should be similar to a standard home with three children, with shift changes to happen at 8am and 8pm to reduce noise.
- To increase safety, all carers would be DBS checked and well trained and the residence would be regulated by Ofsted.
- There were no objections to the proposal from Environmental Health or Highways.
- There was a pressing need for such homes as nationally there was a shortfall in small therapeutic homes.
- This development was an opportunity to give children a safe place.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Dave Winstanley
- Councillor Val Bryant
- Councillor Martin Prescott
- Councillor Bryony May
- Councillor Louise Peace
- Councillor Emma Fernandes
- Councillor Ruth Brown

In response to questions, Mr Osei-Tutu advised that:

- Children would be referred through Hertfordshire County Council in the first instance. However, if there were no children locally then the places would be opened up nationally
- The ratio for staff will always be three children to two or more staff.
- Most of the twelve staff were located within a twenty minute radius of the property.
- This was the first Lumin home for young people, the business does also provide domiciliary.
- This was a new protocol, which was designed with other companies and social workers.
- Marge limited was the owner of the home, Marge partners were running the home and would be registered with Ofsted.
- The aim was to provide long term care so hopefully a child would stay until 18 they were years of age.
- Regular reviews would be carried out in conjunction with social workers.
- Where possible children would go to schools locally, they could travel in the company car and would be encouraged to use public transport.
- Staff members may need to be at school with the young people, or they may have other tasks to complete on the property, they would not be in the home if not necessary.

In response to questions the Development and Conservation Manager advised that members were to focus planning permission considerations and not the day to day running of the business.

The Chair thanked Mr Osei-Tutu for his presentation.

In response to questions the Senior Planning Officer advised that:

- Children with extreme difficulties would not be selected for this property which was part of the conditions.
- The Crime Officer report was completed before the current plans were clarified. Following clarification, the Crime Officer was reconsulted but no further response had been received.

Councillor Ruth Brown proposed to grant permission. This was seconded by Councillor Tom Tyson.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Val Bryant
- Councillor Dave Winstanley
- Councillor Ian Mantle
- Councillor Martin Prescott
- Councillor Tom Tyson

The following points were raised:

- Having visited the site, it was a good location to provide a normal environment for vulnerable children.
- The company was new but that was not a planning concern and there were no planning considerations that would allow for refusal.
- Smaller residential homes were better than larger homes.
- There were no planning considerations to refuse.
- It was shame children services could not be more involved with residence.

Having been proposed and seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That application 25/00012/FP be **GRANTED** planning permission subject to the reasons and conditions set out in the report of the Development and Conservation Manager.

N.B. Following the conclusion of this item, there was a break in proceedings and the meeting reconvened at 21.00.

N.B. Cllr Mason and Cllr Billing returned to the Chamber at 21.00.

8 25/00466/FP MORRISONS SUPERSTORE, BROADWAY, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY, HERTFORDSHIRE, SG6 3TS

Audio recording – 1 hour 59 minutes 46 seconds

The Planning Officer presented the report in respect of Application 25/00466/FP supported by a visual presentation consisting of plans and photographs.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Dave Winstanley
- Councillor Martin Prescott
- Councillor Tom Tyson
- Councillor Claire Billing
- Councillor Ruth Brown
- Councillor Bryony May

In response to questions, the Planning Officer advised that:

- He could not confirm that the 30db noise was constant or only when in use.
- Conditions already stipulate that signage was not currently permitted and further permission must be requested.
- The 30db would be between 7am and 10pm.
- The only lighting would come from touch screen display.
- The charges would only be usable between 7am and 10pm.

In response to questions, the Development and Conservation Manager advised that whilst a percentage of parking spaces at establishments such as supermarkets were designed and reserved for disabled users, currently there was not enough provision of EV bays to justify a requirement for a percentage of EV charging spaces to be reserved disabled bays.

The Chair invited Ms Marlene Gray to speak against this application. Ms Gray thanked the Chair for the opportunity and provided the Committee with a verbal presentation, including that:

- She was speaking on behalf of her daughter who lived adjacent to the proposed charging points.
- The area surrounding the proposed charging points was a quiet area, and the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee reported that low level noise pollution could be life shortening.
- Properties could be devalued by proximity to a substation.
- Fires at electrical substation could spread as neighbouring properties were only 23m away.

In response to a question by Councillor Martin Prescott, Ms Gray advised that she did not just object to the substation as she believed the chargers would also make low level noise.

The Chair thanked Ms Gray and invited Ms Jackie Sayers to speak against this application. Ms Sayers thanked the Chair for the opportunity and provided the Committee with a verbal presentation, including that:

- Her house backed on the car park where the charges were proposed.
- Electric Vehicles are good, but the design of the charging points must be modest.
- She provided Members with pictures prior to the meeting which showed bright blue fixtures which would be unsightly.
- A different location would be better for disabled users.

In response to a question by Councillor Nigel Mason, Ms Sayers advised that pictures circulated to Members ahead of the meeting were obtained from the website of the EV charger company.

The Chair thanked Ms Sayers and invited Councillor Claire Winchester to speak against this application. Councillor Winchester thanked the Chair for the opportunity and provided the Committee with a verbal presentation, including that:

- She had called in this item to support residents in her ward.
- She was not against the provision of electric vehicle chargers, but believed it could be placed at a better location within the car park.
- The difference in ground height meant headlights would be at bedroom height for nearby residents.
- The chargers themselves may not be loud, but the cars parked charging could be.
- Chargers could be attempted to be used later meaning the headlights would be shining through the windows at any time.

In response to points raised during the public presentations, the Planning Officer advised that:

- The noise assessment had been validated by the Environmental Health team at the Council.
- That a potential reduction in house prices was not a material planning consideration.
- That the drawings in the presentation represented what the charging stations would look like, and any different style would need separate planning permission.
- That the location was determined by existing underground cabling.

In response to points raised during the public presentations, the Locum Planning Lawyer advised that there was no requirement for an applicant to be present at this Committee and this would not constitute a valid reason to defer but the item could be deferred if Members consider that more information was required to determine the application.

Councillor Claire Billing proposed to defer the application. This was seconded by Councillor Martin Prescott.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Ian Mantle
- Councillor Tom Tyson
- Councillor Caroline McDonnell
- Councillor Martin Prescott
- Councillor Dave Winstanley
- Councillor Ruth Brown
- Councillor Val Bryant

The following points were raised:

- More information was needed in consideration of the comments from objectors regarding noise and light of the chargers, and more visual support was required.
- Information should be gathered as to whether the Council retained a covenant on the land, as previous landowners.
- Whether further details could be required if permission was granted.
- There could be issues around non-determination by the Council if item was deferred, which may lead to the return of the planning fee.
- Drawings that have been submitted were limited and more information about electric vehicle charging points would allow for a more informed decision.
- There were trees between the proposed charging station and the houses which Members felt would limit some noise.
- Further request was made to review the drawings and layout plan to ascertain whether there was sufficient information to determine the application.
- It was recognised that the substation was furthest away from the nearby residential properties.
- No reason could be pinpoint to defer the application.

During the debate the Locum Planning Lawyer confirmed that the application could be deferred if Members considered that insufficient detail was available to enable them to properly assess and determine the application

During the debate the Development and Conservation Manager confirmed that the period for determination of the application was due to expire the following day, after which the applicant would have a right to appeal against the failure to determine the application and that this runs the risk of an application for costs, but that the applicant may not lodge such an appeal.

During the debate the Planning Officer confirmed that the substation would be 16 metres from the closest point to the property.

Following the debate, Councillor Claire Billing withdrew her proposal to defer this application.

Councillor Martin Prescott proposed to grant permission, and this was seconded by Councillor Ruth Brown and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That application 25/00466/FP be **GRANTED** planning permission subject to the reasons and conditions set out in the report of the Development and Conservation Manager.

9 24/02333/FP LAND BETWEEN PRIORY FARM AND WYMONDLEY SUBSTATION, BLAKEMORE END ROAD, LITTLE WYMONDLEY , HERTFORDSHIRE

Audio recording – 2 hours 52 minutes 10 seconds

The Senior Planning Officer then presented the report in respect of Application 24/02333/FP supported by a visual presentation consisting of plans and photographs.

N.B. Cllr Caroline McDonnell declared an interest in this item due to being a Wymondley Parish Councillor and left the Chamber.

In response to a question from Councillor Dave Winstanley, the Senior Planning Officer advised that 10% biodiversity net gain would be achieved by the provision of an off-site mitigation area.

The Chair invited Mr Luke Rogers, as the applicant, to speak in support of this application. Mr Rogers thanked the Chair for the opportunity and provided the Committee with a verbal presentation, including that:

- This application was a thoughtful and clean energy proposal, just like the original application.
- The original application had an alternative cable route which would have closed roads, this raised concerns in local community and this new application developed a new route to mitigate this.
- The aim was to reduce impact for daily life and throughout consultation this had no objections.
- Drilling would take place entirely underground to protect ecological features and the cabling would be invisible once fitted.
- The application aligned with local and national planning rules and was supported by Officers at the Council.

Councillor Ruth Brown proposed to grant permission and this was seconded by Councillor Ian Mantle and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That application 24/02333/FP be **GRANTED** planning permission subject to the reasons and conditions set out in the report of the Development and Conservation Manager.

N.B. Cllr Caroline McDonnell returned to the chamber at 22:02.

10 24/02713/FP LAND AT RADWELL BURY FARM, NEWNHAM ROAD, NEWNHAM, HERTFORDSHIRE

Audio Recording – 3 hours 5 minutes 5 seconds

The Principal Planning Officer then presented the report in respect of Application 24/02713/FP supported by a visual presentation consisting of plans and photographs.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Claire Billing
- Councillor Tom Tyson
- Councillor Louise Peace

In response to questions, the Principal Planning Officer advised that:

- The distance between the two units was three metres.
- All visual impact was assessed by play services and they were happy with the level of impact.
- New and native species would be added to hedgerows to protect natural viewpoint.
- The CPRE objection on the portal was not in the report due to it no longer being applicable.
- The Environmental Health assessment had raised no objections in relation to noise.

The Chair invited Mr Ryan Macindoe, as the representative of the applicant, to speak in support of this application. Mr Macindoe thanked the Chair for the opportunity and provided the Committee with a verbal presentation, including that:

- As Head of Development at Balance Power he was committed to renewable and low carbon energy across the UK.

- Cleaner more sustainable electricity often varied based on environmental conditions such as wind speed. By creating an area for storing electricity such as this, it would ensure that renewable energy supply could be provided to meet demands at times when environmental conditions were not favourable.
- The site was ideal for such infrastructure as it exceeded the requirements for such a project.
- The batteries would be connected via underground cables.
- The site was not within the green belt, is away from housing and would create no visual or landscape impact.
- To maintain no significant harm, the hedge rows on the road would be filled in to increase local biodiversity and reduce visual impact.
- The plan was temporary and after 40 years the site would be returned to natural land.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Dave Winstanley
- Councillor Claire Billing
- Councillor Ruth Brown
- Councillor Tom Tyson

In response to questions, the Mr Macindoe advised that:

- In choosing the corner of the field for the batteries the landowner did an analysis, and found that the service station had a hotel, in order to avoid disturbing guests a corner furthest away from the services. The corner also had existing underground cabling which makes connection easier.
- Cabling would be completed by Distribution Network Operator.
- In the event of a fire all electronics would be shut down, at the advice of the fire service a turning circle was added to the north platform to allow the fire service to manoeuvre in the event of smoke plumes.
- The energy was indirectly linked to renewable energy as this would be exported to the grid, the battery farm would then import from the grid and export when demand was high.
- The noise assessment was worst case scenario and with the batteries running at the highest-level noise could be heard up to 1km away.

Councillor Dave Winstanley proposed to grant permission. This was seconded by Councillor Val Bryant.

The following Members took part in the debate on the amendment:

- Councillor Ruth Brown
- Councillor Caroline McDonnell

The following points were raised as part of the debate on the amendment:

- The CPRE raised objections.
- There was precedent for fires at battery farms.

In response to points raised in the debate, the Principal Planning Officer clarified that the visual impact that the CPRE objected to had been rectified as laid out in report.

Having been proposed and seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That application 24/02713/FP be **GRANTED** planning permission subject to the reasons and conditions set out in the report of the Development and Conservation Manager.

11 **APPEALS**

Audio recording – 3 hours 37 minutes 19 seconds

The Development and Conservation Manager provided an update on Planning Appeals and advised that since the last update there were four appeals lodged and eight appeal decisions, with 5 of these having been dismissed and 3 allowed, including the Rhee Spring development.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Ruth Brown
- Councillor Dave Winstanley

In response to questions, the Development and Conservation Manager advised that:

- The policy within the Local Plan stated that the 40% affordable housing provision was where viable. In this instance, following viability assessments, it was not deemed viable to provide the 40% affordable housing for this development.
- He would provide further information on the hearing for the Land at New Pound Farm appeal at the next meeting of the Committee, but the hearing would be accessible to the public and Members.

The Chair requested that the Development and Conservation Manager give a detailed update on the Rhee Spring Appeal Decision at the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 10.43 pm

Chair