

Applications Referred to Committee for Determination:

Broadland District Council:

**Y/5/2015/5031: Reepham Fire Station, 36 School Road,
Reepham, Norwich, NR10 4JP:**

**Formation of additional parking spaces, to allow the
parking of up to 20 cars or light vehicles to the rear drill
yard for other users other than Norfolk Fire and Rescue
Service (NFRS) staff:**

Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service

Report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services

Summary

The proposal seeks to utilise part of the rear hardstanding that currently provides for a fire service drill area, as a daytime parking area available to local businesses under the management of the NFRS and operated using a parking permit system, not open to the general public.

Reepham Town Council support this application; no letters of objection have been received from local residents. Both Broadland District Council and the Highways Authority do not raise any objections.

Operated during daytime business hours, the proposal would not compromise the operational or training function of the NFRS site. The proposal would comply with the requirements of the Broadland District Council Development Management DPD (2015); National Planning Policy Framework (2012) and; DCLG Planning Practice Guidance (2014).

Norfolk Fire And Rescue sits within the Community and Environmental Services Department, therefore in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation, the planning application is presented to the Planning (Regulatory) Committee for determination.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services be authorised to:

- (i) Grant planning permission subject to the conditions outlined in section 12.
- (ii) Discharge conditions (in discussion with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the committee) where those detailed above require the submission and implementation of a scheme, or further details, either before development commences, or within a specified date of planning permission being granted.
- (iii) Delegate powers to officers (in discussion with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the committee) to deal with any non-material amendments to the application that may be submitted.

1. The Proposal

- 1.1 Type of development : This application seeks to utilise part of the drill yard located to the rear of Reepham fire station building to provide for permit parking for up to 20 vehicles made available solely, by arrangement, to local businesses located nearby in Reepham.
- 1.2 : Parking would be provided within two areas to the rear of the site. Submitted plans also indicates an area providing access only, to the south front and rear of the fire station building and; areas, available only for use by NFRS staff and vehicles to the north front and south/west rear of the site.
- 1.3 Duration : Full planning permission is sought for this development.
- 1.4 Hours of operation : Vehicles would be permitted to park between the hours of 0700 and 1800hrs.
- 1.5 Access : Access to the site would be direct from the highway via the main fire station access onto School Road.

2. Constraints

- 2.1 The site is located within the development limits of Reepham and close to the town centre, outside of but abutting part of the Reepham Conservation Area boundary located to the east.

3. Planning History

- 3.1 5/2003/0231 Infill former store area, utilising existing roof, creating a female shower/disabled WC – approved 24/03/2003

4. Planning Policy

- 4.1 Broadland District Council Development Management DPD (2015) : GC1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development
: GC4 Design
: EN2 Landscape
: TS3 Highway safety
: CSU1 Additional community facilities
- 4.2 Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (2011/2014) : Policy 1 Addressing climate change and protecting environmental assets
: Policy 2 Promoting good design
: Policy 6 Access and transportation
: Policy 7 Supporting communities
: Policy 14 Key Service Centres
- 4.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) : Achieving Sustainable Development
: 1 Building a strong, competitive economy
: 4 Promoting sustainable transport
: 7 Requiring good design

- : 11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- : 12 Conserving and enhancing the historic Environment

5. Consultations

- 5.1 Broadland District Council : No objections to this application.
- 5.2 Reepham Town Council : Fully support the application.
- 5.3 Highway Authority (NCC) : No objection subject to a condition relating to parking imposed on any grant of planning permission.
- 5.4 Local residents : At the time of writing this report no letters of representation have been received.
- 5.5 County Councillor (Mr James Joyce) : No comments received at the time of writing this report.

6. Assessment

6.1 Proposal

- 6.2 Planning permission is sought to utilise part of the drill yard located to the rear of Reepham fire station as a daytime parking area for up to 20 cars or light vehicles to serve the parking needs of local businesses. Parking would be by prior arrangement and agreement with the NFRS, operated using a parking permit system and would not be open to the general public.
- 6.3 Due to the pre-existing ground markings to the rear, necessary to serve the fire station drill and training area, individual parking bays would not be practicable as these would be likely to compromise the NFRS training facility. Two areas to the rear would be made available for parking and these are indicated on the submitted drawings that accompany the application.
- 6.4 The main entrance to the site off School Road would provide access and egress to the parking areas the subject of this planning application with areas also available for NFRS staff and vehicles.
- 6.5 Hours of operation would be limited to daytime hours of 0700 to 1800 Monday to Friday to remain outside the hours when the NFRS would need the area for fire drills.
- 6.6 **Site**
- 6.7 The site is a purpose brick built single storey building containing a retained fire station with substantial front curtilage. To the rear is located the open training area with lattice tower and compound laid in a tarmac hard surfacing with designated fire practice zones.
- 6.8 A commercial garage defines the northern (side) boundary of the site in a location, close to the town centre, that consists largely of a mixed commercial and residential area.

- 6.9 The site is located outside of but close to the Reepham Conservation Area with part of it abutting the highway providing access to the site.
- 6.10 Access is provided by a 9m wide vehicular entrance off School Road, onto the front curtilage of the site. Internally, access of some 5m width is provided to the rear curtilage on either side of the fire station building.
- 6.11 **Principle of development**
- 6.12 A basic principle when assessing planning applications is outlined in Section 38(6) of the Town and Country Planning Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 which states:
“if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise”.
- 6.13 In terms of the development plan, the County Planning Authority considers the relevant documents in relation to this application is the Broadland District Council Development Management DPD (2015) and the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (2011/2014). Whilst not part of the development plan, policies within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012) is also a further material consideration of significant weight.
- 6.14 Policy 14 of the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (2011/2014) identifies Reepham as a key service centre, having a range of services to meet local needs and those of the surrounding area.
- 6.15 Policy CSU1 of the Broadland District Council Development Management DPD 2015 (Broadland DM DPD) permits proposals for new or extended community facilities to improve the range of local services available, provided there is no significant adverse impact.
- 6.16 Though there are no physical alterations to the site there will be a change of use, in effect, of part of the land from a fire station (Sui Generis) to a car park available on a part time basis, to local businesses. However, given that the parking would be limited to daytime use, and constrained in terms of its location and users so as not to impede the primary function of the fire station, the proposal would continue to comply with Policy CSU1 of the Broadland DM DPD and guidance contained in paragraph 28 of the NPPF in respect of maintaining a local service and facility and, by supporting the function of a local business; seeking to promote a strong rural economy.
- 6.17 This is an established retained fire station within the settlement boundary and an identified key service centre, where development is encouraged to meet local needs and those of the surrounding area. In accordance with Policy CSU1 of the Broadland DM DPD, Policy 14 of the JCS and section 3 of the NPPF, the principle of development is considered acceptable subject to consideration of the other material considerations set out in this report.
- 6.18 **Amenity (noise, dust, light pollution etc)**
- 6.19 Close to the centre of the town, the locality contains a mixture of commercial and business uses, particularly along School Road but the overall character remains predominantly residential. Rear gardens to the bungalows in Sun Barn Walk face directly onto the rear drill area of the fire station from the west. However, these

gardens are already well screened by boundary hedge and tree growth and, as such the proposal for a limited area of daytime car parking would be essentially neutral in terms of its impact upon the residential amenity of these dwellings.

- 6.20 Located to the rear of the building, the proposal would not be readily visible from outside of the site with no discernible impacts upon either dwellings located on School Road or the wider visual amenity of the street to the east which, incidentally forms the boundary of the Reepham Conservation Area. Overall, the proposal would comply with the requirements of Policy GC4 of the Broadland DM DPD in paying adequate regard to the character and appearance of the area, including the impact upon the amenity of existing properties and meeting reasonable amenity needs for potential future occupiers of property.
- 6.21 **Design**
- 6.22 Policy GC4 of the Broadland DM DPD, Policy 2 of the JCS and Section 7 of the NPPF encourages development to be of good design for the context within which it is set and; relate well in terms of scale, design and function with its surroundings.
- 6.23 Unusually for a parking proposal there is an absence of a formal parking layout. However, the primary function of the overall site remains as a fire station with parking areas ceasing their use during the evenings and at week-ends. It would therefore not be in the interests of either the fire service or wider public safety for this training area to be compromised by either the removal of the fire training markings or for this function to be confused by the overlay of markings for a parking layout.
- 6.24 The level of parking at 20 vehicles would be low density and not open to the public for use. It would therefore be reasonable to expect, as indicated in the application submission, for the fire service to be able to manage the parking on this site without the requirement of formal markings.
- 6.25 The parking layout is peculiar to the needs of this site and with suitable conditions and management by the service to prevent parking on unallocated areas, the proposal would comply with the aforementioned design policies.
- 6.26 **Impact on Heritage Assets**
- 6.27 The application site lies outside of but abuts part of the Reepham Conservation Area boundary located to the east.
- 6.28 Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990 requires that when exercising its planning functions, Local Planning Authorities (LPA's) should pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 6.29 Policy EN2 of the Broadland DM DPD and Policy 1 of the JCS seeks to safeguard and enhance environmental assets of a district including its heritage assets.
- 6.30 The principle of safeguarding, preserving and/or enhancing heritage assets is also echoed in Section 12 of the NPPF. Paragraph 131 of the NPPF states that LPA's in determining planning applications should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses; the positive contribution that conservation heritage assets can make to sustainable communities; and the desirability of new development making positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

- 6.31 Paragraph 132 of the NPPF advises that any harm to or loss of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. Paragraph 133 advises that local planning authorities should refuse consent for proposals that will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss. Where proposals will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, paragraph 134 of the NPPF advises that the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.
- 6.32 The proposal seeks to provide car parking provision for up to 20 cars or light vehicles. Utilising part of the existing drill yard located to the rear, no alterations or markings are proposed. Though there are a number of listed buildings within the town they are located some distance to the north/east of the site across the Market Square and, as such, the development would have no impact upon their historic character or setting. Similarly, set behind the fire station, the proposal would not be readily visible and therefore have no discernible impact of the Reepham Conservation Area thereby maintaining its character and setting.
- 6.33 Overall, it is considered that the proposal would not lead to harm of the designated heritage assets, in compliance with the requirements of Policy EN2 of the Broadland DM DPD, Policy 1 of the JCS and section 12 of the NPPF, in paying adequate regard to the character and appearance of the area and; having no discernible impact upon the character and setting of nearby heritage assets.
- 6.34 **Transport**
- 6.35 Policy TS3 of the Broadland DM DPD permits development that would not result in any significant adverse impact upon the satisfactorily functioning or safety of the highway network.
- 6.36 As previously indicated, access onto the site from School Road is provided by a 9m wide vehicular entrance onto the front curtilage of the site. Internally, access of some 5m width is provided to the rear curtilage on either side of the fire station building. No changes to the access arrangements are proposed.
- 6.37 The Highway Authority have reviewed this application submission and in their consultation response do not raise any highway issues. However, it is recommended that a suitably worded condition be imposed to any planning permission that may be granted to limit parking by non NFRS staff and light vehicles to the areas to the rear of the site as indicated on the submitted drawing. This is to ensure that there is sufficient space on the site to accommodate existing parking demand associated with the fire station and to ensure that these fire service operations are not compromised.
- 6.38 It is considered that the proposed development is acceptable in highway terms and unlikely to have a material impact on the highway network, in accordance with Policy TS3 of the Broadland DM DPD.
- 6.39 **Sustainability**
- 6.40 Policy GC1 of the Broadland DM DPD, Policy 1 of the JCS and section 10 of the NPPF promote sustainable development and minimisation of resource and energy consumption.

- 6.41 Given the nature of the proposed development as a car park, the sustainability elements are somewhat limited. However, this proposal would allow the re-use of an existing tarmac hardstanding area during weekday working hours to provide local businesses with a valuable additional resource when the fire training facility is not in use and this is likely to have a significant public benefit by supporting the function of key employers within the town.
- 6.42 Sustainability credentials for the proposed development, when taking into account both the constraints of the site and benefits listed above are, on balance, acceptable when considered against the requirements in the relevant national and local planning policies relating to sustainability.
- 6.43 **Biodiversity and geodiversity**
- 6.44 The application site consists of an area of hardstanding, it is considered that the proposed development would not cause any adverse effects on ecology/biodiversity.
- 6.45 Appropriate Assessment
The site is situated within 10 kilometres of the Norfolk Valley Fens Area and the River Wensum Special Area of Conservation (SAC), which are European protected habitat. The application has been assessed in accordance with Regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and based on the information submitted to the County Planning Authority (CPA) it is considered that the development does not have a significant impact on the integrity of any protected habitat. Accordingly, there is no requirement for the CPA to undertake an Appropriate Assessment of the development.
- 6.46 **The Community Infrastructure Levy**
- 6.47 The development is not CIL liable.
- 6.48 **Responses to the representations received**
- 6.49 The application was advertised by means of neighbour notification letters and site notices.
- 6.50 Neighbour notification letter expiry date: 20 January 2016
Site notice expiry date: 1 February 2016
No representation has been received.

7. Resource Implications

- 7.1 **Finance:** The development has no financial implications from the Planning Regulatory perspective.
- 7.2 **Staff:** The development has no staffing implications from the Planning Regulatory perspective.
- 7.3 **Property:** The development has no property implication from the Planning Regulatory perspective.
- 7.4 **IT:** The development has no IT implications from the Planning Regulatory perspective.

8. Other Implications

8.1 **Human rights**

8.2 The requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998 must be considered. Should permission not be granted Human Rights are not likely to apply on behalf of the applicant.

8.3 The human rights of the adjoining residents are engaged under Article 8, the right to respect for private and family life and Article 1 of the First Protocol, the right of enjoyment of property. A grant of planning permission may infringe those rights but they are qualified rights, that is that they can be balanced against the economic interests of the community as a whole and the human rights of other individuals. In making that balance it may also be taken into account that the amenity of local residents could be adequately safeguarded by conditions albeit with the exception of visual amenity. However, in this instance it is not considered that the human rights of adjoining residents would be infringed.

8.4 The human rights of the owners of the application site may be engaged under the First Protocol Article 1, that is the right to make use of their land. An approval of planning permission may infringe that right but the right is a qualified right and may be balanced against the need to protect the environment and the amenity of adjoining residents.

8.5 **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)**

8.6 The Council's planning functions are subject to equality impact assessments, including the process for identifying issues such as building accessibility. None have been identified in this case.

8.7 **Legal Implications:** There are no legal implications from the Planning Regulatory perspective.

8.8 **Communications:** There are no communication issues from a planning perspective.

8.9 **Health and Safety Implications:** There are no health and safety implications from a planning perspective.

8.10 **Any other implications:** Officers have considered all the implications which members should be aware of. Apart from those listed in the report (above), there are no other implications to take into account.

9. Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act

9.1 It is not considered that the implementation of the proposal would generate any issues of crime and disorder, and there have been no such matters raised during the consideration of the application.

10. Risk Implications/Assessment

10.1 There are no risk issues from a planning perspective.

11. Conclusion and Reasons for Grant of Planning Permission

11.1 The use of part of the Reepham Fire Station drill yard as a car park to serve local businesses, during the daytime would not impede the vital service function of the fire station. The provision of daytime parking spaces would serve to support local businesses located within the town to the overall benefit of the local rural economy.

- 11.2 Subject to the implementation of appropriate conditions, it is considered that the proposal would not create any adverse impacts and is in accordance with the development plan policies identified and national policy. There are no material considerations that indicate that the application should be refused.

12. Conditions

- 12.1 The development hereby permitted shall commence within three years of the date of this permission.
- Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 12.2 The development must be carried out in strict accordance with the application form, plans and documents detailed below:
- a) Site Location Plan; NCC-0363; dated October 2012
 - b) Proposed Block Plan; Y/5/2015/5031 02; dated December 2015
 - c) Planning Statement; Prepared by NPS Group; dated 14 December 2015
 - d) Parking Provision Statement (Rev 1); prepared by NPS Group; dated 10 February 2016; received 10 February 2016
 - e) Heritage Statement (Rev 1); prepared by NPS Group; dated 10 February 2016; received 10 February 2016
- Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning
- 12.3 The proposed parking area hatched green on approved plan (Proposed Block Plan; reference Y/5/2015/5031 02) shall only be used by non NFRS staff and light vehicles.
- Reason: To ensure the availability of parking spaces, in the interests of highways safety, in accordance with Policy TS3 of the Broadland District Council Development Management DPD (2015)
- 12.4 The proposed parking area hatched green on approved plan (Proposed Block Plan; reference Y/5/2015/5031 02) shall only be used for parking provision for non NFRS staff and light vehicles during the hours of 0700 – 1800 Monday to Friday.
- Reason: In the interests of amenity, in accordance with Policy GC4 of the Broadland District Council Development Management DPD (2015)

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services be authorised to:

- (i) Grant planning permission subject to the conditions outline in section 12.
- (ii) Discharge conditions (in discussion with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the committee) where those detailed above require the submission and implementation of a scheme, or further details, either before development commences, or within a specified date of planning permission being granted.

- (iii) Delegate powers to officers (in discussion with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the committee) to deal with any non-material amendments to the application that may be submitted.

Background Papers

Broadland District Council Development Management DPD (2015)

http://www.broadland.gov.uk/PDF/01_Development_Management_DPD_Adoption_Version_September_2015.pdf

Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (2011/2014)

<http://www.greaternorwichgrowth.org.uk/planning/joint-core-strategy/>

The National Planning Policy Framework and technical Guidance (NPPF) (2012)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf

DCLG Planning Practice Guidance (2014)

<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/>

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper please get in touch with:

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