

**Planning Regulatory Committee
Minutes of the Meeting Held on Friday 16 February 2018
at 10am in the Edwards Room, County Hall**

Present:

Mr C Foulger – Chairman

Mr S Askew
Mr D Collis
Mr C Foulger
Mr B Long

Mr W Richmond
Mr M Sands – Vice-Chairman
Mr E Seward
Mr A White

1 Apologies and Substitutions

Apologies for absence were received from Mr R Brame, Mr D Douglas, Mr C Smith and Mr M Storey.

2 Minutes from the meeting held on 1 December 2017

- 2.1 The minutes from the Planning (Regulatory) Committee meeting held on Friday 1 December 2017 were confirmed as a correct record by the Committee and signed by the Chairman.

3 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

4 Urgent Business

- 4.1 The Committee was reminded that the next Planning (Regulatory) Committee Member training session would be held on 19 March 2018 in the Edwards Room, County Hall commencing at 10am. The topics would be Flood risk in planning and Planning Enforcement.
- 4.2 The Planning Services Manager would circulate a proposed training schedule for 2018-19 in the near future, and would include a re-run of the Landscape and Planning and Ecology and planning sessions. The Committee asked to receive reminders 4 weeks, 2 weeks and then 1 week before all future scheduled training dates.

- 5 Y/2/2017/2010: Hillcrest Primary School, Hillcrest, Downham Market, King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE38 9ND.**
- 5.1 Proposal and applicant: Demolition of existing mobile classrooms, store and sheds. Extension and part refurbishment of existing school building, construction of a new standalone two-storey class base block and associated landscaping, to expand the school to a 3-form entry (630 pupil) school. External works to include additional car parking and hard play area (Executive Director of Children's Services).
- 5.2 The Committee received the report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services seeking full planning permission for the erection of a standalone 2-storey class base block to expand the school to a 3 form entry (630 pupil place) and provide a permanent replacement for the existing temporary modular accommodation: an extension to the existing reception classroom and additional parking provision.
- 5.3 During the presentation of the report the following points were noted:
- 5.3.1 Paragraph 13.4 (Landscaping Scheme) of the report to be amended to allow the applicant to submit a revised landscaping scheme for the site which should include smaller tree planting along the boundary of the site adjacent to Civray Avenue. This was as a result of advice received from the Council's Natural Environment Team.
- 5.3.2 A further representation had been received from Mr T Howard in objection to the application. All the issues raised in the representation had been covered within the report.
- 5.4 Mr T Howard, as a resident of Civray Avenue and whose property backed onto Hillcrest Primary School, addressed the Committee in objection to the application on behalf of residents of Civray Avenue, Hillcrest and Sandringham Drive. Mr Howard raised particular concerns about the unsuitable road infrastructure and the loss of privacy in residents' back gardens due to the location of the proposed new building. Mr Howard also stated that the roads were not designed for the large numbers of vehicles using them and also that parents dropping off children at school often blocked resident's driveways, becoming abusive on some occasions when challenged by the residents. Parking down both sides of the road in Hillcrest Avenue had also caused problems for pedestrians and residents and made it impossible for emergency vehicles to access properties if needed. Mr Howard added that requests had been made to the Headteacher at the school and suggestions made about how to remedy the parking problems, but these had not been listened to.
- 5.4.1 In response to a question from the Committee about any formal approach made to the Headteacher to discuss parking issues and problems, Mr Howard said that he had spoken to the Headteacher last year with the Headteacher responding that he was unaware of the extent of the problem. The Headteacher had thought there was only a problem for about 10 minutes at each pick up/drop off time, rather than

residents having problems for up to an hour, twice a day.

- 5.5 Mr M Try, Headteacher at Downham Market School addressed the Committee in support of the application. Mr Try informed the Committee that the school had received a successful outcome at its recent Ofsted Inspection and that the proposed improved facility would allow 180 pupils currently taught in less than adequate classrooms, to be educated in better accommodation and receive a good quality education at a good school. Mr Try added that he understood residents' concerns but reassured the Committee that initially, the 180 children which would be schooled in the new building were already attending the school. Mr Try also said that parents were encouraged to co-operate with local residents and recent improvements to school travel plans had led to an increase in the number of pupils walking and cycling to school. Cycle proficiency training was now being offered to pupils in the lower years at the school and other ways of alleviating parking issues and finding safe drop-off areas were being considered.
- 5.5.1 The following points were noted in response to questions to the Headteacher from the Committee:
- 5.5.1.1 Although the school tried to ensure there was a nice learning environment for all children to be educated in, 180 pupils were currently being educated in cramped and inadequate mobile classrooms.
- 5.5.1.2 In response to a request to undertake some work to see if the school travel plans could accommodate the requirements of local residents, the Headteacher advised that, at the start of the planning process, an open invitation had been offered to all residents to view the plans and raise any concerns. Regular newsletters were produced and published on the school website, and these included information encouraging parents to park carefully and considerately. The Headteacher agreed to take the comments on board and see what else could be done.
- 5.5.1.3 The doors to the school opened at 8.45am. The school day commenced at 8.55am and finished at 3.30pm.
- 5.6 Ms I Horner, Sufficiency Delivery Manager, Norfolk County Council Children's Services addressed the Committee on behalf of the applicant. Ms Horner advised that the school expansion was needed due to the number of houses which had been built in the area over recent years. Ms Horner agreed to take on board the traffic and parking problems raised and advised the Committee that parking provision had been increased which would allow more school staff to park on the school site. She added that if further housing development was planned for Downham Market, Children's Services would liaise with the District Council to consider how to provide school provision outside the residential development area.
- 5.7 Mr A White, County Councillor for Downham Market Division, addressed the Committee as Local Member, during which he said he understood the resident's frustration about inconsiderate parking and that he would like to see the Traffic Regulation Order include sufficient double yellow lines. He added that he did not

wish to oppose the application but had concerns about ensuring traffic was kept moving in a built up area.

- 5.8 The Engineer - Highways Development Management, Norfolk County Council advised that there was an obligation on Children's Services, Norfolk County Council to fund and undertake a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) investigation if planning permission was granted. He added that the recommended condition at paragraph 13.10 of the report (A Traffic Regulation Order for the provision of School Keep Clear Markings and yellow line markings) would look to better manage the school time parking to help address the issues raised at Hillcrest and Sandringham Drive. It was stressed that the scheme shown was 'indicative only' and the exact extents would be subject to a separate TRO consultation process, in consultation with Councillor White as the Local Member.
- 5.9 As part of the proposals, the school would be required to update their school travel plan, and additional cycle shelters had been proposed to encourage walking and cycling to school.
- 5.10 In response to questions from Committee Members, the following points were noted:
- 5.10.1 It was clarified that there were two primary schools in Downham Market. The Sufficiency Delivery Manager, NCC said she was conscious of where significant housing applications were being made, but existing schools needed to show they were operating at capacity before consideration could be given to finding a site for a new school. She added that regular discussions were held with District and Borough Councils where significant housing development applications were being made.
- 5.10.2 There was approximately 21m between the location of the new school block and the rear of the dwellings on Civray Avenue which was considered to be a sufficient distance with regard to overlooking. The position of the dwellings on Civray Avenue and the boundary treatments also limited the impacts of overlooking. The applicant had not been asked to submit a different location for the new classroom block as the distance of 21m was not regarded as causing overlooking which would amount to sufficient weight to warrant refusal of the application.
- 5.10.3 The provision of an onsite drop-off facility within the school could not be insisted upon and would be against policy. Such a proposal would allow parents to drive into the school, drop their children off, then drive out of the school. If such a scheme was provided it would need to be carefully managed by the school, particularly around safety risks and insurance liability.
- 5.10.4 Children's Services, NCC had not identified any other site within Downham Market to house a new school.
- 5.10.5 If planning permission was granted, it would be the responsibility of the applicant to fund the Traffic Regulation Order.

- 5.10.6 In response to a comment by a Member of the Committee, the Planning Services Manager advised that “overlooking” was a material planning consideration, although “loss of view” wasn’t. This was confirmed by the nplaw solicitor in attendance.
- 5.10.7 The ground floor of the building and the houses on Civray Avenue were already screened by fencing in part, trees and hedging. To lessen the impact of the new building, additional planting would be provided and would be a condition of any planning permission granted.
- 5.10.8 As the distance of 21m from the boundary was considered sufficient from a planning perspective, the applicant had not been asked to provide revised plans showing the new block further away from the boundary. The proposed siting of the block had been designed to ensure connectivity between the new block and the existing school, including the outside space.
- 5.10.9 Photovoltaic panels would be installed on the flat roof.
- 5.11 Upon the recommendations within the report being put to a vote, the Committee **unanimously RESOLVED** to:

Recommended that the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services be authorised to:

- i. Grant planning permission subject to the conditions outlined in section 13 of the report.
- ii. Discharge conditions where those detailed in the report 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 to deal with any non-material amendments to the application that may be submitted.

The meeting concluded at 11.05am

Chairman