



**Rochford District
Council**

**SCHEDULE OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO BE CONSIDERED BY
THE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE - 27 March 2008**

All planning applications are considered against the background of current Town and Country Planning legislation, rules, orders and circulars and any development, structure and local plans issued or made there under. In addition, account is taken of any guidance notes, advice and relevant policies issued by statutory authorities.

Each planning application included in this schedule is filed with representations received and consultation replies as a single case file.

The above documents can be made available for inspection as Committee background papers at the office of Planning And Transportation, Acacia House, East Street, Rochford and can also be viewed on the Council's website at www.rochford.gov.uk.

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Ward Members for Committee Items

HAWKWELL WEST

Cllr J R F Mason

Cllr D G Stansby

HULLBRIDGE

Cllr Mrs R Brown

Cllr Mrs L A Butcher

Cllr P R Robinson

SWEYNE PARK

Cllr Mrs J A Mockford

Cllr Mrs J Dillnutt



SCHEDULE ITEMS

- | | | | |
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Construct Single Storey Building for Use as Under
Fives Nursery Accommodation
Scout Hall off Ferndale Road Rayleigh | Mr Mike Stranks | PAGE 4 |
| 2 | 08/00125/FUL
Demolish Existing Dwellings (1 and 3) and Construct
Two Storey Building to Provide 8 No. Restricted Age
Flats With Access, Parking and Amenity Areas, Cycle
Store and Bin Store.
1 and 3 Pearsons Avenue Rayleigh | Mr Mike Stranks | PAGE 19 |
| 3 | 08/00064/FUL
Single Storey Pitched Roofed Extension to Provide
Dormitory to 'Kath Batts' Building With Access Ramp.
Belchamps Camp Holyoak Lane Hawkwell | Mr Robert Davis | PAGE 11 |



Schedule Item 1

TITLE : 08/00039/FUL
**CONSTRUCT SINGLE STOREY BUILDING FOR USE AS
UNDER FIVES NURSERY ACCOMMODATION
SCOUT HALL OFF FERNDALE ROAD RAYLEIGH**

APPLICANT : DOWNHALL UNDER FIVES

ZONING : METROPOLITAN GREEN BELT

PARISH: HULLBRIDGE

WARD: HULLBRIDGE

THE SITE

- 1.1 This application is to a site on part of the existing playing field to the north of Ferndale Road. The site, and indeed the playing field, is owned by the District Council, thus necessitating this item being brought before the Committee.
- 1.2 A scout hut formerly on the site was recently demolished some 12 months ago. The site of the proposal is partly enclosed by hedging about the perimeter of the former building.
- 1.3 The site is accessed from Ferndale Road and over a poorly surfaced track leading around an existing pond behind gardens to existing dwellings.

PLANNING APPLICATION DETAILS

- 1.4 The proposal is to construct a single storey portable type building 15.26m long and 7.416m wide and with a virtually flat roofed design to an overall height of 3.45m. The building would include an external stair at the western end with a level access to a main entrance at the eastern end. A pathway would be constructed around the site onto the playing field to provide pedestrian access to the eastern end of the site. The building would be finished in "mushroom" coloured walls and roof with grey coloured skirting and black windows. The building would be used as a children's nursery.
- 1.5 The revised fenced enclosure about the building would include an outdoor play area.
- 1.6 In a statement accompanying the application, the applicants describe that they have run for 21 years, are a registered charity and are non-profit making. The pre-school caters for children aged between 2 years and five months to 5 years and operated previously from the site in the previous building from 1987 – 2005.



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- 1.7 Since being served notice to quit prior to demolition of the building, the pre-school has operated temporarily from alternative accommodation on various sites and are currently based in Hullbridge which is not an ideal location as it is well outside the area in which they serve and schools into which they feed.
- 1.8 The pre-school currently operates on a session basis for up to 25 children per session throughout school term times on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday mornings 9.20 am to 12.20 pm for all age groups but with a Wednesday afternoon session 1.20 pm to 3.50 pm purely for rising fives. The applicants are unable to offer a Thursday session because of commitments to other groups at their current location. The pre-school would have six members of staff, of which only two are not within walking distance of the site.
- 1.9 The applicants have found the search for a new site difficult and wish to return to their established base.
- 1.10 The application is supported by letters from the head teachers to both Downhall Primary and St Nicholas Church of England Primary Schools.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 1.11 There is no relevant planning history to this site.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

- 1.12 **Hullbridge Parish Council** – No objections or comments.
- 1.13 **Essex County Council Highways and Transportation** - Raise no objection, subject to the following conditions forming part of any approval that might be given:-
1. All works shall take place clear of the adjoining public footpath No. 2 Hullbridge.
 2. If, during the course of the erection of the building, damage occurs to the surface of public footpath No. 2 Hullbridge, then it shall be reinstated in accordance with details and specification of the Highway Authority (Area Highway Manager South).
 3. Adequate car parking facilities to be provided within the curtilage of the site.
- 1.14 **Rayleigh Civic Society** - The site appears to be in the Green Belt, however if the scout hut had the benefit of planning permission this could enable consideration to be given to this application.
- 1.15 It is not clear from the documentation what type of building it is intended to construct and indicates use of plastic steel sheet. Is it to be a temporary structure or will there be a need for foundations to be dug and sewerage facilities provided?



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- 1.16 Four letters have so far been received in response to the public consultation and which in the main make the following comments and objections:-
- Parking problems and lack of parking to serve the development, obstruction and congestion arose when the previous building was in use
 - Additional traffic, noise and pollutants and effect upon air quality
 - disturbance
 - Need for an Environmental Impact Assessment to help consider the application
 - Despite the operating hours suggested there will be activity outside these times as parents arrive and depart at the end of sessions
 - Request traffic survey and analysis on how much carbon the additional vehicles will produce
 - Concern for effect of the building and activities upon the adjoining wildlife and park
 - Concern at activities other than nursery and into the evening playing loud music and for which licence would be easily obtained
 - Concern for the field becoming a car park if access provided
 - Will outdoor playing area restrict the walking of dogs?

MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Green Belt issue

- 1.17 The site is within the Metropolitan Green Belt where permission for new buildings is granted only when they meet the specified criteria for appropriate development or whereby very special circumstances can be demonstrated by the applicant that can be considered to outweigh the harm caused by the inappropriate nature of the new building and other harm to the Green Belt.
- 1.18 The open space area is essentially undeveloped and adjoins areas of regenerating scrub to irregularly shaped parcels of land beyond the site, some of which are in use for grazing. The building proposed would be somewhat isolated in location from the built envelope.
- 1.19 The applicants' circumstances do not demonstrate a particular uniqueness that identifies an exceptional case. The difficulty in finding a site and the operational difficulties of sharing premises could be said of a number of uses. There is no essential element to the applicants' case that would distinguish this site from any other that might be available.



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- 1.20 The point is made concerning the need for a suitable site to be within the community it serves and to develop the partnership with those schools into which the pre-school would feed. However, these circumstances, although restricting the choice of location, do not demonstrate an essential need for this particular site and do not therefore overcome the principle of exceptional need required to overcome established Green Belt policy. Furthermore, the fact that the applicants have been able to continue in other locations some distance from their preferred location disproves any argument that it is essential for them to be granted permission on this site. The proposal is therefore directly in conflict with Local Plan policy R1.
- 1.21 There are no very special circumstances put forward directly to address the Green Belt policy or to demonstrate any relationship between the proposed building (which could be argued as a replacement) and the playing field.

Other Matters

- 1.22 The County Highway Authority raises no objection to the proposal on highway grounds provided any works do not adversely affect the public footpath. It is understood that it is not possible to provide car parking within the site. Despite this, the use previously operated for a number of years without the benefit of on site car parking. It is, however, clear from the representations made on the experience of the previous use, that in the interests of good planning it is preferable to provide car parking within the site and clear of the highway for the use proposed. The proposal would fall within Use Class D1 and require 1 car parking space for each full time member of staff, together with suitable waiting space for parents. It would therefore be necessary to provide 6 spaces for staff. Informal discussion between officers with the County Highway Authority has concluded that a further eight spaces would be a reasonable proportion for provision associated with dropping off and collection associated with 25 child spaces. Without such provision there would clearly be problems of congestion and obstruction in residential streets near to the site.
- 1.23 Representations made express concern at the potential use of the building outside those hours advocated during daytime by the pre-school. This matter can be the subject of conditions to limit the use as part of any approval that might be given.
- 1.24 A comment is made in the representations received on the need for a full Environmental Impact Assessment. The proposal is not within the categories of development specified under regulations that would require the consideration of an EIA to accompany the application.



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CONCLUSION

- 1.25 The proposal would provide a new building within the Green Belt. The applicant has not demonstrated any very special circumstances to outweigh the harm caused by the inappropriateness of the development and the harm to the open character of the undeveloped nature of the open space and adjoining undeveloped land. The proposal is therefore in conflict with Policy R1 to the Council's adopted Local Plan (2006). The proposal fails to provide sufficient off street parking space to serve the development proposed and as such would cause congestion and obstruction arising from on street parking in residential streets adjoining the site.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1.26 It is proposed that this Committee **RESOLVES** to **REFUSE** the application for the following reasons:-
- 1 The Rochford District Replacement Local Plan (2006) shows the site to be within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The proposal is considered to be inappropriate development contrary to Policy R1 of the Local Plan. Within the Green Belt, as defined in this policy, planning permission will not be given, except in very special circumstances, for the construction of new buildings or for the change of use or extension of existing buildings (other than reasonable extensions to existing buildings, as defined in Policies R2 and R5 of the Local Plan).

The proposed new building would develop a currently open and undeveloped site reducing the openness of the area to the detriment of the character and appearance of the Metropolitan Green Belt. The applicant has failed to demonstrate any very special circumstances associated with the development that would outweigh the normal presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The resulting building would harm the character and appearance of the open and undeveloped nature of the site.
 - 2 The proposal fails to provide sufficient off-street car parking within the site to serve the proposed use. The use proposed would require the provision of 6 No. car parking spaces for the staff and a further eight considered reasonable for the 25 potential children attending the pre-school to accord with standard D1 to the Council's Supplementary Planning Document 5 Vehicle Parking Standards (January 2007). If allowed, the proposal would result in congestion and overspill car parking in surrounding residential streets, together with indiscriminate parking within the highway in the immediate vicinity of the premises to the detriment of highway safety.



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Relevant Development Plan Policies and Proposals

R1, LT7 of the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan (Adopted 16 June 2006).

Supplementary Planning Document 5 Vehicle Parking Standards (January 2007) Standard D1



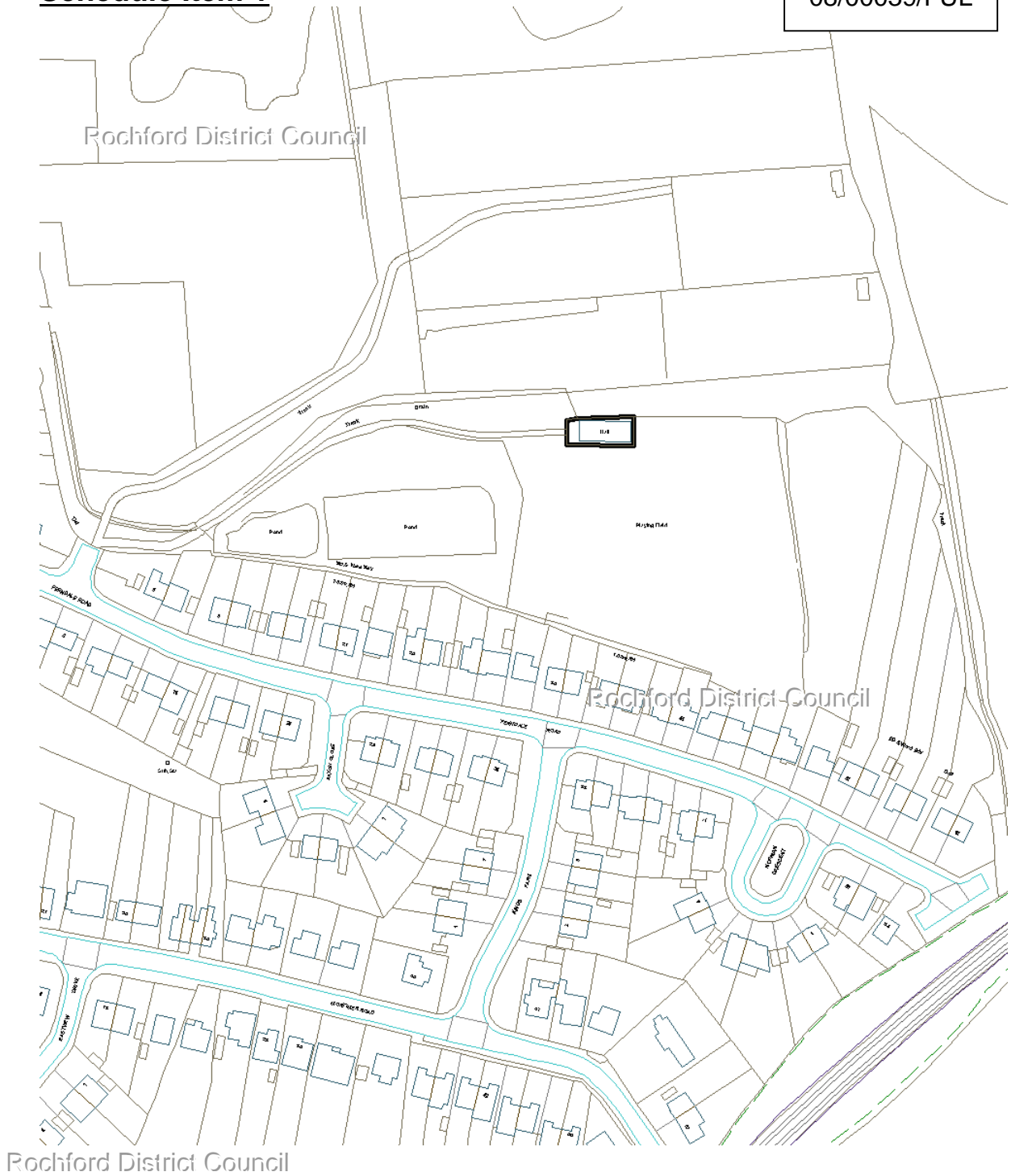
Shaun Scrutton
Head of Planning and Transportation

For further information please contact Mike Stranks on (01702) 318092.



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Schedule Item 2

TITLE : 08/00125/FUL
DEMOLISH EXISTING DWELLINGS AND CONSTRUCT TWO STOREY BUILDING TO PROVIDE 8 NO. AGE RESTRICTED FLATS WITH ACCESS, PARKING AND AMENITY AREAS, CYCLE STORE AND BIN STORE
1 & 3 PEARSONS AVENUE RAYLEIGH

APPLICANT : MR RONALD HILLIARD

ZONING : RESIDENTIAL

PARISH: RAYLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

WARD: SWEYNE PARK

THE SITE

- 2.1 This application is to a site on the western side of Pearsons Avenue 37m north of the junction made with London Road. On the site exist a pair of semi-detached bungalows. The gardens to each bungalow are laid to lawn with borders and domestic fruit and other small trees.
- 2.2 The plot has a width onto Pearsons Avenue of 26.1m and depth of 42.5m. The site has a regular boundary with the adjoining bungalow at No. 5. The site boundary generally reduces down in width across the rear gardens with the dwellings fronting London Road to the south to a width of 24.2m on the rear boundary of the site.
- 2.3 The site is at the transition point of houses characterising London Road and opposite the site and bungalow beyond fronting the western side of Pearsons Avenue.
- 2.4 The site is adjoined to the immediate south by semi-detached bungalows some of which have been subject to modest roof alterations. Opposite the site exist semi-detached and terraced housing. To the immediate south of the site exists a row of garages which neighbour a pair of bungalows fronting London Road. Houses and bungalows back onto the site for the remainder of the London Road and Vernon Avenue frontages.

PLANNING APPLICATION DETAILS

- 2.5 The proposal is to demolish the existing pair of bungalows and construct a two storey building to provide 6 No. two bedroomed and 2 No. one bedroomed age restricted flats. The building would have a width of 23.85m and depth of 16.3m and would be 8.75m at its highest part but would be to a ridge height of 8.3m for the most part. The building would be finished in external brickwork with render to the upper floor.



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- 2.6 The proposed building would be sited consistent with the adjoining bungalow at No. 5 Pearsons Avenue with the main walls set 6.1m from the back of the pavement. Vehicular access would be provided through the building at ground floor to a parking and turning area behind the building. Two car parking spaces would be provided to the front and flanking the access point. A further eight spaces would be provided to the rear of the building, together with bin and cycle stores.
- 2.7 The amenity areas would be provided about the building and car parking areas at the rear and beyond the parking area to the boundaries of the site with adjoining rear gardens.
- 2.8 The rear elevation features two close fitting "Juliet" balconies to the upper floor rear elevation.
- 2.9 The application is accompanied by a design and access statement.
- 2.10 The application is also accompanied by a bat and badger survey that found no evidence of the presence of bats or badgers at the site, but that bats from nearby roosts will forage on the site and nearby gardens. This behaviour would be expected to continue after redevelopment of the site and as such the proposal would not have a detrimental effect on the local bat population.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.11 There is no relevant planning history to this site.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

- 2.12 **Rayleigh Civic Society** - Car parking facilities appear to be given priority over amenity facilities. The rear area needs to be given a complete re-think. The proposal refers to restricted age flats. If this means accommodation for over 55's such residents would be likely to want to sit out in the amenity area. A landscaping plan should be implemented with more trees. Car parking should be moved to the southern side of the plot allowing the northern side of the plot to be developed as a discrete amenity area. Consider there is room to improve the layout of the site.
- 2.13 **Head of Environmental Services** - No adverse comments to make, subject to the Standard Informative SI16 (Control of Nuisances) being attached to any consent granted.
- 2.14 Nine letters have so far been received in response to the public consultation and which in the main make the following comments and objections:-
- Overdevelopment and out of context with bungalow character in the rest of the street



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- Parking/obstruction/congestion problems, particularly where clashing with school and at weekends, shoppers and absence of off street parking for a number of properties
- Invite visiting the street at evening and weekends to see parking situation
- Insufficient parking within the scheme, narrow road, traffic generation/access issues
- Loss of privacy/overlooking particularly from upper level living
- Loss of light arising from new floor level
- Poor design
- Concern at the increase in roof height compared to existing dwellings
- Overloading of amenities such as schools and doctors
- Lack of security
- Excessive noise from car park
- Demonstrable harm to amenities
- Effect upon market value of surrounding properties
- Safety risk of close proximity of London Road for older people
- Nothing to stop accommodation for future undesirable characters
- Flats will alter the ethos of the environment of long standing residents and family living
- Noise and dust pollution whilst development takes place
- Request boundary is made secure at all times

2.15 Members are advised that the consultations are outstanding until 17 March and the period for the site notice until 21 March which is prior to the Committee meeting. Any further representations will be included on the addendum.

MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Density

2.16 The site has an area of 0.109ha. The proposed 8 units would equate to a density of 73 units per hectare. Taking the site area by itself the proposal would exceed the density of between 30 – 50 dwellings per hectare advocated in Local Plan Policy HP3. However, Members will be aware that more recent advice from the Secretary of State at paragraph 47 to Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (November 2006) argues that a density of 30 dwellings per hectare should be a national minimum below which such developments would require justification. A typical sample area of 1 hectare around the application site has a density of 20 units, including the two existing dwellings. The proposal would increase the density of this sample area to 26 units. The character of the area in the vicinity of the site is relatively low density in comparison to central Government advice. The proposal, whilst at a high density for the site by itself, can clearly be absorbed in density terms into the prevailing development pattern, which would be increased to a density still below the national minimum. In these circumstances it is considered that the development is to an acceptable density.



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Compatibility of the Building With the Site Surroundings

- 2.17 The site is immediately adjoined by a flat roofed garage block and modest bungalows. Side spaces of a metre or more are provided about the building. The building would extend 5m beyond the neighbouring bungalow at No. 5 Pearsons Avenue but at a point set in from the boundary by 3m. The double width nature of the plot comfortably accommodates the building proposed and to a modest height and depth in mass. It is not considered that the proposal would overshadow the adjoining neighbouring bungalow at No. 5 unreasonably. The two storey form relates to houses opposite the site and to the side and rear fronting London Road and Vernon Avenue. It is considered that the building proposed respects the character of the surroundings in scale and form.
- 2.18 The first floor flank walls of the building proposed show a number of windows. High level windows facing onto No. 5 Pearsons Avenue are shown to the kitchen areas which each borrow light from the front and rear elevations. Two study windows overlooking the rear gardens to London Road dwellings would be less than 35m from the rear of these neighbouring dwellings. The applicant shows intention for these windows to be obscure glazed but this would need to be conditioned as part of any approval that might be given. Ground floor opposing window areas can be safeguarded by the provision of fencing as a condition to any approval that might be given.

Impact of Traffic Upon Amenity

- 2.19 The site is close to the main London Road. Pearsons Avenue is part of a grid layout of the area through which access to other streets and residential areas is obtained. The site has a quiet setting, but characterised by periods of busy travel and weekend parking/visiting. The proposal would generate the vehicular movements for four additional households to the site. Accommodation for the retired is acknowledged at paragraph 2.49 pp 34 in the preamble to Policy HP12 in the adopted Local Plan (2006) to generate less vehicle movements from the occupiers as with increasing age residents tend to stop driving. An increase in visits by care providers can be expected. This has to be balanced with social visits in comparison to visits associated with households in any particular street. It is considered that in this case the low number of units set against the numbers of households in the street and the backdrop of vehicular activity associated with the wider area Pearsons Avenue serves, would not give rise to significant adverse impact upon the amenity of adjoining residents such that permission should be refused for this reason.



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Storage and Communal Areas

- 2.20 The layout of the site would provide a bin store and cycle store within the area of the site behind the building proposed. This arrangement compares to general storage within adjoining garden areas to adjacent dwellings. It is not considered that the layout of the site would prove detrimental to the enjoyment of nearby dwellings, particularly as the parking areas would not closely adjoin neighbouring garden fences.

Accessibility of the Scheme to Shops/Public transport

- 2.21 The site is close to London Road which has a regular bus service and a parade of local shops. It is considered that the site is well located to existing services and public transport.
- 2.22 The proposal would provide a communal amenity space of an area of some 285 square metres exceeding the Council's requirements by some 85 square metres. The provision includes small areas adjacent to the building, but each is capable of providing space in which to sit out together with a greater rectangular shaped area behind the car park.

Parking Issues

- 2.23 The adopted standard for parking for developments providing age restricted accommodation is 1 car parking space per three bed spaces. The scheme would provide some 24 bed spaces equating to 8 car parking spaces.
- 2.24 The layout of the site would provide a car parking space for each of the eight units with, in addition, two extra spaces for visitors. The layout follows discussions with the County Highway Authority and is understood to incorporate recommendations made prior to the submission of the application. It is considered that the provision of one space per flat or ten spaces across the scheme as a whole is acceptable given the location of the site and age of future occupiers expected with reduced car dependency. Subject to no objection being raised to the proposal by the County Highway Authority it is considered that the parking provision, access arrangements and layout are acceptable.

CONCLUSION

- 2.25 The proposal would redevelop the site of two existing bungalows with eight age restricted flats. The development would achieve an acceptable bulk and mass compatible with the site surroundings and would not prove detrimental to the character and appearance of the street or overdevelop the site.



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RECOMMENDATION

2.26 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES** to **APPROVE** this application, by which time the consultation periods would have elapsed and subject to the following conditions:-

- 1 SC4B - Time Limits Full standard
- 2 SC14 - Materials to be used (Externally)
- 3 SC22 - PD Restricted - Windows (above first floor level only)
- 4 SC23 - PD Restricted - Obscure glazing
- 5 SC50A - Means of enclosure – Full (without PD Restriction)
- 6 SC59 - Landscape Design - Details (Full)
- 7 SC66 - Pedestrian Visibility splay (single)
- 8 SC76 - Parking and turning space
- 9 SC90 - Surface water drainage
- 10 SC91 - Foul Water drainage
- 11 Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 3, Schedule 2, Part 1, Class B and/or Class C, of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (including any Order revoking or re-enacting that Order, with or without modification) no changes or alterations to the first floor rear window/balustrade shall be inserted, or otherwise erected, without the prior approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. Furthermore, the balustrade arrangement to the first floor rear windows shall be implemented in strict accordance with the details on the submitted drawing, namely fixed tight to the rear face of the dormer and retained in this position such that no outside amenity area, balcony or other sitting out area is formed or accessible from the bedroom.
- 12 The development hereby permitted shall be occupied by persons or a widow or widower of such persons having an age of not less than 55 years.

REASON FOR DECISION

The proposal is considered not to cause significant demonstrable harm to any development plan interests, other material considerations, to the character and appearance of the area, to the street scene or residential amenity such as to justify refusing the application; nor to surrounding occupiers in neighbouring streets. Relevant Development Plan Policies and Proposals

Relevant Development Plan Policies and Proposals

Rochford District Replacement Local Plan (Adopted 16th June 2006)
HP3, HP6, HP12.



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Supplementary Planning Document 2 Housing Design (January 2007)

Supplementary Planning Document 5 Vehicle Parking Standards (January 2007) Standard C2/C3.



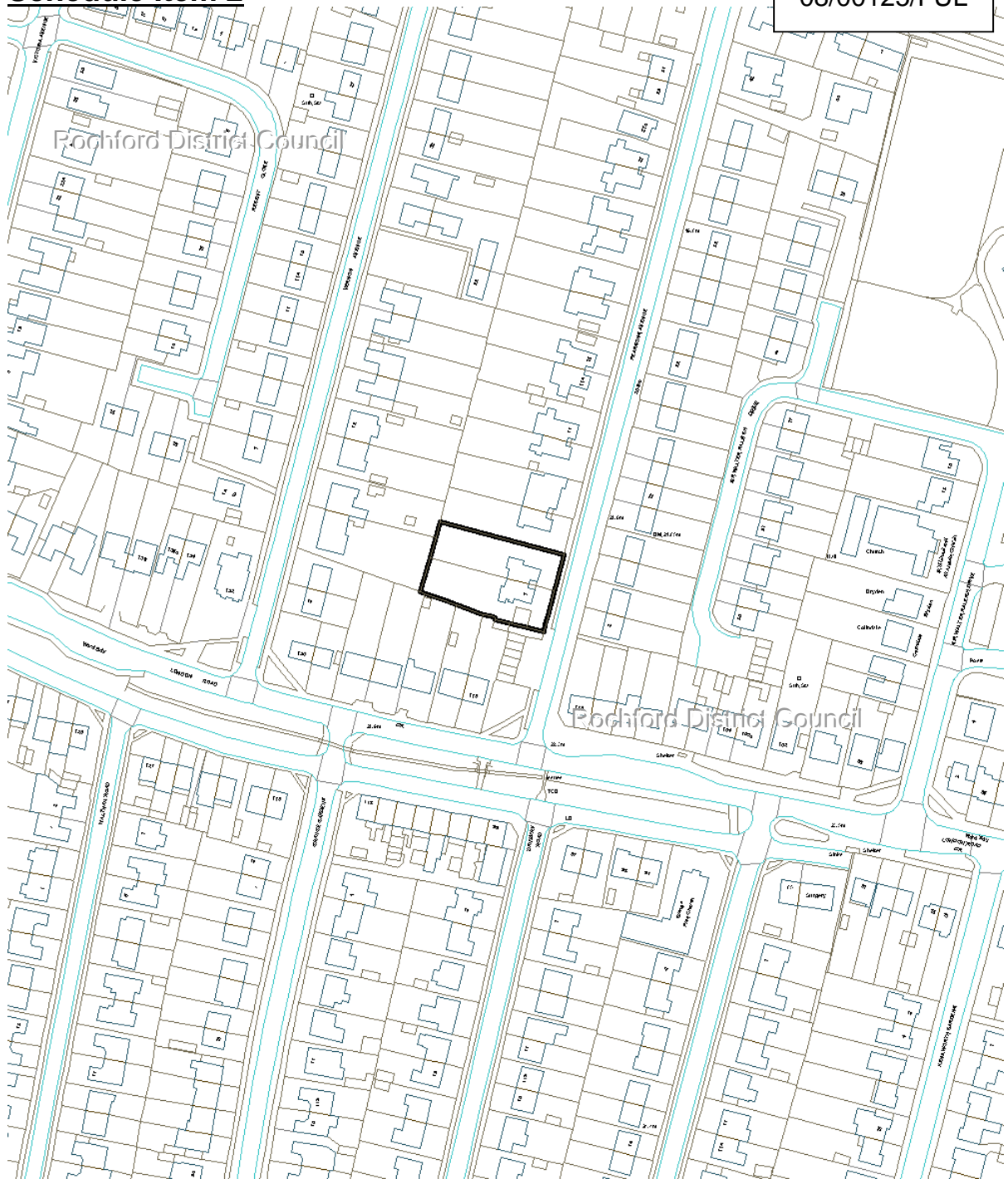
Shaun Scrutton
Head of Planning and Transportation

For further information please contact Mike Stranks on (01702) 318092.



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Schedule Item 3

TITLE : 08/00064/FUL
**SINGLE STOREY PITCHED ROOFED EXTENSION TO
PROVIDE DORMITORY TO 'KATH BATTS' BUILDING WITH
ACCESS RAMP
BELCHAMPS CAMP HOLYOAK LANE HAWKWELL**

APPLICANT : MR NIGEL RUSE

ZONING : METROPOLITAN GREEN BELT

PARISH: HAWKWELL PARISH COUNCIL

WARD: HAWKWELL WEST

PLANNING APPLICATION DETAILS

- 3.1 This application is for an extension to the 'Kath Batts' building at Belchamps Scout Camp and Activity Centre, Hawkwell. The 9 hectare site includes a wildlife site and is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt adjacent to the urban settlement of Hawkwell. The camp enables Scouts and other registered youth groups to enjoy outdoor recreational and social activities in a rural setting.
- 3.2 The extension proposal has been located on the southern side of the existing building which is located near the main car park. To the north and west, the land rises gently, and it falls to the south and east to low points defined by drainage ditches. Trees line these ditches and the building itself sits within a small group of trees that provide screening.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.3 The site has had a number of previous applications over the past twenty years.

07/00985/FUL Erection of 13metre high linear rope apparatus - Approved
02/01/2008

01/00346/FUL Layout track for non-motorised pedal go karts with banking and bridge
(2.5m High Approx) – Approved 10/7/2001

99/00046/FUL Construct parking areas – Approved 29/4/1999

98/00733/FUL Alterations to front elevation comprising removal of two windows,
provision of three new doors and extension to existing canopy – Approved 27/01/1999

F/0173/97/ROC Erection of mobile phone mast - Refused 09/6/1997

F/0232/94/ROC Demolish existing and erect new toilet block – Approved 22/6/1994

ROC/643/87 Erection of pack holiday centre – Approved 25/9/1987



Schedule Item 3

3.4 CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

3.5 Hawkwell Parish Council - Objection as overly large development in Green Belt.

3.6 ECC Highways - De minimus.

Neighbours - One response in favour of proposal.

MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

3.7 The key considerations in this application are:-

1. The Metropolitan Green Belt
2. Leisure and Wildlife Policies

3.8 BACKGROUND

The building to which this application relates, known as the Kath Batts building and lying in the centre of the site, was granted permission by ROC/643/87. The building is modest in scale being single-storey with a pyramidal roof and central chimney. It caters for parties of up to 24 people (including leaders and supervisors). Sleeping accommodation at present consists of two twin bunk leaders' rooms and a large communal dormitory that sleeps 20. This dormitory also functions as a refectory and communal/living space.

3.9 The applicant explains that:-

- In 1992 girls were allowed into the Scouts and the original design of the building falls short of the requirements that a contemporary, inclusive youth facility would be required to fulfil.
- These limitations are principally due to the single multi-purpose space that provides the sleeping accommodation that now limits youth parties to single sex.
- Current Child Protection legislation (The Child Protection Act 1989 and subsequently The Protection of Children Act 1999) and the Scout Association's own Child Protection Policy dictates a further stratification of age separation. This requires separate accommodation for juniors and seniors as well as separate accommodation for the sexes.
- The proposal is to replace the existing sleeping accommodation within a dedicated extension providing a six dormitory facility.
- The proposal is not intended to increase the existing capacity of the facility but to allow it to become wholly inclusive such that it may be used by the widest possible client base within the youth community.



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3.10 THE PROPOSAL

The extension would feature a timber frame construction. It would be constructed on augured piles that provide support with minimal ground disturbance. Each of the dormitory units would be based on a single module (6.8m x 3.5m) repeated six times. Each unit comprises a dorm room for four people, with a W.C. and separate shower facility. These would be linked together (are fully wheelchair accessible) and to the main building by a partially glazed link. The roof would be created with 3 gables allowing 50% of the roof to have a southern aspect. It is intended that these roof pitches would feature solar water heating and photovoltaic panels to generate electricity.

3.11 METROPOLITAN GREEN BELT

PPG2 states that Green Belts have a positive role to play by providing access to the open countryside for the urban population and by providing opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation near urban areas. Policy R1 of the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan (Adopted 16th June 2006) takes into account the Government guidance of PPG2. Policy R1 permits development within the Metropolitan Green Belt for essential small-scale facilities for outdoor sport and recreation that preserve the openness and integrity of the Green Belt. The Belchamps Scout and Activity Centre is an established all year round facility aimed at enabling Scouts and other registered youth groups to enjoy outdoor recreational and social activities in a semi-rural environment. The use of the Belchamps Centre is considered to be of the type supported by Policy R1. Any development permitted by this policy should be of a scale, design and siting such that the character of the countryside is not harmed. It is considered that the proposal has been designed to integrate positively into the environment using a minimal impact design with sustainable building techniques and materials. The plot is also enclosed by trees and vegetation that would reduce any visual intrusion to the Green Belt. The proposal does not conflict with preserving the openness of the Green Belt.

3.12 It is not felt that there is a case for other harm arising as a result of the development. The Belchamps site is next to residential areas to the north and east, however the nearest residential property is sited 70 metres away from the proposal and thus the effect on residential property would be negligible. The proposal is not intended to increase the capacity of the existing building.

3.13 The proposal is therefore regarded as appropriate development. Notwithstanding this if, for instance, it was considered as being larger than "essential small scale facilities" then the circumstances presented by the application outlined above would present very special circumstances in favour of the proposal which relates back to the active outdoor activities on the wider Belchamps Scout Centre.



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3.14 LEISURE AND WILDLIFE

The proposed development is subject to Policies LT1, LT7 and NR7 of the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan. Policy LT1 (Rural Issues) permits leisure proposals in rural areas provided that the rural landscape, biodiversity and the character of the area will not be adversely affected by reason of the size, scale and design of the proposal, or by the intensity/activity associated with the use. Policy LT7 safeguards public open space and prevents development that would be detrimental to nature conservation or the character of the area. A segment of land next to the application site, referred to in the Local Plan as Belchamps Camp (Hockley Woods), is designated as a Wildlife Site and Policy NR7 applies. This policy states that a proposal that adversely affects a site will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the justification for the proposal clearly outweighs the need to safeguard the nature conservation value of the site.

- 3.15 The proposed development is an extension providing a residential leisure facility for recognised youth groups. The development is of a small-scale and screened by surrounding trees and denser woodland nearby. It is thought to be an acceptable development under Policies LT1 and LT7. It is thought that the nature conservation value of the Wildlife Sites would not be impacted upon by the development which is positioned some 30m plus from the wildlife site.

CONCLUSION

- 3.16 The proposal is not considered to be harmful to the Green Belt or conflict with the leisure and wildlife policies and would provide an inclusive facility for use by registered youth groups compliant with contemporary legislation.

RECOMMENDATION

- 3.17 It is proposed that this Committee **RESOLVES** to **APPROVE** the application, subject to the following conditions:-

- 1 SC4B - Time Limits Full – Standard
- 2 SC14 - Materials to be Used (Externally)
- 3 The use of the building hereby permitted shall be restricted solely to purposes ancillary to the main scouting and camping activities of the Belchamps Camp Site.

REASON FOR DECISION

The proposal is considered not to cause significant demonstrable harm to any development plan interests nor harm to any other material planning consideration.



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Relevant Development Plan Policies and Proposals

LT1, LT7, NR7, R1 of the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan (Adopted 16 June 2006).



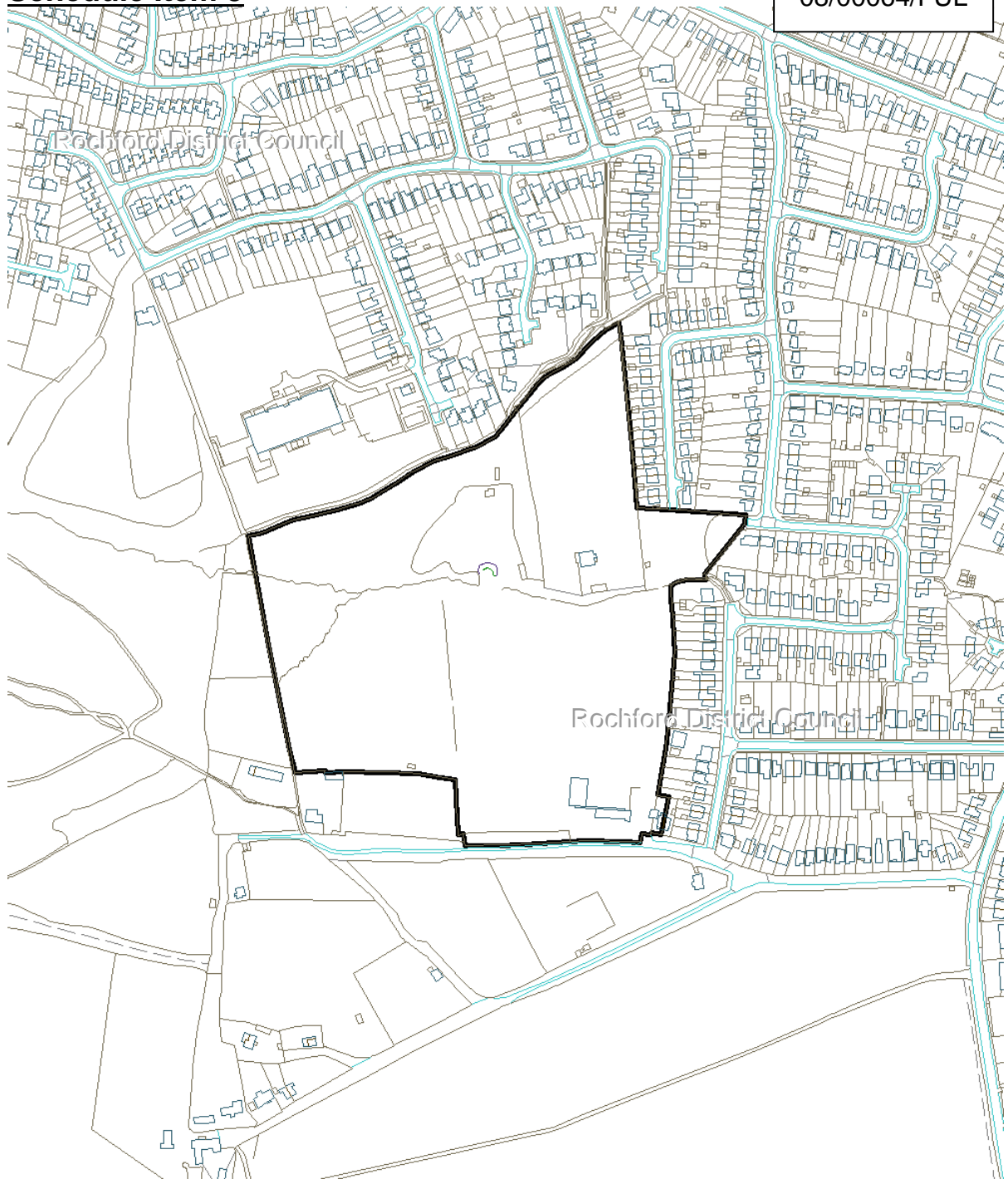
Shaun Scrutton
Head of Planning and Transportation

For further information please contact Robert Davis on (01702) 318095.



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Rochford District Council

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CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PLANNING MATTERS

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Members and Officers must:-

- **at all times act within the law and in accordance with the code of conduct.**
- **support and make decisions in accordance with the Council's planning policies/Central Government guidance and material planning considerations.**
- **declare any personal or prejudicial interest.**
- **not become involved with a planning matter, where they have a prejudicial interest.**
- **not disclose to a third party, or use to personal advantage, any confidential information.**
- **not accept gifts and hospitality received from applicants, agents or objectors outside of the strict rules laid down in the respective Member and Officer Codes of Conduct.**

In Committee, Members must:-

- **base their decisions on material planning considerations.**
- **not speak or vote, if they have a prejudicial interest in a planning matter and withdraw from the meeting.**
- **through the Chairman give details of their planning reasons for departing from the officer recommendation on an application which will be recorded in the Minutes.**
- **give officers the opportunity to report verbally on any application.**

Members must:-

- **not depart from their overriding duty to the interests of the District's community as a whole.**
- **not become associated, in the public's mind, with those who have a vested interest in planning matters.**
- **not agree to be lobbied, unless they give the same opportunity to all other parties.**
- **not depart from the Council's guidelines on procedures at site visits.**
- **not put pressure on officers to achieve a particular recommendation.**
- **be circumspect in expressing support, or opposing a planning proposal, until they have all the relevant planning information.**

Officers must:-

- **give objective, professional and non-political advice, on all planning matters.**
- **put in writing to the Committee any changes to printed recommendations appearing in the agenda.**

