

# Cllrs Lorna Dupré and Mark Inskip

## MONTHLY REPORT JUNE 2021

### Planning matters

#### Linden Homes (Vistry) Sutton

Mark addressed the Planning Committee on Wednesday 2 June (held in a sports hall at The Hive for COVID reasons, due to the Government's refusal to expedite a return to virtual meetings) about the Phase 2 application by Linden Homes (Vistry) at the top of Mepal Road Sutton.

The application is an outline planning application for a further 173 homes along with provision of land for community facilities (sports pitches and burial ground) and open space. It is also proposed that the developer will make financial contributions to enable the expansion of the village primary school as well as secondary school contributions to address the extra demands at Witchford Village College. The application was originally submitted in December 2019 and has therefore taken around eighteen months to come to Committee.

The application does not include details of the landscaping, scale, layout of roads and buildings nor their appearance. All of these will be covered in one or more further applications, known as reserved matters. The Planning Committee agreed to approve the application subject to the signing of a Section 106 agreement, an extensive list of conditions, and further negotiations to agree the off-site highway mitigation measures. It is likely these will take a few months to resolve. Linden Homes (Vistry) will then have two years to submit a further application to address the reserved matters.

The highways mitigation measures include adjustments to the Elean Business Park roundabout and to the approach from Haddenham to the junction at Witcham Toll. The developer will also be asked to make a contribution towards potential further changes to the A10 BP and Lancaster Way roundabouts.

The application has had to comply with the policies in Sutton Neighbourhood Plan, and in particular Policy NP4. At one time proposals had been suggested to cram as many as 427 homes on the site to the north of the village which was once part of the old RAF Mepal airfield. Policy NP4 however limits the size of the development to approximately 250 homes and the Phase 2 application is for 173 homes, taking the full development to exactly 250 homes including the 77 homes already approved in Phase 1.

Policy NP4 also requires the developer to provide additional community facilities to accompany the housing development. There are specific criteria to bring forward a new village green, all-weather pitch and sports pitches located adjacent to the existing facilities next to the Pavilion and Brooklands Centre,

along with a new on-site burial ground. The planning application proposes to add additional sports pitches next to the existing pitches which are heavily used at the weekend. Rather than provide a new all-weather pitch, it is proposed that the developer provides significant funds to upgrade the existing MUGA (Multi-Use Games Area).

A burial ground is proposed, mostly likely in the north-west corner of the site. This will provide a new burial ground for the parish council to use once the existing facility next to the Glebe runs out of space.

30 per cent of the 173 new homes must meet the affordable homes criteria, meaning an additional 52 affordable homes adding to those in the first phase of the development. Policy NP4 also states the whole development should be phased in step with the expansion of local infrastructure, particularly schools and health facilities with particular attention to the expansion of the capacity of the village primary school. It is proposed that the developer will make a financial contribution for primary education of £2,273,775, as part of a total amount for education contributions of £3,179,322. Some developer funds (CIL) have also previously been earmarked to help with expanding Priors Field surgery.

The parish council and district councillors have been broadly supportive of the plans especially because Linden Homes have sought to meet the requirements set out in the Neighbourhood Plan. Mark attended the Planning Committee meeting to confirm his broad support and to raise some specific concerns.

The biggest concern is the possibility of flooding caused by surface water run-off from the site. Mark told the meeting that flooding had affecting some residents who live in homes close to the Phase 1 site and that there were particular concerns with the height of the land being raised. A number of conditions related to surface water drainage are included in the planning approval.

Mark raised the need for negotiations regarding the availability of the new community facilities to happen before Reserved Matters are submitted, so that villagers have earlier access to the new facilities. Mark also raised the need for a more significant biodiversity gain from the development to be agreed. Currently the improvement is very small and it should be possible to get further gains.

Finally Mark flagged a couple of concerns which are expected to be considered in more detail when a Reserved Matters application is made. The first is to take adequate steps to address traffic noise from the A142 such that homes in the north east corner of the site are still able to open windows to get adequate ventilation, a requirement that has become more important with COVID-19. The second was that the homes proposed in the south-west corner of the site are moved further away from properties in Stirling Way and St. Andrews Close. The developer confirmed these concerns would be considered.

If everything goes to plan, in a few months' time the outline planning application will officially be approved. After that a Reserved Matters application can be expected to be submitted.

## 8 The Brook Sutton

Lorna addressed the same meeting of the Planning Committee in respect of another application, for an extension at 8 The Brook, which officers were recommending for refusal. The Committee decided not to follow the officer recommendations, and approved the application by nine votes to one.

## Princess of Wales Hospital Ely

The same meeting of the Planning Committee granted outline permission for new hospital buildings at the Princess of Wales Hospital, with demolition of outpatient blocks, the social club building and the porters' lodge, and redevelopment including inpatient and outpatient facilities, a new multi storey car park, access, and associated infrastructure.

## 65 High Street Sutton

An officer decision on the application for change of use to hot food takeaway is expected imminently.

## Garden Close Sutton

We understand that Abbey Homes has now lodged an appeal against refusal of its reserved matters application for the 53 dwellings at Garden Close.

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## Finance & Assets Committee

The Council's Finance & Assets Committee met on Monday 7 June to consider a number of matters, some of them in confidential session. Among the public items were the following.

- Reviewing the Finance & Assets Hearings Sub-Committee, which hears complaints against councillors under the Code of Conduct. This will now be an Ethical Governance Sub-Committee, enabling it to review the Code of Conduct and associated guidance as well as consider individual cases. There is also a need to recruit a replacement non-voting Co-opted Town/Parish Council Member to fill the current vacancy.
  - A one-off Soham High Street Renewal Capital Grant Fund scheme, using £25,000 from the £1M Market Towns Funding allocated to Soham by the Combined Authority, for small projects in the centre of Soham up to £2,500 in value.
  - Noting the continuation of Palace Green Homes' tenancy of offices at Fordham until 18 December 2024, with the Company seeking to reduce overheads by sub-letting part of the space.
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## Operational Services Committee

The Operational Services Committee meets on Monday 14 June to consider various items of business including the following.

- To approve the Council's second Environment Plan and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, endorse the actions of Council management, and welcome the first interim report of the Combined Authority's Climate Change Commission.
- To note the outcome of a review of the housing lettings policy of the sub-regional group of councils including East Cambridgeshire, and approve changes to the policy.
- To agree to become a member of CAPASP, the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Against Scams Partnership.

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## Unfinished business

- The planning application to turn the Mepal Outdoor Centre into a crematorium, promised by Christmas 2020, has still not been published.
- The meeting of the Bus Walking & Cycling Working Group to sort and prioritise residents' comments from the public consultation which finished over a year ago, was postponed and no fresh date has been set.
- The proposal by the Council leadership to introduce some sort of on-street parking enforcement by offering Council staff as police volunteers working under the direction of the Chief Constable has not yet reached any conclusion. All but a handful of councils in England still have police enforcing on-street parking, with the vast majority having introduced civil parking enforcement years ago.

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## Meet your councillors

We are continuing to offer online Meet Your Councillors events to replace our face to face ones in the Community Room at Sutton School. The next ones will take place on Tuesday 13 July and Tuesday 10 August from 6:30 to 7:30PM. Email [mark@markinskip.org.uk](mailto:mark@markinskip.org.uk) to book a slot.

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**Cllr Lorna Dupré**

**Cllr Mark Inskip**

District Councillors for the Sutton ward