

Minutes of a site meeting held on **Friday, 8 February 2019 at 2.00pm**
at Land between Hollow Lane and Uplands Road South, Carlton Colville, Lowestoft.

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Members Present:

Councillors P Ashdown (Chairman), J Ceresa and P Light

Apologies:

Councillor G Elliott

Officers Present:

P Perkin (Development Management Team Leader) and S Carter (Democratic Services Officer).

Others in Attendance:

Mr I Garrett, Agent/Architect

Mr S Dhanoa, Applicant

Mrs J Tyler, Carlton Colville Town Council

Residents from Uplands Road South, Fordham Way and Rounces Lane

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the site meeting and reminded those present that the purpose of the meeting was a 'fact finding' exercise only and to provide Members with an opportunity to view the site and its surroundings.

The Chairman explained to the members of the public that the applicant could explain the site layout and entrance/exits and the Planning Officer would give an introduction and overview of the application. No decision would be made before the application was considered at the next meeting of the Planning Committee on 12 February 2019. That meeting was taking place at 6.00pm at the Council's offices at Riverside in Lowestoft and was open to the public so anyone present was welcome to attend and sit in the public gallery. Public speaking was three minutes each, that was for the Town Council, Ward Member, Objector(s), Supporter(s) and Applicant/Agent as laid down in the Council's procedure rules.

The Planning Officer advised that the application was seeking full planning permission for a childcare day nursery. The proposal was for a single storey building approximately 43m x 11m, with an eaves height of 2m and overall height to the ridge of 6m. The accommodation would comprise a room for up to 15 babies, three further rooms split between age groups from 1 year olds to 5 year olds, reception, office, kitchen, laundry and plant room. The rooms had been sized to accommodate 90 children if fully occupied; however, the Agent had confirmed that the actual proposed on-site care would be for 70 children.

A high pressure water main running east-west through the centre of the site had dictated the location of the building in the northern part of the site.

It was anticipated that the proposal would generate five full-time posts and 22 part-time posts, with 7.00am to 6.00pm being the hours of operation. In addition to the 1.8m high fencing, 26 car parking spaces were proposed and bike racks for six cycles.

The proposed access had been the subject of amended plans and relocated slightly nearer to Hollow Lane. County Highways had no objection. Consideration had been given to the impact on residential amenity and it was considered that there would be no significant impact. The Planning Officer explained that the Council had a duty to determine all planning applications that were submitted, in the form that they were submitted.

Members observed the views from the corner of Hollow Lane and Uplands Road South and viewed the interior of the site and the locations of the proposed building, car parking and planting.

The Chairman allowed the residents to comment and they raised questions relating to:

- Disruption to the lives of the residents.
- The number of children using the nursery.
- Parents' arrival times.
- Drop off points.
- Insufficient parking on-site.
- People blocking residential driveways.
- The use of Hollow Lane.
- Relocating the proposed entrance.
- Sewerage and drainage from the site.
- Classification as urban or semi-rural site.

Residents expressed the view that if the application was approved, their lifestyle would be changed forever and cars would block their driveways. There were already issues with others parking and blocking residents' driveways and their views. There was inadequate parking for the staff and the road was too narrow for the amount of traffic that would be using the nursery. The cars' exhaust fumes from all that additional traffic would affect the air quality. It was suggested that residents could have parking permits, there could be a roundabout at the junction of Hollow Lane and Uplands Road South, and the roads in the vicinity could be safeguarded with double yellow lines. They did not object to the building, the issue was traffic.

The Applicant confirmed that the nursery was to accommodate 70 children, aged 0-5 years and parents would arrive at a time suited to them. The government allowed up to 30 hours free childcare and each individual would choose their own appropriate times for using the nursery. Having experience with other nursery sites, the parking was considered to be more than adequate. County Highways had no objection to the proposed entrance which had already been relocated from the original plan.

The Agent explained that Hollow Lane could not be used as it was no longer classed as a highway and that the entrance had to be located no less than 10m from the corner junction of Uplands Road South with Hollow Lane. He confirmed that Essex and Suffolk Water had been on site to excavate and they had no objections.

The Planning Officer confirmed that the site was within the defined settlement of Carlton Colville, vacant land within an urban area.

Mrs Tyler from Carlton Colville Town Council explained that the Town Council was a consultee on planning applications and could only make suggestions. The local planning authority considered the comments received from the Town Council and residents; the District Council paid qualified officers to make a recommendation to the Planning Committee.

The Chairman advised that County Highways had no objection but he was not aware if a highways officer had visited the site.

From within the site, the Agent explained the location of the different parts of the development including the distance of 7m from the current pipework, the wooded area in front of the building and the approximate location of the proposed entrance. Their transport policy would encourage walking and cycling thereby reducing car usage. The Agent also advised that his client had other nursery units in London with limited parking and no problems had arisen with their usage.

The Applicant explained that by proposing a drive-in and drop off, they did not feel there would be an issue with parking. Although comment was made that parking was an issue with all schools, the Applicant highlighted a clear distinction between schools and the proposed nursery in that a school with 400 student might provide 40 spaces, whereas on this site they were proposing more than 20 spaces for 70 children. There was no intention for the parents' vehicles to be utilising a dead end road.

Residents made further comments about the difficulty in accessing and exiting their driveways. County Councillor Ceresa explained that if a person was blocked in on their driveway they were entitled to call the police on 101. The Agent reiterated that County Highways had no objection. If Highways felt there were obstructions in the street, a Traffic Regulation Order might be applied. However, it should be noted that there had been no such issues with two other nurseries in Beccles and Lowestoft. In Love Road nursery, Lowestoft, there were four parking spaces for a premises that took 45 children and no traffic issues had been reported. For this new proposal, there should be no parking on the road, particularly with staggered arrivals and drive-in drive-out facilities.

In response to a resident seeking clarification on the health and safety aspect with regard to lorries and building materials being delivered, the Chairman explained that conditions could be applied to any approval, if granted. It was a Committee decision; the Members would listen to the officer's presentation, ask questions, listen to the public speakers, and debate the application prior to making its decision. The Chairman gave a brief explanation of pre-determination, speaking and voting under the rules that would apply to the Committee meeting. In view of his previous involvement, Councillor Light, as Ward Member, would be able to speak on the application but not take part in the voting.

There being no further questions or comments, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

The site visit concluded at 2.52pm.