

Case Officer: Wayne Campbell

Applicant: Mr & Mrs S Werren

Proposal: Outline application with all matters reserved for extension to cottage to form pub & cafe / restaurant and 40 no dwellings

Ward: Deddington

Councillors: Cllr Brown, Cllr Reeves and Cllr Williams

Reason for Referral: Request for Committee Site Visit

Expiry Date: 26 September 2022

Committee Date: 11 August 2022

REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE SITE VISIT

A request has been received from Cllr Reeves that a Committee site visit be held.

Cllr Reeves comments:

"..I hope that a site visit can be facilitated to enable members of the Planning Committee to consider the position on the ground. For my part, notwithstanding having a good knowledge of the village already, I found such a visit immensely helpful".

CONSIDERATIONS

The Council's Planning Committee Procedure Rules (Section 11.3), states that:

"The purpose of a site visit is solely to ascertain the facts relating to the physical nature of the site and its surroundings. The decision to carry out a site visit should normally be based on one or more of the following criteria:

- i. Illustrative material is insufficient to convey the issues*
- ii. A judgement is required on visual impact*
- iii. The setting and surroundings are particularly relevant to the determination or conditions being considered*
- iv. It is necessary to experience similar/comparable conditions at another location/site*
- v. The proposal is of particular significance although applications which only raise issues of principle or fundamental planning policies will not normally be appropriate for a formal site visit*
- vi. It is appropriate to make an informed assessment of the proposals which are subject to conflicting claims by applicants and objectors which cannot be adequately expressed in writing; or the proposal is particularly contentious."*

The request submitted by Cllr Reeves would fall within the scope of criteria i. ii. and iii. as listed above.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

Section 11.3.6 of the Council's Planning Committee Procedure Rules relates to unaccompanied site visits. It highlights that members of the Planning Committee have a long-established practice of undertaking their own visits to sites before Committee meetings.

The Procedure Rules highlights that the disadvantage of these unaccompanied, informal visits is that:

- They can be used by applicants, agents and objectors to undertake unwarranted lobbying
- Where a Member visits private property it can be interpreted as showing favour to the person visited. Therefore Members are advised against entering private land, even if invited to do so, but to view the site only from public vantage points.

This application site is open land located on the southern side of North Street as it leaves the village of Fritwell. There are low hedges that separate the site from the roadway that allow for views to be gained over them. Members of the Committee could therefore reasonably undertake their own informal visits and gain a good understanding of the site and its surroundings without the need to access private land.

In relation to informing an assessment of the impact of the proposal in terms of its potential visual impact, or its potential impact on the setting of the surrounding area, it is the view of officers that entry to the site would not provide any additional benefit given the level of existing public viewpoints.

The recommendation of officers it is that a formal committee site visit is not necessary as it would have limited value in this instance.