

**Land to the West of
Garners House
Main Street
Great Bourton**

13/01318/OUT

Ward: Cropredy

District Councillor: Cllr. Ken Atack

Case Officer: Graham Wyatt

Recommendation: Refuse

Applicant: One Property Group and Mr & Mrs G Townsend

Application Description: OUTLINE - Development of 35 dwellings and a community hall, public open space and associated infrastructure, car-parking and landscaping

Committee Referral: Major application

Committee Date: 31st October 2013

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 The application site forms a roughly square parcel of land measuring approximately 140m x 140m covering 1.89ha. The land is currently laid to grass with horses being grazed on the land. The site lies to the west of Great Bourton, adjacent to the A423. The site is bounded by mature landscaping to the north, south and west. To the east is a wooden fence which separates the site from the adjoining buildings at Garners House. A public footpath (FP 138/5/10) lies to the north of the site. The site also lies within an Area of High Landscape Value. There are no other relevant site constraints.
- 1.2 The application is in outline with all matters reserved for future determination. The proposal seeks permission for 35 dwellings, 10 of which are to be affordable units. The mix of units would provide the following dwellings:

Private Dwellings	Affordable Dwellings
13 x 3 bed	7 x 2 bed
6 x 4 bed	3 x 3 bed
6 x 5 bed	

- 1.3 A new village hall is also proposed as part of the development. Access would be provided centrally off Main Street. A single road would dissect the site with housing provided either side. The proposed village hall would be located in the eastern corner of the site with its own access towards Garners House. An open space would be provided west of the village hall and dedicated parking to the east. An indicative layout has been provided along with indicative elevations for the housing and village hall

2. Application Publicity

- 1.3 The application has been advertised by way of a press notice, site notice and neighbour letters. The final date for comment on this application was 26th Sep2013. Five letters of objection have been received as a result of the consultation process commenting on the following:
- The existing village hall is large enough;
 - Unsustainable location;
 - Lack of services such as school, doctors, pubs etc.
 - Traffic impact and highway safety;
 - Speculative development;

- Development is outside the village boundary;
- Impact on the character and appearance of the area

3. Consultations

3.1 Bourton Parish Council – the parish council wish to raise no objections and makes the following comments:

1. Consultation

In October 2012 One Property Group made available their preliminary plans, including 35 houses, a new community hall and public open space, to the Bourtons Parish Council and the wider public, gauging public reaction by replies returned directly to them. The Council also conducted their own survey of opinions with a questionnaire delivered to every household. Feedback as a result of both these routes has led to certain modifications of the mix of housing proposed, for instance to include single storey bungalows to accommodate older or less able-bodied residents.

Some parish councillors have also researched other recently built or modified village halls in the vicinity to clarify their thoughts on the layout and facilities that could optimally be provided for the two villages of Great and Little Bourton, and this has led to redesign of the plans for the community hall.

Since the submission of the outline planning application on which this consultation is a part the Parish Council exhibited the available plans and supporting documents and drew attention to their availability on the CDC website. The exhibition was quite well attended and was the focus of lively discussion. Written comments were collected during and after the event. These represent a wide variety of opinions and some concerns. Of the comments received, those that favour the scheme out-number those that oppose it

2. Concerns

Position of proposed development The site on a green field at the edge of the present extent of the settlement is worrying some people, in being contrary to the Local Plan currently being processed, but not yet adopted. There are worries that if this proposal were permitted it would set a precedent for future developments, but that seems to be outside the scope of this consultation. The new houses would be visible on approach to the Bourtons from the north, and would make a less open, rural entrance to Great Bourton from the west, the Southam road, although the existing tall hedge is due to be retained, and enhanced with extra, indigenous, tree planting. More consideration could be given to the herbaceous planting to increase biodiversity.

Traffic The extra traffic expected to be generated by the proposed development has caused concerns about congestion at the junction with the A423 Southam Road, both at exit and entrance to the village, with most traffic movements expected to be orientated to and from this junction. It is feared by some that the entrance to the new estate would be an accident-prone zone. To a lesser degree there are worries about increased car journeys through the village to Cropredy, especially for the primary school.

Sustainability, lack of facilities People have expressed concern that the facilities that serve the present community would be insufficient for the extra number of residents expected. This applies to school places, the Cropredy doctors' surgery, the sewerage system where there have been significant problems in the past, and lack of local shop and very limited public transport service. The developers would be required to make financial contribution to augmenting this provision. The lack of shops, work and other

facilities within the parish, and very limited bus service of only 2 regular buses in each direction per day, not at times to suit commuting journeys, mean that most journeys have to be by private transport. There is a Stagecoach 66 bus service that runs along the A423 and stops in the new bus lay-by in Little Bourton. It has been deemed too dangerous for this service to stop on the main road at Great Bourton, without a lay-by for the bus to draw off the road. If the developers were to provide such a lay-by south-bound, and a bus stop platform on the other side, where the topography would make construction of an extra lane extremely difficult and expensive, access would be gained to another five buses a day in each direction, very close to the proposed houses.

Light-pollution Currently this area of Great Bourton is outside the street lighting scheme therefore there is some anxiety that extra roads, lit to the level expected in modern estates, rather than the sparse lighting accepted in village streets, would cause loss of dark skies. It is hoped that a careful lighting scheme would be included in any application for full planning approval.

New Community Hall Those who object are querying the need for a new village hall, and fear the cost of upkeep on a larger public building, but these are parish management matters rather than concerns for the planning committee. The future use of the present village hall would also fall outside present planning consideration.

3. Factors in favour of development, for the benefit of the community

- The present proposal appears fairly spaciouly and pleasantly laid out, with an attempt to reflect local vernacular style of building and materials.
- There is a good mix of housing types and sizes, including some bungalows to meet a desire expressed by some older current residents for this provision, possibly making some present village houses available for younger families.
- There is a perceived need for houses that are affordable by the next generation of residents. The current proposal has a stated inclusion of 30% of 'affordable' homes, rented or shared ownership. This could help local youngsters looking for homes near the support network of their families.
- 35 new houses would bring in new residents some of whom, at least, would support parish activities, the village pubs in both Great and Little Bourton, and All Saints Church in Great Bourton, all of which are in need of new support.
- The new Community Hall being proffered is a great opportunity for the parish to acquire a considerably more versatile facility than the present hall, which is a converted chapel in the centre of the village. This is performing an extremely useful function at present, but will always be limited at 6metres by 7metres in the main hall, and having no parking spaces other than on street parking, conflicting with residents in the vicinity.
- The proposed hall would be 15.5 x 8.5 metres in the main hall, plus a smaller meeting room and other facilities, kitchen, bar and storage-space, and adjacent parking for about twenty vehicles. Being a two- village parish, separated by about a mile, parking would be of particular benefit to residents of Little Bourton who would like to drive to events there.
- Both the size and the parking would make the hall more attractive to lettings in order to raise funds to make it more cost effective and commercially viable. Being purpose-built to modern building and energy-efficiency standards should help to off-set the larger size hall.
- There are many activities and social functions that could be organised in the bigger, modern hall that are not feasible in the present hall, or church.
- Also provided in this scheme are a level area of open green space, community recreation land, adjacent to the hall, and a small equipped play area. The parish is very short of land flat enough to kick a ball about, or to hold a village fete, without being dependent on the temporary generosity of a farmer.

- Although the parish does have a playground in each village, which have both been renovated and re-equipped in the last ten years, the one in Great Bourton is on land that is only leased on a 21 year tenure, with no guarantee of renewal. That site was the only land obtainable after protracted negotiations forty years ago, and nothing suggests that a replacement site would be any easier to find now. At that time residents could might be very thankful appreciative of further communal space.

To quote one letter sent in support of the scheme, 'if properly managed, it could provide a much-needed breath of fresh air to our community in the long run. A new Community Hall with parking space, some low-cost housing and a decent play area are notable benefits.'

4. Balance of Factors

In considering and weighing up the relative adverse and beneficial effects predictable for the proposed development the majority of Bourtons residents who have made their opinion known, appear to consider that the merits outweigh the disadvantages. Therefore, the Parish Council wish to raise no objections at this stage but wish the foregoing comments to be taken into consideration. It also requests that should the Planning Committee decide to grant approval that certain conditions be imposed to mitigate adverse effects.

5. Requests of Conditions to mitigate adverse factors if permission is granted.

- Serious consideration should be given to entirely remodelling the existing traffic calming measures to permit free flow of traffic in both directions, while drawing attention to the requirement for suitable speed, aesthetically designed to be in keeping with a rural area of high landscape value.
- The entry splay into the estate from the west should be widened to allow smoother exit from the traffic stream to minimise build up of traffic turning into Great Bourton from the Southam road.
- Possibly a short left- filter lane out of the village onto the Southam road might ease morning traffic flow.
- A bus lay-by south-bound, and north-bound bus stop, as recommended by the public transport statement from OCC would make possible the Stagecoach 66 service picking up and dropping off to add currently five buses a day in each direction.
- A condition whereby local people received priority consideration for low-cost housing, through a housing association, would be appreciated.
- The Parish Council requests that a condition is imposed that the community hall is built at a strictly defined early stage of the development and that sufficient funds should be paid into an independent third party trust to safeguard that contribution solely for the building of the community hall.

3.2 **Thames Valley Police** – The only advice I can offer at this juncture is to refer the applicants to the principles and standards of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) crime prevention initiative for the built environment, Secured by Design (SBD). I urge them to incorporate said principles etc. within the proposals and to contact me as soon as possible so that they may be advised on how to achieve this.

Cherwell District Council Consultees

3.3 **Rights of Way Officer** – Bourton Footpath No 5 runs adjacent to the northern boundary of the application site and within its curtilage. However, no Public Path Order

will be required to enable development as the plans and Design and Access Statement indicate that the existing footpath is to be retained on its current route.

- 3.4 **Landscape Officer** – The site is located on the periphery of Great Bourton adjacent to the A423 Southam Road. It is on the top of an area of plateau with long distance views to the West. It lies within an AHLV. On the Eastern boundary the site is contained by buildings on the edge of Great Bourton. Hill Farm has uninterrupted views of the site. The Western boundary is contained in the immediate vicinity by a hedgerow which is approximately 3m high. The development will be visible over the top of the hedgerow. There may be long distance views from the M40 and Hanwell village. I drove along the A423 in both directions and observed that there will not be visibility of the development until relatively close to the site when travelling S-N due to the curvature of the road. From the north there will be visibility from quite a distance due to the curvature of the road and gaps in hedgerows. The Northern boundary is formed by a footpath which runs through the site. Impact from here will be highly significant as there are properties proposed very close to the path. Although there is development in the form of the Caravan site on the opposite side of Cropredy Road. This development is visually contained behind the hedge and is imperceptible. In contrast the proposed development will be visible over the hedge. At present the village appears to be set back from the A423 and the built form is not visible. The proposal will visually bring the village up to the A423 in my view to the detriment of the experience of open countryside as you drive along the A423. Villages in the area are tightly nucleated and this would extend the village outwards
- 3.5 **Private Sector Housing Manager** – No objection
- 3.6 **Environmental Health Officer** – As a sensitive development and a major development, I recommend land contamination is considered further and recommend conditions J12 - J16 to ensure this information is provided. It is also noted the site is underlain by the marlstone rock formation which may contain elevated concentrations of naturally occurring contaminants. This will have to be considered fully.
- 3.7 **Ecologist** – Whilst this does not look from aerial photographs to be a field likely to be of high ecological value the applicant needs to submit more ecological information in order for us to be able to assess impacts on habitats and species on site, the appropriateness of the submitted illustrative landscaping scheme and inform any biodiversity enhancements which might be particularly relevant for this development proposal. For example are there any areas of the field which are of greater botanical value? How valuable are the hedgerows? Any ditches? Any mature trees likely to support bats? Evidence of badgers using the site? etc.. The design and access statement claims a Phase 1 survey has been done which is likely to be an appropriate level for this site but I'd like to see a copy of this. In general the illustrative landscape plans may provide some benefits for wildlife if the public open space is managed sympathetically and not all areas are maintained as amenity grassland. Pending view of a survey I would suggest conditions would be required.
- 3.8 **Design and Conservation** – The proposals are located on the western edge of the village and are bound by the west by the A423 / Southam Road, the east by a camping/caravan site, the north by a public right of way and the south by the main village road. The road leads into the heart of the village. While there is some ribbon development along this route, development in this area would significantly change the development pattern of the village.

- The development proposals are for a cul-de-sac development accessed from the main village road. There are significant existing hedgerows along this route and the development leap frogs the existing settlement edge.
- The development form along the main village road varies along its length. In the heart of the village development is relatively dense with terrace cottages; as you move out of the village development is well set back from the road but still fronts onto the route. The development proposals for this area are set back behind the existing dense hedgerow and the built form will not provide an appropriate setting to the arrival at the village.
- The proposed layout predominantly consists of detached houses that front onto the street. There is little variation in housing type to reflect the diversity of units that are found in villages in this area. Density is even throughout.
- A new community hall is proposed in the southeast corner of the village; this building should have greater presence than other in the area and while it might be single storey the design approach should consider in detail its scale and presence.
- I will make no comment on the detailed design of the built form, though there are a number of issues that we would wish to amend if the design were to come forward.
- Parking is shown as being predominantly on plot. This promotes a suburban approach to development.
- Changes would need to be made to the existing village road, including changing the speed limit and reconfiguration of the existing traffic calming. The masterplan currently does not show the existing situation or how it will be amended.

Oxfordshire County Council Consultees

3.9 **Transport and Planning Strategy/Transport Development Control** – Accessibility of essential services and shops would be wholly dependent on travel by private car. In transport terms the site is considered unsustainable. However, should the LPA be minded to grant permission then conditions are suggested

3.10 **Rights of Way** – No objection

3.11 **Drainage** – No objection

3.12 **Archaeology** – No objection

3.14 **Minerals and Waste** – No objection

3.15 **Education/Libraries/Adult Learning/Health Care/Property** – Request financial contribution

4. Relevant National and Local Policy and Guidance Policy Considerations

4.1 Development Plan Policy

Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996

C8: Sporadic development in the countryside

C13: Areas of High Landscape Value (AHLV)

H18: New dwellings in the countryside

C28: Layout, design and external appearance of new development

C30: Development control – design and amenity

Other Material Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework

5. Appraisal

5.1 The issues raised by this development are:

- Planning Policy;
- Principle of the Development;
- Compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework March 2012;
- Planning Obligations; and
- Other Material Considerations.

Planning Policy

- 5.1 Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – *Requiring Good Design* attaches great importance to the design of the built environment as good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. Good design should contribute positively to making places better for people. Planning decisions should aim to ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area and are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.
- 5.2 Saved policy H14 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 identifies Great Bourton as a category 2 settlement whereby residential development within the village is restricted to infilling, the conversion of existing buildings and small scale development that will lead to significant environmental improvements. Saved Policy H18 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 states that new dwellings beyond the built up limits of settlements will only be permitted when it is essential for agriculture or other undertakings.
- 5.3 Saved Policies C28 and C30 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan seek standards of layout, design and external appearance, including the choice of external finish materials, are sympathetic to the character of the context of the development. Further, extensions to dwellings should be compatible with the scale of the existing dwelling, its curtilage and the character of the street scene.
- 5.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) explains that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. This is defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. There are three dimensions to sustainable development. These are environmental, social and economic.

Principle of the Development

- 5.5 The Planning Statement submitted in support of the application accepts that Great Bourton is not a village identified for significant growth or expansion in either the adopted or emerging local plan. However, the applicant suggests that “because of the unique benefits that this proposal will bring to the local community” (Planning Statement paragraph 1.3) these weigh in favour of supporting the development. The benefits identified are as follows:
- Provision of new community hall and open space;

- New market homes to help sustain the vitality of the village bring new expenditure to help sustain local services including the local pub;
 - A wide range of housing;
 - Affordable housing; and
 - Opportunities to enhance traffic calming within the village.
- 5.6 The site comprises 1.89ha of agricultural land that lies immediately to the east of the A423. Access to the site would be from Main Road which is an adopted highway which serves existing predominantly residential properties. There are hedgerows to boundaries including trees and the land is relatively flat. It provides a visual buffer between the A423 and the start of the village to the east. The NPPF recognises the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the importance of it as a finite resource.
- 5.7 The development would provide a supply of housing to include 30% affordable housing. The location of the site is at the edge of the village of Great Bourton, but is not considered to be within the village. Policy H14 of the adopted plan states that “Residential development *within the villages...* will be restricted to infilling, the conversion of existing buildings or small scale development that will lead to significant environmental improvements within the settlement”. As the site is not within the village it would be assessed against policy H18 which only permits housing where it is essential for agriculture or other existing undertakings. There is no suggestion that the housing is essential for agriculture.

Compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.8 Returning to the NPPF, it is necessary to consider whether the development contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. This is defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. There are three dimensions to sustainable development. These are environmental, social and economic which are defined within the NPPF as:
- **an economic role** – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
 - **a social role** – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and
 - **an environmental role** – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

Environmental

- 5.9 The development would comprise 35 dwellings (25 private units and 10 affordable units). The site represents undeveloped land outside of the village boundaries. The NPPF promotes the use of brownfield land. The Design and Access Statement states that an ecological assessment has been undertaken and the site is of low ecological value.

- 5.10 The Landscape Officer raises an objection to the development in terms of visual impact. The Landscape Officer recognises that, “there is development in the form of the caravan site on the opposite side of Cropredy Road. This development is visually contained behind the hedge and is imperceptible.” The Landscape Officer continues by stating that, “In contrast the proposed development will be visible over the hedge. At present the village appears to be set back from the A423 and the built form is not visible. The proposal will visually bring the village up to the A423 in my view to the detriment of the experience of open countryside as you drive along the A423. Villages in the area are tightly nucleated and this would extend the village outwards.”
- 5.11 The development would therefore conflict with policy C8 which seeks to protect the countryside from sporadic development. The site is not previously developed land nor is it identified for future development. The footpath to the north would have its amenity value reduced as a result of the development. The Council also seeks to conserve and enhance those areas designated as Areas of High Landscape Value under policy C13.
- 5.12 It is considered that the development would have a harmful impact on an important part of the open countryside and would cause harm to the rural landscape setting of the village and would reduce the amenity value afforded from the existing Rights of Way. The proposal is considered to be contrary to saved Policy C8 and C13 of the adopted Local Plan.

Social

- 5.13 The development would provide an element of affordable housing. There is no denying that affordable housing in villages is welcome. However, one still has to consider the sustainability of the site. There is a Public House in Manor Road (some 200m to the east of the site) but otherwise there is no reasonable access to facilities, shops or schools within Great Bourton. The neighbouring village of Cropredy provides a primary school (1.4km from the site) and a doctors surgery (2km from the site). Whilst these are within walking distance, it is reasonable to assume that these services will be accessed via private car. Other services such as major employment areas, shopping, secondary schools etc. are provided within Banbury, (some 3.5km south) of the site. Limited bus services run between the site and Banbury. The B500 bus service referred to within the Transport Statement is a ‘dial and ride’ service which requires pre-booking. Bus service 66 runs infrequently between Banbury and Great Bourton. Realistically, this service is not frequent enough to be attractive to those wishing to visit Banbury on a daily basis for employment, shopping or schools. It is highly likely that given the unsustainable location of the site, the occupiers would rely on private cars to access services.
- 5.14 It is noted that the applicant is providing a new village hall. However, there is no indication that the village needs or wants a new village hall. Moreover, this could be provided without the need to develop the entire site for housing. In addition, the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) recognises that the need for a new hall was queried by residents and all the objections received comment that the existing hall is sufficient for current needs.
- 5.15 The SCI also recognises the limited population at the village which would fail to support local services such as a local shop, yet continues in the Planning Statement to suggest that the additional population would continue to sustain the viability of the existing pub. There is no evidence that the additional population would patronise the existing public house. Moreover, the existing pub is still trading without the proposed dwellings being constructed.

Economic

- 5.16 Whilst the development would create construction jobs, this would be a short term benefit. However, this short term economic benefit would not outweigh the fact that the development would not fulfil the social dimension of sustainable development as it would not support the creation of a strong vibrant and healthy community with accessible local services that would reflect the communities needs and support its health, social and cultural well being and that there would be an unacceptable impact against the environmental role of sustainable development in terms of harmful sporadic development in the countryside.
- 5.17 Moreover, the pattern of development would not be linked to facilities that promote the use of sustainable transport modes. The development would not promote sustainable means of transport as promoted in the NPPF. It would not balance land uses so as people can be encouraged to minimise journey lengths for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities which is one of the core planning principles of the NPPF. I therefore conclude that the development would not comprise sustainable development and would not therefore accord with the NPPF.

Planning Obligations

- 5.18 The applicant has indicated a willingness to provide financial contributions to off-set the impact of the development on local infrastructure and amenities. The amount of contributions required are detailed within the One Voice response from the County Council (attached). To date a completed agreement to secure the affordable housing and the financial contributions has not been received. Therefore, an addition reason for refusal will be added to the recommendation to ensure such matters are considered should the application be refused and an appeal lodged.
- 5.19 Any contribution sought needs to comply with the guidance in the NPPF which states that they should be necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. To date the figures presented above have not been agreed by the applicant and no indication has been given as to whether or not they are likely to be.

Other Material Considerations

- 5.20 It is clear that the provision of affordable housing would be a benefit to the village. While there may be a public benefit in providing a new village hall, it is questioned whether this is actually wanted or required. Other matters such as enhancing traffic calming around the village do not require the provision of housing. However, the development would also deliver open market housing and for the reasons given above regarding the social and environmental impacts of the development, the proposal is considered unacceptable and is recommended for refusal.

Engagement

- 5.21 With regard to the duty set out in paragraphs 186 and 187 of the Framework, no problems or issues have arisen regarding the submission during the application. It is considered that the duty to be positive and proactive has been discharged through the efficient and timely determination of the application.

6. Recommendation

Refusal, on the following grounds:

1. The proposal represents development beyond the built up limits of Great Bourton in an area of countryside and is not allocated for development by either the saved policies of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 nor is the application site proposed for development as a strategic housing allocation in the Proposed Submission Local Plan March 2013. It is considered that the proposal represents sporadic development in the countryside which fails to maintain its rural character and appearance and which fails to conserve and enhance the environment and furthermore fails to meet the Council's objectives to meet housing need in a way that is in line with the spatial vision for the area. The application is, therefore, contrary to Policy H18 and C8 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan and Government guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. The site forms part of an Area of High Landscape Value and is prominently located adjacent to public rights of way. It is considered that the development of this site for a housing scheme would have a harmful impact on an important part of the open countryside and would cause harm to the rural landscape setting of the village and would reduce the amenity value afforded from the existing Rights of Way. The proposal is considered, therefore, to be contrary to saved Policy C8 and C13 of the adopted Local Plan.
3. In the absence of a satisfactory planning obligation, the Local Planning Authority is not convinced that the infrastructure directly required to service or serve the proposed development will be provided. This would be contrary to the Policy R12 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan and government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

STATEMENT OF ENGAGEMENT

In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment No 2) Order 2012 and paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012), this decision has been taken by the Council having worked with the applicant/agent in a positive and proactive way as set out in the application report.