

**MINUTES OF THE PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMITTEE  
MEETING  
HELD AT 1:30PM, ON  
TUESDAY, 26 JANUARY 2021  
VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL CONFERENCE**

**Committee Members Present:** Harper (Chairman), Casey (Vice Chairman), Bond, Brown, Hiller, Hogg, Amjad Iqbal, Jamil, Jones, Rush and Warren.

**Officers Present:** Nick Harding, Head of Planning Peterborough and Fenland  
Stephen Turnbull, Planning Solicitor  
Nick Greaves, Principal Engineer  
Daniel Kalley, Senior Democratic Services Officer  
Karen Dunleavy, Democratic Services Officer

**34. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hussain. Councillor Jamil attended as substitute.

**35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

**36. MEMBERS' DECLARATION OF INTENTION TO MAKE REPRESENTATIONS AS WARD COUNCILLOR**

A declaration was declared by Councillor Harper on item 5.2 20/01141/FUL - Land To The South Of Buntings Lane Stanground Peterborough PE7 3DN and that he would be speaking as a Ward Councillor.

A declaration was declared by Councillor Harper on item 5.3 20/01543/HHFUL - 68 High Street Fletton Peterborough PE2 8DR and that he would be speaking as a ward Councillor.

**37. PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT MATTERS**

**37.1 20/01260/WCPP - Masjid Ghousia 406 Gladstone Street Millfield Peterborough**

The Committee received a report, which sought permission to vary condition 8 to allow the amplified call to prayer (The Azan) three times per day, every day (early afternoon, late afternoon and sunset). It is proposed that the duration of each call to prayer would be between three and five minutes. Four loud speakers would be located on the top of the minaret (tower), at the balcony level at the Springfield Rd / Gladstone St junction end of the building. The speakers would be hidden from view.

The Head of Planning introduced the item and highlighted key information from the report.

Councillors Ali and Nadeem, Ward Councillors addressed the Committee and responded to questions from Members. In summary the key points highlighted included:

- The community residents were very diverse and were supportive to one another.
- It was a sincere wish of many residents of the community residents and leaders that a call to prayer would be present.
- A local committee had discussed the proposal and asked for help from the Council on how to successfully implement the call to prayer request.
- The call to prayer if approved would not be loudly amplified and would only reach a small area to the Bourges Boulevard.
- There was resounding support from many residents of various faiths for the application.
- Consultations had taken place in the area and there had been many positive responses, and very few negative ones.
- A well-known actor, Liam Neeson had recently stated in an interview that the call to prayer was a beautiful and melodic, sound.
- The local plan reference within the report in relation to transport, parking standards and amenity provision were not relevant to the application. All of these points had been addressed in the original application to build the Masjid Ghousia. If the application was granted, there would be no risk of overflow on capacity as the issue was with noise. The comments made in the report were conflicting and limited, however, had recommended a three-month temporary trial.
- Under the Equalities Act 2010 and the Human Rights act 1998, the Council must have due regard for the need to eliminate and advance equal opportunity to implement the application.
- The Pollution Team had stated within the report that the operation of a loudspeaker for the proposed purpose is primarily a political judgement rather than a technical consideration. It was felt that there should be no politics in considering such items in Committee.
- There was 288 residents in support and 98 in objection to the application.

Mr Nazim Khan OBE, the Applicant addressed the Committee and responded to questions from Members. In summary the key points highlighted included:

- When the mosque was being considered in 2002, Officers recommendations had been for refusal due to reasons such as being out of character to the area. The current officer recommendation for this planning application stated that the mosque was a local listed building which formed part of the streetscene and was a local landmark site.
- A national award for the best building built in Peterborough was achieved following the construction of the mosque.
- The applicants had always tried to work with residents, politicians and officers to reach the best outcome for the proposals. Unfortunately, the proposal had not been agreed by officers and if it had there could have been a different recommendation put forward.
- The applicants would like a temporary approval, and if any objection was raised during a trial period of 12 – 18 months then the applicant would not continue with the proposal.
- The applicant wanted full support by residents and would not want to alienate anyone.

- The 12-18 month trial period was necessary due to the prayer schedules during the different seasons.
- The applicants wanted to prove to officers and residents that the call to prayer could work.
- Objections to the proposals outside the area should not be given consideration.
- The first call to prayer in the winter and summer would be different, but on average would be around 1pm, 2:30pm, 4pm and 6pm. The last call at sunset would be around 9:30pm in the summer.
- Consideration had been given to shift workers as the length of time would only be 2 – 5 minutes in duration. If there was opposition to the call to prayer, the proposals would be reconsidered.
- The reasons for applying for the call to prayer was to remind people that it was time for prayer, just in case they were not wearing a watch.
- The younger generation had asked whether a call to prayer could be held during Ramadan and the Lockdown period. Officers could not make a decision without an approved planning application.
- Using an alternative such as radio or the use of applications as an alternative technical solution would not be suitable for all.
- Permission had not been sought when the mosque was first built as it had been felt at the time not reasonable.
- The length of time for the call to prayer was dependant on the person who would perform the service, which was why the timings had been estimated to last between two to five minutes. An average time for call to prayer would last between two to three minutes.
- Two prayer times had not been applied for as they would happen around two to three am when the majority of people would be asleep at that time. The last call to prayer in the summertime would be around 11pm and it was felt too late and would not appropriate for the community.
- Research was carried out in Bradford and the sound was not loud or distorted. The Bradford technic could be explored further by the applicant and planning officers and applied if necessary.
- Current call to prayer reminders were produced by way of a paper timetable and on social media. However, the communication would not include the times for call to prayer as this was done about 10-15minutes before the actual time to pray.
- The decibel sound noise level heard at Bradford was about the same distance between Gladstone Street and New England recreation ground, however only faintly.
- The paper timetable could include the 10-15 minute reminder, however, most people would not have a copy. The physical call to prayer would act as a better reminder.

The Planning and Environmental Protection Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members were advised that the Leicester City Council (LCC) consultation involved speaking to the Environmental Team and obtain guidance from them.
- The distance of noise travel could not be given as the application had not stated the output levels. The application only sought to have a discussion with the Council

over what the maximum level of output should be to the nearest noise sensitive premises.

- The report had identified the guidance from Leicester City Council. If Members were to agree as a matter of principle the development was acceptable, the level of output should be set using the LCC guidance at the nearest noise sensitive premises.
- There had been no national guidance in relation to call for prayer or standard practice. The challenge was to ascertain the varied number of times, duration and tones during the day. The impact of this type of noise would also require a scientific assessment.
- The political quote mentioned in the report was included as comments from Environmental Health. This was because the officers could not reach a scientific based recommendation which was why the political comment had been included in the report. Members would need to consider comparisons such as noise from emergency vehicles and the number of times that would happen in the day.
- Members commented that political wording should not be included in assessments, as all Members were independent when considering applications.
- Members commented that a recommendation had included a temporary option from the Pollution Team for the call to prayer, however, the conclusion in the report went against that. Members were advised that because the team had not had guidance, methodology or evidence around what the noise levels should be and therefore could not reach a conclusion. If Members were minded to grant consent, there would be a route which conditions could be applied using the LCC guidance to set a maximum noise level. A noise limiter would need to be installed and that could be a way forward.
- If a subsequent application was presented the team they would consider that the principle had been accepted however, the new application would need to be considered on its own merits using the impact of a similar mosque that operated a call to prayer and it would be a question of whether an additional call to prayer would have a detrimental impact. If one part of the City operated a call to prayer and another with quite some distance, then the cumulative impact would be less than a premises that was next to each other operating the same noise levels.
- Members were advised that the application could not be considered on what permission had been given about the call to prayer, with other areas such as Leicester.
- Members commented that although the community was diverse, the public speakers had stated that they would not want to impose the call to prayer on the whole community if it was not welcomed.
- Members were mindful that the noise generated would be for three times a day, five days a week and people that worked shifts could be impacted by the noise and sleep deprivation. If the application was to allow call to prayer once a week or only on religious festivals, then Members felt that the proposal would be more acceptable.
- Some Members commented that some Council departments had not raised objections such as Highways, Conservation Officer and Millfield association groups and for that reason temporary permission could be considered.
- During the consultation 282 local residents and three ward Councillors had shown that they were in support of the application, with only 98 in objection. The Pollution

Team had stated that temporary consent would allow proper analysis of the noise impact.

- Members commented that they were mindful of the Equalities Act 2010, Human Rights Act 1998 and hoped that the public and applicant's interests were properly protected and applied proportionately when considering the application.
- The scheme would not set an undesirable precedent as each application was considered on its own merits.
- Members commented that the Control of Pollution Act 1974 regulated the use of speakers and that it was not applicable in many areas of the application as the Act related to the noise in streets particular to what times loudspeakers should not be used such as from 9pm to 8am and advertising.
- Some Members felt that a call to prayer would be advertising as it was a loud broadcast. People's lives would be impacted most of the year.
- The officer's recommendation was not meant to repress religious practice.
- All citizens should be treated as equals, and one religion should not be elevated above others in such a diverse community.
- The mosque had operated successfully for 15 years or more without the need for a broadcast.
- Agreeing to the planning application could set a precedent.
- Some Members were curious as to what impact the noise omitted would create in a community, and for that reason temporary permission could be given.
- Modern technology such as applications or a radio broadcasting licence could provide a solution for a call to prayer to operate.
- Some Members felt that there had been some controversy when the first mosque was built in the City, however, there were now six buildings. It was a case of evolution and people got used to it. The same approach could apply for this application.
- The call to prayer was not included in the original application as efforts were concentrated on getting a mosque built was the priority.
- Alternative means for call to prayer such as technology, use of radio broadcast or setting reminder times within the paper schedule was felt by some Members not fit for purpose. Furthermore, the call to prayer was not an advertisement as it was not gaining a benefit from the broadcast.
- Some Members felt that authorities were operating in a policy vacuum.
- The call to prayer was about communities coming together, however, there was no way of knowing what impact it could cause in an area or how it would divide a community.
- Residential amenity would be affected by a noise that was not currently present if the application was approved. It would be unacceptable, to trial a call to prayer on a community that had not been 100% in favour of the proposals.
- Any temporary consent should run to 14-15 months to allow purchase and installation of equipment and be subject to Officers conditions where appropriate if the application was approved.

A proposal was seconded to go against officer recommendation and approve the application. The vote on this motion was defeated (3 for, 8 against).

At this point the committee stopped for a short 10-minute break

## **RESOLVED:**

A second proposal was made and seconded to go with the officers recommendations and **REFUSE** the application. On a vote this was (8 for, 3 against) this motion to **REFUSE** the application was passed.

## **REASON FOR THE DECISION:**

The proposal is unacceptable having been assessed in light of all material considerations, including weighing against relevant policies of the development plan and for the specific reasons given below.

At this point, Councillor Casey took over Chairing of the Committee.

### **37.2 20/01141/FUL - Land To The South Of Buntings Lane Stanground Peterborough PE7 3DN**

The Committee received a report, which sought permission for a photovoltaic solar farm with a generating capacity of 2.93MW and a 25-30 year lifespan, including energy storage containers (for 3 batteries) and ancillary facilities on approximately 4.98ha of the 12.3ha former Stanground landfill site.

The energy generation is equivalent to generating sufficient electricity to power approximately 700 homes. The panels, of 'freestanding, weighted' design to ensure non-penetration of the underlying landfill cap, will be arranged in rows to face south, along an east-west axis. The racks will be a maximum of 2.5m above ground floor level, with no earthworks required to facilitate construction. Battery storage, inverters and other ancillary equipment will be located at the northern end of the site behind a 3.2m acoustic fence set back a minimum of approximately 14m from the nearest dwelling, to provide noise mitigation. Security fencing and a CCTV system will also be provided.

A 2.0 - 2.2m high livestock fence will be provided to enclose the panels and ancillary equipment, with no alterations to existing site boundary fencing. The proposals also include ecological surveys and monitoring to inform appropriate mitigation, and a comprehensive landscaping scheme.

The construction period is estimated to take around 24 weeks, requiring a total of 116 HGV deliveries, with HGV traffic generation peaking at around 2 deliveries per day. Access to the site will be from the redundant A605 off slip to the north, with egress provided to the A605 Stanham way to the southwest.

The Head of Planning introduced the item and highlighted key information from the report and the update report.

Ward Councillor Chris Harper addressed the Committee and responded to questions from Members. In summary the key points highlighted included:

- There was support for such alternative energy production initiatives. The idea of using an old landfill site would seem like a good idea.
- However, it was important to consider the value residents placed on this land as being outweighed because of need and their other justified concerns as not being worthy of serious consideration and thus negating any mitigation methods that should be seriously considered to offset resultant undesirable effects should planning permission be granted.
- In terms of policy LP17 - advised that permission should not be granted for development which would result in an unacceptable loss of public and/or private green space but this was exactly what was being proposed albeit it was accepted only for the life of the solar farm.
- In terms of policy LP22 - Green Infrastructure Network advised that development must protect existing linear features of the green infrastructure network but this will effectively be lost if it was covered in solar panels at the very least for many years.
- In terms of policy LP28 - Biodiversity and Geological Conservation advised that development likely to have an adverse effect would only be permitted where the need and benefits outweighed the loss and that habitats and species of principal importance should be considered in the context of the duty to promote and protect species and habitats.
- Development which would have an adverse impact would only be permitted where the need and benefit clearly outweighed the impact. Plans showed an actual increase in biodiversity was promised, however it was questionable as to whether it should upset an already established wildlife haven whilst destroying the current enjoyment of the open feel of the area for local residents.
- There was a statement within the report that advised there may be a slight perceived loss of green space, but the underlying landscape characteristics and features, such as the grassland, open character and topography, would not be altered however residents understandably challenged this opinion on the grounds of just how can a field full of solar panels possibly be considered as maintaining the open character of the field.
- Views onto and across the open land at the proposal site were considered important from both residential and public locations. There was concern as to how such impacts were only assessed from first and not deemed necessary from second floor windows. The assessment had only been applied to principal habitable rooms which was in effect ground floor habitable rooms only and as such, there had been no assessment from second floor dwelling windows that looked out over the site
- Reflection and glare were also raised as general impacts of concern and again the impact had only been considered for the ground floor windows of nearby properties. It was unfair to just dismiss the effect at first floor level to property owners and any possible need for mitigation as not worthy of consideration.
- Local residents were very fond of this piece of land and that was effectively abandoned to the wild where wildlife had duly obliged and populated it with an array of species such as rabbits, foxes, deer, butterflies, birds and in nearby watercourses great crested newts.
- Residents urged the committee to listen to the concerns before making any final decision.

At this point Councillor Harper left the Committee

Mr Tom Woof, the agent addressed the Committee and responded to questions from Members. In summary the key points highlighted included:

- There was support for the extensive report provided to members from the planning case officer. The application had carefully gone through all the necessary planning considerations before being submitted.
- Concerns raised by local residents had been addressed by the applicant and had been highlighted in the report. However, some of the concerns raised were not material to the planning application.
- All statutory consultees had the opportunity to comment and none had raised any objections to the scheme as outlined. In addition the applicant had undertaken significant consultation with local residents, this included 149 visits by residents to the webpage and 110 responses to the survey. There was 91% support for Cambridgeshire's green infrastructure plans.
- Renewable energy systems were a key part of national and international drives to find more sustainable energy sources and tackle the climate emergency.
- The plan would help the Council towards achieving its net zero carbon footprint by 2030.
- Planning policies were supportive of proposals that sought to tackle the climate emergency and this was the case of the plan in front of members.
- Expert reports had been submitted to help address any concerns raised by residents or other consultees.
- In relation to planning policy LP17 this only referred to public open space or public amenity space and not as suggested to private space.
- In relation to LP 22 and LP 28 which sought the enhancement and protection of the local area there were a number of improvements that the scheme would make to the local area that outweighed the provisions of protection in the policies.
- Well managed solar farms had shown an enhancement of local wildlife and the protection of certain species. The Universities of Lancaster and York had drawn on over 700 pieces of evidence to show that when real care was taken the farms could deliver tremendous benefits to wildlife, pollinators and sustainable food production.
- Significant care had been taken during the design phase of the application to ensure the protection of rabbits, foxes, butterflies and other wildlife.
- There was to be extensive woodland planting on the eastern boundary that would protect the views of residents. In addition this was to provide further habitation for wildlife in the area.
- This application was necessary to decarbonise and to tackle the climate emergency that the Council faced.
- It was confirmed that 91% of residents that responded to the survey online were in support of the green infrastructure proposals as a whole, which included the application in question but also covered a number of other projects.
- Overall, the responses to the proposal were in general support of the application and the installation of solar panels on the site.
- Members were informed that 85% of responses nationally were in favour of solar farms such as the one being proposed.
- There was a variable gap that was to be provided between each row of solar panels, between 4m to 8m. It could be said that more than 50% of the site would not have any development on it. In terms of the panels the land itself was species rich, which extended underneath the panels, providing slightly different habitats to the areas that lay between the panels.
- There was an obligation to undertake an assessment on the visual impacts of the development on local residents. The guidance made provision that the impact on visual aspects did not need to be taken into account for this sort of development.



For landscaping purposes the application took into account the public views in relation to this. It was preferable that residents adjacent to the development maintained their long views and they could see across the horizon to long distance views. Improved planting was proposed to help hide the view of some of the panels.

- Surveys were carried out with regards to protected species, including great crested newts. The results of the survey showed that the great crested newts would use the proposed site for foraging in the future. The fence had been specifically designed to allow animals to access the site. No humans would be able to access the site unless for maintenance.
- The Peterborough City Council biodiversity strategy had been fully taken into account when assessing the application.
- In terms of maintaining the grass levels there was a plan in place to ensure the grass was cut on a twice-yearly basis.
- There were a number of layers of fencing on the site. There shouldn't be any members of public walking their dogs adjacent to the site and within the palisade fencing. It was unlikely that a dog would be able to access the site. There would also be an emergency number on site if a dog did manage to get onto the site.

The Planning and Environmental Protection Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- The land in question was mainly deemed as pony paddock, it did not constitute land that was rich in biodiversity. There was additional planting as part of the scheme and was to be native planting and the formation of species rich grassland.
- The Highways team had gone through extensive discussions with the applicant in terms of access to and from the site. There was confidence that the visibility from the access point could be achieved. Improvement works were also planned for the access to the site to improve visibility and safety.
- The work carried out by the landscape institute and the empirical data submitted by universities showed that the area couldn't be further developed as it was an old refuge tip. If this site was not used, then where else could the solar panels be placed and it was difficult to answer this question. Residents did not need to worry about any future housing development on the site and the increased biodiversity was a positive.
- This was not a Peterborough City Council application but a Cambridgeshire County application. It was important to take note of what residents of the area had said and they were not happy with losing some of their views. In addition there were concerns over developing on a green wedge site.
- The site was currently a pony field and it was not possible to put any other form of development on the site. This was therefore a benefit to tackling the Council's climate emergency.
- The solar panels themselves were fairly low key and would not be too overbearing on the site.
- It was positive that wildlife was still be able to access the site and that there would be an increase in more wildlife on the site.
- From a biodiversity stand this application had been well presented and it was clear to see that this issue had been thought through.
- The impact on the residential area was relatively small in terms of the size of the site and the development proposed.

#### **RESOLVED:**

The Planning Environment Protection Committee considered the report and representations. A motion was proposed and seconded to **GRANT** the application. The Committee **RESOLVED** (9 for, 1 abstain) to **GRANT** the planning permission subject to relevant conditions delegated to officers.

## **REASON FOR THE DECISION:**

The NPPF states that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development - in terms of decision taking this means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay.

The application has been considered in light of the Peterborough Local Plan, the NPPF and accompanying Planning Practice Guidance. The proposal is not considered to adversely impact upon the function of the Green Wedge within which it is sited, and makes a positive contribution to infrastructure provision through the generation of 2.25MW of renewable energy; the proposal complies with policies LP14, LP26 and LP31 of the Local Plan.

The planning application was accompanied by a comprehensive set of detailed reports including a Design and Access Report, Landscape and Visual Impact, a Glint and Glare Study, Ecological surveys and mitigation strategies, a Noise Impact Assessment, a Traffic Management Plan, a Flood Risk Assessment, a GeoEnvironmental Appraisal, and a Statement of Community Involvement.

Detailed topic areas have been assessed and considered With particular regard to safety and technical issues, ecology, landscape and visual impact, noise, conservation, traffic and transport (including rights of way) and the water environment; design, safety and amenity impacts have been considered and the proposal is in accordance with policies LP16, LP17 and LP33 of the Local Plan; the proposal can be accommodated onto the existing open space without significant detrimental impact and will ensure the safety of protected species and enhance the biodiversity value of the area in accordance with polices LP23 and LP28; the character of the landscape and the visual impact of the proposals have been considered and the proposal accords with policies LP27 and LP17; noise impacts on nearby residential dwellings has been considered and the proposal is in compliance with policy LP17; consideration has been given to the transport (including rights of way) implications of the development, and the proposal is in accordance with policy LP13; and consideration has been given to impacts on the water environment and the proposal is in accordance with policy LP32.

Comments of consultees and representations have been taken into account and suitable conditions attached to address any issues raised and in all other respects the proposals is acceptable. As such, there is no reason not to approve the application in line with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act.

### **37.3 20/01543/HHFUL - 68 High Street Fletton Peterborough PE2 8DR**

The Committee received a report, which sought permission for the construction of a single storey rear extension. The existing rear elevation of the property is presently staggered, with a part-two and part-single storey rear wing which is typical of this period of property. The proposal would project 3.3 metres beyond the rear-most elevation of the existing dwelling, with a maximum depth of 10 metres. It would have a maximum width of 4.3 metres, matching the width of the front elevation. The proposal would, in effect, infill to the side of the existing rear wing and project further beyond, removing the staggered rear

elevation at ground floor level. The extension would be of a flat roof design, and the eaves height would measure 3 metres from ground level. It should be noted that it is proposed for the property to change use from a single residential dwelling (Class C3) to a small-scale house in multiple occupation (HMO) for up to 6 persons (Class C4), and for the loft space to be converted to habitable accommodation through the construction of a rear dormer window and front rooflights. Both of these elements however do not form part of the current planning application, and are to be undertaken in accordance with Part 3 Class L and Part 1 Class B of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), respectively.

The Head of Planning introduced the item and highlighted key information from the report and the update report. The rear extension had no negative impact on the amenity of the neighbouring properties. The impact on parking could not be taken into consideration as the application for a HMO for up to 6 people did not require planning permission in itself.

Ward Councillor Chris Harper addressed the Committee and responded to questions from Members. In summary the key points highlighted included:

- Objections raised against the application related to the proposed change of use of the property to a 6 person HMO and that this was in accordance with applicable Town and Country Planning Act and therefore did not require planning permission and further, because this application is for a building extension only, the objections raised are not a matter that can be considered.
- As ward councillor for this part of Fletton and a city councillor, it was the ward councillor's duty to bring to the attention of this committee and more widely the city council, the fact that there was an ever increasing problem of the uncontrolled expansion of HMO's due to this fall-back position permitted by the act, not just in Fletton but across the city.
- Residents that have submitted their objections were not against HMO's. They were a useful extension to the housing offer and where consideration to the wider community was given, particularly with regards to concerns over parking, litter, ASB, noise and litter, there was no justified reason to object to them.
- According to the HMO register there were currently 5 HMOs with 5 or more persons in the Fletton area with a further 15 HMOs waiting to be inspected and passported from a Selective Licence to a Mandatory HMO Licence, so in total there were currently 20 HMO's of 5 or more persons. It would be reasonable therefore to suggest that this was likely to lead to a large amount of additional vehicles that needed somewhere to park but under the act, the council was currently powerless to control it.
- Fletton High Street and the side streets that lead off it were already at saturation point particularly in the evenings and weekends and posed a real risk to motorists, cyclists and pedestrians. The chicane effect being caused by the sheer number of vehicles parking along its length made it very difficult to navigate and for pedestrians to cross the road, even more so as this was a main bus route, any further increase in vehicle parking would only compound an already serious problem. The applicant has unwittingly announced the fact that this is a distinct possibility.
- Members attention was drawn to the fact that in both the plans and the photographs submitted, the rooms were shown to have double beds. This confirmed a fear and

real possibility that there was a potential for up to 12 people to reside at this address.

- A new 4 person HMO had in the last couple of weeks been registered and within days of it being so, there were reported problems with parking and residents being advised by the councils PES office to contact their councillor because there was nothing they could do regarding the arrival of these additional cars in an already saturated road in the Fletton area.
- Bin contamination was a regular problem with HMO's in the area despite the efforts of landlords, the bins overflowed and this led to an increase in litter on the streets. It was hoped the landlord would ensure the tenants were advised of their responsibility to the community and any breach was acted upon quickly.
- Although it was difficult to refuse as there was no planning reason to object to the building extension itself it was hoped members of the committee understood the concerns of the local residents regarding the increase in the number of vehicles and that the Council needed to look at how to control the number of HMO's across the city.
- Residents in the local area had been spoken to with regards to the issue of HMO's and the people living in them, however it was disappointing to hear officers from the public enforcement service that it was up to residents to keep an eye on the properties.
- There was the potential for more than six people to be living in the property and this was shown in the drawings provided by the applicant.

At this point Councillor Harper left the Committee

Mr Dominic Adamczyk, on behalf of the applicant addressed the Committee and responded to questions from Members. In summary the key points highlighted included:

- The sole purpose of the application in front of Committee was for the granting of the rear extension of 3.3m as outlined in the plans. There were a few areas of concern that needed to be addressed.
- In terms of transport the report outlined that the application itself did not have any effect on parking demand.
- It was noted that the extension did not cause any harm to the character of the local area.
- Finally the proposal did not cause any harm to the amenity of neighbouring properties.
- The company prided themselves in openness and transparency in the way they worked and had been honest from the outset that the property was to be used as a HMO for a maximum of six people.
- The developments created were of high quality and large spacious accommodation was created wherever possible.
- Due to the current pandemic it was important for landlords to create the most spacious rooms and space as was possible. This helped reduce anxiety and aided the prevention of poor mental health.
- All the regulations set out for HMO's were to be adhered to. The licence for the property was for a maximum of six people living in the property.
- The extension would provide all the rooms with their own separate and private bathroom. Furthermore the extension allowed for a larger communal living area and kitchen.
- The beds were  $\frac{3}{4}$  double bed sizes therefore providing more comfort to the residents. The standard of the application was to provide professional people with high quality living accommodation.

- It was believed that the application altered the perception of what a HMO was and the benefits it could provide the local area.
- The lifestyle of those in an HMO were that of a city based life and it was anticipated that tenants were more likely to use public transport instead of owning their own vehicle. Secure bike storage was also provided in the garden. The parking spaces required for a six person HMO was the same as a family home of three to four adults.
- The managing agent provided clear guidance that was put up in the house stating that there was only one person allowed per room. Cleaners went round twice a week and would report anything that was not being adhered to back to the managing agent. The licence would only allow six people and if that went over by one then the company would be in breach of this licence and would be liable to face penalties.
- In terms of parking the average number of cars for a similar HMO was around four to five cars in suburbs and in the city centre this average was around two vehicles per HMO.
- Although there was potential for those on higher incomes to have their own car there were still instances where senior managers at local distribution centres would stay in a HMO and walk or cycle to work.
- If the management of HMO's was not done properly there was a risk that the number of people living in a HMO would exceed the permitted number, however the managing agent for this property was used to running HMO's and would enforce the six person maximum.

The Planning and Environmental Protection Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- From a planning point of view the Council could take enforcement action if the number of people living in the HMO exceeded six. There would need to be an investigation as to whether the increase in people had a detrimental impact on the property and neighbouring area.
- As a city there was a need for good quality housing and the application in front of committee needed to be applauded in terms of looking to give residents and people the opportunity to live in and around the city.
- The rooms were of good size and had their own bathrooms, this separated them out from other HMO's in the city which were not of a good standard.
- In terms of the application for the rear extension there did not seem to be any planning grounds in rejecting the proposal.

#### **RESOLVED:**

The Planning Environment Protection Committee considered the report and representations. A motion was proposed and seconded to **GRANT** the application. The Committee **RESOLVED** (8 for, 2 against) to **GRANT** the application subject to relevant conditions

#### **REASON FOR THE DECISION:**

Subject to the imposition of the attached conditions, the proposal is acceptable having been assessed in the light of all material considerations, including weighing against relevant policies of the development plan and specifically:

- The proposal would not unacceptably impact upon the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area, in accordance with Policy LP16 of the Peterborough Local Plan (2019); and

- Neighbours adjacent to the application site would retain an acceptable standard of amenity, in accordance with Policy LP17 of the Peterborough Local Plan (2019).

CHAIRMAN  
1:30 – 5.09PM