

Subject:

FW: Planning Application: 213086

From: Matt Free [REDACTED]

Sent: 28 January 2023 19:38

To: Eleanor Moss <Eleanor.Moss@colchester.gov.uk>

Cc: Karen Syrett <Karen.Syrett@colchester.gov.uk>; jennifer.goff@btinternet.com

Subject: RE: Planning Application: 213086

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Hi Eleanor,

Could you let me know if there is anyone making representation in opposition of Planning Application 213086 on Thursday 2nd February?

I feel that your report to the planning committee is clearly biased towards approval as you have not disclosed key information to allow the councillors to make a true informed decision.

Are the planning committee going to visit the proposed site before the meeting?

What information is given to the planning committee to make an impartial informed decision, is it just your report?

There are elements of objection comments that you brushed over in favour of the need for affordable housing approval on a proposed rural exception site. Why isn't the text, as shown below, part of your report? The full objection, dated 15/12/22, needs to be shared with all councillors making the decision about this planning application so that they are not prejudiced. Is this something that can happen? If not, then can you explain why not?

2. Over-reliance on outdated and misleading data from Local Housing Needs Survey

Another key element of a rural exception site is that the proposed development must meet a clearly identified local housing need. The Proposal fails to provide sufficient evidence of a clear local need.

The Proposal refers to a Housing Needs Survey (HNS) that was performed in early 2020. This will soon be three years old and is therefore simply too old to use as a basis for assessing local housing needs and views of local residents. Nevertheless, I have reviewed the 2020 HNS, noting that it only had a response rate of 25% and therefore represents the views of a minority of residents.

Of the 25% of residents that responded, the HNS found that there was some support (69%) for a small development of 4-8 homes primarily for affordable housing where one or two open market houses were to be included. Note that this is 69% of the 25% of respondents, making up only 17.25% of residents. More importantly, this question lacks sufficient detail to be relevant to a rural exception site. The question does not ask whether residents would be in support of a small development that is to be built outside of the identified village settlement boundary on green open space.

If respondents were asked about building a development of 4-8 homes on green open space in the heart of the village outside of the settlement boundary, the support would plummet. Furthermore, if it was made clear that these new homes will not count towards the CBCs target of new homes in Copford and Easthorpe (and therefore will be additional homes on top of what local residents already feel is a large increase), support for the site would drop further still to the point where I suspect none would remain.

It is clear from the HNS that the main reason respondents had a desire to move to alternative accommodation was to set up their first / independent home, with 68% of households citing this option. There was a strong desire from those in need to own their own property with 82% preferring to own part or all of their property. I understand that the proposed properties for local residents under the Proposal are rental properties. If the majority of the individuals identified have a desire to own their own property, the housing in the Proposal will be useless.

Furthermore, the HNS indicates that there are seven applicants on the CBC housing register who have stated a local connection to Copford. There is no information as to the needs and desires of those people, who may have no interest whatsoever in moving into the proposed accommodation. It is impossible to confirm without further information and there is clearly a risk that these properties do not meet the needs or desires of the very people it claims to be for. Further information should be sought as to the appropriateness and effectiveness of the site in meeting the referenced local housing need.

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I would like to feel that CBC planning department are fully transparent and would provide all the key information to ensure that councillors are not biased in any way.

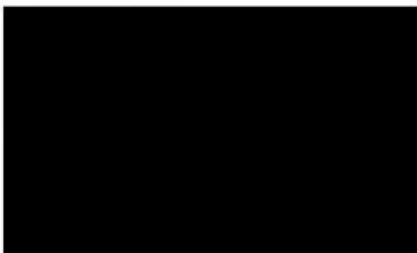
I'm afraid that your report does not support this view, as why would you not refer to the above extract, maybe this is something that you can help answer?


Of course, there is little time to react to a report that only appeared yesterday and within a week a planning decision is going to be made.

If you could get back to me on all the above questions as a matter of urgency, then I'd appreciate it.

Kind regards,
Matt

Matt Free MSL





From: Matt Free

Sent: 27 January 2023 17:19

To: Eleanor Moss <Eleanor.Moss@colchester.gov.uk>

Cc: Karen Syrett <Karen.Syrett@colchester.gov.uk>; jennifer.goff@btinternet.com

Subject: RE: Planning Application: 213086

Hi Eleanor,

Sorry, yes please can you ask the policy team to contact me in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan.

You mention in your report; 'There is an emerging Neighbourhood Plan for Copford. This is currently at examination and therefore limited weight is attached to this. If the Examiner's Report concludes the Copford Neighbourhood Plan can proceed to referendum then further weight can be attached'.

What does this actually mean? What happens if the neighbourhood plan is approved after the planning committee make their decision?

The Government website states: 'Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area'.

If there is so much local objection to this planning application, and you are aware that the neighbourhood plan is being examined, then why is this application being pushed through now? Surely you should wait until the examiner has reported his findings?

All feels a little underhand to me.

I'll await your response.

Many thanks,
Matt

Matt Free MSLL



[REDACTED]

From: Eleanor Moss <Eleanor.Moss@colchester.gov.uk>
Sent: 27 January 2023 16:06
To: Matt Free <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Karen Syrett <Karen.Syrett@colchester.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: Planning Application: 213086

Hello Matt,

This is committee report which I have written for next Planning Committee on 2nd February, with the recommendation for approval. It will be up to Planning Committee to determine the application.

I am afraid there are no set timescales when it comes to neighbourhood plan examination and therefore I can't say when it will be likely the examiners report will be available. I can check with our policy team and ask them to give you a latest update on the neighbourhood plan if that helps?

Kind regards,

Eleanor Moss | Principal Planning Officer | Colchester City Council
T: 01206 506824 | Place & Client Services



From: Matt Free <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 27 January 2023 11:14
To: Eleanor Moss <Eleanor.Moss@colchester.gov.uk>
Cc: Karen Syrett <Karen.Syrett@colchester.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: Planning Application: 213086

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Hi Eleanor,

Good morning, I hope that you are well.

I have just noticed that a 'Committee Report' has appeared on the planning portal.

Can you let me know what this for? It appears that it has been written on behalf of the applicant, therefore biased towards approval, but I wanted to know what gravitas it has?

Of course, there is a lot of local objections to a consideration to build on green agricultural land, hence the reason to find out what is going on with this application.

I think I have asked this in the past, but whilst I've got you, is there a typical timescale for approval of a Local Neighbourhood Plan?

If you could give me an update on this application, I would appreciate it.

Many thanks,
Matt

Matt Free MSU

