

APPENDIX 2

Planning Committee

19 July 2018

2.6 REFERENCE NO - 17/506010/FULL		
APPLICATION PROPOSAL Erection of an 74 suite Care Home (use class C2) with associated car parking, refuse and external landscaping.		
ADDRESS Southlands Rook Lane Bobbing Sittingbourne Kent ME9 8DZ		
WARD Bobbing, Iwade And Lower Halstow	PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL Bobbing	APPLICANT Graham Land & Development AGENT Carless & Adams Partnership

The Major Projects Officer reported that the Economic Development Team generally had not much to comment on the application, and were generally supportive of it and had welcomed the opportunity for apprenticeships and new job opportunities.

The Major Projects Officer considered the application to be acceptable and in accordance with both the National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Plan.

The Chairman moved the officer recommendation to approve the application and this was seconded by the Vice-Chairman.

Parish Councillor Graham Herbert, representing Bobbing Parish Council, spoke against the application.

Joanne Prudence, an objector, spoke against the application.

Melissa Magee, the Agent, spoke in support of the application.

A visiting Member spoke against the application. He acknowledged the need for this type of facility, and also raised the following points: the site was not appropriate for the development; concerned with the extensive and large scale of the building; the land was not designated for development; it was on a rural lane; the site had poor accessibility, with a lack of public transport; the nearby roads were hazardous; unsafe roads for walking or cycling; busy in rush hour, adding to air pollution; should not allow a development that did not improve or keep neutral the impact on air quality; and this was the wrong site for the size of the development.

Another visiting Member read out a statement from a Ward Member which included the following points: this was a beautiful valley and the development caused demonstrable harm; should not be building on green fields; this was too close to residential dwellings; loss of light; noise pollution; waste collection noise and odours; it did not fit in with the area; and suggested a site meeting took place.

The Senior Development Planner (KCC) explained that traffic movement data for both the former elderly, mentally, infirm day centre and proposed care home uses had been derived from the industry-recognised prediction software tool called TRICS. This had demonstrated that the extant last use of the site could potentially have generated more traffic movements than for the proposed use.

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Councillor James Hunt moved a motion for a site meeting. This was seconded by Councillor Mike Henderson.

The following points were raised in discussion on the benefits, or not, of having a site meeting: this was a poor location, a site meeting would see that; not necessary as would not see what was going to be built there; context of the topography of the land would be beneficial; it was possible to see everything with the use of photographs and plans, without meeting on site; and it would be beneficial to view Rook Lane, the traffic, and see the slope at the site, with regard to any potential overlooking.

On being put to the vote, the Chairman was required to use his casting vote, and the motion for a site meeting was lost.

Further discussion ensued which included the following points: the site was near to an Air Quality Management Area, there would be more traffic and transport movements; Key Street would be 'havoc'; unsuitable site for a care home, especially when emergency vehicles were required; the countryside was an ideal site for this type of facility; if Kent Highways and Transportation did not object to the application, the Council could not use highways as a reason for refusal; turning in from the A2 was bad; could not understand the logic of Highway's figures, with staff, commercial vehicles and visitors accessing the site; could not believe there would not be an increase in traffic movements from its previous use; this was a known dangerous junction on a blind hill; impact on the landscape from afar; this would blight the area and was detrimental to the visual amenity of local residents; the facility was likely to only have low light at night for the staff and so light pollution should not be an issue; and did not consider the patients would cause issues of overlooking to neighbouring properties.

A Member requested a one word answer as to whether the junction was currently considered to be dangerous, and the Senior Development Planner (KCC) said 'no'.

The Vice-Chairman withdrew his seconding of the proposal.

The Major Projects Officer explained that the TRICS system used by KCC Highways and Transportation to interrogate traffic data was well respected and could be relied upon for reliable comparisons between different land uses.

Councillor Andy Booth moved a motion to defer the application for more detailed evidence of the highways data and consideration of air quality. This was seconded by the Chairman. The Proposer and Seconder agreed to an amendment by Councillor Mike Henderson to include improved design quality and consideration of landscape impact and visual amenity. On being put to the vote, the motion was agreed.

Resolved: That application 17/506010/FULL be deferred for more detailed evidence of the highways data and consideration of air quality, and improved design quality and consideration of visual amenity and landscape implications.