

# **Report to the District Development Control Committee**



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

***Date of meeting: 17 April 2007***

**Subject: Planning Application EPF/2230/05 – Land at rear of Fyfield Hall, Willingale Road, Fyfield**

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## **Recommendation**

That the Committee considers the recommendation of Area Plans Sub-Committee B/C that planning permission be granted for the conversion of barns to five residential units and erection of six new houses at Fyfield Hall, Willingale Road, Fyfield.

## **Report**

### **Background**

1. This application has been referred to this Committee by Area Plans Sub-Committee B/C with the recommendation that planning permission be granted.
2. The application was reported to the Area Sub Committee with a recommendation that planning permission be granted subject to conditions and subject to the applicants first entering into a legal agreement under Section 106 to ensure the provision and management of a proposed wildflower meadow and riverside nature area. The committee report is attached to the agenda for this meeting. Members of the Area Sub Committee considered that the legal agreement should also encompass provision of £100,000 as a commuted sum towards the provision of affordable housing in the District. Since that meeting however the applicants have suggested that they would prefer to make some monies available for local community facilities for the use of new residents of the proposed scheme and for local people and are suggesting £70,000 towards affordable housing across the District together with £20,000 towards extension and refurbishment to the Fyfield Village Hall and £10,000 towards improvements to children's play facilities in the village.
3. The Area Sub Committee also asked that officers clarify two issues that they felt were not clear from the original report.
4. Firstly, what is the proposed use of the listed dovecot building. This is marked as "storage" on the submitted plans and for clarification this is intended to be domestic storage use in connection with the adjoining barn conversion (Unit 8) and not a commercial storage use.
5. Secondly, how the long-term management of the proposed wildflower area and riverside walk were to be achieved. Following discussion with the applicant it is clear that the riverside "walk" indicated on the plans is mis-named. The intention is not to provide a public walkway but simply to provide a managed area of land for plant and wildlife. The intention is that both this area and the

wildflower meadow will be created by the developers and managed in the long term by a residents' management group.

### **Planning Issues**

6. The main issues in determining the application concern whether very special circumstances exist in this case, which allow an exception to be made to Green Belt policy.
7. When considering this submission, the Area Plans Sub Committee agreed with the officer's report that very special circumstances exist in this case. These are: the very significant improvement to the setting of the Grade I Listed Fyfield Hall from the removal of inappropriate buildings and uses from its setting, an overall increase in the openness of the site, a significant reduction in traffic movements in the rural area, the removal of open storage and parking and the incorporation of a wildflower meadow within the scheme. The Sub Committee members however felt that in addition there was a need to provide a contribution to affordable housing in the district and the sum of £100,000 was suggested, however there was also some discussion at the Sub Committee about the provision of local community facilities and the applicants preference towards providing monies to meet identified local needs is also appropriate. The provision of £70,000 towards the provision of affordable housing and £30,000 to be overseen by the District Council in conjunction with the Parish Council toward improving local community facilities would be in accordance with policies H6A and I1A of the adopted Local Plan.

### **Conclusion**

8. Should the Committee be minded to grant planning permission, it will be subject to the conditions included in the officer's report to the Area Sub Committee, and subject to a legal agreement to establish and maintain the wildflower meadow and riverside area and such other requirement, be it affordable housing or local community facilities, or a mix of the two, as members consider appropriate.