

PLANNING VISITING SUB-COMMITTEE

Friday, 12 March 2021
(11:30 am - 12:15 pm)

Present: Cllr Muhammad Saleem (Chair), Cllr John Dulwich (Deputy Chair) and Cllr Dominic Twomey

Also Present: Cllr Princess Bright

1. FELS FARM, DAGENHAM ROAD - 20/02167/FULL

Following a deferral at the Planning Committee on 16 February 2021, an appointed Visiting Sub-Committee met at Fels Farm, 360 Dagenham Road, Rush Green to review the impact of a planning application for a residential development on the openness of the setting in the surrounding Green Belt, so as enable the Committee to make an informed decision at its meeting on 22 March 2021. Given the current lockdown, attendance was restricted to three Members and one ward councillor.

The Sub Committee met with the applicant and their agent. It was noted that the site was currently being used as a temporarily storage area for used vehicles prior to sale elsewhere. The Deputy Chief Planner referencing the site plan outlined the application which involves the demolition of a number of existing buildings including the barn fronting Dagenham Road, and the construction of seven new dwellings comprising three x 4-bedroom detached and four x 3-bedroom semi-detached properties, each with off-road parking and generous amenity space.

Members took the opportunity to view the site from Dagenham Road and then walked its entire boundary from the road and into the adjacent Country Park, noting that given the surrounding trees, the site's setting and the heights of the proposed properties, they would not be easily seen from the Country Park.

Having viewed the site and raised a number of questions with the applicant/agent and officers, the Sub-Committee concluded the visit, and reconvened at a Teams meeting on Wednesday 17 March, to which all the appointed Members of the Sub-Committee and the three ward councillors were invited to attend.

** Councillor Sanchia Alasia attended on 17 March for the deliberations.*

The Chair outlined the findings from the visit. It was the view of the Sub-Committee that the proposed development would have a negligible bearing on the openness and amenity of the surrounding Green Belt and represented a significant improvement on the current permitted use.

It was acknowledged however that the local ward councillors were still opposed to the application for the reasons outlined at the Planning Committee, and specifically that approval to this application in the Green Belt would set a dangerous precedent for future developments in the area and that the existing barn was a symbol of the Borough's agricultural heritage and consequently should be retained.

