REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE FULL COMMITTEE SITE INSPECTION GROUP HELD ON MONDAY, 2 JULY 2007

(53/1675/06/O, 53/1674/06/CA & 53/1673/06/CA) (i) outline application for erection of 42 new dwellings and conversion of building to one dwelling and construction roads and footpaths; (ii) conversion of barns to 4 dwellings; (iii) Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of 5 lean-to additions to barns – Land between Shorneywell and Orchard Way, Chillington

Present: Cllr B E Cane
Cllr R J Carter
Cllr S E Cooper
Cllr P Coulson
Cllr G J Fielden (Chairman)
Cllr M J Hicks
Cllr I Longrigg
Cllr D M O'Callaghan
Cllr R Rowe
Cllr J W Squire
Cllr R C Steer
Cllr R J Vint
Cllr A Ward

In attendance and participating:
S Munday (Head of Planning and Building Control)
Cllr J Baverstock (local Ward Member)
Cllr P Greening (Chairman of the Parish Council)

Also in attendance but not participating:
Objectors and supporters

(Note: apologies for absence were received from Cllrs H D Bastone, J Brazil, J D Hawkins, J T Pennington and J A Westacott)

During the introduction, Cllrs B F Cane, R J Carter, G J Fielden, R Rowe and R J Vint wished to declare personal interests in the planning applications 53/1675/06/O, 53/1674/06/CA & 53/1673/06/CA by virtue of their association with members of the Helmer Trustees.

In introducing the application, the Head of Planning and Building Control (HPBC) made particular reference to aspects which should be taken into consideration whilst looking around the site. These included the application in the context of planning policies, traffic issues and the traffic calming proposals, density of development in comparison to the remainder of the village, infrastructure capacity, suitability of converting the stand alone barn adjacent to the pub, the conversion of the scheme as a whole and the loss of trees and wildlife considering the site was located in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The Group walked the footprint of the site to gauge the setting in comparison to neighbouring properties and its context in relation to the surrounding countryside. Particular reference was made to the proposed access road onto the site noting that the Highway Authority had raised no objection to this aspect, the gradient of the land down to the southern end of the development and its boundary in comparison to the flood plain, along with how the two storey dwellings would compare to the existing adjacent bungalows. Furthermore, the proximity of the proposed footpath links was also highlighted.

The local Ward Member advised those present that he was surprised that the Highway Authority had not raised any objections the application. It was felt that with the main access into and out of the site being from the A379, there were considerable safety risks to pedestrians as well as the additional traffic.

The Parish Council (PC) representative advised Members that although it was appreciated that the land was earmarked for development and that the parish plan had identified the need for further affordable housing, the main reason for objecting to the application was due to the perceived over density of the housing suggested along with concern over the access road onto the A379 and due to it being in a conservation area. Furthermore, it was noted that although a new village hall was an aspiration, a preferred option would be to renovate the existing village hall. In conclusion, the PC representative noted that should the committee be minded to support the application, then a section 106 agreement which supported the parish exclusively should be incorporated into the conditions.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

(a) The necessity of incorporating a pinch point on the A379. In response it was noted that this was a traffic calming initiative to reduce speed and also provide a pavement for safe pedestrian access;

(b) The availability of car parking spaces. It was noted that there was sufficient parking to support the development and in the case of the money for the proposed village hall being used to renovate the existing hall, then this site could be used for further parking facilities;

(c) The housing need for the village of Chillington. Following a query, the HPBC noted that he would ascertain the statistics for presenting to the Development Control Committee when it next considered the application.

The Chairman concluded the inspection by emphasising to those present that the application would be fully reconsidered afresh at 18 July 2007 Development Control Committee meeting.