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## Planning Committee

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**MINUTES** of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT on Thursday, 11 September 2025 from 7.01 pm - 10.14 pm.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Andy Booth (Chairman), Hayden Brawn, Derek Carnell (Substitute for Councillor Monique Bonney), Ann Cavanagh, Lloyd Chapman, Simon Clark (Vice-Chair), James Hunt, Peter MacDonald, Peter Marchington, Julien Speed, Paul Stephen, Terry Thompson, Karen Watson (Substitute for Councillor Kieran Golding) and Tony Winckless.

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Rebecca Corrigan, Ian Harrison, Joanne Johnson, Kellie MacKenzie and Ben Oates.

**OFFICERS PRESENT (VIRTUALLY):** Surinder Atkar.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillors Monique Bonney (visiting Ward Member), Chris Palmer and Richard Palmer.

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Monique Bonney, Kieran Golding, Claire Martin and Ben J Martin.

### 302 **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

The Chairman outlined the emergency evacuation procedure.

### 303 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 July 2025 (Minute Nos. 197 – 207) were taken as read, agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### 304 **Declarations of Interest**

No interests were declared.

### 305 **2.1 - 24/500125/FULL Land at Pitstock Farm, Pitstock Road, Rodmersham, Kent, ME9 OQN**

| <b>2.1 REFERENCE NO 24/500125/FULL</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>PROPOSAL</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                     |
| Installation and operation of a renewable energy generating station comprising ground-mounted photovoltaic solar arrays together with inverter/transformer units, control house, substations, onsite grid connection equipment, storage containers, site access, access gates, internal access tracks, security measures, other ancillary infrastructure, and landscaping and biodiversity enhancement. |                                     |
| <b>SITE LOCATION</b> Land At Pitstock Farm, Pitstock Road, Rodmersham, Kent                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                     |
| <b>WARD</b> West Downs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                     |
| <b>PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL</b> Rodmersham PC, Bapchild PC, and Milstead PC                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                     |
| <b>APPLICANT</b> Voltalia UK Ltd                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>AGENT</b> Stantec (Maeve Whelan) |

The Planning Consultant introduced the application as set out in the report. He referred to the two tabled updates which included: further objections from Rodmersham Parish Council; and a further objection from CPRE - The Countryside Charity (Kent). The Planning Consultant gave a presentation of the application, which included: site location; site context; proposed site layout; visualisation; agricultural land classification; alternative sites search area; and proposed landscaping.

Parish Councillor Richard Bush, representing Bapchild Parish Council, spoke against the application.

Parish Councillor Duncan Burnett, representing Rodmersham Parish Council, spoke against the application.

Paul Forshaw, an Objector, spoke against the application.

Robert Chamberlain, the Applicant, spoke in support of the application.

The Chairman moved the officer recommendation to grant planning permission as per the recommendation in the report, and this was seconded by the Vice-Chairman.

A visiting Ward Member spoke against the application.

The Chairman invited Members to make comments, and these included:

- Aware that similar applications on best and most versatile agricultural land had been refused by Local Authorities and upheld by Planning Inspectors on appeal;
- offshore windfarms generated far more electricity than solar farms;
- there was no justifiable reason to erect solar farms on agricultural land;
- surprised that this was considered acceptable on Grade 1 agricultural land;
- highway concerns regarding access to the site;
- other sites were available;
- the application would result in a loss of employment in the area;
- the Council had a duty to protect Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and farmland;
- the industrialisation of farmland was unacceptable;
- struggled to see how the benefits of the application did not outweigh the harm that would be caused;
- the local rural lanes were too narrow for HGVs to access safely;
- there would be ecological and biodiversity harm;
- Grade 1 agricultural land needed to be protected for the nation's food security;
- there was no mitigation to protect the views of local residents;
- a lot of hedgerows would need to be removed to accommodate the application and these could not be mitigated against easily;
- there needed to be a change of government policy to ensure new housing was fitted with solar panels rather than having solar farms;
- the Vigo Lane, Sittingbourne appeal decision which had been approved and this was very similar to this application in terms of size and the objections raised; and
- Kent County Council (KCC) Highways, Transportation & Waste had not objected so could not refuse on highway grounds.

In response to questions from the Chairman, the Planning Consultant outlined the revised mitigation measures the applicant had agreed with officers as set out in

paragraph 3.5 on page 13 of the report. A Community Fund had been offered by the applicant but he was unsure whether it would be appropriate as mitigation measures needed to meet the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulation Tests and be relevant and necessary in policy terms.

Prior to the vote, the Chairman reminded Members that if they voted against the application, they would need to provide a substantial reason for refusing and attend any subsequent appeal hearing.

As the vote was tied, the Chairman used his casting vote to approve the application.

Councillors Karen Watson and Tony Winckless asked that it be noted that they had abstained from voting.

***Resolved: That application 24/500125/FULL be granted as per the recommendation in the report.***

## 306 2.2 - Land West of Church Lane, Newington, Kent, ME9 7JJ

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>2.2 REFERENCE NO 25/500761/FULL</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>PROPOSAL</b><br>Erection of 90 no. residential dwellings, together with associated access, open space, landscaping, drainage, infrastructure works and earthworks, and the provision of car parking spaces for existing residents. |
| <b>SITE LOCATION</b> Land West of Church Lane, Newington, Kent                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>WARD</b> Hartlip, Newington and Upchurch                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL</b> Newington                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>APPLICANT</b> Fernham Homes Operations Limited <b>AGENT</b> DHA Planning                                                                                                                                                           |

The Planning Manager introduced the application as set out in the report. He referred to the tabled update which included: comments from Network Rail; a link to the Members' briefing note from the applicant; and a representation from a Ward Member proposing four reasons for refusal. The Planning Manager reported that the applicant had responded to the representation from the Ward Member, highlighting that the education requirements had been included in the application which sought a Section 106 Agreement which would address those matters. They also advised that lighting could be provided by way of condition, and whilst it was proposed on the footpath, had been avoided elsewhere in line with the ecological conditions.

Parish Councillor Stephen Harvey, representing Newington Parish Council spoke against the application.

Jayne Venables, an Objector, spoke against the application.

The visiting Ward Members spoke against the application.

The Chairman moved the officer recommendation to grant planning permission as per the recommendation in the report, and this was seconded by the Vice-Chairman.

The Chairman invited Members to make comments, and these included:

- The application was a 'continuation' of the original development which had been

allowed at appeal;

- street lighting should be provided;
- there were currently huge infrastructure issues in Swale for education provision and this needed to be considered;
- the application was contrary to the Development Plan;
- noted that there was a history of refusals on the site;
- could a condition requiring relevant street lighting be imposed?;
- concerned that the public footpath was not wide enough; and
- highway safety concerns.

A Member referred to the request from one of the visiting Ward Members to impose a Grampian condition requiring that no houses be built until the secondary school proposed at Quinton/Grovehurst was completed, and wondered whether this could be imposed? The Planning Manager said it would be unreasonable to impose such a condition as the applicants had no control over when the secondary school would be built. The Senior Lawyer (Planning) added that any such condition would be ill-advised as none of the criteria in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) would be satisfied and it would not be enforceable.

Councillor Tony Winckless moved the following amendment: That condition (13) of the report be amended to include provision of street lighting within the development. This was seconded by the Chairman and agreed by Members.

***Resolved: That application 25/500761/FULL be granted as per the recommendation in the report, subject to the amendment of condition (13) to require street lighting within the development.***

### 307 2.3 - Rose Cottage, The Street, Hartlip, Kent, ME9 7TJ

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| <b>2.3 REFERENCE NO 25/501620/FULL</b>                                                                                                                                                                                    |                              |
| <b>PROPOSAL</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                              |
| Section 73 - Application for variation of Condition 2 (Garage Location and Extension to rear of the Garage) and Condition 5 (Foundation design & Tree Protection Strategy) related to planning permission 24/500695/FULL. |                              |
| <b>SITE LOCATION</b> Rose Cottage, The Street, Hartlip, Kent, ME9 7TJ                                                                                                                                                     |                              |
| <b>WARD</b> Hartlip, Newington and Upchurch                                                                                                                                                                               |                              |
| <b>PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL</b> Hartlip                                                                                                                                                                                        |                              |
| <b>APPLICANT</b> Mr and Mrs A Nicholls                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>AGENT</b> Lander Planning |

The Planning Manager introduced the application as set out in the report. He drew attention to the tabled update which set-out a representation received objecting to the application; and the applicant's response.

Klaire Lander, the Agent, spoke in support of the application.

The visiting Ward Members, spoke against the application.

The Chairman moved the officer recommendation to grant planning permission as per the recommendation in the report, and this was seconded by the Vice-Chairman.

***Resolved: That application 25/501620/FULL be granted as per the***

***recommendation in the report.*****308 3.1 - 25-25A West Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 1AL**

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| <b>3.1 REFERENCE NO 23/500931/FULL</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                        |
| <b>PROPOSAL</b><br>Partial change of use of ground floor offices to residential, and erection of a two storey rear extension, first floor side extension and a second floor, to create 3no. new residential flats including alterations to existing flat. |                                        |
| <b>SITE LOCATION</b> 25-25A West Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 1AL                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                        |
| <b>WARD</b> Homewood                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                        |
| <b>PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL</b> N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                        |
| <b>APPLICANT</b> Mr Sunil Popat                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>AGENT</b> Wyndham Jordan Architects |

The Planning Officer introduced the application as set out in the report.

Laura Johnson, representing the Applicant, spoke in support of the application.

The Chairman moved the officer recommendation to refuse planning permission as per the recommendation in the report, and this was seconded by the Vice-Chairman.

Councillor Paul Stephen who had called-in the application outlined his reasons for calling it in which included: it would provide much needed affordable housing; it was in-keeping with other properties and would enhance the area; the flat roof would not be visible; and it was in a sustainable location.

In response, the Planning Officer said that the reasons for refusing the application was to do with the proportions and design and their impact on the streetscene. She noted there had been a number of revised drawings and said both she and the Council's Urban Design advisor had worked with the applicant to provide a better design and options on how that could be achieved. The Planning Manager stated that the application was not affordable in planning terms.

A Ward Member stated that he agreed with officers that, the application would be visually intrusive.

The Chairman invited Members to make comments, and these included:

- Aware that officers had worked with the applicant to provide an application that would be more acceptable;
- the proposed flats would be very small;
- considered it was acceptable as it was on a brownfield site and would not be visually intrusive;
- the development would be an improvement on what was currently there;
- considered the benefits of the application, outweighed any harm;
- there was a variety of building heights in this location;
- could see how the eaves height could have an impact; and
- there would be significant disruption to local residents during construction.

On being put to the vote the motion to refuse the application was lost.

Councillor Paul Stephen moved a motion to approve the application, subject to suitable conditions. This was seconded by Councillor Terry Thompson.

At this point a Member said they understood that Councillor Paul Stephen was a friend of the applicant. Councillor Stephen stated that whilst he was an acquaintance of the applicant, he was not a friend. He added that he would gain nothing if the application was approved.

Members debated potential reasons for approval based on the points made.

On being put to the vote the motion to approve the application was lost.

Following advice from the Senior Lawyer (Planning) the original motion to refuse the application was moved by Councillor Simon Clark, and seconded by the Chairman. On being put to the vote the motion was approved.

***Resolved: That application 23/500931/FULL be refused as per the recommendation in the report.***

## 309 Part 5 applications

### PART 5

Decisions by County Council and Secretary of State, reported for information

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- **Item 5.1 – 6 Lawday Avenue, Eastchurch, Sheerness, Kent ME12 4BJ**  
**PINS Decision: Appeal Allowed**  
**Committee or Officer Decision : Delegated Refusal**

The Chairman said it was a disappointing decision.

- **Item 5.2 – A299 Thanet Way, Hernhill, Kent, ME13 9EL**  
**PINS Decision: Appeal Dismissed**  
**Committee or Officer Decision : Delegated Refusal**

- **Item 5.3 - Ivy Pham House, 123 Marine Parade, Sheerness ME12 2BX**  
**PINS Decision: Appeal Dismissed**  
**Committee or Officer Decision : Delegated Refusal**

- **Item 5.4 – 34 Court Tree Drive, Eastchurch, Kent, ME12 4TR**  
**PINS Decision: Appeal Allowed**  
**Committee or Officer Decision : Delegated Refusal**

The Chairman said he was disappointed with the decision.

- **Item 5.5 – Vanity Farm Camp, Leysdown Road, Leysdown, Kent, ME12 4LN**  
**PINS Decision: Appeal Dismissed**  
**Committee or Officer Decision : Delegated Refusal**

The Chairman welcomed the decision. A Member said it was an “excellent decision”.

- **Item 5.6 – Units 1 & 2 Parsonage Farm, Seed Road, Newnham, Kent, ME9 0NA**

**PINS Decision: Appeal Dismissed Committee or Officer Decision : Appeal Against Non-Determination**

- **Item 5.7 – Redcot, Bell Farm Lane, Minster-on-sea, Kent, ME12 4JB**

**PINS Decision: Appeal Dismissed  
Committee or Officer Decision : Delegated Refusal**

- **Item 5.8 – 51 Parsonage Chase, Minster-on-sea, Kent, ME12 3JX**

**PINS Decision: Appeal Dismissed  
Committee or Officer Decision : Delegated Refusal**

- **Item 5.9 – Land at Honeysuckle Drive, Minster-on-Sea, Sheerness, Kent, ME12 3RE**

**PINS Decision: Appeal Dismissed  
Committee or Officer Decision : Delegated Refusal**

- **Item 5.10 – 22 East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 4RT**

**PINS Decision: Appeal Allowed  
Committee or Officer Decision : Delegated Refusal**

- **Item 5.11 – Moat View, Church Lane, Newington, ME9 7JU**

**PINS Decision: Appeal Dismissed  
Committee or Officer Decision : Delegated Refusal**

- **Item 5.12 – 24 Athelstan Road, Faversham, Kent, ME13 8QL**

**PINS Decision: Appeal Dismissed  
Committee or Officer Decision : Delegated Refusal**

### **310 Adjournment of Meeting**

The meeting was adjourned from 8.10 pm until 8.20 pm.

### **311 Extension of Standing Orders**

At 10 pm, Members agreed to the suspension of Standing Orders in order that the Committee could complete its business.

Chairman

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All minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel