

**PLANNING COMMITTEE REPRESENTATION ON TWO APPLICATIONS AT
CAMBRIDGE ROAD, STANSTED UTT/13/1126/OP AND 13/1456/OP**

14 AND 10 CAMBRIDGE ROAD, STANSTED

I am sorry that I cannot be with you in person today. My remarks are mainly directed at 14 Cambridge Road, with passing reference to 10 Cambridge Road.

In summer 2012 you twice rightly refused applications for 14 homes on this site. Your officers say that this latest application is substantially different and so should be approved.

That claim does not stand up to examination. The reasons you refused the previous proposals 12 months ago were over-development of the site and loss of employment land. This application is worse. It has added commercial premises to the previous 14 houses? Over-development has become gross over-development!

The addition of a three-storey commercial building is no more than a sop. It is an ill-considered gesture towards the appropriate continued commercial and employment use of much of the site, but on less than 10% of the available land area. With next to zero parking provision, it is an insult to good planning practice.

Stansted Mountfitchet is growing rapidly, with an increasing demand for services and employment. In the past three months a woodfuel business has been forced out of Cambridge Road and Stansted altogether. It needed larger premises that the application site could have provided. Stansted Business Forum has said that this site could meet known demand for office, workshop and e-commerce premises. This year Google voted Stansted the e-commerce capital of the East of England.

The proposal that the three adjoining sites besides Cambridge Road should together become a Development Opportunity Site has been welcomed.

Comprehensive redevelopment of the three sites is supported by the associated reports from Carter Jonas and Essex Place Services. But delivery requires the planning authority NOT to accept the first major application that comes along from one of the three landowners in isolation from the other two. Only one of the reports' eight success criteria is met by this application.

To approve 14 Cambridge Road would make a mockery of this initiative. It would (i) undermine redevelopment on the other two sites (ii) not even provide its own parking requirements and (iii) do nothing to mitigate store delivery chaos on Cambridge Road.

There are 39 pay-and-display spaces at the Crafton Green car park. Local businesses are complaining that they are losing custom when the car park is full. Ticket sales have risen by 25% in the past year (according to the council's own data). New and expanding businesses with no land for off-street parking are increasing the demand for car parking spaces.

Your officers' report is silent on evidence about car park occupancy beyond that provided by the applicant.

Even if the applicant were correct that the maximum occupancy rate is 70%, only 12 spaces would be left to make up the deficit of 19 spaces that would be generated were the application implemented. When, as is the actual case, demand exceeds all 39 spaces, the success of existing Cambridge Road businesses risks being undermined by this inadequate proposal.

Sustainable development does not mean to cram as many homes as possible almost anywhere you can. It means to plan them in the right places.

Hundreds of people already live in and besides Stansted's centre. Hence, sustainability in Stansted's centre means enabling sustained economic and service activity; not cramming it full of homes.

That is how the National Planning Policy Framework should be applied to Stansted's town centre; encouraging its economic vitality.

In contrast with 14 Cambridge Road, the application at 10 Cambridge Road should be approved because it will bring new services and new jobs to the town centre.

Better proposals are bound to come forward at No. 14 in due course. You have received a solicitor's letter confirming a financial bid was made in recent months to retain the site for commercial use.

Sustainable development is not achieved by backing quick fixes - and quick bucks for landowners - through inappropriate schemes that cannot be undone during most of our lifetimes.

I urge you to propose and to vote for refusal of the application at 14 Cambridge Road, Stansted and to approve the application at 10 Cambridge Road.

Thank you for listening to me and – I hope it – watching me this afternoon.

Cllr Alan Dean

Member for Stansted South, Uttlesford District Council