

Written response:

This planning application (LPA reference: 21/0573/FUL) was lodged by the Developer in March 2021, but only first presented to the Planning Committee for their determination on 21 October 2021. Delays in respect of the finalisation of the Committee Report were not caused by Members but amongst others things by the discovered presence on the site of a protected moth and the need for additional technical information (e.g. Highways, Environment Agency, noise) from consultees.

On 21 October 2021 Members resolved to defer the determination of the application for the following reason: that the risks the development may pose to the adjacent Maple Lodge Nature Reserve had not been fully understood and/or that the suggested conditions would ensure there would be no harm. Members requested that the Council instruct its own expert to review the application, in particular in respect of the impacts of the development on groundwater and the adjacent nature reserve. They were fully entitled to take this course of action.

Following the meeting, the Developer chose to lodge an appeal against the non-determination of the application, a decision which they were fully entitled to make. It is not agreed or conceded that Members of the Planning Committee “fail[ed]” local residents in reaching a decision that further information was required before it could be properly satisfied that it was in a position to determine the application.