

## Samuel Ball

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**From:** David Gill  
**Sent:** 30 March 2020 14:58  
**To:** Samuel Ball  
**Subject:** FW: Re: Officer Panel - Cottage Farm application  
**Attachments:** Chief Planners Newsletter - March 2020.pdf

Dave Gill  
Monitoring Officer  
(Head of Law and Democracy)

0116 257 2626

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**From:** David Gill  
**Sent:** 26 March 2020 10:07  
**To:** I\_Councillors  
**Subject:** Re: Officer Panel - Cottage Farm application

Dear Members

Various officers have received email and telephone communication regarding the meeting of the Officer Panel to consider the outstanding application for the Cottage Farm development with a request that this matter be deferred until such time as there can be more substantive member and public involvement.

On Monday 23 March the Council received guidance from the Government via the Chief Planning Office (copy attached) that stressed that the planning functions of local authorities are to be regarded as a critical function in protecting the economy (particularly in the recovery phase) and as far as practicable planning decisions should continue to be made using delegated authority where appropriate. From this advice it is the understanding of officers that the Planning Inspectorate will continue to function and that the time limits are not in abeyance. You will see from the application report that this application is already outside of those time limits and if a decision is not made then there is the possibility of an appeal for non-determination.

Aside from the above this site is an allocated site within the local plan and therefore the principle of development has been agreed at a strategic level. As always there is a risk that if this decision is not made then the Local Plan will be put in jeopardy and the flood gates will be opened to speculative applications.

There has been extensive consultation with the public and officers are seeking to maximise the involvement of both yourselves and the public. All Members of the planning committee have been invited to submit any representations that they made orally, in writing. Other members may do so if they wish. The registered speakers have been given a similar opportunity.

Any failure to make a decision leading to an appeal would also reduce the ability of the Council to protect local residents by tailoring any conditions to address local concerns and may also impact on the amount and/or quantity of Sec 106 contributions that can be secured by negotiation with the developer.

Finally, and for the avoidance of any doubt, this is not a rubber stamping exercise. Officers are well aware of the concerns of both members and the public and the application will be subject to rigorous and robust examination with all factors for and against the application being balanced before the decision is made.

I trust that this goes some way to assuage the concerns that have been raised but we are required to continue to function in extraordinary times. As and when provision is made to enable virtual meetings officers will prioritise the introduction of them as soon as practicable

Dave Gill  
Monitoring Officer  
(Head of Law and Democracy)

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