

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD ON 13 MARCH 2019 FROM 7.00 PM TO 9.20 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Tim Holton (Chairman), Chris Bowring (Vice-Chairman), Carl Doran, John Jarvis, Malcolm Richards, Angus Ross, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey and Wayne Smith

Councillors Present and Speaking

Councillors: UllaKarin Clark, John Halsall and Abdul Loyes

Officers Present

Marcia Head, Lead Specialist, Development Management & Compliance
Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager
Mary Severin, Borough Solicitor
Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist

Case Officers Present

Stefan Fludger
Senjuti Manna
Simon Taylor

77. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillor Bill Soane.

78. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 13 February 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

MEMBERS' UPDATE

There are a number of references to the Members' Update within these minutes. The Members' Update was circulated to all present prior to the meeting. A copy is attached.

79. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

80. APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS

There were no applications recommended for deferral, or withdrawn.

81. APPLICATION NO 183208 - BROOK HOUSE AND READYPOWER HOUSE, MOLLY MILLARS LANE

Proposal: Full application for the proposed change of use from existing mixed use to Sui Generis mixed use (B1c/B2/B8) to include erection of extension to Brook House, installation of solar panels and two silos, engineering excavation work, ancillary parking and demolition of existing ReadyPower building.

Applicant: Philip Glover, Intersurgical.

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 13 to 74.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Amended condition 12;
- Replacement of condition 14 (Employment Skills Plan, which was deleted because it instead formed part of the legal agreement) with a condition for a Project Community Liaison Group;
- Clarification of the first sentence of condition 15;
- Amended condition 21;
- Amended condition 24 (incorrectly stated as condition 23 within the Members' Update).

Emily Temple, Agent, spoke in favour of the application. She stated that Intersurgical was the second largest employer within Wokingham. Emily added that the NHS was one of Intersurgical's largest clients, and the increase in their Wokingham headquarters would allow Intersurgical to respond to the NHS's growing needs. Emily stated that the application sought to redevelop the adjacent and currently empty site to allow Intersurgical to expand their manufacturing capacity. Emily added that the site would have ample parking for staff, and that environmental surveys had been conducted as part of the application process.

Angus Ross queried whether condition 24 as stated in the Members' Update should have actually been stated as condition 23. Simon Taylor, Case Officer, confirmed that the 'Doors' condition should be stated as condition 23, as in the original agenda.

Wayne Smith queried whether there had been any comments on the application to date. Simon Taylor stated that as of the day of the Planning Committee, no comments had been received from neighbours or the Town Council. Simon added that should the Committee be minded to approve the application in principle, full planning permission would be granted subject to deferral and delegation of the final decision to the Assistant Director of Place Based Services, following consideration of representations received from neighbour notifications, and subject to a legal agreement.

Members of the Committee commented on their support for a large employment provider in the Borough such as Intersurgical, and welcomed their efforts to expand their Wokingham headquarters in line with planning policy and regulations.

Carl Doran queried why hours of use for delivery by heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) was not conditioned. Simon Taylor clarified that there would be on average four HGV movements per day. Simon added that the HGVs originated from Lithuania, making it hard to predict when they would arrive. Simon stated that there had been no complaints regarding noise from the current HGVs to date.

Tim Holton queried how many of the proposed car parking spaces would be affected by flooding. Simon Taylor stated that 14 car parking spaces would be situated within flood zone 3B, which equated to a 1 in 15 year flood risk. Simon added that these spaces would be signposted to inform users of the flooding risks, and that there were early warning systems in place with the Environment Agency.

RESOLVED: That application 183208 be approved in principle, subject to deferral and delegation of the final decision to the Assistant Director of Place Based Services, following consideration of representations received from neighbour notifications; conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 14 to 24; amended conditions 12, 21, 24 and replaced condition 14 as set out in the Members' Update; and subject to legal agreement.

82. APPLICATION NO 183380 - THE DAY CENTRE, SOUTH LAKE CRESCENT, WOODLEY

Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of 10no 3 bed semi-detached, affordable dwellings at the Former Age Concern site, South Lake Crescent.

Applicant: Ms Holly Messenger, Wokingham Housing Ltd

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 75 to 118.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Amended condition 3(b);
- Amended condition 6;
- Amended condition 10;
- Amended condition 15;
- Amended condition 21;
- New condition 24;
- New informative 6;
- Correction to the final sentence of paragraph 86 of the report;
- Amended recommendation to reflect the requirement for a legal agreement to secure the employment skills plan;
- New informative 7.

David Bragg, Woodley Town Council, spoke in objection to the application. He stated that Woodley Town Council had recommended the application for refusal, based predominantly on parking related issues. David added that the Town Council want to see the current site redeveloped, however they wished for this scheme to include communal parking. David stated that there was no restriction for on street parking within South Lake Crescent and the street parking was currently used by existing residents. David added that the road width of 4.8m at its most narrow point was difficult to allow two large cars to pass, and could restrict emergency vehicles access to the properties if any cars were parked on the street. David stated that there would be an increase in the risk of collision on the road as a result of the proposed dwellings, specifically at the bend of the road where there was a blind spot. David stated that most residents would have to drive to access local amenities, and added that the Town Council would prefer less dwellings on the site with provision for communal parking. David asked the Committee to consider implementing a one way system should they be minded to approve the application.

Martin Few, Architect, spoke in favour of the application. Martin stated that he had worked alongside the applicant (Wokingham Housing Ltd) to redevelop the current site. Martin added that the plans and designs of the proposal had been tweaked throughout the process as a result of feedback and community engagement. Martin stated that the public consultations had been very positive, with most of the concerns being focussed on car parking. Martin added that the proposals, including car parking provisions, were in line with policy and regulations and were in keeping with the street scene.

Abdul Loyes, Ward Member, spoke in favour of the application. Abdul stated that Woodley needed more affordable housing, and was of the opinion that the proposed 3 bedroom semi-detached properties would be a welcome addition to the affordable housing supply within Woodley. Abdul added that he welcomed condition 13 (Off Site Works). Abdul

stated that the public consultation had been very positive, however he acknowledged resident concerns regarding car parking. Abdul stated his support for the proposals, and hoped that the Committee would consider and approve more affordable housing schemes in the future. Abdul asked that the Committee approve the application, whilst taking in to account the concerns of the residents.

Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager, responded to concerns raised by some of the speakers regarding parking issues. She stated that the parking provision at the proposed development met Wokingham's car parking standards. Judy added that there was currently spare capacity with the on street parking, and the 10 new vehicular access points would help to prohibit parking in this area. Judy stated that the provision of a footway would improve visibility on the street, and added that the 4.8m minimum road width was deemed acceptable and clarified that the road was situated in a quiet location. Judy stated that changing the road to a one way system would be outside of the scope of the application and would not stand up at a subsequent appeal. Judy noted that the site was previously used as a day care centre, which would not have a dissimilar trip rate to that of the proposed application.

Simon Taylor, Case Officer, clarified that the proposed development was within walking distance to the Woodley Town Centre, with a selection of bus stops on the route.

The Committee welcomed the development of high quality affordable housing schemes within the Borough such as this application.

Carl Doran queried why the affordable housing mix was split 60/40 (affordable renting to shared ownership) rather than 70/30 as stated in the core strategy. In response, Simon Taylor stated that the 70/30 split formed a part of the 2010 core strategy, and as such these figures could change over time. Simon added that the percentage split had been assessed by a policy Officer and was deemed acceptable.

RESOLVED: That application 183380 be approved subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 75 to 83, amended conditions 3(b), 6, 10, 15 and 21 as set out in the Members' Update, new condition 24 and new informatives 6 and 7 as set out in the Members' Update, and subject to legal agreement as set out in the Members' Update.

83. APPLICATION NO 183289 - 5 HATCHGATE COTTAGES, HATCHGATE LANE, COCKPOLE GREEN

Proposal: Householder application for proposed erection of part single, part two storey side/rear extensions, single storey front extension, plus erection of garden room.

Applicant: Mr and Mrs C & J Copland

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 119 to 142.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included a correction to the table at paragraph 16.

Adrian Gould, Agent, spoke in favour of the application. He stated that the application had local precedent with other properties having similar works done to their properties, and fall-back position case law. Adrian was of the opinion that common sense needed to be applied to this application, as the applicant already had permission to build large

outbuildings which would cause more harm and leave a bigger footprint on the greenbelt than the current proposals before the Committee.

Chris Copland, Applicant, spoke in favour of the application. He stated that his property had not been extended to date, whereas neighbouring properties had been. He added that his original application was refused due to the lack of a fall-back position, and as a result the application before the Committee was smaller in volume and footprint than the original application and included a valid fall-back position. Chris stated that the current proposals were less disruptive and impactful on the green belt than the fall-back position, however they were fully prepared to implement the fall-back position should the application be refused.

John Halsall, Ward Member, spoke in favour of the application. He stated that the Planning Case Officer had done a good and thorough job with regards to this application. John was of the opinion that in this particular instance the planning policy was an absurdity, which would cause more harm to the green belt. John stated that he was a strong defender of the green belt, however the green belt required families to protect and maintain it. John added that the NPPF stated that harm to the green belt should be accounted for, and if it would be more harmful to apply planning policy to this application then the policy should not be applied. John stated that the current proposals were less harmful to the greenbelt than the approved fall-back position. John was of the opinion that the Case officer shared this opinion, however they were guided by policy in this instance. John urged the Committee to approve the application as it would cause less harm to the greenbelt than the already approved proposals.

Angus Ross queried where the permitted side extension was approved. Stefan Fludger, Case Officer, clarified that the side extension was approved under delegated powers and amounted to a 34% increase in the volume of the original dwelling.

A number of Member queried why the fall-back position would be unlikely to be implemented. Stefan Fludger stated that the permitted development rights outbuildings would need to be fully constructed prior to the commencement of the side extension. He added that it would appear to be impractical to build the rear outbuildings prior to the commencement of the side extension, and added that it would be difficult for the applicant to use the outbuildings for residential use as they were separated from the main dwelling.

Stefan Fludger clarified that if construction began on the side extension prior to the completion of the permitted development rights construction, then the permitted development rights would be revoked. Mary Severin, Borough Solicitor, confirmed this to be correct.

A number of Members queried what constituted very special circumstances. In response, Stefan Fludger stated that a fall-back position constituted very special circumstances, however Officers had only put limited weight on this particular fall-back position, as it was not deemed feasible for the applicant to live across several outbuildings across the site. Stefan added that the question for the decision maker was to decide how likely the fall-back position was to occur.

A number of Members were of the opinion that the fall-back position was feasible, and would cause greater harm to the green belt than the current application.

Chris Bowring was of the opinion that the ideal situation for the green belt was to refuse the application, as Officers had deemed it unlikely that the fall-back position would be implemented, thereby leaving a lesser footprint on the greenbelt.

Marcia Head, Lead Specialist - Development Management & Compliance, stated that if Members were minded to approve the application, the applicant could build the permitted development rights outbuildings and complete them prior to beginning work on the current application. A number of Members queried whether a legal agreement could be implemented whereby the permitted development rights could be revoked should the current application be approved. Marcia stated that a unilateral agreement could be conditioned should the Committee request it, however stated that the applicant could have submitted a unilateral agreement as part of the application but had not.

The Committee sought clarification from the Agent with regards to the unilateral agreement. Adrian Gould stated that a unilateral agreement had been discussed with the Case Officer and that he and the applicant had expected the application to be recommended for approval subject to a unilateral agreement, and commented that the applicant had already agreed to legal fees of £1000 to support this. In Adrian's opinion, there was a late change of direction from Senior Planning Officers and subsequently the application was recommended for refusal without a unilateral agreement.

RESOLVED: That application 183289 be refused, as the proposed extensions would enlarge the volume of the original dwelling beyond 35% within the greenbelt with no very special circumstances existing which would clearly outweigh the harm identified, and the proposals would therefore be contrary to policies CP12, TB01 and section 13 of the NPPF.

84. APPLICATION NO 190421 - THE EMMBROOK SCHOOL, EMMBROOK ROAD, WOKINGHAM, RG41 1JP

Tim Holton relinquished the Chair to Chris Bowring for the duration of this item.

Proposal: Application to vary condition 3 of planning consent 181565 for an artificial grass pitch with flood lights. Condition 3 refers to the hours of operation; condition 3 to be altered to state: 'The facility shall only be used between the hours of 07:30 until 22:00 hours Monday to Friday and 08:00 hours to 20:00 hours on Weekends and Bank Holidays'.

Applicant: Wokingham Borough Council

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 143 to 158.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Updated reason for condition 3;
- Amended condition 5;
- New informative 1 in connection with condition 5;
- Additional representation received;
- Correction to paragraph 22;
- Appended minutes of the Planning Committee meeting dated 10 October 2018, agenda item 43.

Craig Hunter, on behalf of the Applicant, spoke in favour of the application. He stated that the project would boost the attractiveness of the school to pupils of years 8 to 11, by

providing better facilities and reducing the usage of the currently boggy grassed areas. He added that an increase in pupil admission numbers as a result of the increased attractiveness of the school would result in an increase in funding for the school. Craig stated that the development would allow staff to increase their own health and wellbeing and would allow the school to host tournaments for the community. Craig added that the development would make the school a hub of the community and would improve the scope of student opportunities.

UllaKarin Clark, Ward Member, spoke in favour of the application. She stated that the 3G football pitch would be a wonderful addition to the Emmbrook School and would allow for local football clubs to train on the site. UllaKarin added that the development would provide a huge benefit for the local community, allowing the school to host tournaments and improve the health of its staff, students and wider community. Ullakarin stated that there would be strong management strategies in place on the site, and that should the hours of use not be extended then the business case would be affected which would in turn remove the funding for the project. UllaKarin stated that all users of the site would have to sign a code of conduct prior to usage of the facilities, which would allow management to remove offenders. Ullakarin added that acoustic barriers and padding could be used in the future as a noise prevention strategy, if it was deemed necessary.

In response to the point raised regarding acoustic barriers, Senjuti Manna, Case Officer, stated that they did not form a part of this application however the applicant could implement them in the future if it was deemed necessary.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey raised concerns over the noise management plan, as it had not yet been submitted. Senjuti Manna stated that the noise management plan needed to be detailed and approved before development was first used, and clarified that this was conditioned.

Senjuti Manna clarified that noise levels had been monitored from 10m behind the goal line. The computer model had been created using this data and had suggested that the nearest residential properties were 55m and 65m behind the goal lines and would not be subject to unacceptable noise levels.

Angus Ross stated that since the previous application came to Committee, a much more detailed noise impact assessment had been carried out as well as a detailed management plan. He added that the scheme was now far more robust and would better serve the community.

Carl Doran queried why acoustic barriers were not part of the application. Senjuti Manna clarified that this would require further planning permission, however this could be conditioned within the noise management plan if substantiated complaints relating to noise above 50 decibels had been received and verified by a noise monitoring Officer.

RESOLVED: That application 190421 be approved, subject to the conditions as set out in agenda pages 144 to 146, updated condition 3 and amended condition 5 as set out in the Members' Update, and new informative 1 as set out in the Members Update.

Tim Holton resumed the Chair.