

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD ON 9 OCTOBER 2019 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.13 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Simon Weeks (Chairman), Chris Bowring (Vice-Chairman), Stephen Conway, Carl Doran, Abdul Loyes, Andrew Mickleburgh, Malcolm Richards, Angus Ross and Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

Officers Present

Connor Corrigan, Service Manager – Strategic Development Locations, Planning Delivery
Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager
Mary Severin, Borough Solicitor
Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist

Case Officers Present

Simon Taylor
Alex Thwaites

41. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Gary Cowan and Pauline Jorgensen.

42. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 11 September 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.

43. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Simon Weeks declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 46 (application number 191112) on the grounds that he knew the applicant, who was a farmer within his ward, and had conversations and interactions with the applicant in the past. Simon stated that he would hand over the Chair to the Vice Chair for the duration of the item, leave the room and take no part in the discussion, debate or voting of this item.

44. APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS

There were no applications recommended for deferral, or withdrawn.

45. APPLICATION NO. 191753 - PARCEL AA - ARBORFIELD GARRISON SDL

Proposal: Application for approval of reserved matters pursuant to outline planning consent O/02014/2280 for the erection of 44 dwellings associated internal roads, parking and landscaping

Applicant: Millgate Homes (C/O Mr Richard Barter)

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 11 to 42.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Clarity that the actual site (Parcel AA) sat wholly within Barkham Parish;
- Altered condition 2 to include the final plans for decision;
- Response to Arborfield and Newland consultation;
- Clarification of the parking table following amended plans.

Simon Weeks queried whether the proposed development would be an improvement on the buildings currently situated at the site, whether Crest Nicholson were responsible for the overall affordable housing provision across the SDL, and whether other parcels within the SDL had a lower density. Alex Thwaites, Case Officer, stated that in his view the proposed dwellings would be a considerable improvement. Alex clarified that Crest Nicholson did indeed have the responsibility to meet the overall 20% onsite affordable housing contribution in addition to a 15% commuted sum across the SDL. Alex stated that other parcels of the SDL had a lower density than that proposed for Parcel AA.

A number of Members queried whether social cohesion had been taken into account across the SDL when considering where to place affordable housing. Connor Corrigan, Service Manager – Strategic Development Locations and Planning Delivery, stated that social landlords had assessed the SDL, both as a whole and as its component parcels, and had identified areas which would allow for the most effective management of properties. Connor added that the Arborfield SDL was a large site and the social landlords had identified a number of larger areas within larger parcels to place onsite affordable housing.

Stephen Conway queried whether, as per the Parish Councils comment, there was a risk people would park outside of the development on Princess Marina Drive. Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager, stated that the proposed development met the Council's parking standards. Judy added that the developers had amended the plans to move 4 parking spaces away from the junction. Judy stated that Princess Marina Drive had double yellow lines which would make it unlikely that it would be used as an overflow.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried aspects of the electric vehicle charging provision at the proposed development. Simon Weeks clarified that there was no current local or national electric vehicle charging policy, however a national policy was currently being drawn up. Judy Kelly stated that part of the Council's new highways design guide included guidance on electric vehicle charging, and the highways department were working with developers to help accommodate electric vehicle charging provision. Judy added that she would expect approximately 4 active and 21 passive charging points on a site of this size. Connor Corrigan stated that the biggest issue with electric vehicle charging provision was the lack of power station infrastructure, further guidance on which would be included within the national guidance that was in development.

Carl Doran queried why this parcel was not seen as a sustainable area for affordable housing, and why the 'build to rent' houses were not included within the total figures. Connor Corrigan stated that social landlords had assessed all parcels of the SDL and had concluded that it was easier to manage affordable housing within larger parcels. Connor added that private rental units were slightly different to an open market house and had a separate legal agreement associated.

Angus Ross sought confirmation that the TPO'd tree would not be compromised by the proposed development. Alex Thwaites confirmed that the tree would not be compromised by the proposed development, including its root protection.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey raised concerns with the parking provision at the proposed development, considering its location would likely account for 2 vehicles per dwelling plus visitor provision. Simon Weeks stated that the Council was in the process of updating its local plan, which would include new parking standards. Until the new local plan was published, the existing parking standards had to be applied to all current planning proposals. Judy Kelly confirmed that all flats would have 1 allocated space and the development met the current parking standards.

Malcolm Richards queried whether the proposed 4 storey building would have a lift, whether the site would have pavement in its entirety, and what alternative there was to enter and exit the site if there was an issue at the proposed single entry point. Alex Thwaites confirmed that there would be a lift within the proposed 4 storey building. Judy Kelly stated that highway construction details, secured under outline planning condition, were to be submitted, which could include some shared space. With regards to the entrance, Judy stated that there was no alternative entry point, and Highways would only ask developers for a second access point for a development consisting of 100 or more properties.

Chris Bowring queried whether affordable housing was spread out across the SDL. Alex Thwaites confirmed this to be the case, and added that only this parcel and one other (which was a small 12 unit parcel) had no on site affordable housing.

Carl Doran raised his concern with the lack of on-site affordable housing provision, and that in his opinion the Council were not getting full value from commuted sums.

RESOLVED That application 191753 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 12 to 15, and altered condition 2 as set out within the Members' Update.

46. APPLICATION 191112 - MANOR FARM, FINCHAMPSTEAD, WOKINGHAM, RG40 3TL

Simon Weeks left the room for the duration of this item. Chris Bowring assumed the Chair for the duration of this item.

Proposal: Full planning application for the erection of 25No polytunnels (retrospective)

Applicant: Mr Slavchev

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 43 to 68.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included the deletion of condition 5.

Chris Bowring asked for confirmation that the Committee could consider this application on its own merits as it was a retrospective application, and sought clarification as to why it was now considered acceptable to allow additional polytunnels, when previously it was indicated that no more polytunnels were required on the farm. Simon Taylor, Case Officer,

confirmed that the Committee could consider this application on its own merits. Simon added that market conditions had changed over time and it was now considered acceptable to allow additional polytunnels.

Angus Ross commented that the proposals only accounted for a 6 percent increase in total land covered by polytunnels, which was minimal.

Carl Doran queried whether the polytunnels were a single use plastic. Simon Taylor stated that the polytunnels were not a single use plastic, and they were proposed to be stored and re-used.

Andrew Mickleburgh suggested that only non-deciduous plants be used to screen the site from its surroundings. Connor Corrigan, Service Manager – Strategic Development Locations and Planning Delivery, stated that the attached landscaping condition allowed the Council to control the species used as part of the screening.

Stephen Conway sought reassurances as to the reasoning behind the deletion of condition 5. Connor Corrigan stated that this condition was deleted as it was not deemed reasonable on the applicant to impose this condition. Connor added that a situation could have arisen which would require the applicant to bin additional crop which would then require trucks to remove the waste. Therefore, there would be no additional impact on the road network should the crop be binned or transported for sale.

RESOLVED That application 191112 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 44 to 46, and the deletion of condition 5 as set out within the Members' Update.

Simon Weeks resumed the Chair.