

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD ON 9 NOVEMBER 2016 FROM 7.00 PM TO 9.25 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Tim Holton (Chairman), Chris Singleton (Vice-Chairman), Chris Bowring, Philip Houldsworth, John Kaiser, Malcolm Richards, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey, Wayne Smith and Bill Soane

Other Councillors Present

Councillors: Andy Croy and David Lee

Officers Present

Neil Carr, Principal Democratic Services Officer
Connor Corrigan, Strategic Delivery Manager
Mary Severin, Borough Solicitor
Ian Bailey, Service Manager, Development Management
Adam Coggins, Highways Engineer

Case Officers Present

Justin Turvey
Laura Callan
Pooja Kumar
David Smith
Graham Vaughan

64. APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were received.

65. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12 October 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

MEMBERS UPDATE

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

66. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Richards stated that, as a result of his role as Executive Member for Highways and Transport, he would take no part in the discussion or voting in relation to Item 68, Application No – 161596: Land to the West of Thames Valley Park Drive.

67. APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS

There were no items deferred or withdrawn.

68. APPLICATION NO - 161596 LAND TO THE WEST OF THAMES VALLEY PARK DRIVE

Proposed: Full application for the proposed development of a Park and Ride facility providing approximately 277 vehicular spaces, motorcycle parking and associated vehicular access and landscaping.

Applicant: Wokingham Borough Council.

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in Agenda pages 13 to 44.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Details of a paper petition with 1,253 signatures which objected to the Park and Ride scheme;
- Details of an additional objection to the application on the basis that it should not be considered by the Planning Committee;
- Clarification on the operation of the Park and Ride and proposed monitoring of the nearby Waterside Centre car park;
- Information on the shuttle bus frequencies between Reading town centre and Thames Valley Park;
- Confirmation that the external lighting scheme, required under Condition 16, would include approval of the hours of operation.

Members had visited the site on Friday 4 November.

Bill Luck (Earley Town Council) spoke against the application. He raised concerns about the visual impact of the proposed park and ride facility, especially at night. He also stated that the proposed landscaping was inadequate and there would be a negative impact on local wildlife. He also expressed concern over the sustainability of the proposed surface water drainage system.

Councillor Andy Croy, Ward Member, spoke against the application. He stated that local residents were unanimous in their opposition to the proposal. He also felt that the scheme would have no significant impact on traffic flows in the area. Drivers using the park and ride would make a small financial saving but would see an increase in their journey times. A park and ride scheme with 277 spaces would not deliver enough benefits to offset the damage to the local environment and local wildlife.

Mary Bather, representing the North Earley Residents Group, spoke against the application. She stated that the proposed park and ride scheme was too small and too close to Reading town centre to deliver any significant benefits. Conversely, it would have a significant negative impact on the environment, causing damage to local wildlife and impacting on the Thames National Trail. She felt that a full environmental impact assessment should be carried out before the proposal was considered by the Committee. 2,800 residents had opposed the proposal through the online and paper petitions submitted to the Council. She suggested that the site could be used for other purposes, such as recreation, which would have a much lower impact on the local environment.

Matt Gould, Wokingham Borough Council Highways, spoke in favour of the application. He stated that use of the site for a park and ride scheme was supported by the Council's planning policies. The park and ride scheme would reduce the volume of traffic travelling into Reading town centre and would not require any additional buses as the existing shuttle service would be used. He stated that, as a result of a public consultation, the proposed park and ride facility had been moved further away from the towpath and would incorporate additional screening. The proposal was supported and funded by the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership. He also stated that Reading Borough Council had raised no objections to the proposal.

In response to a Member question Officers clarified that parts of the application site were located within the countryside. However, these areas were located between buildings and the railway embankment and were well screened from public vantage points. Consequently, it was considered that the scheme would not be significantly harmful in terms of countryside impact.

In response to a Member question it was confirmed that the proposed park and ride would operate Monday to Friday and would utilise the existing Thames Valley Park shuttle bus service. The site would be controlled by barriers and the lights would not be used at weekends.

Members raised questions about the projected usage of the park and ride facility and potential future transport schemes in the area such as the East Reading Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) link. Officers confirmed that the scheme would reduce the number of vehicles driving into Reading town centre and would not have a significant detrimental impact on the local highway network. The park and ride scheme was a stand-alone project which should be considered on its own merits irrespective of potential future transport schemes in the area.

In response to a Member question Officers confirmed that the applicant intended to reduce overall site levels which would reduce the visual impact and lessen the impact of the proposed lighting. Additional tree planting would also help to screen the site. The on-site lighting to be used would be covered by a condition which required detailed proposals relating to height, type and direction of light sources. It was suggested that, if the application was approved, the Chairman should be consulted about the detailed landscaping and lighting schemes to be delivered.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) application No. 161596 be approved, subject to the conditions set out on Agenda pages 14 to 20;
- 2) that the approval of detailed proposals relating to conditions 11 and 16 be carried out following consultation with the Chairman of the Planning Committee.

69. APPLICATION NO - 162140 MATTHEWSGREEN, NORTH WOKINGHAM

Proposed: Reserved Matters application pursuant to Outline planning consent O/2014/2242 (outline consent for up to 760 dwellings and associated infrastructure) for Phase 2b of the development involving the erection of 73 residential dwellings, associated amenity space, access, garaging and parking, internal roads, pathways, drainage and associated landscaping and provision of a section of the streamside recreational park. Appearance, landscaping, layout and scale to be considered.

Applicant: Linden Homes

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in Agenda pages 45 to 74.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Proposed amendment to Condition 6 to allow further discussions between WBC Highways Officers and Linden Homes about the planned use of retaining walls (i.e. structures) within the highway at the north west corner of the site;
- Confirmation that only one letter of objection had been received from local residents;
- Confirmation that the number of dwellings proposed was 73, not 76 as stated in the table on page 76.

Members had visited the site in March 2015.

Councillor David Lee (Wokingham Town Council) spoke in favour of the application. He welcomed the fact that internal road widths had been increased following the Town Council's comments on the application. The Town Council had expressed concern about situations when large vehicles tried to pass and the resulting health and safety risks for road users and pedestrians. He asked the Committee to take this into consideration when looking at future applications involving new roads. Councillor Lee also raised concerns about the balancing ponds in the public open space to the north east of the development. He asked how the ponds would be managed to prevent stagnant water and the accumulation of rubbish.

Nick Laugharne (Linden Homes) spoke in favour of the application. He stated that the application would deliver a high quality development. He referred to the public meetings held prior to the submission of the application and the positive changes made in light of comments from local residents, the Residents' Association and the Town Council.

In response to a Member question Officers confirmed that the balancing ponds within the public open space would only contain water following a 1 in 30 year storm event. The ponds would normally be dry and there was no chance of stagnating water. The ponds would also be constructed with a shallow gradient to enable easy egress. Following construction, the public open space would be transferred to the Council for ongoing maintenance.

Members asked about measures to mitigate the impact of noise from the Northern Distributor Road (NDR). It was confirmed that national noise standards were in place and would be used to ensure appropriate noise mitigation for the dwellings. This would be assessed under a separate condition application.

Members raised concerns about the introduction of three storey housing adjacent to existing properties and the open space frontage to the north of the site. Officers confirmed that, in relation to existing properties, the proposed separation distances were considered to be appropriate. In relation to the public open space, it was considered that the height increase from two and a half storeys to three storeys would not overbear the open space and would have limited impact.

In response to a Member question Officers confirmed that parking for the flats would comprise a mixture of one allocated space per flat and a number of unallocated spaces. The amount of parking was considered to be commensurate with the dwelling mix and in line with other schemes approved by the Committee and the Council's adopted parking policies.

RESOLVED: That application No 162140 be approved, subject to the conditions set out on Agenda pages 46 to 49, with the amendment to condition 6 as set out in the Members' Update.

70. APPLICATION NO 162212 & 162213 KENTWOOD FARM EAST, NORTH WOKINGHAM

Proposed: 162212 - Full application for the proposed development of 6 two bedroom flats, 3 two bedroom houses and 1 three bedroom house, plus associated access, car parking and landscaping.

162213 - Reserved Matters application pursuant to outline planning consent (O/2011/0699 / VAR/2014/1846) for the development comprising 6 residential dwellings, access, garages, parking, internal roads, pathways, and associated landscaping and a section of the on-site Northern Distributor Road.

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out on Agenda pages 75 to 100.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Proposed amendment to Recommendation 2, Condition 1 (Page 83) to amend reference to one drawing and add two drawings;
- Clarification on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipt to be generated by Application 162212;
- Clarification on potential measures to reduce the impact of noise to external space around the flats (Pages 76 and 90);
- Clarification on the visibility splays for the Northern Distributor Road (NDR) and the relevant tree and shrub/groundcover planting.

Members had visited the site in October 2013 and also in 2015 as part of the Members' Tour.

Members asked for clarification on noise levels relating to parts of the communal open space around the private flats in the scheme. Officers confirmed that the communal space around the flats could experience noise levels above guideline levels. This could be mitigated somewhat by constructing a 2m brick wall between the communal space and the NDR. However, it was felt that the townscape benefits of securing the open space outweighed the amenity benefits of providing the wall. All the dwellings in the scheme would achieve appropriate internal noise levels through building measures such as triple glazing.

In response to a Member question Officers confirmed that the Council's Highways Team would discuss the road surfacing materials to be used for the NDR in order to minimise the impact of noise on local communities.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Application No 162213 be approved, subject to the conditions set out on Agenda pages 83 to 84, with the amendment to condition 1 as set out in the Members' Update;
- 2) Application No 162212 be approved, subject to the conditions set out on Agenda pages 77 to 82.

71. APPLICATION NO - 161301 LAND WEST OF BEECH HILL ROAD, SWALLOWFIELD

Proposal: Reserved Matters application pursuant to Appeal Outline planning permission O/2013/1221 (dated 09/06/2015) for a development of up to 120 dwellings with associated infrastructure and access from Beech Hill Road. This application comprises 120 dwellings including details of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale.

Applicant: Bellway

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out on Agenda pages 101 to 136.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Proposed amendment to Condition 2 to reflect the receipt of revised drawings;
- Proposed amendment to Condition 4 to requiring agreement on a Landscape and Ecological Maintenance and Management plan prior to the commencement of development;
- Proposed amendment to Condition 14 to requiring agreement on an Employment Skills Plan prior to the commencement of development;
- Proposed additional Condition 15, requiring agreement on the specification for open space and play area prior to commencement of development.

Peter D'Ardenne spoke against the application. He stated that the appeal decision in July 2015 established the principle of up to 120 residential units on the site. The plans indicated that the applicant was struggling to fit 120 units on the site and he felt that the number should be reduced. He expressed concern about the shared hedgerow between the existing and new properties and stated that the proposal would result in overlooking and a loss of privacy for existing residents in Diana Close.

Terry Follen spoke against the application. He expressed concerns about parking provision and stated that 6 Diana Close would be overlooked by eight properties resulting in a loss of privacy and views and increased noise pollution.

Steven Brown (Woolf Bond Planning) spoke in favour of the application. He stated that the detailed scheme was the outcome of a collaborative approach between the applicant and Council Officers. The submitted proposals had received no technical objections from statutory consultees and demonstrated that the applicant had responded to local concerns.

In response to Member concerns about overlooking of properties in Diana Close, Officers stated that the hedgerow would provide screening for ground floor windows whilst the upper floor window at 6 Diana Close was a bathroom window. The proposed separation distances between properties were acceptable in policy terms.

In response to a Member question on parking, Officers confirmed that the site requirement for parking spaces was 254. The application included 269 parking spaces with a further 70 potential garage spaces.

Members expressed concern about the potential impact on parking from houses in multiple occupation. Officers confirmed that it would be possible to attach a condition limiting permitted development rights for specific parts of the site.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) application No 161301 be approved, subject to the conditions set out on Agenda pages 102 to 105, with the updates and amendments to the Recommendation and conditions 2, 4, 12, 13, 14 and additional condition 15, as set out in the Members' Update;
- 2) a further condition be added, to limit permitted development rights for plots 3 to 10 of the application site.

72. APPLICATION NO - 162529 21 - 26 TAPE LANE, HURST

Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of 11 dwellings with associated access, car parking, landscaping and drainage following demolition of existing semi-detached bungalows.

Applicant: Wokingham Housing Limited

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in Agenda pages 137 to 164.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Information on housing densities in surrounding areas;
- Confirmation that a revised plan had been received relating to parking provision on the site.

Members had visited the site on Friday 4 November.

Tony Hogg spoke against the application. He stated that parking was an ongoing issue for existing residents in the area. The proposed development would increase the number of properties adjacent to Tape Lane thereby exacerbating the existing parking problems.

In response to a Member question Officers confirmed that the application included 11 allocated and eight unallocated parking spaces, with a further three visitor parking spaces. The proposed on-site parking provision exceeded the Council's parking standards.

Officers confirmed that it would be possible to attach a further condition relating to the potential inclusion of additional parking provision within the site layout. A further detailed parking plan could be considered in conjunction with the Chairman of the Committee and the ward Member.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) application No 162529 be approved, subject to the conditions set out on Agenda pages 138 to 143, with amendment to condition 12 as set out in the Members' Update and condition 3 to be approved in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee and the ward Member;
- 2) an additional condition be approved, seeking further consideration of the on-site layout for parking, to be discussed in conjunction with the Chairman of the Committee and the ward Member.

73. APPLICATION NO - 162223 HILL FARM, JOULDINGS LANE, FARLEY HILL

Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of one cattle shed and construction of associated access track, yard and silage clamp.

Applicant: Mr Butler

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in Agenda pages 165 to 184.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Confirmation that sufficient information had already been submitted in relation to Conditions 3 and 4 with resulting amendments to the conditions;
- Proposed additional condition, restricting use of the buildings to agricultural purposes, unless otherwise agreed.

Members had visited the site during the summer of 2015.

In response to a Member question Officers confirmed that the proposals would not result in a significant increase in vehicle movements.

RESOLVED: That application No 162223 be approved, subject to the conditions set out on Agenda pages 165 to 167, with the amendments to conditions 3 and 4 and the additional condition as set out in the Members' Update.

74. APPLICATION NO - 161920 LAND REAR OF STANBURY HOUSE, BASINGSTOKE ROAD, SPENCERS WOOD

Proposal: Proposed change of use of agricultural land to provide Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and associated access, car park, footpaths and landscaping works.

Applicant: Cooper Estates

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in Agenda pages 185 to 202.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included clarification that the authorised use of SANG would be Assembly and Leisure (D2) which meant that livestock could not be kept on site.

In response to a Member question Officers confirmed that the principle of development for a SANG had been approved via an earlier application in 2011.

RESOLVED: That application No 161920 be approved, subject to the conditions set out on Agenda pages 185 to 188, with the clarification set out in the Members' Update.

75. PRE-COMMITTEE SITE VISITS

The Head of Development Management and Regulatory Services had recommended that a pre-Committee site visit be undertaken in respect of the following application:

162288 – Malmesbury, Dairy Lane, Remenham Hill, Remenham – Full application for the proposed creation of a polo facility for private use, comprising a polo field, exercise track,

stable block, all weather practice area, summer pavilion and widening of existing access onto A4130 – To view the relationship of the development to nearby residential properties and in relation to amenity (including noise and disturbance) and highway safety.

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