

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD ON 1 FEBRUARY 2017 AT 7.00 - 9.45 PM**

Committee Members Present

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

Other Councillors Present

Councillors: Bob Pitts, Ken Miall and Gary Cowan

Officers Present

Connor Corrigan, Chris Easton, Justin Turvey and Arabella Yandle

84. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Councillor John Kaiser was duly elected as Vice Chair of the Planning Committee.

Councillor Tim Holton, Chair of the Planning Committee, extended his thanks to Former Councillor Chris Singleton, outgoing Vice Chair, for all his hard work on the Planning Committee

85. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillor Philip Houldsworth

86. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

An amendment was made to the Minutes of the Committee held on 7 December 2016, namely that Lyndsay Jennings, Solicitor, attended the meeting.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7 December 2016, together with the amendment as outlined above, 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.

87. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor John Kaiser declared a personal interest in Item 92 on the agenda, Application number 163115, The Firs, Parkcorner Lane, on the grounds that he knew the applicant. He stayed in the room, but did not take part in the discussion or vote on this item.

88. APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS

There were no items deferred or withdrawn

89. APPLICATION NO - 162881 - ARBORFIELD GARRISON

Proposal: Full application for temporary planning permission for the use of land for filming, incorporating temporary change of use of existing former barracks buildings from Use Class Sui Generis to Use Class B1, and the use of the site and hard standing for parking and storage, with associated access

Applicant: Crest Nicholson Operations Limited C/O Savills

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in Agenda pages 9 to 38.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Clarification of responses from both Arborfield & Newland Parish Council and Barkham Parish Council;
- An additional neighbour comment;
- A re-wording of Condition 2 relating to the effect of the use of the site on surrounding properties, and
- A re-wording of Condition 9, to wit that no operation should commence until external lighting schemes had been submitted and approved in writing.

Ken Hann, a resident of the ward, stated that he was happy with the build proposed but had concerns in regards to: the speed of the access roads; the working hours of some of the stages, and the parking and access. In particular, he questioned the proposed design of the entrance to the site and whether it took account of current road use, and whether the 40 mph limit on Langley Common Road should be changed to 30 mph along the entire road. He asked for clarification on whether a proposed Traffic Order reducing the speed to 30 mph could be part of the application in front of the Committee as the Council had not identified it as suitable for a 30mph limit in its current form even though it was identified as a walking route to the Bohunt School.

Chris Tinker, Agent for Crest Nicholson, the developers, led Members through a presentation, comparing the site to an existing Film Studio at Longcross and outlining the benefits to the community in terms of employment and income. He stated that the site would be actively staffed and managed and that the traffic flow would be less than that of its previous use.

The Service Manager for Highways Development Management stated that there had been no restriction in regards to access on the military base and that an independent Road Safety Audit had been carried out and found no issue with the proposal. He highlighted that the visibility was to be improved by some removal of vegetation and that that a 30 mph speed limit reduction would be considered for this section of the road alongside the detailed design work of the Langley Common Road and Biggs Lane roundabout improvements which formed part of the wider Arborfield SDL transport mitigation measures. He advised that the 30mph speed limit reduction was not necessary for this application currently being considered by committee. He also indicated that the anticipated number of vehicle movements would not be unusual for this type of road and that as the working day did not fit a standard pattern, there would not be an overall peak travel time issue.

In answer to Members' questions about the length of tenure and its impact on the Borough housing targets, the Case Officer stated that, if the company wanted to extend their length of tenure by even one year beyond the nine laid out in the application, they would need to submit a further application. The Strategic Delivery Manager went on to state that the site in question was currently due to be developed into housing in the final phase of the Arborfield development. He explained that there was always a degree of slippage in building projects but that any shortfall would be more than made up for by other developments in the Borough. The site has extant permission but this area would require a new reserved matters application to be made prior to construction of housing.

In response to a Member's question about employment opportunities, Chris Tinker explained that, as a highly unionised industry, there were unlikely to be many career opportunities for local young people as actors but that there would be opportunities in the support sector and associated careers.

In response to a Member question regarding safe walking routes to Bohunt School, the Service Manager for Highways Development Management indicated that, the 30mph speed limit reduction would be reviewed under a separate scheme as mentioned earlier, and that as the only existing footpath was on the opposite side of the road to the site access junction, potential conflict between users was not consider to be an issue.

In response to a Member question about sound and its impact on neighbours, the Strategic Delivery Manager indicated that most of the activity on site would be indoors and that, outside, set-building would take place during normal working hours.

Resolved: That application No. 162881 be approved subject to the conditions set out in Agenda pages 9 to 38, and the amendments to conditions 2 and 9 as laid out in the Members' Update.

90. APPLICATION NO - 163444 - 52 READING ROAD, WOKINGHAM, RG41 5NE

Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of supported affordable housing consisting of 7no bedsitting rooms, 2no single person flats and supported ancillary accommodation, car parking, motor cycle parking, covered cycle storage and garden following demolition of existing building.

Applicant: Wokingham Housing Ltd

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in Agenda pages 39 to 64.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Proposed amendment to condition 3;
- Proposed additional condition regarding operating hours during building work;
- Comments from Councillor Mirfin in support of the application, and
- Additional comments from neighbouring residents in objection to the application.

Simon Price, Head of Housing, spoke in favour of the application, stating that the application would provide much needed affordable accommodation for young people, which was a priority for strategy in the Borough. Darren Toes, Wokingham Housing Ltd, went on to outline some of the features of the new build. He explained that the existing building would be demolished and that the new building, whilst being built in a different architectural style to other houses in the area because of its location, was being designed to fit in with the surrounding houses in choice of materials and gable ends. The new building would be a similar height to the existing building and would have a footprint only 5% larger.

Members indicated that they were in support of such a build and that a good effort had been made by the designers to fit in with the vernacular style, but were concerned about noise and parking. In response, the Service Manager for Highways Development Management stated that the condition relating to construction method covered noise. He

went on to explain that, as the application was classed Sui Generis, ie that its use did not fit into any other user class, that any future uses which might require an increase in parking levels would require a completely new planning application. Therefore the parking is deemed adequate for the current proposed scheme and has been design to enable on site turning for all vehicles as well as access to motorcycle and bicycle parking within the site.

Resolved: That application no 163444 be approved subject to the conditions set out in Agenda pages 39 to 64 with condition amended and the additional condition as set out in the Members' Update.

91. APPLICATION NO - 163369 - BEECHWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL, AMBLESIDE CLOSE, RG5 4JJ

Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of 3 single storey classroom extensions, extension to existing staffroom, erection of new security fencing and gates, new pathways, access door and alteration to parking layout.

Applicant: Wokingham Borough Council

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in Agenda pages 65 to 88.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Amendment to paragraph 8, page 72, to whit that the increase in student numbers would be 15 per annum, not 30 as published;
- Summary table with current and proposed staffing levels;
- Proposed minor correction to condition 10, and
- Proposed additional condition regarding operating hours during building work.

Anju Sharma, Schools Programme Manager, spoke in favour of the application, explaining that the Council had a duty to ensure adequate school provision and that infill builds were part of the approved strategies. She stated that Woodley had been identified as requiring 45 extra places per year and that Beechwood had been chosen due to its current design, location, site area and the housing developments going on around it. She went on to explain that the expansion had been designed in partnership with the Council and that there were future plans to expand the school further to a two form entry (60 pupils per year) which would allow for efficient staffing and planning.

In response to a Member question, the Service Manager for Highways Development Management stated that there would be an increase of 4 additional staff, 3 full-time and one part-time, and that one extra parking space had been included in the design per full-time equivalent (FTE) staff member. He explained that this provision was in line with the Council's adopted parking standards and that the scheme also secured an updated travel plan, as well as improvements to both cycle parking and scooter parking.

In response to Member questions, the Case Officer indicated that construction work would commence in the summer to be ready for September and that a condition had been attached to the Construction Management Plan outlining hours of delivery. She stated that the school travel plan would be updated by September and that the parking and cycle/scooter places would be ready for then. Over the summer, construction traffic would be asked to park on site.

Resolved: That application no 163369 be approved subject to the conditions set out in Agenda pages 65 to 88 and the amendments and proposed condition as set out in the Members' Update.

92. APPLICATION NO - 163115 - THE FIRS, PARKCORNER LANE, CARTERS HILL, ARBORFIELD, RG2 9JJ

Proposal: Householder application for the proposed replacement of existing roof lights with dormer window extensions and the erection of a raised terrace to the south- west corner of the building at first floor level

Applicant: Mr & Mrs M Yardley

Councillor John Kaiser declared a personal interest and did not take part in the discussion or vote on this item.

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in Agenda pages 89 to 110.

Members had visited the site on Friday 27 January 2017.

Patrick Haran, Planning Agent, spoke in favour of the application, citing CP11 as the relevant policy, which supported small scale extensions to buildings in the countryside. He stated that the proposed extension would result in a 12.5% increase to the footprint but no increase in overall height, and that the current use for the 1st floor was as accommodation so that no change of use was involved. The expectation was that the flat would revert to an elderly relative and the installation of dormer windows and a terrace would increase manoeuvrability, with the impact limited by the substantial boundary screening. He stated that there was no objection from either the Parish Council or neighbours.

Councillor Gary Cowan, Ward Member, spoke in favour of the application, indicating that the property was on an un-adopted road and did not overlook anyone. He stated that alterations to other properties in the area had been approved. In relation to the citing of CP11, he suggested that the build would not cause harm and that the terrace sat comfortably within the Council's own guidelines. The Council recognised the need for families to support elderly relatives and this build would fit with that need.

The Case Officer cited CP11, stating that the proposal was an example of excessive encroachment, that it was inappropriate in scale and appearance and that, as such, it would cause significant harm. The information about the proposed occupancy by an elderly relative had not been cited in the application in justification.

In answer to Members' questions relating to the likelihood of an appeal if refused, the Case Officer pointed out that the application site does not benefit from permitted development rights for further extensions and additions and therefore planning permission is required for the proposed alterations. Whilst there was some leniency for properties in the countryside, the proposed extension would in effect convert an outbuilding into a home. She also stated that a plan did not have to take into account who was living there.

The Committee were reminded that, just because a building could not be seen, there was still a need to be mindful of the impact of a building.

The recommendation put to the Committee to refuse the application, when put to the vote, was not supported. As a result, an alternative proposal was received from Councillor Wayne Smith to approve the application for the reason that the planned extension would not cause significant harm and that the increase in scale would not be inappropriate. This was seconded by Rachelle duBey

The following conditions were attached:

- The development should begin no later than three years from the date of the decision;
- The development would be carried out in accordance with the plans in Agenda pages 95 to 108;
- Materials used in the construction of the external surfaces would match those in the existing building, and
- The extended building would not be occupied at any time other than as ancillary to the residential use of the dwelling known as the Firs, Parkcorner Lane.

Resolved: That Application no 163115 be approved subject to the conditions set out above.

93. APPLICATION NO - 161845 - 134-146 LONDON ROAD, RUSCOMBE, RG10 9HA

Proposal: Full application for the erection of 31 two bedroom apartments with associated communal areas, landscaping and parking (C3 residential use)

Applicant: McCarthy & Stone

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in Agenda pages 111 to 148.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Proposed change to condition 3, whereby Community Liaison details would be implemented during the construction unless otherwise agreed;
- Proposed changes to condition 4 relating to the Approved Scheme for Tree Protection;
- Proposed changes to paragraph 44, page 131 regarding the value of the CIL amount psqm;
- Further information regarding the number of trips generated in peak hours, and
- A note referring to additional comments that had been received.

Members had visited the site in 2015.

Mike Evans, Planning Chair for the Parish Council, spoke in opposition to the application, citing that the development went against the Village Design Statement in its location in an open/semi-rural stretch of London Road and raising concerns about the amount of carparking being put forward. He referred to the difference in the design and the fact that the increase in area given to concrete would add to the flooding risk. He stated that the village needed an influx of families, not down-sizers, and that, due to the fact that there were no amenities in Ruscombe and there were no bus stops, residents would be forced to walk if they were not able to have a car.

Ian Hann, agent, spoke on behalf of the applicant, stating that the flats would allow older people to live in a setting where they have their own space. He suggested that the majority of tenants would be 65-75 years old and that the site would be carefully managed by the applicant. He went on to outline the rise in the older population in the country, stating that the number of older residents in Wokingham was set to rise by 23% by 2036, with an increase in the number of families being headed up by someone of 65 or more. He added that the proposal met council targets and that it would potentially free-up other accommodation in the area.

Councillor Bob Pitts, Ward Member, spoke in opposition to the application. He disagreed with the agent, stating that it was unlikely that accommodation would become accessible to young families because of the cost of housing. He suggested that most over 55s would still be working and that the parking would be insufficient in light of the lack of public transport and amenities. He finally asked what the management charges and costs to the residents would be and stated that some clearance had already taken place.

The Case Officer stated that, whilst they considered the Village Design Statement and the comments received, the proposal did not present great conflict with it. The frontage of the proposed design was reflected in other properties on the London Road and a flood risk assessment had taken place and been accepted. He suggested that the character of the properties around was mixed and that as such the proposed build would not be out of character, stating that the site had already been allocated to housing. He explained that site clearance work did not have to be approved, and that extant pegging out had been related to the movement of lizards.

In response to Members' questions, the Case Officer stated that only one person in the household needed to be over 55. The Service Manager for Highways Development Management went on to explain that the car-parking would not be allocated to individual properties, which complies with the Council's parking standards and is often the way parking is managed on private sites such as retirement developments. A condition has been applied to the scheme to ensure that the unallocated parking is retained and not allocated to individual occupiers. He felt that the intended age range of the residents was pertinent to the management condition.

In answer to a Member's question regarding parking, the Case Officer stated that the parking met Council policy and that there was an extant outline scheme for 16 dwellings.

In response to a Member question regarding the entry points of three properties onto the road, the Service Manager for Highways Development indicated that similar junction formations and numbers had been previously considered and consented with an earlier application on this site and that they each met the visibility splay requirement and were deemed acceptable for this scheme.

In response to Members' questions regarding density, the Case Officer confirmed that the property would have a much higher density than other properties in the locality, but that this was implicit in the nature of flats.

Councillor John Kaiser proposed that the application be deferred to permit a site visit. This was dropped. It was then proposed by Councillor Tim Holton that the application be refused for the reason that the proposed application was out of character due to bulk, scale and mass plus failure to complete the legal agreement. This was seconded by Councillor Wayne Smith.

Resolved: That Application no 161845 be refused for the reasons set out above.

94. JOULDINGS LANE, SWALLOWFIELD

Proposal: To give permission to Hampshire County Council to determine the Definitive Map Modification Application on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council

Applicant: Hugh Craddock

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in Agenda pages 155 to 160.

Resolved: that Hampshire County Council be given permission to determine the Definitive Map modification

95. FOOTPATH EARLEY 15 - 660 WOKINGHAM ROAD, EARLEY

Proposal: To modify a Diversion Order on Footpath Earley 15

Applicant: Wokingham Borough Council

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in Agenda pages 161 to 166.

Councillor Ken Miall, Ward Member, spoke in opposition to the application, asking why the original footpath plan was not being enforced and, if the Highway rules were not to change on this stretch of path, why the Diversion Order was being submitted. He stated that there were issues with erosion on the path and that two people had fallen down the bank.

The Public Rights of Way Manager stated that there had been an error in the original S106 agreement and that the proposed width of 2.5 m would mean that the footpath agreed with the agreement. She went on to state that funding had been assigned to improve the slope of the path and that fencing would be installed along the top of the embankment. The path was to become part of a long distance route.

In response to a Member question, the Public Rights of Way Manager stated that to pursue the original plan would result in a high cost to the Council with the likelihood that the diversion in front of the Committee would be agreed anyway. The Borough Solicitor stated that the diversion in front of the Committee would give a common-law path legal status with all the protections that includes.

Resolved: That the modification to the Diversion Order be agreed

96. FOOTPATH WOKINGHAM 23 - TAN HOUSE CROSSING, WOKINGHAM

Proposal: to put a Railway Crossing Diversion Order on Footpath Wokingham 23

Applicant: Wokingham Borough Council

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in Agenda pages 167 to 168.

Damian Haynus, Network Rail, spoke in favour of the application, outlining the risks associated with the current crossing and the particular issues such crossings had with

vulnerable users and unauthorised access, mostly children. He stated that if the crossing was reopened as is, the risk assessment gave that it would attract the third highest risk rating. He indicated that the temporary bridge had made a big difference to this rating.

In response to Member questions, Mr Haynus stated that the temporary bridge currently in place was frequently vandalised and as a result was a high cost stream. The intention was to change to a permanent bridge by 2019. A bridge would reduce the risk rating to the lowest rating. He also indicated that, whilst disabled access had not been part of the original crossing, any future permanent bridge structure project would consider the ability to deliver disabled access where possible.

The Service Manager for Highways Development Management stated that discussions had taken place with Network Rail with the potential to extend any new bridge from Carnival Pool to cross both railway lines. The Public Rights of Way Manager added that funding for the bridge was on the CIL list and that progress would occur as soon as possible.

Resolved: That the Railway Crossing Diversion Order be authorised.

97. QUARTERLY ENFORCEMENT MONITORING REPORT

Proposal: to review the quarterly Enforcement Report

The Committee received and reviewed the quarterly Enforcement Report outlined in page 5 of the Members' Update.

Resolved: That the quarterly Enforcement Report be noted

98. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

There were no items that required exclusion of the public

This page is intentionally left blank