

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD ON 1 MARCH 2017 FROM 7.00 PM TO 10.15 PM**

Committee Members Present

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

Other Councillors Present

Councillors: Keith Baker, David Chopping, Charlotte Haitham Taylor, Norman Jorgensen, Pauline Jorgensen, Ken Miall, Angus Ross and Chris Smith

Officers Present

Connor Corrigan, Strategic Development Service Manager
Chris Easton, Service Manager, Highways Development Management
Mary Severin, Borough Solicitor
Justin Turvey, Operational Development Manager Lead Officer
Arabella Yandle, Democratic Services Officer

Case Officers Present

Katie Herrington, Planning Officer
Christopher Howard, Development Manager (South of M4 SDL)
Pooja Kumar, Planning Officer
Daniel Ray, Senior Planning Officer
Graham Vaughan, Senior Planning Officer

99. APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were received

100. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 1 February 2017 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.

101. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Michael Firmager, who was welcomed as a new member of the Planning Committee, stated that as an Earley Town Councillor he had made a decision on a consultation response to Wokingham Borough Council on the application for Item no 107, but that this did not create a conflict with his role on the Planning Committee, and he had not made up his mind on the decision before the Committee. He did not attend the meeting of Earley Town Council in respect of Item no 103.

102. APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS

No applications had been recommended for deferral, or withdrawn.

103. APPLICATION NO - 170031 - ALDRYNGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL, EARLEY, RG6 7HR

Proposal: Full application for the proposed demolition of external stores, swimming pool (including support facilities), temporary classrooms and part demolition of main building, followed by erection of two storey teaching block with hall. Erection of detached store adjacent to car park, provision of MUGA in playing field and associated works to landscaping and extension to car and cycle parking.

Applicant: Wokingham Borough Council

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in Agenda pages 15 to 54.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Clarification as to the number of objections that were received per subject;
- Additional comments from the adjoining Ward;
- Additional information regarding the hours of the two schools, Aldryngton Primary School and Maiden Erlegh Secondary School;
- Proposed amendment to condition 9, to whit that there would be no deliveries during the start and end of school day.

Members had visited the site on 24 February 2017.

William Luck, Town Councillor, Earley Town Council, spoke in objection to the application. He stated that, whilst he understood the issues around school places, he felt that traffic and parking issues had not been properly addressed by the application, omitting a revised plan for on-site parking, a travel plan and traffic mitigation measures.

Ian Head, Chair of Governors, Michael Gordon, Resident, and Hannah Sealam, Resident, led the Members through a presentation, and asked for a rejection of the application, raising the following points:

- The governors in the school were legally bound to guarantee health and safety in the school and the plan did not fully address traffic, parking or safety and the impact of the increase in pupil numbers, referring to the availability of parking in the surrounding area that did not exist and taking into account the proximity of Maiden Erlegh Secondary School, a pre-school and shops.
- Lancaster Road, referred to in the plan as offering 18 on-street parking spaces could, in fact, only safely house 11. Residents felt there was an unacceptable level of danger already and the proposed increase in pupil numbers would impact traffic, noise and safety. It was also felt that the design was overbearing.
- The loss of the swimming pool would contravene several paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in regards to loss of the pool, amenity and opportunities to improve health and well-being in the community. The proposed alternative at Loddon Valley Leisure Centre would not be able to cater to the level of use the pool at Aldryngton Primary School was subject to. In addition, as pointed out by Sport England, the proposed Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) was not big enough for a number of field sports and did not have a run-off area.

Kathryn Mitchell, Resident, spoke in favour of the application as a parent who had not been able to place her child because of oversubscription despite living 0.32 miles away. She stated that her allocated school was 3 miles away and that this resulted in an annual

mileage of approximately 3000 miles, going on to explain the impact that the situation had on parents and children in terms of being able to engage in many of the normal activities of a family.

Piers Brunning, Service Manager, Policy, Strategy and Partnerships for Wokingham Borough Council, spoke in favour of the application. He explained how demand for places at Aldryngton Primary School had increased due to the influx of young families into the area and that, whilst both Aldryngton Primary School and Loddon Primary School had been part of a review of school places in Earley, there had been a marked increase in numbers applying to Aldryngton Primary School. He indicated that it was expected that the additional places would be taken up by pupils who likely lived within walking distance and that traffic would be reduced as a result and that various methods would be adopted to encourage walking. He went on to suggest that the school compared to similar schools nationally, so would not lead to a reduction in teaching standards as well as offering a range of modern facilities.

Councillor David Chopping spoke on his and Councillor Ken Miall's behalf as Ward Members, in favour of the application, stating that the expansion of Aldryngton Primary School would go some way to satisfy the needs of local families in the catchment area in finding school places for their children. He explained that there had been a campaign around expansion for two years and that an expansion would result in improved level of acceptance of pre-school children moving up to primary, a reduction in car journeys, and more in-year admissions. He raised concerns regarding car parking in the area, but stated that the number of places proposed in the plan met Council requirements and that the increase in movements would be minor. He commended the officers on their work.

In response, the Service Manager, Highways Development Management, stated that the number of parking spaces in the plan was double that required by staffing levels proposed by the school expansion, and that whilst parking on roads within the vicinity of the school was acknowledged, enforcement of illegal parking was a matter for the police. A survey had been carried out on parking in the area and this had been used on an advisory basis in the planning process. He went on to state that the size of the development did not trigger the requirement for a Transport Assessment and that a Transport Statement had been produced. In line with this, highways are happy with the condition relating to the requirement for a Travel Plan. He informed the Committee that parking enforcement would be more actively pursued when the Council obtained Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) later in the year.

The Case Officer stated that there were other 2 and 3 storey buildings in the area and that the current level of landscaping would be maintained, with a 28m gap between the school and the nearest residence. In relation to the MUGA, she explained that the Sport England guidelines listed a range of sizes as appropriate, and that the age of the pupils precluded the need for full sized pitches. The MUGA in the proposal would accommodate pitch sizes of the sports being played and an adjacent field was available. The lack of run-off area would not make the pitch unsafe.

She went on to talk to the loss of the swimming pool, which had a range of users in addition to the school pupils. She stated that Loddon Valley Leisure Centre had been consulted with regard to providing the curriculum requirement.

In response to Member questions, the Case Officer indicated that the proposed expansion included a lift. It was clarified that the lack, or not, of school places was not a planning

matter, but that part of the role of the Planning Department was to take a balance and a view on what to give weight to as part of the decision process. The Operational Development Management Lead Officer went on to quote directly from the NPPF, to wit that the Government favoured the offering of choice to parents in regards to school places and that Planning Departments should take a pro-active, positive and collaborative approach to meeting these requirements.

In relation to construction traffic, the Case Officer referred to conditions 4 and 9 in the application requiring a Construction Method Statement and a Construction Management Plan to be submitted. The Operational Development Management Lead Officer stated that works on the site would be restricted in hours and that the application for the Tesco Express had included conditions limiting the time of deliveries to exclude the start and end of the school day.

In response to Member questions, the Service Manager, Highways Development Management, stated that the applicant had set out within the Transport Statement information relating to existing bus services, and went on to reiterate that the school pick up and drop off issues compare to similar schools within the Borough and nationally, and that the proposed number of parking spaces proposed on-site met the Council's required parking standards. He stated that, whilst outside the application before the Committee, the parking associated with the Tesco Express did not typically add to increased traffic movements in the area due to the majority of its trade being base on pass-by and diverted trips, including some parents, and would not solely be new trips, and, as such, might actually help alleviate parking issues as we have seen from other areas of the borough where convenience stores are located within close proximity to a school. He indicated that the accident data obtained for the last 5 years showed that only one accident, recorded as slight, had happened at the nearby zebra crossing and that the accident was outside of the school peak hours and identified by the Police as driver error.

Officers were requested to look into the existence of any travel plans. The Service Manager, Highways Development Management, referred to the conditions in the report, highlighting that a Travel Plan was to be approved prior to occupation and that it would be beneficial to include both schools and consider the facilities within the surrounding area by the shops. He suggested that the increase in traffic movements would amount to no more than 15 per year over seven years and that road use and the Travel Plan would be reviewed over that time period. He outlined a number of measures that could be taken to formalise parking, such as signage and carriageway lines associated with parking enforcement, however these would need to be secured along with measures to encourage alternative modes of travel.

Councillor Bowring suggested the addition of a new condition limiting the number of school places in future to 420. Officers agreed that this would be possible.

Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey suggested that the application approval be subject to an approved travel plan.

The Service Manager, Highways Development Management, explained that the practice was for a travel plan to be approved until 6 months after the occupation of a new site, but as this was an expansion it would be acceptable to require the approval of a travel plan prior to commencement.

Resolved: That the Committee resolve to consult the Secretary of State on Application no 170031 and supporting papers in accordance with paragraphs 9 and 10 of the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009, and grant planning permission provided:

- 1) the Secretary of State decides not to call-in the application for determination, or
- 2) the period in which the Secretary of State may respond under paragraph 11 of the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009 expires.

Following this, that Application no 170031 be approved subject to the conditions set out in Agenda pages 15 to 14 and the amended condition as laid out in the Members' Update; the additional condition that the number of school places be limited to 420, and an amendment to condition 11, to wit that the Travel Plan be approved in writing by the Planning Department in Consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee before commencement.

104. APPLICATION NO - 162829 - PLOT TO NORTH OF CHURCH LANE, THREE MILE CROSS

Proposal: Application for Reserved matters application for 175 dwellings including internal access roads, garages, parking places, open spaces, allotments, Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) and Locally Equipped Area of Play.

Applicant: Taylor Wimpey Homes

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in Agenda pages 55 to 90.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Clarification to the report regarding car parking and the methodology of determining the amount of spaces required;
- Proposed amendment to conditions 2 to include approved plans;
- Proposed amendments to conditions 3, 6, 9 and 13;
- Proposed deletion of conditions 5 and 10 due to duplication;
- Proposed additional condition to wit that plans of allotment plots and locations of water supplied would be submitted for approval;
- Proposed re-designation of condition 15 as an informative,
- Additional comments from residents in objection to the application.

Philippe Nozay and Neville Swift, Residents, led the Members through a presentation, suggesting that an increase in housing was not an imperative, going on to state that the application presented issues in terms of building height, traffic and flooding, and questioning the location of the affordable housing stock.

Andy Barron, Taylor Wimpey, spoke in favour of the application, commending the officers on their hard work. He explained that the images shown by the first speakers were of standing water, not flooding, and that, as there was no existing infrastructure in the area, the steps taken to mitigate drainage and flood prevention that were part of the application would, in fact, improve the existing situation.

In response, the Service Manager, Highways Development Management, stated that traffic and access had been part of the outline application, and as such did not form part of the application in front of the Committee. He also informed the committee that a number of

junctions and road improvements had already been put in place. He confirmed that the flood risk strategies that had been secured for the site, including the attenuation ponds and other Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) features, would improve the current issues that the site had with regards to any potential surface water flooding on the site.

The Case Officer explained that the type of affordable housing proposed was mixed in accordance with policy. The siting of this housing proposal could not be dictated and the Housing Provider would seek for it to be clustered for management purposes. He indicated that there were only two 3-storey buildings, and that their placement and appearance, in terms of their overall design were in accordance with parameters.

In response to Member questions regarding parking and traffic flow, the Service Manager, Highways Development Management explained how the proposed number of parking spaces had been calculated and complied with the Council's Parking Standards Study Report, and also advised that the garages were of a larger size (3m X 7m) which would also encourage use for cars and cycle storage. He indicated that large refuse vehicles had been tracked as part of the supporting information for the scheme and that the main spine road was wide enough and accorded with the Council's standards.

In response to Member questions regarding flooding and surface run-off, the Service Manager explained that the design and provision for flood prevention had to take into account a 1 in 100 year event plus 30% increase due to climate change in line with the Environment Agencies requirements. He stated that the drainage system had been reviewed and is designed to ensure that the existing greenfield runoff rates from the site were not exceeded.

The SDL Service Manager went on to explain that the proposed scheme took the water table into account as part of the drainage strategy. He stated that where necessary the ponds would be dry-lined so that there would be no ingress from the water table. In regards to pond safety, he indicated that the ponds would have graded sides to enhance safety with appropriate landscaping along the edges. He sought clarity that the ponds would be dry / wet ponds. The ponds would be maintained by Wokingham Borough Council.

Resolved: That application no 162829 be approved subject to the conditions set out in Agenda pages 55 to 90 and the amended, deleted and additional conditions as laid out in the Members' Update.

105. APPLICATION NO - 163385 - LONGMOOR LAKE, CALIFORNIA COUNTRY PARK

Proposal: Full planning application for the installation of vehicle overrun strips along the access road, formalisation of the existing car park and the construction of new car parks creating a total of 301 bays including disabled and public carrier vehicle bays, the removal of 73 trees and the planting of 85 trees, and erection of the tensile tent canopy adjacent to the Café, with associated provision for street furniture, lighting and landscaping, replacement of underground pumping station, upgrading of power supply with associated distribution boxes.

Applicant: Wokingham Borough Council

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in Agenda pages 91 to 110.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Amendment to the proposal description, to whitt that the number of car park bays would be 311;
- Amendments to the report regarding planting, car parking and opening hours;
- Clarification as to the traffic surveys that had taken place;
- Proposed additional condition relating to the tensile canopy;
- Additional comments in objection to the proposal, and
- Summary statements from an online petition.

Roland Cundy, Chair of Finchampstead Parish Council, spoke on the application. Whilst he appreciated that the country parks must derive income to be self-financing, he asked what traffic calming measures were proposed and what steps were going to be taken with regard to minimising risk. He also raised concerns regarding the impact of the application on the Scouts, stating that the scouting facility was in use six days per week and that it accommodated 200 young people with a further 100 on a waiting list. He questioned the time it had taken to renew the lease.

James Cutler, Resident, questioned the level of consultation of neighbours, going on to suggest that there would be a rise in crime and litter and that the amenity value of the Park was under threat. He also questioned the apparent omission of any reference to the Nine Mile Ride Cycle Way and expressed a concern that the site might then become subject to development.

Andy Glencross, Countryside Officer at Wokingham Borough Council, spoke in favour of the application. He explained that the application before the Committee was not an isolated scheme but part of a wider plan to improve networks. He outlined the history of the site, which had been bought by the Council in 1973 and that the infrastructure dated back to that point. He went on to indicate that the facilities that would be introduced as part of the plan would cater for the increased population and would make the site more accessible and all-weather. He suggested that future plans would include an enhancement of the play area, catering operations and lake frontage.

In response, the Service Manager, Highways Development Management, outlined the methodology used by the applicant in surveying the current use of the park during the busiest periods last year, explaining that 358 vehicles had been on-site at the peak. He stated that the formalisation of the car park spaces would be to improve the current state of the car park. In regards to the Nine Mile Ride Cycle Way, he clarified that the path was linked to improvements identified for safe route to school associated with the new Arborfield Bohunt School development and was not part of the application before the Committee. He added that Greenway routes had been identified as part of a separate Council project and that one of the greenway routes would lead to and through California Country Park from Arborfield via Commonfield Lane and, again, was not part of the application before Committee. He also confirmed that the application included the provision of cycle parking in the form of 42 cycle hoops.

In regard to consultation, the Case Officer outlined the measures that had been taken to consult on the application. She stated that the site had not been identified for development and that, following consultation, some car park spaces had been moved to increase the separation between the car park and neighbouring residences.

In response to Member questions, the Service Manager, Highways Development Management, stated that there were 5 Greenways in Arborfield of which Nine Mile Ride was one. He explained that the request by a Member for the reduction in speed limit to 30MPH had not previously been supported by the police because of the lack of speed-reduction features on the road, but that future road developments in the area would likely lead to a speed reduction, although this request was not related to the application in front of Committee. He stated that the application was intended to accommodate and improve the existing provision and that as peak use of the site did not coincide with rush hour traffic, the impact of increased traffic to the site would be negligible.

In response to Member questions, the Case Officer stated that the wider project would include facilities, and the Countryside Officer went on to indicate that there were comfort facilities on site and that, as part of the new offer of the café contract, an increase in toilet provision would be included.

Resolved: That application no 163385 be approved subject to the conditions set out in Agenda pages 91 to 110 and the additional condition as laid out in the Members' Update.

106. APPLICATION NO - 162321 - LAND TO THE NORTH OF WOOD LANE, BARKHAM, RG41 4TS

Proposal: Application for the change of use of agricultural land to equestrian land, erection of a stable lock and storage of logs (retrospective)

Applicant: Mr and Mrs Smith

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in Agenda pages 111 to 126.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included a clarification as to the Ward in which the application falls, which is Arborfield and not Barkham.

Resolved: That application no 162321 be approved subject to the conditions set out in Agenda pages 55 to 90.

107. APPLICATION NO - 163315 - ENGINEERING BUILDING, WHITEKNIGHTS CAMPUS, READING UNIVERSITY

Proposal: Full application for the erection of a 5 storey Health and Lifesciences Building; new entrance and external works to Philip Lyle Building; associated landscaping and car parking; following demolition of the Engineering and Harborne Building within the Whiteknights Campus of the University of Reading.

Applicant: University of Reading

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in Agenda pages 129 to 156.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Further information regarding cycle provision, sustainable design and ecology;
- Proposed amendments to conditions 3-5 relating to the demolition of the Engineering Building;
- Proposed amendments and renumbering of conditions 12, 17, 18 and 19;

- Proposed additional condition regarding the submission of a Demolition Method Statement;
- Proposed additional condition relating to cycle provision;
- Proposed additional condition relating to sustainable design and construction, and
- Proposed additional condition relating to bat mitigation.

Mervyn McFarland, Agent, spoke in favour of the application, stating that it would help the University maintain its world-wide reputation, raising the profile of its role in the bio-sciences. He explained that, whilst the application would result in a reduction in floor space, it was part of the University drive to increase efficiency in terms of its use of space and facilities and that it had been designed in collaboration with stakeholders to offer a contemporary design.

Councillor David Chopping, Ward Member, spoke on the application, stating that the car parking in the plan should be considered in the light of the whole campus, with consideration for local residents.

In response, the Service Manager, Highways Development Management, stated that Reading University had a parking strategy as part of their expansion plans which the Council was supportive of and would be reviewed further through future applications.

In response to a Member question regarding chimneys and hazardous emissions, Mervyn McFarland stated that any emissions would be produced by the labs and as such would have to meet environmental standards.

Resolved: That application no 163315 be approved subject to the conditions set out in Agenda pages 129 to 156, the amendments to conditions 3-5, and the additional conditions as laid out in the Members' Update.

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