

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD ON 14 JUNE 2017 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.55 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Tim Holton (Chairman), John Kaiser (Vice-Chairman), John Jarvis, Malcolm Richards, Angus Ross, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey, Wayne Smith and Bill Soane

Other Councillors Present

Councillors: David Lee and Barrie Patman

Officers Present

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

Case Officers Present

Katie Herrington, Senior Planning Officer
Pooja Kumar, Senior Planning Officer
Ashley Smith, Development Management Team Manager
Graham Vaughan, Senior Planning Officer
Christopher Kempster, Career Grade Planning Officer
Daniel Ray, Senior Planning Officer

1. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillor Philip Houldsworth

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor John Jarvis declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 11, Application no 171120 – Grovelands Park, Grovelands Avenue because he was a Non-Executive Director on Wokingham Housing Ltd at the time that the application was submitted. (He left the meeting during consideration of the matter and did not take part in the vote.)

Councillor Angus Ross declared a personal interest in items 5 and 10: Application no 170264 – Land at Finchampstead Road; and Application no – 171143 – Ryeish Sports Centre, stating that though he had been the Executive Member for the Environment when these applications had been submitted, he still had an open mind with regard to the decision.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10 May 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.

4. APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS

No applications were recommended for deferral or withdrawn

5. APPLICATION NO 170264 - LAND AT FINCHAMPSTEAD ROAD

(Councillor Angus Ross declared a personal interest in this item)

Proposal: Full application for the proposed change of use of land to Suitable Alternative natural greenspace (SANG) with associated landscape works and parking.

Applicant: Gladman Developments

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in Agenda pages 13 to 30.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Clarification that the application stood alone and unrelated to any development;
- Confirmation that the WBC Drainage Officer was satisfied with the scheme;
- Proposed amendment to Condition 2, and
- Proposed update to plan numbers in Condition 4.

Clarissa Flynn, Residents Group, spoke against the application. With the aid of a presentation, she suggested that the proposed site for the SANG was not an ideal one. The existing path and access were narrow, there was no bus access and the site was prone to flooding. A tree survey had indicated that eight veteran oaks with Tree Protection Orders would be felled. She stated that there were many other sites that were better suited to development as SANGs and suggested that the application would not have been proposed without the intention to build houses nearby.

David Lee, Ward Member for Norreys, read a statement on behalf of Julian Mcghee-Sumner, Ward Member for Westcott, in opposition to the application. He stated that the application was premature and that it was intrinsically linked to a development.

In response, the Case Officer stated that the application before the Committee was a separate matter from any future application pertaining to development. He indicated that the SANG would use existing access so would have little impact on trees. The WBC officer was satisfied with the SANG application.

Following discussion, Councillor John Kaiser proposed that the application be deferred to allow Members to attend a site visit to gain a fuller understanding of the application. This was seconded by Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey.

Resolved: That Application no 170264 be deferred in order to allow the Committee to undertake a site visit.

6. APPLICATION NO 162885 - READING FOOTBALL CLUB AT FOREST SCHOOL

Proposal: Full planning application for indoor sports facility; means of access and parking; ancillary outbuildings and associated landscaping.

Applicant: Reading Football Club

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in Agenda pages 31 to 62.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Clarification that Forest School was an academy;
- Clarification as to construction hours, and
- A proposed update to condition 3 listing amended plan numbers.

Nina Sharp, Consultant and Agent for Barton Wilmore, spoke in favour of the application, outlining the close working relationship between Reading Football Club and the Forest School. She stated that benefits to the proposals included improved playing field surfaces and landscaping, together with an increase in community use.

In response to a Member question regarding lighting in the dome, she explained that the dome structure reflected light into the interior only and would not therefore create any light pollution.

Resolved: That Application no 162885 be approved, subject to the conditions set out in Agenda pages 31 to 62, and the update to Condition 3 and the clarifications as laid out in the Members' Update.

7. APPLICATION NO 161911 - CROSFIELDS SCHOOL, SHINFIELD ROAD

Proposal: Full application for the proposed artificial turf pitch with fencing and floodlighting, re-grading of land for two new football pitches and an artificial cricket strip

Applicant: Crosfields School, Shinfield Road, Wokingham

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in Agenda pages 63 to 92.

Neil Boddington, Agent, spoke in favour of the application, stating that he had worked closely with the Case Officer on the application. The application included a bio-diversity condition, which the applicants are happy to implement and work with the Council on. There was no intention to develop the land in future.

Resolved: That Application no 161911 be approved subject to the conditions set out in Agenda pages 63 to 92.

8. APPLICATION NO 163372 - WOKINGHAM THEATRE, TWYFORD ROAD

Proposal: Full application for the proposed internal/external alterations to theatre to provide additional backstage space, rehearsal space, new studio, public circulation areas and new storage barn.

Applicant: Wokingham Theatre Board

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in Agenda pages 93 to 118.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Clarification on the nature of community use provided;
- Proposed amendment to Condition 8, to wit that drainage requires 40% allowance for climate change;
- Proposed amendments to Condition 2 and 4;
- Proposed amendments to plans, and

- Proposed additional condition requiring the submission and approval of a Construction Method Statement prior to any development.

Hedda Bird spoke in favour of the application, outlining the success of the Theatre and the opportunities that expansion would offer, including higher attendance figures, clubs and training. Katie Hamilton then went on to re-iterate the wide community use by local people from eight to 80 years of age.

David Lee, Ward Member for Norreys, spoke in favour of the application, stating that since the original decision in the 1980s to build the facility, it had gone from strength to strength. He asked if there would be an extension granted if part of the expansion had not been completed prior to the end of the 3-year construction condition.

In response, the Case Officer stated that the 3-year construction condition referred to the commencement of development. She also clarified that fire prevention strategies were governed by Building Control regulations and did not come under the purview of the Planning Department.

In response to Member questions regarding the plans and parking, the Service Manager, Highways Development Management, clarified that the regulations required 1 car park space to every 5 seats and that the scheme provided in excess of this number for the additional elements of the proposal.

In response to Member questions regarding the Community Plan, the Lead Officer, Operational Development Management, stated that Ward Members would be consulted on the community use Management Plan in Condition 4.

Resolved: That Application no 163372 be approved subject to the conditions set out in Agenda pages 93-118, the amendments to conditions 2 and 8 and the additional condition and clarifications as laid out in the Members' Update, and the amendment to condition 4 as laid out in the Members' Update with an additional comment, to wit that the Community Plan be agreed in conjunction with the Ward Members.

9. APPLICATION NO 171143 - RYEISH SPORTS CENTRE *(Councillor Angus Ross declared a personal interest in this item)*

Proposal: Full application for the proposed construction of new sports changing facilities and fitness suite following demolition of the existing building on site.

Applicant: Mr Andy Glencross, Wokingham Borough Council

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in Agenda pages 143 to 168.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included clarifications as to the applicant and the number of car parking spaces provided.

Neil Jones, Senior Operational Property Specialist, spoke in favour of the application, outlining the history of the site and the range of improvements that were being offered by the application.

Barrie Patman, Ward Member for Shinfield South, spoke in favour of the application, stating that the improvements to the site and the wide range of sports and activities that were proposed would increase the footfall. He suggested that access would be improved with good signage and that the site needed to be well advertised.

In response, the Service Manager, Highways Development Management, outlined the road improvements, cycle lanes and the upgrading of footpaths that were taking place in association with wider development that was progressing as part of the South of the M4 Strategic Development Location.

Resolved: That Application no 171143 be approved, subject to the conditions set out in Agenda pages 143 to 168 and the clarifications as laid out in the Members' Update.

10. APPLICATION NO 171007 - HIGHWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL, FAIRWATER DRIVE

Proposal: A full application for a single Storey extension for the creation of six classrooms to the north side of the existing car park and, a new Speech and Language building adjacent to the existing hall to allow for a 2 form entry school. Additional staff parking bays and Cycle Canopy provision. New pedestrian route from Woodlands Avenue and a new reception classroom garden to the north of existing nursery/reception block.

Applicant: Wokingham Borough Council

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

Anju Sharma, Specialist, Growth & Delivery, spoke in favour of the application, stating that, as part of the Primary Schools Strategy, Woodley had been identified as requiring an extra 45 places per year and that the application before the Committee would provide 30 of these. The site was close to new developments that would see approximately 1000 new properties built in the area. The application would provide enhanced facilities, more parking and a specialist unit for speech and language therapy.

In response to Member queries regarding parking, the Service Manager, Highways Development Management, explained that the amount of spaces provided by the proposal was in excess of those required by the Council's parking standards of one space per each Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff member. The increase in numbers would be phased in over several years, allowing the school to work with the community and to upgrade/develop further the School Travel Plan.

In response to a Member question regarding loss of space, the Case Officer stated that most of the area that was due to be developed was already hard standing.

Resolved: That Application no 171007 be approved subject to the conditions set out in Agenda pages 119 to 142.

11. APPLICATION NO 171120 - GROVELANDS PARK, GROVELANDS AVENUE *(Councillor John Jarvis declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item)*

Proposal: Application to vary conditions 2, 3 and 9 of planning consent F/2014/2611 for the erection of residential development of 6no two bed dwellings with associated external

works. Condition 2, 3 and 9 relate to materials, elevation and boundary treatments respectively

Applicant: Wokingham Housing Limited

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in Agenda pages 169 to 182.

Resolved: That Application no 171120 be approved, subject to the conditions set out in Agenda pages 169 to 182.