

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD ON 9 MAY 2018 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.00 PM**

Committee Members Present

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

Councillors Present and Speaking

Councillors: Clive Jones and David Hare

Councillors Present

Councillors: Imogen Shepherd-DuBey

Officers Present

Chris Easton, Service Manager, Highways Development
Mary Severin, Borough Solicitor
Madeleine Shopland, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist
Justin Turvey, Operational Development Management Lead Officer (Interim)
Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist (Clerk)

Case Officers Present

Laura Callan

90. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Bill Soane.

91. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 11 April 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

92. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

93. APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS

No applications were recommended for deferral, or withdrawn.

**94. APPLICATION NO 173675 - AUTO TRADER HOUSE, DANEHILL, EARLEY
(HAWKEDON)**

Councillor Holton stated that as he was a Ward Member for Hawkedon ward in which application No 173675 – Auto Trader House, Danehill, was situated, the Vice Chairman would chair the part of the meeting relating to this application. Councillor Holton indicated that he had an open mind with regards to the application and would remain during and participate in the discussion of the application and decision making.

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 9 to 64.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Clarification that the travel plan need not be secured via the S106 agreement and that condition 6 be an appropriate mechanism to secure the travel plan;
- A correction of the proposed unit mix;
- A comparison of the predicted noise levels arising from the dismissed appeal proposal and the current proposal.

Bill Luck, Earley Town Council, spoke in objection to the application. He discussed issues involving car parking at the proposed development. He stated that the Town Council felt that there was adequate car parking at the proposed development but were concerned at the increase in cost that underground parking would bring. He stated that the local bus service only provided an hourly service (with an additional bus at peak times), and he felt that the more frequent bus service was of a distance that most people would not walk to use it. He stated that the proposed double raked cycle storage would be difficult for residents to use. He added that the Town Council was pleased that a car parking management plan would be implemented at the proposed development. He requested that the security arrangements for parking be revised. He stated that the UV panels at the top of the tower blocks would be visible to the residents of the top floors of the surrounding tower blocks which would be unappealing for the residents affected.

Nick Green, Planning Consultant for the applicant, spoke in favour of the application. He stated that the proposed development site had been in a derelict state for some time and the existing office buildings had become redundant and had no prospect of use as offices in the future. He added that the development would help to address the general need for housing within the Borough. He stated that trees would be present around the development to add an additional level of privacy.

John Neale, Architect for the applicant, spoke in favour of the application. He stated that the proposed development would have 76 residential units with 58% of these being dual aspect, with none being north facing. He added that the proposed development would include 116 car parking space, 90 cycle spaces and 10 motorbike spaces. He stated that the height of the tallest tower block would be 9m in height, which was 2m lower than the existing office block. He added that all of the flats had been designed to meet local and national guidelines.

Clive Jones, Ward Member, spoke in objection to the application. He was of the opinion that the proposed development would not improve on the street scene. He added that he felt there was not enough affordable housing planned within the proposed development. He stated that there was an underground lateral spring near the proposed development and questioned the effect the proposed development would have on the water table. He stated that there was not currently any security on the site and he was of the opinion that the developer had not kept the site safe and questioned whether they would resolve this should the plan be approved. He asked that the Committee reject the application.

David Hare, Ward Member, spoke in objection to the application. He stated that the local schools and GP's in the area were full and felt that the proposed development would put an additional strain on their resources. He added that Lower Earley Way already had a bad traffic congestion problem in the morning rush hour and that the additional cars that would be present from the proposed development would further increase the traffic problem.

Councillor Kaiser asked a number of questions surrounding car parking, UV panels, the underground water spring and whether impact on schools and GP's was a planning issue.

Chris Easton, Service Manager - Highways Development, clarified that the proposed parking was fully acceptable based on Wokingham Borough Council's (WBC's) standards. He added that the double cycle racks were not ideal in accessibility terms. In response to Councillor Jones' question regarding the underground spring, Chris Easton confirmed that condition 26 would require bore holes to be dug to assess the water table. Laura Callan, Case Officer, stated that the UV panels would be seen by residents of the top floors but would not be unacceptable in terms of appearance. In response to the question regarding pressure on local schools and GP's, Laura Callan stated that the development would attract Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which could be used to improve the local amenities within the area.

Councillor Holton questioned the emphasis made on the previous refused application, and stated that Inspectors report should be the focus instead. He questioned whether the double glazed balcony offered more amenity space than that which a study with a large window would provide. He added that the Inspector had cited an increase in street parking should a development be approved and stated that there was only an hourly bus service available. He queried the sustainability of the proposed development for residents, stating that the nearest local supermarket would be too far away for everyday shopping for those on foot.

In response to Councillor Holton's comments, Chris Easton clarified that the references to the previously refused plan were there to highlight the improvements made in the proposed scheme. He added that the street view of the surrounding area only showed some cars using street parking and felt that the proposed development would not propose a significant problem in this regard. In addition, he added that as the road was a public highway, parking restrictions could be enforced if there became a need. He clarified that the CIL funding could be used to boost the sustainability of the surrounding area. Laura Callan clarified that the balconies would be screened but could also be opened and a large communal space was available for residents.

In response to questions from Councillor Shepherd-DuBey regarding access for delivery vehicles and draining of the underground car park, Chris Easton clarified that there would be a block paved turning entrance that delivery vehicles could use and that the drainage to the underground parking would be dealt with by the same drainage system that would service the rest of the buildings.

Councillor Ross queried the proportion of single bedroom flats within the proposed development. Laura Callan clarified that the development was in line with housing policy TB05 and did not propose an unacceptable amount of smaller or larger units. Justin Turvey, Operational Development Management Lead Officer (Interim), clarified that the one, two and three bedroom flats would add to the local mix of dwellings.

Councillor Holton proposed that the application be refused as it did not have a suitable housing mix, lacked private amenity space and lacked a sustainable location. This was seconded by Councillor Shepherd-DuBey.

Upon being put to the vote it was:

RESOLVED: That Application 173675 be refused on the grounds that the proposed development did not have a suitable housing mix, lacked private amenity space and was not a sustainable location.

Councillor Holton resumed the Chair of the meeting.