

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD ON 8 MAY 2019 FROM 7.00 PM TO 9.25 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Chris Bowring (Vice-Chairman, in the Chair), Carl Doran, Malcolm Richards, Angus Ross, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey, Wayne Smith and Bill Soane

Councillors Present and Speaking

Councillors: Paul Fishwick

Councillors Present

Councillors: Sarah Kerr, Adrian Mather and Imogen Shepherd-DuBey

Officers Present

Connor Corrigan, Service Manager – Strategic Development Locations, Planning Delivery
Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager
Mary Severin, Borough Solicitor
Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist

Case Officers Present

Nesha Burnham
Andrew Chugg
Sophie Morris
Simon Taylor

85. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

86. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 13 March 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Vice Chairman in the Chair.

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

Chris Bowring declared a prejudicial interest in item number 94, on the grounds that he was the Deputy Executive Member for Regeneration and was therefore closely linked to this application. He stated that he would leave the room and relinquish the Chair for the duration of this item.

87.1 Election of Chairman for Agenda Item 94

Chris Bowring proposed that Angus Ross be elected Chairman for the duration of Item 94. This proposal was seconded and upon being put to a vote it was:

RESOLVED: That Angus Ross be elected Chairman for the duration of agenda item 94.

88. APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS

Agenda item 89, application number 181499, was withdrawn from the agenda on the request of the applicant.

89. APPLICATION NO 181499 - LAND SOUTH OF CUTBUSH LANE, SHINFIELD
This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

90. APPLICATION NO 190198 - TOUTLEY ROAD / OLD FOREST ROAD, WOKINGHAM

Proposal: Full application for the construction of the western section of the Northern Distributor Road linking Toutley Road in the north and the A329 Reading Road in the south west, incorporating a railway bridge, a new junction on Toutley Road / Old Forest Road, and associated works including crossings, drainage, flood risk improvements, shared footway/cycleway, SANG replacement and laying out of new public open space.

Applicant: Wokingham Borough Council C/O WSP.

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 109 to 104.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update corrected Condition 3 of the recommendation to state 'Rev 04' in place of the originally stated 'Rev 03'.

Ian Haller, on behalf of the applicant, spoke in favour of the application. He stated that the application covered 1.4km of new single carriageway and a bridge over the railway. Ian extended his thanks to all of the teams associated with developing the project to its current state. Ian added that a statutory consultation process had been undertaken, and various amendments had been made to the scheme as a result of responses received. Ian stated that over 2500 trees would be planted as a part of the proposed development, including a creation of a woodland area. Ian added that paths would be created to link the development to the existing SANG, and that any felled trees would be replaced at a ratio of 20 to 1 in addition to the 2500 other newly planted trees. Ian stated that should the application be approved, then the draft bridge agreement and track positions would be subsequently agreed.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey stated that the Winnersh are was in need of the proposed road, which was a compromise as residents had not wished for the road to go over the Toutley Road.

Angus Ross asked for clarification over the speed limits on the proposed road. Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager, stated that the speed limit would be 40Mph via the Reading Road until the Old Forest Road junction, after which the speed limit would be 30 Mph.

A number of Members commented on the benefits that this road would bring to the area.

Angus Ross queried why it appeared that the Fire Service had not been consulted regarding this application. Sophie Morris, Case Officer, stated that the Fire Service were routinely consulted as a matter of course, and added that they are likely to have been consulted regarding this application, and Officers would confirm whether they had been.

Carl Doran asked for clarification regarding the pedestrian crossing points and acoustic sound barriers. Judy Kelly stated that the signalised crossing points would be built near the proposed open space. Sophie Morris stated that from a planning point, acoustic barriers were undesirable from a visual aspect. Sophie added that noise insulation grants would be available to affected houses.

Malcolm Richards queried how the 'no parking' would be indicated on the proposed road. Judy Kelly stated that double yellow lines would feature along the length of the proposed road to indicate that no parking was available.

RESOLVED: That application 190198 be approved subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 110 to 119, and corrected condition 3 as set out in the Members' Update.

91. APPLICATION NO 180753 - TRIDENT HOUSE, 2 PARK LANE STREET, WINNERSH

Proposal: Full application for the proposed change of use, raising of the roof, single storey rear extension and alterations to fenestration to provide 12 flats with rear amenity space and onsite parking.

Applicant: Mr Sundeep Saxena.

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 145 to 184.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- A correction to page 156 of the agenda to refer to 'Residential Amenities' in the body of the report;
- Amendment to paragraph 14 of the report to read 'Affordable Housing Viability Report.'

Paul Fishwick, Ward Member, spoke against the application. He was of the opinion that the proposed development had insufficient parking and no visitor parking, which would force residents to park on surrounding highways.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey stated that the surrounding roads were usually dull with on street parking, and the inadequate parking at the proposed development would compound the on street parking issues. Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager, stated that the parking arrangements at the proposed development were compliant with parking standards as all of the parking would be unallocated and there was therefore no requirement for visitor parking.

Malcolm Richards queried the car parking management arrangements at the proposed development. Judy Kelly stated that the parking management strategy was secured via the management condition, which stated that the parking must remain unallocated and covered details such as access gate operations and signage. Judy added that the development provided 12 unallocated parking spaces as opposed to the 8 spaces required by standards.

A number of Members expressed their disappointment over the number of parking spaces at the proposed development, however referenced that they were in line with the Council's current parking standards.

Carl Doran queried why the application was recommended for approval when it was contrary to CP15 due to a reduction of office space, and queried why some of the amenity spaces were below standard. Simon Taylor, Case Officer, explained that a previous application regarding this site was dismissed at appeal, and the loss of office space was not considered a reason for refusal at the time and it would therefore be unreasonable to consider it as a reason for refusal now. Simon added that CP15 was intended to protect office space in the main areas of business, and the proposed development site was around 2km from Winnersh Triangle (the main office/business area). Regarding the amenity spaces, Simon stated that due to the difficulties presented in repurposing an office building into a residential building, some areas were smaller than standard. Simon added that the smaller amenity spaces were less than half a square metre, with bedroom and living room sizes being compliant with standards, and as a result it was deemed acceptable.

Carl Doran asked for clarification regarding the small commuted affordable housing sum. Connor Corrigan, Service Manager – Strategic Development Locations and Planning Delivery, stated that the repurposing of office buildings was generally more expensive than a regular development. Connor added that the proposals had been independently assessed by a viability expert, and Officers had accepted the professional opinion.

A number of Members reiterated concerns raised at previous Committee meetings regarding the process of how viability assessments and affordable housing contribution calculations were carried out.

Malcolm Richards queried the low ceiling heights in some of the dwellings. Connor Corrigan stated that the ceiling heights were a matter for building regulations, and so long as they met the minimum standards (which they had done in this instance) they were accepted by Officers as this was not a planning consideration.

RESOLVED: That application 180753 be approved, subject to the conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 146 to 154.

92. APPLICATION NO 190673 - LUCKLEY HOUSE SCHOOL, LUCKLEY ROAD, WOKINGHAM

Proposal: Full application for the proposed construction of a reduced size multi-use synthetic turf sports pitch with a 3m-4.5m high fence and 6no 12m column floodlights.

Applicant: Mr Norman Patterson.

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 185 to 222.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Clarification of timings related to Condition 12;
- Clarification regarding questions raised by Members during their site visit.

Mike Sheldon, resident, spoke against the application. He stated that he was speaking on behalf of the local residents association and that in their opinion they were astonished with the lack of detail and numerous inaccuracies contained within the report. He added that the plan and design statement stated that the proposals would be screened from

residential properties via retention of trees. Mike referenced an image from a resident's garden which showed a low level of screening from the proposed site. Mike was of the opinion that the view from Denby Close had been grossly misrepresented, and that a significant loss of privacy for residents would occur if the application was approved, in particular as the position of the pitch would allow teams and coaches or trainers to be grouped on the west side of the pitch near Denby Close. Mike was of the opinion that the 51m separation distance from the nearest residential property to the proposed site was incorrect, with the real distance being closer to 30m. Mike stated that the bat report had included a light spillage assessment but had not referenced issues surrounding noise. Mike was of the opinion that the noise impact assessment had been undertaken using a computer model which had been modelled from a further corner of the proposed site away from residential properties, and therefore it did not accurately account for the noise of a whistle or a hockey ball hitting a back board.

Maria Gee, Ward Member, submitted a written statement which was in opposition to the application. In her absence, Chris Bowring read out the statement. Maria stated that this application differed from similar local applications such as that of Emmbrook School due to the location of the sports facility to nearby residential housing. Maria added that there was no existing sound barrier to houses in Denby Close, and that the noise impact assessment was not, in her opinion, convincing and urged the Council to undertake its own assessment. Maria asked that should the application be approved that local ward Members be involved in developing a noise management scheme. Maria stated that the assessment of effects on bats, a protected species, had only considered light and omitted noise. Maria asked that an additional assessment of the effects of noise on bats be carried out before the application could be considered. Maria cited safety concerns for school boarders and local residents due to the proposed extended hours and the open planned nature of the existing site, as stated that it was essential for a risk assessment be carried out taking into account the change of use from purely school use to mixed school and commercial use. Maria asked that should light spillage caused concerns, that mitigation methods such as additional planting or variation to operational hours be put in place.

Simon Taylor, Case Officer, stated that the pitch would not be full sized and therefore would attract a low crowd participation. He added that the measurements of the proposed site from the residential properties were taken from an aerial view map, and this distance was measured to be 51m.

Bill Soane queried whether fencing could be erected to help screen residential properties from the proposed development. Connor Corrigan, Service Manager – Strategic Development Locations and Planning Delivery, stated that fences could be erected if privacy became an issue, however this was undesirable as the fences could create 'dead land' between boundaries which could lead to antisocial behaviour.

In response to Member questions regarding the impact the proposed development would have on nearby bat populations, Connor Corrigan stated that the Council's Biodiversity Officer had not objected to the proposals including when light and noise was taken into account.

In response to Member questions regarding Sport England's involvement, Simon Taylor stated that Sport England generally promote dual use facilities with extended operational hours in order to promote community health and engagement with sporting activities.

Carl Doran queried who provided the noise assessment and whether it had identified any unacceptable noise levels. In response, Simon Taylor stated that the applicant had carried out the noise impact assessment and had accepted changes to the application by condition. He added that the assessment had only identified the referee's whistle as breaching the acceptable noise levels, and as this was to be used infrequently it was deemed acceptable in this instance.

Angus Ross felt that the Committee should have been provided with the noise assessment and its findings in more detail. Connor Corrigan stated that the noise impact assessment document was a very technical document, however the executive summary would cover the key findings and could be provided should Members' wish.

Wayne Smith was of the opinion that the applicant should have undertaken a comprehensive consultation with local residents with regards to this application. He stated that members needed to know more about Sport England's involvement with the application, for example regarding hours of use.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey asked that the Committee be provided with specific information with regards to which activities are to take place on the proposed development.

Angus Ross proposed that the application be deferred, in order that clarification of separation distances be provided, the executive summary of the noise impact assessment be provided, Sport England's involvement relating to requirements of the of the usage of the site (such as hours of use) be clarified and clarification of which activities are proposed to be carried out on site be provided. This was seconded by Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey.

RESOLVED: That application 190673 be deferred, in order that clarification of separation distances be provided, the executive summary of the noise impact assessment be provided, Sport England's involvement relating to the requirements of the usage of the site (such as hours of use) be clarified and clarification of which activities are proposed to be carried out on site be provided.

93. APPLICATION NO 190233 - LORD HARRIS COURT, MOLE ROAD, SINDLESHAM

Proposal: Full planning application for demolition of Lord Harris Court Centre care home (88 bedroom) and erection of a new 45 bedroom care home and 60 assisted living apartments (C2 use Class), together with associated car parking, landscaping and amenity space provision.

Applicant: Kevin Harris, Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution.

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 233 to 276.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Amended plans detailing revised boundary measures to include ecologically-friendly fencing suitable for small animals;
- Amended paragraph 55.

Stuart Crickett, agent, spoke in favour of the application. He stated that a previous application had been refused due to concerns over the size and scope of the proposal.

Stuart added that the current application had undergone comprehensive changes and positive reviews, which had reduced the bulk and height of the proposals whilst still delivering a top quality care home. Stuart stated that the current proposals amounted to no loss in resident amenity, and the development would have no adverse highways impact. Stuart added that Tree 35 (T35), a grand oak tree, would be preserved and incorporated into the new development. Stuart stated that the proposals would provide two state of the art facilities to care for the elderly and dementia patients.

Mike Larsen, resident, spoke in objection to the application. Mike was of the opinion that the new proposals were still of considerable bulk and scale, and cited that the previous application was roundly refused. Mike added that the current proposals had placed the structures further back in the site, making it denser than the previous proposal. Mike stated that the phases approach to the construction of the development could take a considerable amount of time. Mike added that the T33 and T34 lived in harmony with retained T35 and should also be protected rather than felled.

Paul Fishwick, Ward Member, spoke in objection to the application. He stated that the proposed balconies overlooked residential properties and would reduce their privacy. Paul added that T33 and T34 provided screening and grew outside retained T35 and should also be retained. Paul was of the opinion that the proposed development would adversely impact the traffic on the already congested surrounding roads. Paul stated that there were parking concerns relating to the proposals, and that the smoking shelter adjacent to the residential properties needed to be moved elsewhere. Paul was of the opinion that the proposed development would cause light pollution, and that there were substandard footways outside of the development linking to public transport routes.

Andrew Chugg, Case Officer, responded to a number of points raised by the speakers. He stated that the size of the proposals had been reduced and that the general relationship between the proposed structures and the residential properties had increased by between 1.5m-2m. Andrew added that the proposals would not have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area. Andrew clarified that the Landscape and Tree Officer had not objected to the felling of T33 and T34, and added that extra landscaping would be provided as part of the proposed development. Andrew stated that the balconies were not considered to have a significant impact of residential privacy. Andrew added that the loss of light and overbearing nature of the proposal were not considered unacceptable in planning terms.

Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager, stated that the traffic in the surrounding area was low on the morning of the site visit.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey was of the opinion that the proposed location of the smoking shelter would adversely affect the existing residents, and asked for it to be moved. The Committee concurred with this request, and Andrew Chugg confirmed it could be moved via condition.

Wayne Smith asked that the ecological fencing condition (as amended within the Members' Update) be agreed in consultation with the local Ward Members.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey queried why T33 and T34 were required to be felled. In response, the Committee asked the agent to clarify. Stuart Cricket stated that it was his belief that the root protection area of T33 and T34 would encroach on the proposed

development over their lifespan, and that their loss was justified by the preservation of T35 which would have a longer lifespan.

RESOLVED: That application 190233 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 186 to 192, variation to condition 2 as set out in the Members' Update in conjunction with the Ward Members', and additional condition regarding the relocation of the smoking shelter away from the existing residential properties.

94. APPLICATION NO 190395 - ALEXANDRA HOUSE, ALEXANDRA COURT WOKINGHAM

Chris Bowring left the room

Angus Ross assumed the Chair.

Proposal: Full planning application for the proposed change of use of ground floor from 'Spin and Night club' to mixed use comprising retail (use class A1) and Business (use class B1a), plus changes to fenestration to ground floor.

Applicant: Bernie Pich (On Behalf of Wokingham Borough Council).

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 223 to 276.

The Committee were advised that there were no Members' Updates.

Nesha Burnham, Case Officer, advised the Committee that Condition 5 was no longer required.

Maria Gee, Ward Member, submitted a written statement which commented on the application. In her absence, Angus Ross read out the statement. Maria was of the opinion that it was odd that the Council was converting part of the building to office space, when office space appeared to be in over supply in Wokingham Town. Maria added that she hoped that an analysis of the likely tenant demand had been completed, and a risk assessment completed for the market value of the property should tenants not be found. Maria noted that this application had no car parking associated with it.

Angus Ross commented that a nearby office was to be demolished shortly, and that this proposal would counterbalance a portion of the lost office space from that building.

Malcolm Richards stated that there were existing problems with parking within the town centre, however he had no obvious concerns with regards to this application.

RESOLVED: That application 190233 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 225 to 231, and with the removal of condition 5.

Chris Bowring resumed the Chair.