

**MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD ON 14 OCTOBER 2020 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.45 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Simon Weeks (Chairman), Chris Bowring (Vice-Chairman), Stephen Conway, Gary Cowan, Pauline Jorgensen, Abdul Loyes, Malcolm Richards, Angus Ross and Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

Councillors Present and Speaking

Councillors: Jim Frewin

Officers Present

Connor Corrigan, Service Manager – Strategic Development Locations, Planning Delivery
Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager
Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist
Rachel Lucas, Legal Advisor to the Committee

Case Officers Present

Adriana Gonzalez
Kayleigh Mansfield

27. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Carl Doran and Andrew Mickleburgh.

28. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 September 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman at a later date.

MEMBERS' UPDATE

There are a number of references to the Members' Update within these minutes. The Members' Update was circulated to all present at the meeting, and published on the WBC website. A copy is attached.

29. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

30. APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS

No applications were recommended for deferral, or withdrawn.

31. APPLICATION NO.201337 - LAND AT PARKLANDS, BASINGSTOKE ROAD, THREE MILE CROSS

Proposal: Application for the approval of reserved matters pursuant to outline planning consent 171737 for the erection of 55 dwellings and all associated parking, landscape and access. Details of Layout, Appearance, Landscaping and Scale to be determined.

Applicant: Mr R Permain

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 15 to 42.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Complete amendment of the recommendation including conditions and informatives;
- Amendment of paragraph 84 to provide greater clarity;
- Amendment to the wording of paragraph 85.

Harry Glossop, resident, spoke in objection to the application. Harry stated that the concentration of the proposed affordable homes 35, 36, and 37, adjoining 3 existing dwellings, would result in an issue of overlooking and light pollution as the bedrooms of the existing and proposed dwellings would face each other. Harry stated that the concentration of properties in this specific area was unnecessary. Harry added that the concentration of homes in southern block would lead to a very crowded living situation for new and existing residents, resulting in the existing properties gaining 2 or 3 new neighbours which would feel unnecessarily crowded. Harry stated that it would be important that the houses within the southern area, within the proximity of existing dwellings, were limited in height as to not add to the issue of blocking natural light. Harry added the area north of the Brambles should have sufficient drainage in place, as an existing SUD was already in place and the area was already subject to flooding. The hill flowed northeast to southwest, and Harry had not seen any mitigation considerations regarding this particular issue.

Gillie York, resident, spoke in objection to the application. Gillie stated that she was the owner of Lieutenant Cottage, and her property would be surrounded by the new development. Gillie stated that the positioning of the SUD, in the context of the slope of the land going from the SANG down to Lieutenant Cottage. The field in front of the cottage already flooded in the winter, and the proposed drainage would be insufficient, whilst the SUD would continue to create additional problems. Gillie added that the soil was mainly clay based, and anything built on such land would raise the water table for all properties within the vicinity. As sewerage would be located towards the far north of the development, and it would be removed by direct flow rather than pumping, it would not be sufficient to accommodate the proposed new dwellings when sewerage problems were already present locally. Gillie stated that the access for the proposed development would be located on a road with a seemingly minimum speed of 40Mph rather than a maximum speed of 40Mph. Gillie added that traffic calming had been promised for some time now to reduce the speed limit on the road to 30Mph, however this had yet to be implemented. Gillie queried where the storage of building and construction materials would be located, as to not disrupt the lives of existing local residents.

Nick Paterson-Neild, agent, spoke in support of the application. Nick stated that the outline planning permission was granted for this development in February 2019, including the principle of development, access, and development of a SANG. Nick added that the application in front of Members was to consider issues such as the layout and design of the development. Nick stated that the development would be located next to planned improvements, and would be ideally positioned to support housing need within the Borough. Nick stated that the proposals would be of high quality design and would fit in with the character of the surrounding area. Nick added that the development would provide a mixture of housing including 19 affordable properties. The centrepiece of the development would be the SANG, which would serve existing and proposed properties and residents. Nick stated that the SANG had 10 visitor spaces associated with it. The development would increase biodiversity gains within the area via the provision of additional landscaping features. All properties would have access to an active electric vehicle charging point, one bed units would have access to one parking space, two and three bed units would have access to at least 2 parking spaces, and four bed units would

have access to 3 car parking spaces. Nick concluded that the development would be of high quality, and conformed to all standards.

Jim Frewin, Ward Member, spoke in objection to the application. Jim stated that this would be a further area of green land within the Shinfield area that was allowed to be developed via an appeal. Jim asked that Committee Members consider whether an adequate level of amenity space was good enough for Borough residents. Jim added that the development would add further traffic to an already congested area, and the approved access would require vehicles to cross a 40Mph road. Jim queried which conditions would mitigate the safety issues concerning access to the site. Jim queried what mitigations would be put in place regarding sewerage and surface water flooding, to ensure that the development would not add to these existing issues. Jim stated that 68 mature trees would be removed as part of the proposals during a time of climate emergency. Jim was of the opinion that there was not a good record of delivering replacement trees within the Borough, and sought assurances that replacement trees would be cared for and replaced if necessary. Jim queried what safeguards would be put in place regarding AWE emergency zone.

Simon Weeks noted a variety of points raised by public speakers, and asked the appropriate officers for clarification. Firstly, were the distances related to proposed properties 35, 36, and 37 and existing dwellings policy compliant. Connor Corrigan, Service Manager – Strategic Development Locations and Planning Delivery, stated that the proposals were policy compliant, with a 22m back to back separation distance. From a planning point of view, the number of units in an area was not relevant if all units met the appropriate standards. The standards accounted for privacy concerns, and the proposals were bedroom to bedroom rather than a lounge to bedroom situation, which would be more intrusive relationship.

Simon Weeks sought clarification regarding the sloping of the development, and associated levels of the proposed dwellings. Connor Corrigan stated that there was an approximate 2m level differential between the Brambles and the proposed development site, which reduced to 0.5m as you moved across the site. This difference in levels was considered as part of the application and was deemed acceptable.

Simon Weeks sought clarification regarding the concern raised related to lighting and the effects thereof on existing dwellings. Connor Corrigan stated that if there was a perceived issue for existing dwellings then shielding could be placed around the lighting during the detail stage of the application. In response to this, Simon Weeks suggested that an informative be included to seek appropriate shielding should the Committee be minded to approve the application.

Simon Weeks sought clarification regarding the concerns raised related to flooding issues. Connor Corrigan stated that Taylor Wimpey had a scheme in place to improve drainage in the area, and this would be an improvement on the existing drainage solution in the area. Connor added that officers and the applicant were aware of issues related to flooding, and the application would seek to improve these issues. Simon Weeks queried whether sewage concerns had been considered. Connor Corrigan confirmed that Thames Water had not raised an objection to the development. Simon Weeks commented that it was important to note a distinction between no objection being raised, and Thames Water being happy that there was capacity to accommodate a new development within their existing sewage network.

Simon Weeks sought clarification regarding the speed calming measures which had been delayed. Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager, stated that the developer had a scheme to enable traffic calming measures on the Basingstoke Road, and the plans were progressing nicely until the Covid-19 pandemic had begun. The scheme had subsequently been delayed but not lost, and officers would press the developer for an update regarding the scheme.

Simon Weeks commented that the use of the word adequate, relating to amenity provision, also made him uneasy. However, the scheme was scheduled to be delivered over two years and therefore 55 units would not be delivered immediately.

Simon Weeks sought clarification regarding the concern raised about the AWE emergency zone, and whether the standards present at the time of outline approval had to be applied. Connor Corrigan stated that if this was a new application, the new standards would be considered. However, as this was a reserved matters application the standards present at the time of the outline approval were applied. As such, the development could be accommodated within the existing AWE plan.

Pauline Jorgensen queried why the roads were not proposed to be adopted by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC), and whether the Juliet balconies would cause any overlooking. Judy Kelly stated that the developer was under no obligation to offer the roads to WBC, and in this case the street lighting was different to standard due to ecology reasons. In addition, there was a combined drainage solution which was different to standard. The roads would be maintained at adoptable levels, and this was secured by condition. Connor Corrigan stated that the Juliet balconies would be facing the SANG, and there was therefore no issues relating to overlooking.

Abdul Loyes queried whether the site was an allocated development site, and whether any part of the site was located within the green belt. Connor Corrigan stated that the site was located within the wider SDL area, however it was not an allocated site. The principle of development was established at appeal, and the site was not located within the green belt.

Malcolm Richards queried the road widths, both at the entrances to the site and throughout the site, queried whether each unit would have access to off street parking and thereby confirming to Borough standards, and queried whether the walking route to a local school would be illuminated by street lighting. Judy Kelly stated that the road widths were guided by a swept path analysis, and the widths varied based on vehicles passing refuse vehicles. Each unit would have access to off street parking and the development accorded with Borough parking standards. Kayleigh Mansfield, case officer, clarified that the highways would be illuminated, however the public right of way would not be illuminated which was a common scenario, for example due to ecology reasons.

Angus Ross queried whether the open space and SANG would be adopted, and where off site visitors could park should they wish to visit the SANG. Judy Kelly stated that the site was required to provide 17 visitor/unallocated spaces, and it was proposed to provide 23 with a net surplus of 5 spaces. Judy added that the parking management strategy would likely address the issue of people visiting the SANG. Connor Corrigan stated that the SANG would be handed over to WBC for management, and access had been secured to the public despite some private roads in the vicinity.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey queried the size of trees due to be planted on the site, as other sites had experienced the loss of newly planted trees. Connor Corrigan stated that he

expected the trees to be of a fairly substantial size as they would mostly be planted within the SANG. Connor added that any trees planted would be subject to a five year maintenance and replacement condition.

Gary Cowan was of the opinion that there had been overdevelopment in the area and additional development such as this application, the principle of which was allowed at appeal, treated WBC policies with disdain. Gary Cowan asked that officers provide carbon offsetting calculations for future applications proposing to remove mature trees and replace with smaller specimens. Simon Weeks commented that national and local planning policy was silent on issues such as electric vehicle charging, and this development proposed to provide an active electric vehicle charging point for all units which was a move in the right direction.

Rachel Lucas, Legal Advisor to the Committee, advised that the Constitution stated that Members should hear all discussion on a Planning application in order to be in a position to vote. Angus Ross had previously commented that he had not heard part of the Agent's statement. Angus Ross stated that he would therefore abstain from the subsequent voting.

Simon Weeks proposed that an informative be added, asking that street lighting be shielded as to not be intrusive to properties both within the development site and outside of the development site. This informative was unanimously agreed and added to the list of informatives.

Simon Weeks proposed that an informative be added, asking that the speed of delivery of traffic calming measures on the Basingstoke Road be expedited, to ensure that sufficient measures were implemented at the earliest opportunity. This informative was unanimously agreed and added to the list of informatives.

Stephen Conway proposed that an informative be added, requesting that Thames Water address existing foul water issues prior to the proposed dwellings being made available for sale. This informative was unanimously agreed and added to the list of informatives.

Chris Bowring sought clarification that drainage could be considered, as this was a part of the outline application. Connor Corrigan stated that there was not an issue with considering drainage issues in this instance.

RESOLVED That application number 201337 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out within the Members' Update, and three additional informatives related to light shielding, traffic calming delivery, and foul water removal as resolved by the Committee.

32. APPLICATION NO.202270 - 12 RECTORY ROAD, WOKINGHAM, RG40 1DH

Proposal: Full application for the proposed change of use from dwellinghouse (C3) to non-residential institution (F1). Erection of two single storey extensions to the south-west and north-west of the property, and demolition of the existing garage.

Applicant: Wokingham Borough Council (WBC).

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in agenda pages 53 to 78.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included an amendment to condition 9.

Adam Davies, on behalf of the applicant, spoke in support of the application. Adam stated that last year it became apparent that the existing contact resource centre would be located within a new road system, and therefore the centre needed to move locations. Adam added that the contact centre formed a central part of the care plan in place for these children, and the contact was facilitated by supervisors. Some contact could be challenging, and it was essential that children enjoyed a positive experience within a safe and homely environment. The proposed location was ideal due to a good level of privacy, in a quiet setting. Adam stated that the centre would operate between 9am to 6pm Monday to Friday, with the busier times being after school. It was not intended to operate the facility at the weekends, and 4 contacts could be made at any one time. Adam added that the facility would include a reception and kitchen area, in addition to private rooms for contact to take place.

Malcolm Richards queried where parents would park when they had an appointment to have a contact session, asked whether sprinklers should be included in the plans if the facility was akin to an educational facility, queried whether any residential management staff would be present within the facility overnight, and asked whether it was possible to retain any of the trees on site that were proposed to be felled. Adam Davies clarified that children could be dropped off between 9am and 6pm by a carer, and parents would be expected to park locally and walk to the facility. Adam added that the facility was not an educational resource, and operational management would be present on site however not overnight. Adriana Gonzalez, case officer, stated that there were no trees of importance or quality on site, and a suitable landscaping condition was in place to ensure replacement planting, especially in the context of the nearby conservation area. Adriana confirmed that the facility was not considered as an educational facility.

Angus Ross queried whether there was any potential harm to the property north of the proposed development site in terms of overlooking or separation distances. Adriana Gonzalez stated that separation distances between the proposed extension and the existing dwelling conformed to standards, and obscure glazing would be implemented to retain privacy.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey proposed an informative, asking that sprinkler provision be accommodated during other construction works on the building. This informative was unanimously agreed and added to the list of informatives.

Gary Cowan queried whether a ground penetration radar survey could be carried out, as had been requested for a recent application involving a mature tree. Connor Corrigan, Service Manager – Strategic Development Locations and Planning Delivery, stated that a ground penetration radar survey was only carried out when the tree in question was a very significant tree. Connor added that there were not category A or B trees on site, parking could be accommodated without harming the trees, and only the extension could impact on the roots of the tree however this was unlikely to have much of an impact. Gary added that he was happy if officers were confident that the roots would be protected, as the tree had a positive impact on the street scene.

Simon Weeks commented that the proposed location was away from noise and excess traffic, and would provide a calm environment for children to receive contact sessions.

The proposed new location was better than the current facility's location by a busy junction, as it was located back from the road, and associated traffic noise and pollution.

RESOLVED That application number 202270 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 54 to 56, amended condition 9 as set out in the Members' Update, and additional informative regarding sprinkler provision as resolved by the Committee.

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