

MINUTES
OF A MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE

held on 22 March 2022
Present:

Cllr L M N Morales (Chairman)
Cllr T Aziz (Vice-Chair)

Cllr J Brown Cllr C Rana
Cllr S Dorsett Cllr D Roberts

Absent: Councillors A J Boote, D E Hughes and N Martin.

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 1 March 2022 be approved and signed as a true and correct record.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Boote, D Hughes and N Martin.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

4. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of Urgent Business.

5. PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT APPEALS

The Committee received a report on the planning appeals lodged and the appeal decisions.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

6. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Committee determined the following applications subject to the conditions, informatives, reasons for refusal or authorisation of enforcement action which appear in the published report to the Committee or as detailed in these minutes.

6a. 2020/1196 Former Gas works site, Boundary Road, Woking

[NOTE: The Planning Officer advised the Committee that condition 15 had been updated since the report had been published, following a further consultation response from the Council's Flood Risk and Drainage Engineer the wording of Condition 15 is recommended to be altered to:

No development shall commence, except for demolition and above ground site clearance works, until a surface water drainage scheme for the site based on sustainable drainage principles and an assessment of the hydrological and hydrogeological context of the development has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage scheme should demonstrate the surface water run-off generated up to and including the 1 in 100 plus climate change critical storm will be as close to pre-development greenfield runoff rates as reasonably practicable. No alteration to the approved drainage scheme shall occur without prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.

The drainage scheme details to be submitted for approval shall also include:

- I. Calculations demonstrating no increase in surface water runoff rates and volumes discharged from the site compared to the existing scenario up to the 1 in 100 plus climate change storm event and as close to greenfield as reasonably practicable
- II. Calculations demonstrating no on site flooding up to the 1 in 30 storm event plus climate change and any flooding in the 1 in 100 plus climate change storm event will be safely stored on site ensuring no overland flow routes.
- III. Detail drainage plans, including construction drawings of the surface water drainage network, associated sustainable drainage components, flow control mechanisms and a detailed construction method statement

The surface water drainage scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted and thereafter it shall be managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details in perpetuity.

Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding, to improve and protect water quality and to ensure the future maintenance of these in accordance with Policies CS9 and CS16 of the Woking Core Strategy 2012 and the policies in the NPPF.]

The Committee considered an application for the erection of a building to provide offices and maintenance facilities, together with parking, fencing and landscaping for Woking Community Transport (Bustler).

Following some questions from Councillor T Aziz, Ward Councillors, the Planning Officer explained that there was no access to the site itself from Boundary Road. It was noted that there was access to staff parking from Boundary Road, but the access to the site was from Monument Way. The Committee heard about an undetermined application for a link road, which could benefit this development; it was clarified that all highways' considerations had been measured on the existing scenario, which was acceptable. If the link road was approved, it would only improve the highway situation for access to this site.

Regarding the separation distance from the properties opposite the site, it was noted these were 22-33m from the front elevation of properties and 17m-28m from the front boundary. These distances to exceed the minimum standards in the SPD for Outlook Amenity, Privacy, and daylight strategy.

In response to another question from Councillor T Aziz regarding the fence, the Planning Officer confirmed that the concrete fence would be removed and replaced with mesh fencing to ensure security of the bus parking area.

The Chairman raised a question regarding the electric charging points and the Planning Officer confirmed that 5% would be active with the remaining points passive to be activated when needed. It was noted that condition 13 covered the PV charging points.

Councillor S Dorsett commented on the representations received on the application and asked whether the training room window could be obscured glazed, as he felt like this would be easy to do and address the concerns raised. The Planning Officer advised the Committee that the separation distance was well over the minimum and it would not meet the tests to require this as a condition of the application. The Planning Officer commented that this window overlooked the front elevation of the property and there was a lesser expectation to privacy at the front. The Planning Officer advised that it was of no relevance that the application was linked to Woking Borough Council as all applications had to be treated the same.

Members considered this to be a well thought out application and were pleased that it adhered to CS19 of the Core Strategy.

RESOLVED

That planning permission be GRANTED subject to conditions.

6b. 2021/1102 Land north of Warbury Lane and west of Chobham Road

The Committee considered an application for the erection of a stable building and retrospective permission for an existing sand school and use of land for the private recreational keeping of horses (site address/location clarified 21.02.2022).

RESOLVED

That planning permission be GRANTED.

6c. 2022/0068 Moorcroft Community Centre, Woking

The Committee considered an application for the removal of brickwork below the window and adaption of window to install new access door and window above. The exterior timber pergola with plastic roof shall be adapted to accommodate this opening.

RESOLVED

That planning permission be GRANTED subject to conditions.

6d. TREE/2021/8484 Castle Cottage, Castle Road

The Committee considered a tree works application at Castle Cottage, Castle Road, Horsell for a T1 Oak. To reduce by 2-3m. Reduce entire crown by 2-3m to secondary growth. Lift crown to 5m.

RESOLVED

That consent be Granted for the Tree Works Application REF. TREE/2021/8484.

7. PLANNING PEER REVIEW

The Committee considered the report which provided an overview of the recent Peer Review of the Council's Planning Services undertaken by the Local Government Association. Thomas James provided a brief overview of the report and explained that the peer review had been requested from the Local Government Associations (LGA) in response to a motion agreed at Council.

The report set out ten key recommendations, which in turn had been produced into an action plan which was attached at appendix 2.

The Chairman worked through the action plan and asked Committee members if they had any amendments they would like to make at each action point. The discussion and agreed changes (in bold) are noted below.

Action Point 1

Following discussion on the 'community ownership' of the masterplan, it was agreed that the sentence below under the implementation column would be amended to read "*Review information on the Council's website and develop with Comms officers an overarching narrative around place making and major projects and **growth planning agenda.***"

Action Point 2

There were no changes to this point

Action Point 3

Members were interested in who would be putting the training programme together and commented that they would like to have some input so that it was tailored to Members needs. Some new Members felt that the Planning training provided last year was too high level, particularly for newly elected Members, although they appreciated this had been different to previous years due to the impact of the pandemic on the training provision. It was agreed to revise the text under the implementation column to read, "*Develop a training programme, bespoke for Woking Borough Council, for members and officers and to signpost online training resources. To identify mentoring opportunities for chair of planning committee*"

Action Point 4

The Committee were supportive of this point and commented that it was important that they had the opportunity to meet all Planning Officers at the initial training sessions.

Action Point 5

The Chairman reported that this action point had already progressed positively, and she hoped that a clear forward plan for items coming to committee would continue to improve.

Action Point 6

It was agreed that the text under the action column should be *“All parties and committee members recognise **the need that planning committee decisions must be non-political and to make individual planning judgements**”*

Action Point 7

The Chairman questioned whether the reference to the Masterplan in this action should be added to action point 1 where the masterplan was also referenced. Councillor D Roberts commented that this was a complex point as there were some things that could be changed at this point and some that could not; he was unsure we should be asking for community ownership of the masterplan at this point. The Chairman commented that more detail from recommendation 7 should be included in this action point, particularly reference to the residents panel and community engagement. Giorgio Framallicco commented that Members could choose to add further wording, but he did not think this was necessary. Members agreed to update the wording in the implementation column, so the last sentence would read *“Implement the agreed engagement objectives set out in the emerging Corporate Plan, **particularly focussed on the wider planning agenda**”*.

It was also agreed that under the action column, the last sentence should be amended to read *“Continue work, **and build on community engagement and accessibility**”*

Action Point 8

The Chairman commented that there should be an IT champion appointed to ensure the website was user friendly. It was agreed to update the wording in the sentence under the implementation column to read *“The Council has a dedicated webpage setting out what support it could provide to help Neighbourhood Forums prepare Neighbourhood Plans; **this should be signposted from our website in a user-friendly manner. This will be regularly reviewed to bring it up to date.**”*

Action Point 9

There were no changes to this point and it was already being progressed.

Action Point 10

There were no changes to this point.

Action Point 11

There were no changes to this point

Action Point 12

There were no changes to this point

Action Point 13

It was agreed to update the wording in the sentence under the implementation column to read *“Liaise with ICT to develop a plan to redesign the planning **and Planning Policy website in consultation with all stakeholders**”*

Action Point 14

There were no changes to this point

Action Point 15

It was agreed to update the wording in the sentence under the action column to read *“Produce guidelines for the public on planning committee procedures and decision making, **available in advance**”*

Action Point 16

Members asked to add Adam Walther's name to the lead officer column.

Action Point 17

There was some discussion regarding the call-in procedure and whether by doing so the member was pre-determining the outcome of an application. Giorgio Framalico commented that a Councillor must make their decision on an application only after they had heard the whole argument. When you call in an application, you must remain open minded until this discussion had concluded. Calling in a decision simply meant that a Member thought it warranted further debate, not that they necessarily disagreed with the recommendation. It was agreed that the call-in procedure could be an area that was focussed on in the training.

It was agreed to update the wording in the sentence under the implementation column to read "*In liaison with the chair of planning committee, review **and improve** the call-in procedure within agreed timeframes.*" It was also agreed that a date would be added to the timeframe column – **April 2023**.

Action Point 18

It was agreed to update the wording in the sentence under the action column to read "*Make data accessible in digital format with good access to GIS skills and **GIS training where needed.***"

Action Point 19

It was agreed to update the wording in the sentence under the action column to read "*Make the next local plan digital, **not document based***"

There was some discussion on how frequently the Planning Committee wanted to be updated on the action plan with some suggesting quarterly was too frequent. It was agreed for the update to remain quarterly for the time being and it was noted moving forward the update was likely to be brief as it would be an update on the progress made.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

That (i) the action plan be approved, subject to the amendments agreed above; and

(ii) a quarterly update on the action plan be presented to the Planning Committee.

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and ended at 9.05 pm

Chairman: _____

Date: _____