

MINUTES
OF A MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE

held on 28 February 2023

Present:

Cllr L M N Morales (Chairman)
Cllr T Aziz (Vice-Chair) (Items 1 – 6a only)

Cllr J Brown	Cllr S M Oades
Cllr G T Cosnahan	Cllr T G Spenser
Cllr S Dorsett	Cllr M A Whitehand
Cllr P J T Graves	

Absent: Councillors A J Boote

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7 February 2023 be approved and signed as a true and correct record.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A Boote.

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. 2022/0658 Technology House, 48 - 54 Goldsworth Road, Woking

[NOTE 1: The Planning Officer advised the Committee that an additional letter of representation had been received from the Basingstoke Canal Society which raised concerns regarding elements that were contrary to the Town Centre Masterplan and suggested that the Society should receive contributions from the scheme. The Planning Officers commented that the Town Centre Master Plan document was not adopted policy and that they did not think any contribution should be made. This representation did not affect the Planning Officers recommendation.]

[NOTE 2: In accordance with the procedure for public speaking at Planning Committee, Mr J Summers attended the meeting and spoke in objection to the application and Mr S Lodge and Mr T Morris spoke in support.]

The Committee considered an application for the demolition of existing buildings and erection of a building of up to twenty five storeys comprising two hundred and twenty four residential units, ground floor commercial units, landscaping, bin and cycle storage, public realm works and associated works and facilities (Amended Plans)

Following a number of question from the Committee the Planning Officer confirmed that the application was within the area that was considered the 'town centre' and that the application had gone through the Design Panel process three or four times.

Regarding the differing percentages of affordable housing quoted by the Planning Officer and the applicant, it was explained that from a planning perspective it was not possible to state a development would deliver 100% affordable housing as there was no way to secure this. Through S106 Agreement a maximum of 40% affordable housing could be secured and it was only on the word of the developer that the remaining 60% would be delivered. This was explained on page 39 of the report. The Committee heard that it was uncommon to be able to deliver even 40% affordable housing in town centre locations.

Taking into account the other high developments in the immediate vicinity of this application, some Councillors questioned whether the Council would be liable to costs if this application was refused. Thomas James, Development Manager, explained that Planning Officers would not recommend refusal if they were not confident that they could defend their position on appeal. With regards to this application, it was noted that it was a subjective matter regarding the impact on the townscape and whether the Committee considered the provision of affordable housing to overcome this reason for harm. The Planning Officers were confident they could win an appeal with the refusal reasons as set out in the report.

Following a more detailed explanation of the bin storage and collection solution, the Committee were concerned that all the bins would be taken down and stored on the pavement on collection day. It was noted that there was no visualisation of these bins on the pavement, but it was anticipated there would be a considerable impact. Planning Officers did not think it was an acceptable solution, which many Members of the Committee agreed with. The Committee considered whether they wanted to add this as a reason for

refusal. Councillor T Aziz proposed, and it was duly seconded by Councillor T Spenser to add the bin storage as a reason for refusal. Thomas James commented that the Committee needed to consider whether it would be considered prudent to refuse on these grounds as mitigation regarding this point could be secured by condition. The Committee accepted the advice from Officers.

Some Councillors thought they would find it difficult to refuse this application as it provided a large amount of affordable housing that was desperately needed and would have a huge effect on housing waiting lists. Others agreed that there was a need for affordable housing, but questioned whether this was good quality affordable housing. It was suggested it was cramped with not enough amenity space, which in turn could cause social issues. The Design Panel reviews had suggested that many improvements could be made on this application to make it better for future residents.

Councillor T Aziz, Ward Councillor, commented that he had attended a couple of the workshops hoping that the Developer would make the application more acceptable to Planning Policy. Councillor T Aziz wanted to highlight a few concerns raised by residents and thought more time was needed to address these concerns. The Councillor had sympathy for those that these high rise buildings affected. Councillor T Aziz commented that it was overdevelopment of the site and that the quality of the accommodation needed to be better. He hoped that if refused by the Committee the Developer would come back with an improved application.

Some Members commented that they would be concerned by the proposed amount of residents being condensed into the proposed size of building.

Some Members thought that determination of the application came down to a balance and whether the provision of affordable housing outweighed any harm. Some of the Committee thought that it would be in character with the area and although at odds with the Town Centre Master Plan, as this was paused and not adopted it should not be taken into consideration. They thought that the application needed to be judged in the current context of the area, and even though the high rise Ecoworld development had not commenced, the application had been approved. Some Members were minded to support the application due to the affordable housing provision and taking everything on balance.

Councillor J Brown proposed, and it was duly seconded by Councillor S Dorsett that the application be approved, subject to conditions.

Some Members were worried that this building did not follow the desired building height bell curve effect from the town centre and was a hike upwards, therefore setting a precedent. Residents in Mabel Street had expressed concern regarding the overbearing look of the development. These Members supported the provision of affordable housing, but thought that the quality of the housing was equally important. This proposal did not include sufficient recreation/amenity space and it was anticipated that this could cause social problems.

Following a question the Planning Officer confirmed that it would be difficult to address the lack of amenity space through conditions as the site was constrained.

Some Members sympathised with the motion put forward by Councillor J Brown, but also felt that long term, residents would not be happy in this development and we needed to ensure any affordable housing suited the needs of the many families that would be housed there.

In accordance with Standing Order 22.2, the Chairman deemed that a division should be taken on the motion to approve the application. The votes for and against approval of the application were recorded as follows.

In favour: Cllrs J Brown and S Dorsett.

TOTAL: 2

Against: Cllrs T Aziz, G Cosnahan, R Leach, S Oades, L Morales (Chairman), T Spenser and M Whitehand.

TOTAL: 7

Present but not voting: None.

TOTAL: 0

The application was therefore not approved.

In light of the discussions, the Chairman queried whether the Committee wanted to consider any additional reasons for refusal. The lack of parking and lack of amenity space were considered again.

Councillor R Leach proposed, and it was duly seconded by Councillor T Aziz that lack of parking provision be added as a reason for refusal.

In accordance with Standing Order 22.2, the Chairman deemed that a division should be taken on the motion to add an additional reason for refusal regarding parking provision. The votes for and against this motion were recorded as follows.

In favour: Cllrs T Aziz, R Leach, S Oades, T Spenser and M Whitehand.

TOTAL: 5

Against: Cllr G Cosnahan.

TOTAL: 1

Present but not voting: Cllr J Brown, S Dorsett and L Morales (Chairman).

TOTAL: 3

The additional reason for refusal was approved.

Councillor R Leach proposed, and it was duly seconded by Councillor T Aziz that lack of amenity space provision be added as a reason for refusal.

In accordance with Standing Order 22.2, the Chairman deemed that a division should be taken on the motion to add an additional reason for refusal regarding amenity space provision. The votes for and against this motion were recorded as follows.

In favour: Cllrs T Aziz, R Leach, S Oades, T Spenser and M Whitehand.

TOTAL: 5

Against: Cllr G Cosnahan.

TOTAL: 1

Present but not voting: Cllr J Brown, S Dorsett and L Morales (Chairman).

TOTAL: 3

The additional reason for refusal was approved.

In accordance with Standing Order 22.2, the Chairman deemed that a division should be taken on the recommendation to refuse the application. The votes for and against refusal of the application were recorded as follows.

In favour: Cllrs T Aziz, G Cosnahan, R Leach, S Oades, L Morales (Chairman), T Spenser and M Whitehand

TOTAL: 7

Against: Cllrs J Brown and S Dorsett.

TOTAL: 2

Present but not voting: None.

TOTAL: 0

The application was therefore refused.

RESOLVED

That planning permission be REFUSED with the two additional reasons for refusal relating to lack of parking and lack of amenity space.

6b. 2023/0011 Little Oaks, Jackmans Lane, St Johns

[NOTE: In accordance with the procedure for public speaking at Planning Committee, Mr C Sharp attended the meeting and spoke in objection to the application and Mr P Uttley spoke in support.]

The Committee considered an application for the erection of two semi-detached and one detached dwelling and associated hard and soft landscaping following the demolition of the existing dwelling.

The Chairman asked for clarification on the flood risk of the site as the applicant stated it was low risk, and the Planning Officers report stated that part of the site was at medium risk of surface water flooding. The Planning Officer confirmed that the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment showed that part of the site was at medium risk of surface water flooding, with the frontage on Jackmans Lane at high risk of surface water flooding.

The Planning Officer advised that they had visited almost all of the properties that bordered the site over the course of dealing with recent planning applications, but there had not been a topographic survey submitted with this application (although there was with previous applications on the site). The image supplied by the applicant of the view from the closest rear window of adjoining Heathside was quite heavily reliant on vegetation on the Heathside side of the boundary screening the site, however the applicant had no control

over this as it was located outside of their ownership and could be removed by existing or future occupiers of Heathside.

Councillor R Leach, Ward Councillor commented that the majority of representation he had received related to the rural nature of this path, which would be lost. The site was right on the edge of the Green Belt.

The majority of Members thought that the development would increase traffic massively down this rural lane and it was considered inappropriate.

In accordance with Standing Order 22.2, the Chairman deemed that a division should be taken on the recommendation to refuse the application. The votes for and against refusal of the application were recorded as follows.

In favour: Cllrs J Brown, G Cosnahan, S Dorsett, R Leach, S Oades, T Spenser and M Whitehand

TOTAL: 7

Against: None.

TOTAL: 0

Present but not voting: Cllr L Morales (Chairman).

TOTAL: 1

The application was therefore refused.

RESOLVED

That planning permission be REFUSED.

6c. 2022/0393 Cherrywood, Blackdown Avenue, Pyrford

[NOTE: In accordance with the procedure for public speaking at Planning Committee, Mr A Grimshaw attended the meeting and spoke in objection to the application and Mr S Darnley spoke in support.]

The Committee considered an application for the subdivision of plot of Cherrywood, retention of existing dwelling and erection of new attached two storey dwelling with accommodation in the roof space with associated parking and amenity space (AMENDED PLANS).

Councillor S Dorsett, Ward Councillor commented that the application had received objections from the residents forum and because of this he thought the discussion and determination of the application should be by Committee. Councillor S Dorsett commented that he had some concerns regarding the possible terracing affect and whether the application was contrary to the Neighbourhood Plan. Councillor S Dorsett thought that equivalent weight needed to be given to the Pyrford Neighbourhood Plan as the Core Strategy. The Councillor appreciated that the concerns raised were subjective, but he thought it deserved to be debated.

Follow a question raised regarding rear access to the original dwelling, the Planning Officer advised that passage had been included in the plans to maintain this separate access.

It was confirmed that the application was for a separate dwelling, there would be no internal access to the existing dwelling.

In accordance with Standing Order 22.2, the Chairman deemed that a division should be taken on the recommendation to approve the application. The votes for and against approval of the application were recorded as follows.

In favour: Cllrs J Brown, G Cosnahan, R Leach, S Oades, T Spenser and M Whitehand.

TOTAL: 6

Against: None.

TOTAL: 0

Present but not voting: Cllrs S Dorsett and L Morales (Chairman).

TOTAL: 2

The application was therefore approved.

RESOLVED

That planning permission be APPROVED.

6d. 2022/1120 R A Cross, 19 High Road, Byfleet, West Byfleet

The Committee considered an application for the change of use from retail (Class E) to mixed retail/residential use (Class E/Class C3) including rear balcony, relocation of external staircase and fenestration alterations to create 3no flats.

Members of the Committee encouraged the applicant to access the pre-application process and find out what the Local Planning Authority would considered acceptable for this site.

In accordance with Standing Order 22.2, the Chairman deemed that a division should be taken on the recommendation to refuse the application. The votes for and against refusal of the application were recorded as follows.

In favour: Cllrs J Brown, G Cosnahan, S Dorsett, R Leach, S Oades and T Spenser.

TOTAL: 6

Against: None.

TOTAL: 0

Present but not voting: Cllrs and L Morales (Chairman) and M Whitehand.

TOTAL: 2

The application was therefore refused.

RESOLVED

That planning permission be REFUSED.

7. UPDATE - PLANNING PEER REVIEW ACTION PLAN

The Committee heard that there had been a lot of progress on the Action Plan since the last review.

It was agreed that Councillors could put forward suggestions of topics that they would like to see on the Planning Training programme. Thomas James commented that he was keen that training took place in person as there was more interaction.

It was noted that the review of the Core Strategy would be commencing soon, with a view to update before 2027.

It was agreed that progress of the Action Plan could be reviewed annually going forward.

The meeting commenced at 7.00pm
and ended at 9.30 pm

Chairman: _____

Date: _____