

MINUTES
OF A MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE

held on 21 March 2023

Present:

Cllr L M N Morales (Chairman)

Cllr A J Boote	Cllr R N Leach
Cllr J Brown	Cllr S M Oades
Cllr G T Cosnahan	Cllr T G Spenser
Cllr S Dorsett	Cllr M A Whitehand

Also Present: Councillor W Forster.

Absent: Councillors T Aziz

1. MINUTES

Councillor S Dorsett commented that under item 6c 2022/0393 Cherrywood, reference was made in the minutes to a Residents Forum, which did not exist. The reference should have been to the Residents Association and the Neighbourhood Forum, both of which had objected to the application.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 28 February 2023 be approved and signed as a true and correct record, with the exception of the error noted above.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor T Aziz.

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. 2022/0694 Land On the West Side Of Egley Road, Egley Road

The Committee considered an application for planning permission for the redevelopment of Land West of Egley Road, Woking to include 86 dwellings (43 market dwellings and 43 affordable dwellings) (C3 Use Class), the erection of a 62- bed care home building (Use Class C2), new vehicular access point off Egley Road with improved pedestrian and cycle links, open and recreational space as well as hard and soft landscaping throughout the site, SUDs, car parking, biodiversity features and other associated infrastructure (Amended Description) (Amended Plans).

In his role as County Councillor for this division, Councillor W Forster spoke in objection to the application and raised concern about the appropriateness of the development and whether it was in keeping with the bordering dwelling and surrounding area. He commented that it was proposed that some of the taller dwellings would be built on the highest area of the site, which would dominate the landscape. Councillor W Forster was worried that this development would remove the green gap between Mayford and Woking and would be a loss of biodiversity. In regards to the affordable housing, the Councillor commented that this looked to be a positive, however when you looked into the numbers, only eleven units of traditional family housing were being provided, a large proportion would be provided in the apartment blocks.

Following a question regarding the required separation on the eastern and south eastern border of the site, the Planning Officer advised that in their opinion visual separation had been achieved and this had been addressed in some detail at the pre-application stage. It was noted that this was a allocated site under the Site Allocations DPD 2021, so it was expected that it would be developed. It was required that any development on this site maintain a sense of visual separation (not physical separation). There was a robust band of oak trees on the eastern boundary that would be retained, along with additional planting and on the south eastern edge of the site the dwellings would be set back. This would provide an approximate 45-65 metre wide green gap along the eastern, south eastern boundary and the highway. Then test of GP7 was for visual separation to be maintain and in the Planning Officers opinion this was achieved by the application. The Committee were reminded the Planning Inspector changed the site to require visual separation, rather than local separation.

Following a query, the Planning Officer confirmed that a care home was an acceptable use for this site, along with the residential dwellings. This was not contrary to the Core Strategy or Policy GP7.

Some Members largely supported the application, however they had some concerns around the amount of parking provided to the care home. The Planning Officer acknowledged that the parking provision was towards the lower end of what was expected, however this did meet policy requirements. It was noted there were visitor spaces throughout the site which did deliver extra capacity.

Following a question about adding a condition to secure the affordable homes element of the application, the Planning Officer confirmed that this would be secured by way of S106. The Planning Officer acknowledged that a large amount of the affordable housing had

been allocated to the apartments, however this was one of the first sites to provide the First Homes provision under the Government scheme.

Councillor G Cosnahan, Ward Councillor, commented that residents were generally unhappy about this proposed development and the loss of green belt, although he appreciated this had been agreed some time ago and this site was now allocated for development. Councillor G Cosnahan thought that the visual separation was good, but he was concerned regarding the volume of people that would appear in this area. He thought that the affordable housing was a real benefit, although did not think the proposed mix was right. Councillor G Cosnahan was keen to represent the unrest of his residents although did comment that the development provided amenity space, affordable housing and the transport links to the site were good. Councillor G Cosnahan suggested that an extra condition be added to ensure adequate sewage provision was included regarding the pumping and also flood prevention around the pumping station.

Councillor G Cosnahan proposed, and it was duly seconded by Councillor A Boote that an additional condition regarding sewage be added.

Mr T James, Development Manager, advised that condition 29 covered issue around sewage and queried whether this was sufficient. This condition had also been separated to cover the Care Home and residential elements. Councillor G Cosnahan was happy with this condition but asked that additional text be added to specifically address flood mitigation around the pumping station. The Committee agreed that if approved, an additional condition would be added which required a bund to be erected around pumping station.

Councillor J Brown commented that he still had concerns about the application including aboricultural issues, heritage assets, inadequate visual separation and insufficient parking. Councillor J Brown proposed, and it was duly seconded by Councillor S Dorsett that the application be refused.

Some members shared the concern regarding parking as it was thought the developer was offering the minimum required which they thought to be short sighted. Members also raised concern around lack of EV charging points. The Planning Officer said that even though at the lower end, the parking provision did comply with our policy requirements. With regards to the EV charging points, every dwelling would be provided with one, so the Planning Officer did not think this would be grounds for refusal.

If the Committee was minded to refuse the application, Mr T James advice was that the reason for refusal should be based on the character and appearance failing to provide spatial separation. It was the opinion of the Planning Officers that this would be the only reason that could successfully be defended on appeal

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

In favour: Cllrs J Brown and S Dorsett.

TOTAL: 2

Against: Cllrs A Boote, R Leach and L Morales (Chairman).

TOTAL: 3

Present but not voting: Cllrs G Cosnahan, S Oades, T Spenser and M Whitehand.

TOTAL: 4

The application was therefore not refused.

If the application was approved it was suggested that an additional informative be added encouraging the care home to provide 50% of parking spaces with EV charging points, and as agreed earlier in the meeting an additional condition would be added which required a bund to be erected around pumping station.

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

In favour: Cllrs A Boote, G Cosnahan, R Leach, L Morales (Chairman) and T Spenser.

TOTAL: 5

Against: Cllrs J Brown and S Dorsett.

TOTAL: 2

Present but not voting: Cllrs S Oades and M Whitehand.

TOTAL: 2

The application was therefore approved.

RESOLVED

That planning permission be GRANTED subject to conditions, including an extra condition as noted in these minutes regarding a bund to be erected round the pumping station, additional informative encouraging the care home to provide 50% of parking spaces with EV charging points and S.106 Legal Agreement.

6b. 2022/1168 Quevrue, Holly Bank Road, Woking

[NOTE 1: The Planning Officer advised the Committee that four additional letters of objection had been received which mainly reiterated the comments already summarised within the representations section of the report.]

[NOTE 2: In accordance with the procedure for public speaking at Planning Committee, Mr Simon Ashall attended the meeting and spoke in objection to the application and Mr James Gellini spoke in support.]

The Committee considered an application for the erection of an apartment building containing seven flats following demolition of existing dwelling, with associated landscaping, parking and bin and cycle stores (amended plans rec'd 14.02.2023 and 15.02.2023).

Following a question about the chimneys, the Planning Officer confirmed that these had been added as a decorative feature at the request of the Planning Officer to add interest.

Some Members of the Committee commented that there were positive aspects about the application, however they also had concerns. These concerns related to the affect this development would have on the street scene due to the scale bulk and mass. It was also thought that it was contrary to Policy BE1 of the Hook Heath Neighbourhood Plan, which should be given considerable weight.

The Planning Officer commented that matters of bulk, mass and design were subjective and that Officers had looked at these in detail. Woodbank to the west and Hollywell to the south created a specific context to the site which was considered acceptable and in keeping. A Member commented that one of the nearby apartment buildings had been allowed on appeal due to it being sheltered accommodation and queried whether this would affect the acceptability of the proposed application. The Planning Officer commented that it was not obvious that Woodbank was a C2 scheme so in terms of character and appearance it was not possible to differentiate this view.

Following concerns raised regarding the amenity space, the Planning Officer commented that in their opinion this was considered acceptable and condition 21 covered this in detail.

Some Members thought that allowing this development would set a precedent and although it was not out of character within the immediate area, it was out of character for Hook Heath. This development could see a domino affect in Hook Heath and potential start to place change.

The Planning Officer commented that the application was a matter of planning judgement. There were currently apartment buildings on two sides of the site, which meant it did not appear out of character to the immediate area. That said, it was impossible to guarantee that approval of this application would not affect the North and East of the site. Planning Officers had come to the conclusion that they would be more likely to lose on appeal if this application was refused.

Councillor S Dorsett proposed, and it was duly seconded by Councillor J Brown that the application be refused on the grounds of scale, bulk and mass which was contrary to policy CS21.

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

In favour: Cllrs J Brown and S Dorsett.

TOTAL: 2

Against: Cllrs A Boote, R Leach and T Spenser.

TOTAL: 3

Present but not voting: Cllrs G Cosnahan, S Oades, L Morales (Chairman) and M Whitehand.

TOTAL: 5

The application was therefore not refused.

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

In favour: Cllrs A Boote, R Leach, S Oades and T Spenser.

TOTAL: 4

Against: Cllrs J Brown and S Dorsett.

TOTAL: 2

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

TOTAL: 3

The application was therefore approved subject to the recommendation set out within the report.

RESOLVED

That authority be delegated to the Development Manager (or their authorised deputy) to Grant planning permission subject to:

- (i) Prior submission of bat survey work confirming an absence of bat roosts from the existing building to be demolished, or any bat roosting compensation or mitigation measures (if required) being secured via planning condition(s) (and subject to no objections being raised by Surrey Wildlife Trust Ecology Planning Advice Service);
- (ii) Planning conditions set out in the report (plus any additional condition(s) which may be required for bat roosting compensation or mitigation measures);
- (iii) Prior completion of a Section 106 Legal Agreement to secure the required SAMM (TBH SPA) contribution.

6c. 2023/0085 Garages 1 To 12 Between 31 And Pond, Bonsey Lane, Westfield

[NOTE 1: The Planning Officer advised the Committee that two additional letters of objection had been received which mainly reiterated the comments already summarised within the report.]

[NOTE 2: The Planning Officer advised that Surrey Highway had submitted a response which sought additional information on the scheme. The Planning Officer had gone back to request clarification on why they needed this as the application was identical to the last time it was submitted and approved, and Surrey Highways had come back with no comment. The only change was that the housing type had changed from social to affordable.

The Committee considered an application for demolition of 12no existing disused garages and erection of a three storey 7no unit apartment block.

RESOLVED

That authority be delegated to the Development Manager (or their authorised deputy) to Grant planning permission subject to:

- (i) Planning conditions set out in the report; and
- (ii) Undertaking of the Chief Executive of Woking Borough Council to secure:
SAMM (TBH SPA) contribution of £5,573;

100% affordable rented units (i.e. 7no units); (Officer Note: As Woking Borough Council is the owner of the land the subject of this planning application, it cannot enter into a Section 106 legal agreement to secure any planning obligations which may be required to mitigate the effects of the proposed development. However, the Council's Chief Executive is able to commit the Council to give effect to the specific measures in this case under delegated authority. Any such commitment by the Council's Chief Executive would provide certainty that such 21 MARCH 2023 PLANNING COMMITTEE measures will be given effect and implemented for the proposed development.)

6d. 2023/0060 3 Dinsdale Close, Woking

This application had been withdrawn from the agenda.

6e. 2022/1126 212 High Road, Byfleet, West Byfleet

The Committee considered an application for the retention of boundary fence. (Retrospective).

The Committee were minded to refuse the application and encouraged the applicant to re-submit an application that was more appropriate. Members did not want to set a precedent for a fence of this height in this area.

RESOLVED

That planning permission be REFUSED and authorise formal enforcement proceedings.

6f. 2022/0882 Turners, The Ridge, Woking

The Committee considered an application for the erection of fencing along front and side boundary. (Retrospective)

RESOLVED

That planning permission be REFUSED and formal enforcement proceedings authorised.

Planning Committee 21 March 2023

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and ended at 9.50 pm

Chairman: _____

Date: _____