

MINUTES
OF A MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE

held on 4 June 2024
Present:

Cllr L Lyons (Chairman)
Cllr G Cosnahan (Vice-Chair)

Cllr A Javaid Cllr S Mukherjee
Cllr R Leach Cllr M Sullivan

Absent: Councillors D Jordan, C Martin, P Pandher and T Spenser.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Jordan, C Martin, P Pandher and T Spenser.

Councillors D Jordan, P Pandher and T Spenser had been unable to attend the mandatory Planning Committee training and were therefore unable to participate in the meeting. An alternative training session would be arranged for them in advance of the next committee meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 16 April 2024 and 20 May 2024 be approved and signed as a true and correct record.

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.

Prior to the matters for determination, the Chairman asked to read a brief statement about the practice of the Chairman of the committee voting;

“Although the constitution does not require the Chairman to abstain from voting, there has been a local convention in Woking Borough Council for some years for Chairmen not to. In an effort to modernise the committee, I intend to be considered to be voting on all items for determination, as I believe that is what residents would expect me to do. I have asked for this point to be minuted, and I do not intend to repeat this statement in future Planning Committee meetings.”

6a. 2023/0737 - 3Js Nursery, Smarts Heath Road, Woking

[NOTE 1: The Planning Officer advised the Committee that there was an error in the refusal reason 1 on the recommendation page of the report, where is referred to ‘proposed football pitches’. This should read “*The location of the proposed **indoor fitness club** is in an isolated rural location and therefore is not locationally sustainable and would not contribute to the achievement of sustainable development or improve conditions for a wide variety of people to undertake this leisure activity*”.]

[NOTE 2: In accordance with the procedure for public speaking at Planning Committee, Mr Vince Skillcorn attended the meeting and spoke in support to the application.]

The Committee consider an application for a change of use of an existing commercial unit (Use Class B1/ B8), to an indoor fitness club and studio (Use Class E(d)).

Some Members ask for further explanation on how this would harm the Greenbelt as there were no external works proposed and there were already vehicles coming and going on this commercial site. The Planning Officer explained that the proposed change of use would intensify the site and the figure provided suggested that there would be an increased use. It was considered that here would be insufficient parking which could lead to user parking on access drive or the grass, which would lead to the erosion of the Greenbelt. It was clarified by the Planning Officer that the existing uses would remain on site and this application would be in addition to these.

It is this change of use that was considered harmful which would lead to the intensification of the site.

It was noted that the NPPF was very clear on the appropriate uses and development of Greenbelt; indoor sports and leisure was considered inappropriate in principle, unless very special circumstance had been put forward, which they had not.

In accordance with the Standing Order set out in the Constitution, 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 G Cosnahan, A Javaid, R Leach, L Lyons (Chairman), S Mukherjee and M Sullivan.

TOTAL: 6

Against: None

TOTAL: 0

Present but not voting: None.

TOTAL: 0

The application was therefore refused.

RESOLVED

That planning permission be REFUSED.

6b. 2022/1086 - 1 Robin Hood Road, St Johns, Woking

[NOTE 1: The Planning Officer advised the Committee that one additional letter 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 Graham Cundy attended the meeting and spoke in objection to the application and Mr Patrick Graham spoke in support.]

The Committee considered an application for the demolition of No.1 Robin Hood Road and erection of a part three storey, part two storey building comprising Seven self-contained flats and a ground floor commercial unit (Use Class E) and associated parking, landscaping and works (AMENDED PLANS).

Cllr R Leach, Ward Councillor commented that he shared some of the same reservations as raised by the objecting public speaker and had concerns regarding the parking provision. It was thought that the retail unit was likely to attract traffic, which there was no provision for, and local car parks were already congested. The Councillor also commented that the three storeys height of the proposed application would be out of place with the surrounding area, and he was concerned regarding the narrow nature of Barrack Road which ran beside the site.

The Planning Officer confirmed that the parking element of the application was compliant with policy, which required 4.5 spaces and the applicant was providing 5 spaces. There was no minimum requirement for dedicated parking for commercial units.

With regard the height of the application, the Planning Officer confirmed that most developments in the area were two storey and some with living space in the roof. In terms of urban design, corner plots were considered a good location for taller buildings. The

Planning Officer noted that variation of height was not necessarily harmful and there was often steeping up and down in a street scene.

The Planning Officer acknowledged that Barrack Road was narrow, however they stated that there was a current dwelling already on the plot and Surrey Highways had not raised any objections to the application.

Following a question, the Planning Officer confirmed that the commercial units opening hours were set out in the conditions. That said, nothing could stop the applicant applying for a change in opening hours, but this did not mean it would be granted. Any future application would be considered on its own merits.

With regard to deliveries to the commercial unit, it was thought these would take place from Robin Hood Road. It was only one small commercial unit, the Planning Officer did not consider this to be an issue.

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

In favour: Cllrs G Cosnahan, A Javaid, L Lyons (Chairman), S Mukherjee and M Sullivan.

TOTAL: 5

Against: None

TOTAL: 0

Present but not voting: Cllr R Leach.

TOTAL: 1

The application was therefore approved.

RESOLVED

That Planning Permission be GRANTED subject to conditions and a S106 Agreement.

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and ended at 7.55 pm

Chairman: _____

Date: _____