

MINUTES
OF A MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE

held on 15 October 2024

Present:

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

Cllr A Javaid	Cllr J Pearce
Cllr D Jordan	Cllr T Spenser
Cllr R Leach	Cllr M Sullivan
Cllr C Martin	

Also Present: Councillors I Johnson and E Nicholson.

Absent: Councillors S Mukherjee.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 3 September 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.

6a. 2022/1189 Hoe Bridge School, Hoe Place, 224 Old Woking Road

[NOTE 1: The Planning Officer provided the Committee with an update on condition 35 and condition 37, as detailed below;

Condition 35 - Update to text of second bullet point only (new proposed text shown in bold italics below, remainder of condition 35 remains unchanged):

- Heras fencing, ***installed to prevent penetration by badgers and hazel dormouse***, must be erected around the working area, ***in general accordance with Appendix 6: Badger considerations of the Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA), dated 2nd October 2024 (amended), prepared by Arbtech Consulting Ltd***, to prevent encroachment into retained habitats where badger setts and hazel dormouse could be present;

Condition 37 - New proposed text shown in bold italics below, remainder of condition 37 remains unchanged):

k) An Education Action Plan setting out how students will be taught the importance of local habitats and the importance of caring for such sites.

[NOTE 2: In accordance with the procedure for public speaking at Planning Committee, Robert Kotlarz attended the meeting and spoke in objection to the application and Chris Webster spoke in support.]

The Committee considered an application for the construction of new two-storey Senior School building (Use Class F.1), reorganisation and resurfacing of existing parking area served by existing access to Old Woking Road, formation of entrance only access from White Rose Lane and associated works (amended description and amended plans and additional documents submitted August 2024).

Councillor I Johnson, Ward Councillor, remarked that the consideration of this application required a balanced approach, weighing the importance of extending educational services against Green Belt and highway concerns. He highlighted that a significant portion of the objections were related to highway issues and access, potentially stemming from inadequate maintenance and sightlines. Councillor Johnson emphasised the need for further examination of the access and congestion on White Rose Lane. He called for more detailed information on the transport plan to assess its feasibility. Additionally, he addressed concerns about traffic noise affecting a nearby bungalow, noting that the focus should be on the impact of the noise on usage, rather than ownership.

The Committee noted that the transport assessment highlighted the underuse of the current fleet of minibuses and questioned how increasing this fleet would alleviate congestion if the buses remained underutilised.

In response to a query, the Planning Officer explained that two surveys were conducted in 2022 and 2023 due to the extended application period, which incorporated changes and the introduction of the travel plan. Regarding minibus parking, it was clarified that there was ample space on the wider school site, and the buses would not need to remain on site throughout the day.

Addressing an objector's comment about previous concerns from the highway's authority, the Planning Officer stated that the applicant had made changes to address these concerns. The proposed upgrade to the White Rose Lane junction aimed to relieve pressure on Old Woking Road, and access to White Rose Lane would be restricted. The Planning Officer emphasised that the application could not resolve existing issues which were in essence caused by another school but sought to make improvements. The Highways Authority was now satisfied with the applicant's proposals.

It was noted that there was insufficient width to provide any further footpath on White Rose Lane.

In regard to the bungalow on White Rose Lane, the Planning Officer agreed with the comment made by Councillor Johnson, that any assessment on the impact of noise would be on usage. This had been assessed and a 1.5m acoustic fence was proposed to mitigate this. This was considered sufficient as there would be restricted usage of the White Rose Lane.

The Committee commented that although the Highways Authority no longer objected to this, the application would do nothing to improve the safety of the area. They questioned how the travel plan would be monitored and policed. The Planning Officer advised that the Travel Plan was an evolving document and would be part of the S106 Agreement. Surrey County Council monitor the Travel plan alongside a monitoring schedule. There would be repercussions if the targets were not met.

Councillor D Jordan proposed, and it was duly seconded by Councillor J Pearce, that the application be refused on the grounds that the entrance was out of keeping with the character of White Rose Lane, the overbearing nature on number 46 and other properties on White Rose Lane and nearby.

Amanda Francis, Solicitor, informed the Committee that Officers were obliged to provide advice on the risk of potential costs being awarded against the Council at any potential Appeal and reputational harm which may follow. She advised the Committee that whilst a potential costs award against the Council was not a material planning consideration, it was prudent to provide legal advice to Councillors in that if they were minded to refuse the Planning Application they should have robust Planning reasons for refusal which could stand up to the scrutiny of an Appeal.

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 R Leach, D Jordan, L Lyons (Chairman), J Pearce and M Sullivan.

TOTAL: 5

Against: Cllrs C Martin and T Spenser.

TOTAL: 2

Present but not voting: Cllrs G Cosnahan & A Javid.

TOTAL: 2

The application was therefore refused.

RESOLVED

That planning permission be REFUSED.

6b. 2022/1190 Hoe Bridge School, Hoe Place, 224 Old Woking Road

The Committee considered an application for listed Building Consent for the demolition of a section of brick wall in association with the development proposed under related planning application ref: PLAN/2022/1189 (for the Construction of new two-storey Senior School building (Use Class F.1), reorganisation and resurfacing of existing parking area served by existing access to Old Woking Road and associated works).

The Planning Officer advised that 'In the absence of planning permission being granted for the associated development proposed under planning application ref: PLAN/2022/1189 no 'other considerations' existed to outweigh the 'less than substantial' harm (which must nonetheless be afforded considerable weight and importance) which would arise to the heritage significance of the curtilage listed brick boundary wall due to the loss, through demolition, of a section of this wall. No 'other considerations' existed so as to provide clear and convincing justification for the harm to the significance of that designated heritage asset and, in the absence of planning permission being granted for the associated development proposed under planning application ref: PLAN/2022/1189, no public benefits existed so as to outweigh the harm to the significance of that designated heritage asset. The proposed works were therefore contrary to Policy CS20 of the Woking Core Strategy (2012), Policy DM20 of the Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (DMP DPD) (2016), Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2023) (most notably paragraphs 205, 206 and 208) and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).'

RESOLVED

That the application was REFUSED.

6c. 2024/0104 Moor House Residential Home, Horsell Moor

[NOTE: In accordance with the procedure for public speaking at Planning Committee, Brian Harris attended the meeting and spoke in objection to the application and Anthony Cappalonga spoke in support.]

The Committee considered an application for the change of use of a care home (Class C2) to HMO for 14 persons (Sui Generis).

RESOLVED

That planning permission be GRANTED subject to S.106 Legal Agreement and conditions.

6d. 2023/0915 Westfield Social Club, 33 Westfield Road

The Committee considered an application for construction of a new social club with two self-contained one-bedroom flats at first floor level. The construction of seven three-bedroom dwellings, (two blocks of two semi-detached dwellings and one block of three terraced dwellings) and associated landscaping following the demolition of the existing Westfield Club. (Amended Plans).

Following a question the Planning Officer confirmed that the developer was repurposing the hard standing and the application would not encroach on the common land.

RESOLVED

That planning permission be GRANTED subject to conditions and a S106 agreement to secure the SAMM contribution.

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and ended at 8.30 pm

Chairman: _____

Date: _____