

Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 28 October 2021 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Tom Kelly (Chair), Steve Liddiard (Vice-Chair), Gary Byrne, Mike Fletcher, James Halden, Terry Piccolo, Georgette Polley and Lee Watson

Apologies: Councillors Colin Churchman

In attendance: Louise Reid, Strategic Lead - Development Services
Matthew Gallagher, Major Applications Manager
Nadia Houghton, Principal Planner
Julian Howes, Senior Highway Engineer
Sarah Williams, Service Manager, Education Support Service
Caroline Robins, Locum Solicitor
Ollie Thursby, Trainee Engineer
Neil Wakeling, Trainee Engineer
Sarah Williams, Service Manager, Education Support Service
Kenna-Victoria Healey, Senior Democratic Services

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the recording to be made available on the Council's website.

45. Minutes

The Chair stated that there was a time limit for the use of South Essex College venue which was until 9.30pm. He said that if the items on the agenda were not concluded by 9.30pm, the meeting would be adjourned and would recommence at the next Planning Committee meeting on 2 December.

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 August 2021 were approved as a true and correct record.

46. Item of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

47. Declaration of Interests

In relation to 21/01061/OUT, Councillor Polley declared that the applicants were related to a colleague of hers but had not discussed the application or any planning related matters. She stated that she had sought advice from the Council's Monitoring Officer which would not require her to remove herself from participating the application.

48. Declarations of receipt of correspondence and/or any meetings/discussions held relevant to determination of any planning application or enforcement action to be resolved at this meeting

Members declared that they had received an email from Andrew Blakely in relation to 21/01309/FUL.

Councillor Fletcher declared he had received an email in relation to 21/00894/TBC.

Councillors Halden and Polley both declared an email from Councillor Hebb in relation to 20/00064/FUL.

49. Planning Appeals

The Committee was satisfied with the report.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

50. 20/00064/FUL Town Centre Car Park King Street Stanford Le Hope Essex (Deferred)

The report was presented by the Principal Planner.

Councillor Fletcher enquired as to the parking on the site and how officers came to the decision to allow three hours free parking. The Principal Planner explained it was felt three hours was a reasonable amount of time for shoppers to have the freedom to do what they needed to do, given the shops which were located on King Street and the High Street. Councillor Halden commented he felt that three hours was a reasonable amount of time given the range of shops on King Street such as hairdressers, restaurants etc. and that by only having three hours free parking and being close to the station would put a stop to commuters parking in the car park all day.

Councillor Fletcher sought clarification as to the impact of the view of the church, officers explained that further information and line of sight views had been provided by the applicant which demonstrated that the church was screened with foliage and therefore it was deemed the development would not impact on the view of the church.

Councillor Halden commented he was struggling with the health contribution, he continued to state within the report the contribution was to provide additional floor space and this would be utilised for the Corringham integrated hub, however to his knowledge planning permission and the total budget for floorspace was approved two years ago via Cabinet. The Principal Planner commented that the NHS reconsultation had confirmed the funding would be directly provided to the medical centre and benefit the medical centre and patients of the Corringham Surgery. During the discussion Councillor Halden

commented he just wanted to be sure that what had been promised for residents could actually be delivered. The Principal Planning officer explained that a specific IRL reference for healthcare provisions in Stanford le Hope and Corringham had been set up to ensure that the contributions offered would be put towards local healthcare and as a result complied with policy.

During discussions Members sought assurances that the three hours free car parking would not be removed from the application and the section 106 agreement would confirm this. It was explained to Members that there would be no planning approval issued until the section 106 agreement was secured and completed and that free parking for the site was included in this. If the applicant wanted or needed to modify any parking this would differ from what Members have given a resolution to approve and any material changes to the free car parking would have to come back to committee.

The Chair commented that three years ago the committee rejected the application due to no parking which Members felt was important, having now returned to the committee with three hours free parking the Chair felt the applicant had listened to Members and didn't feel the application was a bad idea, he actually liked the design of the flats.

Councillor Halden commended the work of officers in being able to secure the three hours free parking, was a lot more desirable than the original application. He continued by stating after listening to the debate and questions raised by Members he felt some Members were still concerned that the application could go through on appeal. The application put in front of Members for either approval or refusal could in actual fact just be a judgement call. He then referred to the speaker statement letter of Councillor Hebb from the last meeting who had spoken on behalf of residents of Stanford Le Hope. Councillor Halden continued by commenting the health contribution part of the section 106 agreement didn't make sense to him.

Councillor Piccolo commented he understood and agreed with some of the concerns Members had raised, that being said as Ward Councillor he was pleased that 57 parking spaces had been secured for residents and shoppers in Stanford Le Hope and was minded to support the recommendation.

Following clarification of a typo left in the recommendation, under the section 106 and car parking, it was confirmed the words "pricing system fixed for a" should have been omitted from the report.

Councillor Fletcher stated he felt it was time to draw a line on questioning whether an application would be taken through the appeal process and instead judge on its merits of the development in question and therefore the benefits or harm to the area. He continued by stating it was clear there was harm from the Heritage point of view, it was also clear that the development would limit the amount of parking in the area however this should be looked at against the housing needs and contribution to housing in Stanford Le Hope.

The Chair of the committee proposed officers recommendation and this was seconded by the Vice Chair.

Recommendation A

For (6) Councillors Tom Kelly (Chair), Steve Liddiard (Vice-Chair), Mike Fletcher, Terry Piccolo, Georgette Polley and Lee Watson.

Against (1) Councillor James Halden

Recommendation B

For (5) Councillors Tom Kelly (Chair), Steve Liddiard (Vice-Chair), Terry Piccolo, Georgette Polley and Lee Watson.

Against (1) Councillor James Halden

Abstained (1) Councillor Mike Fletcher

Councillor Byrne did not participate in the application due to not being present at the September meeting when the application was first presented.

51. 21/01061/OUT Land Adjoining Balgownie Farm Lower Dunton Road Bulphan Essex

The report was presented by the Major Applications Manager.

Councillor Byrne commented that a previous application for a bigger development seemed to sail through with approval from officers, however this application which was a smaller development and in the same location was being put forward for refusal.

The Major Applications Manager explained that the location had key differences at the time when the application in question came through it was in line with the local development framework, where the need for a hospice was highlighted. He continued by explaining the sites were not linked and the local authority had carried out a planning test as with all sites.

Speaker statement was heard from:

Mark Jackson, agent in support.

Councillor Byrne commented that Members needed to be consistent in our approach for this type of development as we had said yes to a much larger development nearby the site. He commented that this current application had been submitted by a family business who also looked after the local church. He continued by mentioning that a bigger development had been approved by the committee which was located across the road from the current site and he could not understand why Members were happy to approve that application yet seemed to have concerns with this one.

Steve Taylor stated that the location of the development was on the narrowest part of the Green Belt, which when established was between 25 to 35 miles around London which was why it was called the metropolitan greenbelt. He continued to state that the location where the development was suggesting to be built had about 5 miles of greenbelt remaining, this would be cut in half should the Local Thames Crossing go ahead, he further commented that the location of the development had no pavements for children to walk or local services, no bus stops and no special circumstances that he could see for the application to be approved.

Councillor Byrne mentioned that the development would result in creating up to 200 jobs for our captains of industry. Councillor Piccolo queried with Councillor Byrne where these 200 jobs would be coming from in relation to this development.

Councillor Halden mentioned when he first looked at the application he was happy to support Officers recommendations and oppose the development on the grounds that it was to be built on the Green Belt however as 2 of the 3 reasons were openness and characteristics of the site. He found this difficult to agree with as there was now a housing development site on the other side of the road which had already created the characteristics for the road and limited openness of the greenbelt.

Councillor Fletcher stated he knew how Councillor Halden felt, as looking at the application it was principle against practical consideration, which was why he had queried the building north-west of the site and if this was to be replaced as part of the application the site would be no more open than it currently was. He continued by stating his understanding was that just because there was a new development in the area, did not change the fact that the land was Green Belt.

Councillor Watson commented that she understood where Councillor Byrne was coming from, however the decision made with regards to the bigger development site was decided by a different Committee of members than those currently sitting on the Committee. She continued by stating there were plenty of Brownfield sites which could be developed and the application in front of them was still a Green Belt issue.

Councillor Polley remarked on the impact on the heritage of the site, she continued by stating following statement from Heritage officer it was clear that the development would cause harm to the heritage of the site.

Councillor Liddiard commented that they needed to make it clear to developers that we will not accept piecemeal development with 6 dwellings here, and 5 houses there, and that Members should say no to this.

The Chair of the Committee proposed officer's recommendation and this was seconded by the Councillor Fletcher.

For: (6) Councillors Tom Kelly (Chair), Steve Liddiard (Vice-Chair), Mike Fletcher, Terry Piccolo, Georgette Polley and Lee Watson

Against: (2) Councillors Gary Byrne and James Halden

52. 21/01309/FUL Land Adjacent Blackshots Stadium And Stanford Road Grays Essex

The report was presented by the Principal Planning Officer and included the following updates:

- There were some plan references and date updates to Condition 2
- Condition 6 had a sentence added referring to a drawing reference
- Condition 7 refers to dpc rather than ground level
- Condition 8 omits the words 'off site' to the title
- Condition 9 included a plan reference number with respect to the proposed footway/cycleway recently received
- Condition 22 will also refer to a plan ref no which is based upon advice from the FRM
- Condition 23 had now been omitted as is not required as the license has been signed and agreed
- Condition 24 had a plan reference update change
- Condition 30 had a sentence added to say 'in particular no flooring and lighting shall be installed in the sports hall until the specification has been agreed with Sports England'
- Condition 31 had been omitted as it not required
- Finally there are very minor reference and word changes to Conditions 37 and 41

Steve Taylor commented he wasn't aware that the application spread over both sides of the road and enquired where the boundary was for the up-and-coming Lower Thames Crossing on Stanford Road. Officers explained the distance between the application and the boundary line was around 100m Highways England had been consulted with and had no objections to the application. Members are further advised there was access to both north and south of the highway which included a pedestrian crossing and as part of the recommendation £20,000 would be included for highway improvement as part of the development.

Councillor Byrne enquired further to the email from a Ward Councillor which had been circulated to Members as to whether any weight had been given to drop off and pick up points as part of the application. The Principal Planning Officer explained it was vital there was to be no dropping off on Stanford Road and in addition a detailed travel plan had been included as part of the application which included pick up and drop off points.

During discussions it was confirmed that access to Treetops School was included as part of the development and that works had been consented by the Highways Authority and were due to start in the New Year.

The Chair of the Committee enquired as to the use of King Edward Drive and Buxton Road and asked if the existing entry for Treetops School via these roads was to be discouraged. The Senior Highways Engineer confirmed that once the new road had been completed this would be the desired entry and exit to the school. Councillor Kelly, Chair of the Committee continued by enquiring as to what officers would do should parents park on King Edward Drive instead of the drop-off and pick up point located within the school grounds. The Senior Highways Engineer commented that there were not many children at present who would be attending the new school from the estate of which King Edwards Drive was part of , he continued to explain that there were options which could be used to prevent parking such as double yellow lines, however this would need to be looked into not only from a safety perspective but also the possibility of affecting residents who currently live in the area.

At 8:15 pm, the committee agreed to suspend standing orders until 9:30 pm.

Councillor Piccolo enquired as to whether there was enough room to have three lanes in each direction towards the access point on the Stanford Road for the school as currently the road was a single road carriageway. The Senior Highways Engineer assured members there was plenty of room for the proposed three lanes which would then merge into one and advise if necessary the speed of the road could be reduced, for example to 30 mph.

Councillor Polley remarked on the open spaces towards the Treetops School site and asked if the sports pitches were to be used by the school. She continued by stating if it was, she had concerns with excited children trying to cross the Stanford Road and there would presumably be no changing rooms or toilets provided. The Senior Highways Engineer commented that the school would be asked to supervise children when crossing the road and the possibility of having a bridge in place was not only expensive but also took up room on the highway. He continued by stating that there would be a provision in place for children waiting to cross the road.

Councillor Watson raised concerns with regards to whether officers were confident for the next academic year Stanford Road could cope with an increase of traffic movements. The Senior Highways Engineer stated following the traffic assessment the road and signals would cope with the increasing traffic. He continued by commenting a traffic management plan hadn't as yet been decided as officers would need to liaise with local residents, it was noted that if there any parking issues officers could deal with these and then include them in a traffic management plan.

The Principal Planning Officer replied to Members queries confirming there was tight wording which had been agreed with the applicant and Sport England, that when the school were not using sports pitches these could be used for community uses and that the southern pitches would be used for community uses.

Councillor Liddiard enquired, if a preferred route for children who lived on Long Lane would be from the north west of the site, this could mean walking across Blackshots Playing field. Officers confirmed that it would be encouraged for children to walk to school and if parents decided to park for a short time in Blackshots car park, to drop the children so they could walk to school as long as it did not cause any issues within the car park itself, they could not see any problems with this.

During discussions Members queried as to the impact the increase traffic would have on Danehole Roundabout and how the children would be arriving at the school, for example would there be any school buses to provide transport within the catchment area. Officers explained that the estimated travel plan expected 204 children to walk, 98 to cycle, 123 to travel via car, 21 to car share, four by taxi and four via scooter.

Councillor Byrne stated they should be getting the application right, with regards to children getting to school at this stage not later down the line waiting to see if anything would happen. The Senior Highways Engineer advised if Members wished for restrictions to be included from the start as part of the application this was something officers could look into and include.

Speaker Statements were heard from:

Michael Gamble, Resident in objection.

Joy Redsell, Ward Councillor in support.

Steve Mundy, CEO South West Essex Community Education Trust in support.

Councillor Fletcher enquired as to how the applicant knew what the objector was going to say as he covered some points within his speakers statement. Democratic Services explained that any objections were sent to the applicant as outlined within the Constitution to give the applicant the opportunity to respond to the objectors comments.

Councillor Halden remarked the Council had worked with the Multi-Trust the Academy was part of, and therefore knew how to work well with them. He continued to explain that Pupil Place Plans were in high demand across the borough and the figures were growing. Council Halden commented that the existing school was only a temporary building with 240 children and although it was not perhaps the ideal location, he was confident that mitigation could be put in place should there be any traffic issues which would ensure children's safety was a priority.

Councillor Polley expressed her concerns with regards to traffic issues not only made by residents but also a local Ward Councillor. She continued by stating she felt it was important the school had a designated drop off and pick up points.

Steve Taylor stated that although he understood there was a need for the application and more schools within the borough, he did not feel the location

was the best place for the development especially with a volume of traffic along Stanford Road.

Councillor Fletcher commented he agreed with Councillor Halden there was a need for schools in the borough, however he had concerns with regards to the location of the application and felt that in relation to Stanford Road the risks and concerns needed to be dealt with before agreeing the application.

Councillor Watson also agreed that schools was needed and although she too had concerns with regards to the location it was clear the school would soon be at full capacity for the new academic year and therefore highlighted its need in the area.

Following advice from the Principal Planning Officer, hearing the Ward Councillor's statement, and Members debate, Members agreed to the following wording for the Travel Plan:

"10. Prior to the to the first operation of the school buildings hereby permitted, a Travel Plan shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the local planning authority. The Travel Plan shall include the Mode Shift STARS Travel Plan process and detail specific measures to reduce the number of journeys made by car to the school buildings hereby permitted and shall include specific details of the operation and management of the proposed measures including specific drop-off and pick-up controls. The commitments explicitly stated in the Travel Plan shall be binding on the applicants or their successors in title. The measures shall be implemented upon the first operational use of the building hereby permitted and shall be permanently kept in place unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority. Upon written request, the applicant or their successors in title shall provide the local planning authority with written details of how the agreed measures contained in the Travel Plan are being undertaken at any given time."

Councillor Halden proposed the officer's recommendation and was seconded by Councillor Polley.

For: (6) Councillors Tom Kelly (Chair), Steve Liddiard (Vice-Chair), James Halden, Terry Piccolo, Georgette Polley and Lee Watson

Against: (2) Councillors Gary Byrne and Mike Fletcher

53. 21/00304/FUL Land Rear Of Ewen House High Road Fobbing Essex

Due to the limited time left in the meeting, this item was deferred to the next Planning Committee meeting.

54. 21/00894/TBC 13 Loewen Road Chadwell St Mary Essex

Due to the limited time left in the meeting, this item was deferred to the next Planning Committee meeting.

The meeting finished at 9.35 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk