

## **Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 9 January 2020 at 6.00 pm**

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**Present:** Councillors Tom Kelly (Chair), Mike Fletcher (Vice-Chair), Gary Byrne, Colin Churchman, Angela Lawrence, David Potter, Gerard Rice, Sue Sammons and Daniel Chukwu (Substitute) (substitute for Sue Shinnick)

Steve Taylor, Campaign to Protect Rural England Representative

**Apologies:** Councillors Sue Shinnick

**In attendance:**

Leigh Nicholson, Interim Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection  
Julian Howes, Senior Highway Engineer  
Sarah Williams, Service Manager, Education Specialist  
Matthew Gallagher, Major Applications Manager  
Nadia Houghton, Principal planner  
Caroline Robins, Locum Solicitor  
Wendy Le, Democratic Services Officer

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

### **58. Minutes**

The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 28 November 2019 was approved as a true and correct record.

### **59. Item of Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

However, the Chair stated that planning application 18/00551/FUL had received a resident email that incorporated comments from the Essex Badger Protection Group. Therefore, the Applicant had requested that the application be deferred to the next Committee meeting to enable discussions between the Applicant and the Essex Badger Protection Group to be held. Regarding the notice of letters sent to affected residents regarding the application due at Committee that evening, he apologised for the late delivery of these letters and gave reassurance that notification would be sent out earlier when the item was due back at Committee next month.

### **60. Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

**61. 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**

The Chair declared on behalf of the Members of the Committee that all had received a resident email regarding application 18/00551/FUL (which was deferred as confirmed earlier).

Steve Taylor, Campaign to Protect Rural England Representative, declared that he had received an email from Essex Badger Protection Group.

**62. Planning Appeals**

The report was presented by Leigh Nicholson, Interim Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection.

Councillor Rice asked for a summary of the number of applications that had been approved at Committee and awaiting section 106 contributions to be concluded. Leigh Nicholson replied that a summary could be provided and circulated to Members.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Planning Committee noted the report.**

**63. 18/00551/FUL Land Adjacent Curling Lane Helleborine and Meesons Lane, Grays, Essex**

This item has been deferred to the next committee meeting.

**64. 19/01331/FUL Windy Ridge, 251 Branksome Avenue, Stanford Le Hope, Essex, SS17 8DF**

The report was presented by Nadia Houghton, Principal Planner. The application sought permission for the development of eight 2 bedroom dwellings consisting of four semi-detached pairs with car parking underneath. The site of the proposal, Windy Ridge, was situated in a corner plot of the Homesteads and the proposal focused on the rear garden of Windy Ridge. The site had been identified as suitable for development and was one of the last policy developed site.

Windy Ridge was modest in appearance and plots 1 – 4 were most visually prominent on the street scene as well as being too close to Windy Ridge. The proposal did not fit in with the appearance of the Homesteads and there was concern on parking on highways so the application was recommended for refusal.

*The Vice Chair arrived at 18.12.*

The Chair opened the item up to the Committee for questions.

Mentioning that the Homesteads was a protected precinct, the Chair said that there had been a number of planning applications in the area over the years. He questioned why this particular site was one that was not protected as part of the Homesteads.

Referring to page 45 of the agenda, Nadia Houghton said that the 1997 Local Plan had identified the Homesteads as a residential precinct due to the character of the area but some of the sites was identified in Annexe A9 where development was acceptable. This application's site was one of those identified and may be one of the last of the identified sites that had yet to be developed.

The Chair opened the item up to the Committee for debate.

Councillor Byrne commented that Branksome Avenue on Orchard within the Homesteads had created 15% more traffic when it had been built and if this was site was approved, it could eventually create 8% more traffic. He went on to say that the roads within the area were already dangerous and had traffic issues along with parking problems. Approving this site would end up causing more of these issues.

Councillor Lawrence agreed with the Officer's recommendation for refusal but she felt that more consultation needed to be undertaken between Planning Officers and Applicants to ensure applications came to committee with proposals that followed the council's standards.

The Chair felt the design of the proposed dwellings were bulky and the number of houses proposed were too many within the site.

Referring to Councillor Lawrence's comment, Nadia Houghton clarified that pre-application advice was given to Applicants prior to the submission of an application.

With the debate coming to a close, the Officer's recommendation for refusal was proposed by Councillor Byrne and seconded by Councillor Churchman. The Committee went on to the vote.

**For:** (8) Councillors Tom Kelly (Chair), Mike Fletcher (Vice-Chair), Gary Byrne, Colin Churchman, Angela Lawrence, David Potter, Gerard Rice and Sue Sammons.

**Against:** (0)

**Abstained:** (1) Councillor Daniel Chukwu.

Planning application 19/01331/FUL was refused.

**65. 18/00313/REM Land Adjacent Church Hollow To Rear Of Hollow Cottages and North Of London Road, Purfleet**

The report was presented by Matthew Gallagher, Major Applications Manager. He gave a brief summary to remind the Committee of the wider planning application 17/01668/OUT that had been granted outline planning permission on 20 December 2019 following consideration in April 2019 by the Planning Committee.

Following on from that, the current planning application was for the approval of reserved matters, for a parcel of land. The proposed number of dwellings and parking spaces was detailed in paragraph 1.2 on page 58 of the agenda. The woodland area of the site was protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) so would be partly retained along with play areas and public open spaces forming around 32% of the site area.

The style of the houses was outlined in paragraph 1.5 on page 59 of the agenda. Reserved matters included the appearance of the house types proposed and the designs were not aiming to mimic the houses in the surrounding area and the appearance corresponded positively to the National Design Guidance. It would also provide opportunities for ecological enhancement.

The layout proposed responded positively to the Council's own design guidance as well national guidance. The proposal complied with the outline permission granted in April 2019.

There was one suggested change to condition 2 on page 89 of the agenda where after the wording, 'Prior to the commencement of the development', the following would be inserted, 'excluding preliminary works as defined on page 4 of the outline planning condition on 17/01668/OUT' which would enable preliminary works such as site investigations to be undertaken as long as it was consistent with the planning conditions that had been outlined on 17/01668/OUT. The application was recommended for approval subject to conditions.

The Chair opened the item up for questions to the Committee.

Referring to the proposed 61 dwellings, Councillor Rice sought clarification on the number of affordable units. He also asked if the proposed 94 parking spaces met with council standards.

Referring back to the debate that took place on planning application 17/01668/OUT, Matthew Gallagher reminded Committee that the outline permission approved at Committee had secured a minimum of 10% affordable units and, subject to viability reviews, could provide up to 35%. There had been discussions regarding the affordable homes nomination which had been resolved during the discussion of planning application 17/01668/OUT back in

April 2019 and the Applicant was required to follow the obligations set within the s106 agreement for the outline planning application permission.

Moving on to Councillor Rice's query on car parking spaces, Matthew Gallagher clarified that parking spaces had been assessed against the 2012 council draft standards for car parking spaces. The assessment had taken into consideration that the proposed dwellings would be within walking distance of the Purfleet train station and would be close to the future town centre. Page 84 of the agenda set out the provision of the 94 proposed parking spaces and paragraph 6.69 highlighted this. The parking spaces were within the suggested Council standards.

Julian Howes, Senior Highway Engineer, confirmed that the proposed dwellings had good accessibility to the train station and was within the range of parking spaces required within Council standards.

Regarding the maps and plans of the proposal, Steve Taylor noted that some of the proposed dwellings did not appear to have rear gardens as part of the design. Matthew Gallagher confirmed this was the case and that from page 73 of the agenda onwards, this was explained within the layout of the proposal. The National Design Guidance advised that the quality and utility of space were to be considered and following that, some proposed dwellings would not have a conventional rear garden but instead would have access to a private roof terrace or balcony. In addition, the site had convenient accessibility to the surrounding open spaces comprising of 32% of the site area. The focus was more on the quality of space rather than the size and this was acceptable following application of relevant guidance.

Steve Taylor noted the design of the mews style type of houses to be fine but commented that the proposed dwellings along London Road did not have gardens. Matthew Gallagher explained that there were ground level issues on London Road and the proposed dwellings there would have private terraces instead of rear gardens and would not be overlooked.

Councillor Byrne noted that page 62 of the agenda stated that the site was within a high flood risk zone and sought clarification on this. Matthew Gallagher confirmed that the high flood risk issue had been considered back in April 2019 when the original planning application 17/01668/OUT had been considered at Committee. This application had been through the sequential and exception tests and flood risk was not an issue when considering reserved matters.

Referring to Matthew Gallagher's comment on replanting of trees during the report's introduction, Councillor Churchman questioned whether the trees would be saplings or mature trees. Highlight paragraph 6.15 of the report, Matthew Gallagher answered that the trees would be of standard and a heavy standard with reasonable height on planting and not saplings.

The Chair sought more clarification on the number of affordable units being between 10% to 35% and when it would be known for certain the accurate

percentage available. Referring back to the debate of 17/01668/OUT in April 2019, Matthew Gallagher explained that National Planning Policy Guidance had introduced a minimum target of 10% of affordable units to be made available which was secured at the time of planning application 17/01668/OUT. This had been through the viability proposal and the Applicant was prepared to accept a lower return. At the early stages of the Purfleet Centre redevelopment, it may not be possible to achieve in excess of the 10% minimum but may eventually achieve a higher level of affordable housing provision subject to viability. Potentially, it would take time for viability to improve as a result of development costs but the early phases would provide a 10% minimum.

The Chair questioned why a one way traffic flow system was in place on Caspian Way. Matthew Gallagher explained that the proposal was to make a connection to Caspian Way to enable a southbound traffic flow but not northbound for cars. However, two way pedestrian and cycle movements would be possible. Adding to this, Julian Howes said that there was no highway reason but it would enable better accessibility and to avoid traffic wraparound from one development to another.

Noting the report highlighted the site as low density, the Chair questioned how this conclusion had been reached. He went on to say that parking was important and for homes to have its own rear garden and thought that it would be unusual in Thurrock for homes to not have a rear garden. He questioned whether the site would increase in density over time. Referring to page 58 of the agenda, Matthew Gallagher explained that the number of dwellings were divided per hectare of the site which gave a figure of 26 dwellings per hectare. Compared to the pre NPPF PPG (Housing), this was considered low density. He went on to remind Committee that the residential density parameter had been considered and approved by committee in planning application 17/01668/OUT back in April 2019.

Matthew Gallagher reiterated his point on the rear gardens and the private terrace/balcony design. He went on to say that the internal floor space of each proposed dwelling exceeded the nationally described standard and was a comfortable size.

Steve Taylor sought clarification on whether the entire site, including retained open spaces and woodland areas, was taken into the calculation of density. He thought these should not be considered as it was not proposed to be built on or could be built on due to tree preservation orders. Matthew Gallagher confirmed that the entire site was taken into the calculation and that it did not take into consideration factors such as retained open spaces or areas with tree preservation orders.

On parking spaces, Councillor Rice said that 61 proposed dwellings with a proposed 94 parking spaces would equal to 1.5 car park spaces per dwelling. He did not feel this was adequate as a household could have more than one car and that the reality was that people used their cars, not the buses or train. He stated that the parking spaces was insufficient per dwelling which would

cause issues in the long run and needed to be addressed as cars would end up parking around the development and ruin its appearance. He felt that the application should be deferred to enable a reconsideration of the parking spaces proposed.

Matthew Gallagher explained that the proposed parking spaces was within the range of the council's draft standards for parking provisions from 2012. He went on to say that Purfleet was within a controlled parking zone so there would be restrictions on where cars could park. The Applicant and Highways department were aiming to promote sustainable methods of transport and travel plans were highlighted within the section 106 agreement that was within the outlined planning permission granted on 17/01668/OUT. The Applicant had formulated the proposal to be within the range of the parking provisions outlined. The majority of roads within the development would not be adopted and were subject to estate management.

Councillor Chukwu agreed with Councillor Rice that car parking was an issue within the proposal and should be looked at before approval could be given.

Councillor Lawrence questioned which areas within the proposal would be privately managed. In response, Julian Howes said that from an initial consultation, the road that would be adopted would be only the main road into the development from London Road (Orchard Road). There were no plans for other roads to be adopted.

The Chair opened the item up to the Committee for debate which he started off by reminding the Committee that Ward Councillors had been supportive of the Purfleet Regeneration Scheme which was seen to be positive. He noted that the application proposed 61 dwellings in zone 1 out of an eventual 2,850 dwellings within the project.

Continuing on, the Chair said the number of parking spaces available somewhat concerned him but thought that people would be aware of the number of spaces available when buying these types of dwellings. This would be the same for the dwellings without a rear garden. He went on to say that he was pleased to see that the woodland area of the site would be retained as this had been a condition outlined in planning application 17/01668/OUT back in April 2019. He stated that he would be voting for approval of the application and against a deferral.

The Vice-Chair felt that the density of the site proposal and the number of parking spaces available was an issue to be reconsidered. Regarding density, he felt that it was unfair how density was calculated and on parking, he thought there was an optimism on how people travelled around. He pointed out that the train station was ideal for commuting purposes but not for a weekly shop. The issue was that enforcement of parking issues would only move cars to park elsewhere thus causing an issue elsewhere. He stated that he would support a deferral to ask officers to clarify how parking will be managed.

Although the scheme and layout of the proposal was good, Councillor Rice commented that the earlier application of 19/01331/FUL had been refused on the grounds of heavy density and lack of parking provisions available. He went on to say that the application should be deferred so that officers and the Applicant could reconsider the number of parking spaces proposed. With the 94 currently proposed, it could potentially mean cars parking around the development and end up spoiling the appearance of the area.

Councillor Byrne announced that he was in agreement with the Chair and went on to say that Purfleet residents and the council was positive of the Purfleet Regeneration Scheme. He would be against a deferral of the application.

Councillor Lawrence acknowledged both sides of the debate but stated that she would consider the application, as well future applications linked to the Purfleet Regeneration Scheme, on their own merits. She agreed that people buying the proposed dwellings would be aware of the parking provisions available with the dwelling.

Councillor Rice proposed that the application be deferred for the reasons stated as before and the Vice-Chair seconded this. The Committee went to the vote.

**For:** (3) Councillors Mike Fletcher (Vice-Chair), Gerard Rice and Daniel Chukwu.

**Against:** (6) Councillors Tom Kelly (Chair), Gary Byrne, Colin Churchman, Angela Lawrence, David Potter and Sue Sammons.

**Abstained:** (0)

The proposed motion for the application to be deferred was rejected.

The Officer's recommendation to approve the reserved matters subject to conditions and the amendment to condition 2, was proposed by the Chair with Councillor Byrne seconding it. The Committee went on to the vote.

**For:** (6) Councillors Tom Kelly (Chair), Gary Byrne, Colin Churchman, Angela Lawrence, David Potter and Sue Sammons.

**Against:** (3) Councillors Mike Fletcher (Vice-Chair), Gerard Rice and Daniel Chukwu.

**Abstained:** (0)

Planning application 18/00313/REM was approved subject to conditions.

**The meeting finished at 7.24 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](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)**