



Planning Committee

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Michael Chalk (Chair), Councillor Timothy Pearman (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Imran Altaf, Tom Baker-Price, Andrew Fry, Joanna Kane and Emma Marshall

In Attendance:

Councillors David Thain and Brandon Clayton

Officers:

Helena Plant, Paul Lester, Karen Hanchett and Stuart Evans (of Anthony Collins)

Democratic Services Officer:

Gavin Day and Jo Gresham

31. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Brandon Clayton and Bill Hartnett with Councillors Emma Marshall and Joanna Kane substituting respectively.

32. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Fry and Marshall sought clarification in regard to the section 106 contributions to Worcestershire County Council (WCC) as detailed on page 34 of the Main Reports Pack. As Members of WCC, they wished to confirm that there was no conflict of interest with them setting on the Committee.

Officers clarified that the aforementioned Members had not been compromised by the issue, Councillors were present as Members of the Planning Committee and as the Committee had been made aware of their positions on the County Council it was all being conducted in a transparent manner.

33. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED that

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Chair

The Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 24th August 2022 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

34. UPDATE REPORTS

An update report was received by Members who indicated that they had received sufficient time to examine the report and were happy to proceed with the meeting.

35. APPLICATION - 20/01650/FUL - LAND OFF FAR MOOR LANE AND WEST OF THE A435 BIRMINGHAM ROAD, FAR MOOR LANE, REDDITCH, WORCESTERSHIRE

The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting and outlined the committee arrangements, the Chair also highlighted to those present that the meeting was being livestreamed via the Councils YouTube channel.

The application was for the Land Off Far Moor Lane and West of The A435 Birmingham Road, Far Moor Lane, Redditch. The application was a cross boundary application between Redditch Borough Council (RBC) and Stratford-on-Avon District (SDC) – for the erection of 236 homes with open space, landscaping, drainage, infrastructure and other associated works - comprising 210 new homes in Redditch and 26 new homes in Stratford-on-Avon.

Officers presented their report and in doing so drew Members attention to Pages 1 to 34 of the Site Plans and Presentations Pack.

Page 2 of the Site Plans and Presentations Pack detailed that the site was allocated for housing development for 205 dwellings on the adopted local plan. Officers also highlighted a small plot of land to the south of the proposed site which was designated as primary open space, and that this would be retained during the development.

Officers detailed the local services/facilities which would be affected by the development and highlighted that there were no outstanding objections to the development from related consultees and that there was a section 106 agreement outlining contributions to local facilities and services detailed on pages 32 and 33 of the Agenda Reports Pack.

Members attention was drawn to pages 7-14 of the Site Plans and Presentations Pack to detail the layout of the site. During the explanation the position of the proposed blocks of affordable housing on site were highlighted, Officers also detailed the road system into and around the site and drew Members attention to the changes to Far Moor Lane as detailed on pages 32 to 34 of the Site

Plans and Presentations Pack, which also included the installation of a 3m wide combined footpath.

Officers drew Members attention to pages 24-25 of the Site Plans and Presentations Pack to detail the changes to the trees and woodland areas on site. The application proposed the removal of approximately 515 Poplar trees, 11 individual trees and some low quality self-seeded vegetation, Officers also informed Members that the poplar trees were at the end of their individual lives. The proposed application would replace the lost trees with an additional 600 new native trees that would give a more bio-diverse woodland. Officers also highlighted that 2.5ha of woodland would be retained or enhanced compared to the current 1.1ha.

In regard to ecological matters, the application was supported by the ecological Officer and as a result of initial concerns raised from consultees, there had been a number of wildlife surveys conducted on site. The application was considered policy compliant by Worcester Wildlife Trust, Natural England and Warwickshire Wildlife Trust due to the retention of a sufficient amount of the existing flora and fauna, the retention and enhancement of the existing waterways and the addition of more bio-diverse woodland areas. The condition as detailed on page 34 of the main reports pack was highlighted to Members, and that the drainage on site was to be managed to ensure no future harm was caused to other water bodies or habitats due to improper water retention.

County highways assessed the application and had no objections with the proposal, the internal roads would be adopted by WCC Highways, with the exception of some areas which would be managed alongside the affordable housing, this was detailed on page 30 of the Site Plans and Presentations Pack.

In conclusion, officers reiterated the conclusions made in section 19 on page 33 of the Public Reports Pack.

Officers have found no material considerations which indicated that the development should not be determined in accordance with the development plan and on the basis that the proposals comply with relevant policies of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan.

It was recommended that planning permission be granted subject to conditions and the prior completion of a s106 legal agreement.

At the invitation of the Chair, the following speakers addressed the Committee under the Council's Public Speaking Rules

Residents and interested parties in objection to the application (3 minutes each)

- Councillor Brandon Clayton – Resident
- Councillor David Thain – Interested Party
- Mark Crompton – Resident & Chair of Winyates Green Residents Association
- Pam Oldfield (Statement read out by Mark Wallace) – Resident
- Councillor Peter Hencher-Serafin – Stratford District Council Member
- Councillor Juliet Brunner (Statement read out by Democratic Services) – Interested party
- Norman McLeod (Statement read out by Democratic Services) - Resident
- Mr Gary Moss – Planning advisor for Stratford District Council Parish

Ward Members (3 minutes each)

- Cllr Peter Fleming
- Cllr Anthony Lovell
- Cllr Luke Court

In support of the application (up to 27 minutes shared)

- Mr Richard West – Cerda Planning
- Mr Andrew Carter – Homes England
- Mr Gary Goodwin – Morris Homes

There was an adjournment after the public speaking between 20:43 and 20:57 hours.

On recommencement of the Committee, Officers clarified the following points raised during the public representations.

- That the site had been allocated for housing development under Policy 4 (housing provision) of the adopted Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.4, and that regardless of the historical position, Members should adhere to the currently adopted local plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- Regarding the impact on the local facilities mentioned during public representations, a section 106 agreement was detailed on pages 33 and 34 of the Agenda Reports Pack. The 106 agreement identifies contributions necessary in response to the impact of proposed development, and highlighted contributions for secondary education, medical, transport and a substantial contribution to Bio-diversity projects over the two councils to assist in current and future projects.

- That the Poplar trees on site were towards the end of their individual lives and that the developers proposed a substantial landscaping solution which seeks to retain most of the rest of the established landscaping and enhance the biodiversity on site.

During questions from Members, the Officers advised/clarified the following matters

- On the issue raised during the public speaking regarding the proposed Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) of the new dwellings. Officers replied that it would be a B rating which would be covered under the current building regulations.
- It was detailed that in regard to the children's play areas, the material, construction and quality would be covered under condition 6 detailed on page 34 of the Agenda Reports Pack, in that developers were required to submit detailed plans for these areas prior to approval.
- Regarding further clarification on the traffic measures. Karen Hanchett of WCC Highways addressed the Committee and clarified that the "roundabouts" mentioned on the presentation slides were pedestrian refuge areas to aid crossing and to shelter ghost right turn lanes. Karen Hanchett also detailed to Members that there had been several iterations of the development, of which the first two were deemed unsuitable and objections were raised, however, the current proposed application was fully compliant and had passed safety audits.
- Officers confirmed that the forestry commission had granted right to fell licences for the poplar trees.
- Officers detailed that there were more extensive plans for tree planting for the site on the planning portal which ensured a bio-diverse mix of native plants.
- Officers informed Members that the section 106 agreement in the report was for contributions to RBC and that a separate section 106 agreement would be agreed by SDC. The sole exception to this would be the shared contribution for bio-diversity projects.
- On flooding on the site and an assurance that there would be no sewage leaked into the waterways. Officers drew Members attention to section 15 paragraph 15.6 on page 30 of the Agenda Reports Pack. It was also confirmed that the waterways would be managed by the developers or a management company.
- That the application would ensure a net gain in biodiversity which had been supported by a detailed calculation by the applicant, however, no specific % had been calculated.
- In response to the comments made during public speaking and whether there were seven different species of bat found.

Officers replied that they had contacted Natural England, Warwickshire Wildlife trust and Worcester Wildlife Trust as consultees which had identified no issues to raise an objection against.

- Officers confirmed that the Arboricultural Officer was still in objection, however, based on the whole scheme, Officers considered the application still acceptable despite the objection.

Members then proceeded to consider the application which Officers recommended be delegated to the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services.

Members wished to thank the public speakers for their contributions both for and against and for their balanced, informative and emotive representations.

Members expressed a concern in regard to the sewage treatment on site in that if it had to be pumped there could be sustainability issues with regard to the maintenance and running of the machinery.

Members expressed regret with regard to the loss of wildlife habitat and the poplar trees, however, they did not see it as sufficient grounds to reject the application, considering the lack of Officer/Consultee objections to the application and the section 106 contributions.

Members supported the footpath and traffic calming measures proposed for the site and expressed the opinion that should Members approve the application it seemed from the information provided to Members that the developers would produce a high quality development.

Members expressed the opinion that although they agreed with the Councils requirement for new housing, they were unsure whether the proposed site was the correct location for these new dwellings considering the loss of green space and bio-diverse landscape during the climate emergency. There was some discussion regarding the change in priorities since the decision was made to permit building on this site. However, Members were reminded, and as highlighted by Officers earlier in the meeting, they needed to adhere to the policies outlined within the current local plan unless material considerations indicated otherwise. Officers reiterated that they had found no material considerations which indicated that the development should not be determined in accordance with the development plan.

Members wished to inform the public present that in order for the Planning Committee to reject an application there needed to be a

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material reason that would sustain in front of a Planning Inspectorate and that in this instance there was no such reason that they could identify.

On being put to a vote it was

RESOLVED that

having regard to the development plan and to all other material considerations, that DELEGATED POWERS be granted to the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services as outlined on pages 33-35 of the Agenda Reports Pack.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 9.58 pm

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