

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Andrew Fry (Chair), Councillor William Boyd (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Juma Begum, Brandon Clayton, Claire Davies, Matthew Dormer, Sharon Harvey, David Munro and Monica Stringfellow

Also Present:

Councillors Gary Slim and Jane Spilsbury

Officers:

Helena Plant, Amar Hussain and Sharron Williams

Democratic Services Officers:

Gavin Day

56. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bill Hartnett and Ian Woodall with Councillors Monica Stringfellow and Sharon Harvey in attendance as substitutes respectively.

57. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

58. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 11th December 2025 were presented to Members.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 11th December 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

59. UPDATE REPORTS

Members indicated that they had enough time to read and consider the Update reports, therefore, the Update Reports were noted.

Chair

60. 25/00601/FUL - FORMER PLAY AREA, LOXLEY CLOSE, CHURCH HILL SOUTH, REDDITCH, WORCESTERSHIRE

At the discretion of the Chair and to accommodate public speakers, the agenda was reorganised to hear Agenda item 6 before Agenda item 5 (minute No61).

The application was reported to the Planning Committee because the application required a Section 106 Agreement, in addition to the applicant being Redditch Borough Council. As such, the application fell outside the Scheme of Delegation to Officers.

Officers presented the report and in doing so, drew Members' attention to the presentation slides on pages 15 to 24 of the Site Plans and Presentations pack. Officers further drew Members' attention to the additional Photographs of the site detailed on pages 11 to 14 of the Supplementary Agenda pack.

The application was for the former play area, Loxley Close, Church Hill South, Redditch, Worcestershire and sought development of 6 No. houses with associated parking.

Officers stated that under the current Local Plan the site was designated as a housing site for up to 10 dwellings, however, due to concerns around drainage, the application was for 6 dwellings only. Officers confirmed that the housing density would be similar to surrounding developments and therefore, was deemed acceptable.

All 6 dwellings would all be social rented units and would form part of Redditch Borough Council's housing stock.

No objections were raised by consultees which included Worcestershire County Council Highways (County Highways), North Worcestershire Water Management (NWWM) and environmental agencies, subject to the imposition of suitable Conditions.

Concerns with regard to Bat roosting were raised by Residents. However, following surveys undertaken, no evidence of bat roosting was found. The surveys did identify some foraging and commuting activity in the area, therefore, suitable Conditions to safeguard the bat and bird habitat were included.

At the invitation of the Chair, David Wood and Keith Linden, local residents, addressed the Committee in objection to the application. Katie Hughes, the Applicant's Agent, addressed the Committee Via Microsoft Teams in support.

Following questions from Members, Officers detailed that:

- The additional vehicle parking spaces which were part of the application were over the required number of spaces for each dwelling; therefore, would be communal use for all residents.
- The houses were elevated due to the flood risks, however the gardens were not.
- Consideration had been given to large vehicular access such as refuse vehicles which would service the new development in the same manner as the surrounding dwellings.
- No evidence of bat roosting was identified. However, Conditions 15,16 and 17 would cover the mitigation measures in respect to bats and wildlife.

Officers detailed that although there was a loss of open space, due to the size of the development, there was no requirement to provide replacement areas, additionally, as there were less than 10 dwellings proposed it was not possible to secure this via the Section 106 agreement. Officers further detailed that the applicant was Redditch Borough Council. Therefore, Members had the opportunity to take up their concerns with Leisure Services to try and secure alternative provision, however, this was not a material planning consideration which formed part of the application.

The Committee then debated the application which officers recommended for approval.

Members stated that although they were reluctant to lose the open space which was actively used by residents, as the local Plan identified the area for residential development it was difficult to go against the Officers recommendation without strong material planning reasons. Although Members sympathised with residents, they had to balance the loss of amenity against the 6 dwellings, which would provide 6 families on the Council's waiting list with a home.

Members were happy with the proposed development especially the housing density, ecological considerations and the inclusion of Communal parking over what was required. Therefore, on being put to the vote it was:

RESOLVED that

having had regard to the development plan and to all other material considerations, authority be delegated to the Assistant Director for Planning, Leisure and Culture Services to GRANT planning permission subject to:-

- a) The satisfactory completion of a Section 106 planning obligation.**

b) Conditions and Informatives as detailed on pages 55 to 66 of the Public Reports pack.

The meeting stood adjourned from 19:53 hours to 19:59 hours for a comfort break.

61. 25/00481/FUL - EASEMORE HOUSE, 103 EASEMORE ROAD, TOWN CENTRE, REDDITCH, WORCESTERSHIRE, B98 8EY

The application was reported to the Planning Committee because the application was for major development and required a Section 106 Agreement. As such, the application fell outside the Scheme of Delegation to Officers.

Officers presented the report and in doing so, drew Members' attention to the presentation slides on pages 5 to 13 of the Site Plans and Presentations pack. Officers further drew Members' attention to the additional Photographs of the site detailed on pages 5 to 9 of the Supplementary Agenda pack.

The application was for Easemore House, 103 Easemore Road, Town Centre, Redditch, Worcestershire, B98 8EY and sought the demolition of the existing buildings and erection of a residential development of up to 13 No. new dwellings.

The Chair noted that the location was previously referred to as Community House.

Officers detailed that the site location was identified as being highly sustainable due to its proximity to the town centre and prominent bus routes. Less parking was proposed than would normally be supplied due to the sustainable location. According to the Streetscape design guidance, a 4-bedroom dwelling would normally require 3 parking spaces, however, only two spaces were proposed per plot. After reviewing the applicant's submissions, Worcestershire County Council, Highways (County Highways) deemed the parking to be acceptable due to the sustainable location.

30% affordable housing would be secured via the Section 106 planning obligation. This was identified to be plots 7,8,9 and 10 which would be under shared ownership.

There were no objections from consultees subject to appropriate Conditions.

The existing building was identified as a non-designated heritage asset; however, limited weight was afforded to the building in terms

of its impact on the streetscene which was balanced against the supply of housing.

After questions from Members, Officers clarified the following:

- it was decided to move the bus stop following discussion with County Highways after traffic safety concerns were raised.
- The built-out area at the entrance of the site would feature drop curbs to enable cyclist to go onto the curb and not have to go into the road.

Members then debated the application which Officers recommended for approval.

Members expressed some concern about the boundary screening which separated the back of the development from a major highway which could be dangerous for young children. Officers replied that the boundary treatment was covered under a Condition so they would address that issue via that condition and ensure that it provided adequate screening and safety.

Members were displeased with the movement of the bus stop to a position which was, in their opinion, a greater traffic and safety concern when compared to the current location. There was also some concern with the lack of parking provision for the residents and for any visitors to the site, noting that regardless of the sustainable location it was human nature to own a vehicle. Any vehicles above the two per household would need to be accommodated on the already packed road, further increasing congestion and obstructions. However, with no objections from County Highways on either of those issues, it would be difficult to support refusing the application on highways grounds, therefore, Members saw no reason to reject the application. Upon being put to the vote it was:

RESOLVED that

having had regard to the development plan and to all other material considerations, authority be delegated to the Assistant Director for Planning, Leisure and Culture Services to GRANT planning permission subject to:-

- a) The satisfactory completion of a S106 planning obligation.**
- b) The conditions and Informatives as detailed on pages 33 to 43 of the Public Reports pack.**

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