



MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 18th SEPTEMBER 2018 AT 8PM IN THE WEST ROOM

Present

Councillors:

Andrew McAuley (AM) - Chairman
Rob Smith (RS) – Vice-Chairman
Matt Reid (MR)
Ian Hill (IH)
Fergus Lapage (FL)
Tom Bindoff (TB)
Terry Jackson (TJ)

Co-opted Members:

Tony Powell

Officer:

Rachel Gill

Members of the Public:

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1. Apologies for Absence

Jeremy Bell (JB)
Peter Richardson (PR)

2. Declarations of Interest

None

3. To consider the following applications: -

P17/S3231/O Land at Britwell Road, Watlington

Amendment No 1

Hybrid application comprising (1) Full planning permission for the demolition of the existing pig farm and its associated buildings; the erection of 183 dwellings (Use Class C3); the creation of a new vehicular access from Britwell Road; the creation of a vehicular access from the industrial estate road south of Cuxham Road (to serve the proposed employment area); public open space; substantial urban drainage system; landscaping and other ancillary works, including off-site highway works; and the relocation of a telecommunications mast and equipment; and (2) Outline permission for up to 650sqm of Use Class B1(a) floorspace with access and all other matters reserved. (Amended in accordance with drawings and information accompanying letter dated 3rd August 2018)

AM gave some background information on this application and why the meeting was being held.

Jonathan Porter (JP) Planning Director Archstone was invited to speak first.

JP said that following the last meeting a detailed written response had been provided to answer questions and concerns raised. Items had also been discussed with Councillor Bell (JB) and Archstone would be happy to make the discussed further changes.

JP went on to give some background on the T-junction on Britwell Road stating that it would be an interim arrangement until a change in priority could be made. He thought it realistic that this would happen before development of the site was completed.

He added that Archstone had sought to incorporate all comments and that this level of engagement had not been experienced previously. He appreciated that if permission was given this would not be the end of engagement as items such as S106 and construction traffic plans would be ongoing. He said that Bloor Homes would usually have monthly meetings during development of the site.

Tim Horton (TH) was invited to speak next.

TH recognised that the site will be developed but expressed concern over the effect of 183 houses compared to 140 which he felt was a better figure.

He felt that the main effects of 183 houses were:

- Houses were closer to the road, although he acknowledged an improvement over previous iterations
- Development goes beyond the Edge Road and this sets a precedent
- By cramming somewhat, you create an environment where cars are always in front of houses. A reduction to 140 houses would reduce this.

He also added concerns that the majority of traffic from the houses would use Pyrton Lane to access the M40. He felt the design would be a soulless dormitory cul-de-sac with linear car parks.

AM asked for questions and comments.

FL asked for clarification that TH felt that 140 was Ok and 183 wasn't?

TH said yes and that 140 would allow for more separation of cars from homes.

IH felt that the Pyrton Lane impact would not cause huge problems as it would be a small % increase in terms of overall traffic, maybe 6 or 8 movements/hour at peak. He added that WPC are in discussion with OCC about reducing a 100m section of Pyrton Lane to single carriageway to deter 'rat run' traffic.

TH disagreed and felt that movements would be much higher than IH suggested.

JP responded by saying he was pleased with the positive comment from TH about improvements to the scheme. He added that the Examiner concluded that the numbers of houses for the site should be development controlled and not led by the Kirkham Report. The number has been informed by design and has to meet the SODC mix of dwellings which means a large proportion of smaller properties. The landscape assessment and detailed design has been supported by the SODC design officer.

In relation to car parking there is evidence that parking between houses increases crime and also encourages a higher level of lighting. A lot of the properties have 2 parking spaces at the front with landscaping. This design is considered better for security and for access.

AM moved the meeting on to consider the application:

Analysis of the application against the criteria in the WNDP Policy for Site A

As there is a Policy in the WNDP for this site the NPAB (Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Board) met last night to make an assessment of this application against the Neighbourhood Plan.

(See attached document)

Criterion 1: They conform to the principles set out in the Watlington Design Guide

TP felt that some details still needed to be confirmed on this. TJ added that a continuing dialogue would be helpful. AM felt that a better representation of Watlington style could be made.

TB added that 140 houses would not achieve the same mix of affordable housing, and that density in the High Street and Couching Street was high. Also, the density on the site was on the low end of SODC figures. TP said that 140 was always indicative and NP's cannot include numbers. Ideas on density have changed recently.

In broad terms the design conforms to the Design Guide but there are still some points of concern which should be considered by the Planning Officer and could be covered in conditions.

Criterion 2: They are landscape-led and are appropriate for their location within the setting of the Chilterns AONB. All proposals should demonstrate that they have addressed site layout, design, orientation, height, bulk and scale of structures and buildings. In addition, careful consideration should be given to the use of colours, materials and the reflectiveness of surfaces in relation to the proximity of the site in relation to the AONB. Careful consideration should be given to the use of street lights and other forms of external illumination to safeguard the dark night skies of the AONB.

Further discussions required on lighting. Homes with 2.5 storeys have been moved and the quantity reduced.

WPC has not previously raised objections regarding the impact of the development on the AONB.

Criterion 3: They provide affordable dwellings to development plan standards.

WPC has raised no issues regarding the provision of affordable homes on the site. The proposal is to provide 40% affordable homes which complies with SODC requirements.

Criterion 4: They are designed in a way which takes account of heritage assets in the wider locality of the site.

WPC has not raised any objections regarding the impact of the development on the Conservation Area, listed buildings or other heritage assets.

Criterion 5: They conserve and enhance the chalk stream alongside the north-eastern boundary.

WPC has consistently indicated that proposals for development must protect and enhance the stream. The planning conditions put forward by the SODC Countryside Officer should be adopted. There should also be a planning condition for the conservation and enhancement of the stream to be agreed with SODC and include consultation with WPC.

Criterion 6: They create the best use of the Flood Zone area with the objective of maximising its ecological value and complementing the adjacent chalk stream.

Comments as above.

Criterion 7: They provide land for formal and informal recreation use and open space in accordance with development plan standards

The proposals meet the requirements of this part of the Policy. Archstone has broadly complied with requests from WPC to re-design the open areas within the site.

Criterion 8: They provide land for a re-aligned B4009

The development proposals comply with this part of the policy. There are ongoing discussions about the delivery and funding of the edge road. SODC is fully aware of the importance of delivering the road as part of development.

- (i) WPC should continue to stress the importance of constructing the road ahead of residential development.
- (ii) A view is needed about the proposal to build dwellings on the western side of the new road - although this has been discussed at meetings with Archstone it has not been mentioned as a reason to object to the planning application.
- (iii) A view is needed about the proposal for the junction with Britwell Road.

There was some discussion on these points.

Building on the Western Side of the New Road

TB stated that the road was called an 'Alternative route for the B4009' until Homes England became involved and called it an Edge Road. He felt that some houses on the other side would make it look less like a by-pass. Site B&C will most likely have houses on the other side of the road. He compared it with, for example, Brook Street.

TP added that most Edge Roads do have housing on both sides, and this would limit building on the other side. Even if a precedent is set there should be restrictions on building going further out. Use houses as a preventative measure. AM cited Windmill Piece on Britwell Road as another example.

IH felt that like Didcot there will be housing on the other side eventually – it is best to deal with it and get a better design. Having a community boundary like Britwell-com-Sotwell may be a way forward in the future. RS did not want a 'fortress town' and felt 'soft edges' were better.

AM raised concerns that the play areas would be the other side of the road but could see that crossing points with good sight lines were included and it would be safer than Britwell Road and could not see a strong argument against. TJ wanted each application looked at on merit – and the development on the other side of the road not seen as a precedent.

Criterion 9: They provide connectivity within the site and with the town and countryside.

The proposals comply with the policy but there are issues with the detail of the proposals which need to be resolved. A planning condition is needed which requires the agreement of SODC for a scheme for improving connectivity between the site, the town and the countryside which can also provide an opportunity for consultation with WPC.

Criterion 10: They provide for the necessary traffic mitigation measures in general, and on Britwell Road and Cuxham Road in particular.

Details of these proposals were provided with the amended plans. There has not been enough time/opportunity over the summer holiday period to consider these in detail and discuss them with either OCC, SODC, the developer, the Town Hall trustees or the local community. A planning condition is needed which requires proposals for traffic mitigation measures to be agreed by SODC with an opportunity for consultation with WPC.

Criterion 11: They are designed so that the built edge of the development blends into the landscape.

The proposals generally comply with the policy. WPC hasn't made any detailed comments on this but will want to have a chance to comment on a tree planting scheme. A planning condition is needed which requires proposals for a planting scheme to be agreed with SODC and makes provision for WPC to be consulted.

Criterion 12: They take account of the existing Watlington Industrial Estate to the south and east of the site. Planning applications should demonstrate the necessary measures to ensure that the existing industrial uses can continue and that the occupiers of the new dwellings can enjoy appropriate standards of amenity.

It is not possible for WPC to make any judgement on this part of the policy. However, it should comment that SODC must ensure that amenities of new residents and the needs of existing businesses are not compromised by the development.

Criterion 13: They deliver a well-balanced mix of housing types, including needs identified in the most recent Watlington Housing Study.

The proposals are in line with the policy.

Criterion 14: They include measures to provide resilience to the effects of climate change.

The proposals meet the basic requirements of the Policy within current legislation.

MR asked about Electric power points. JP confirmed that capacity for charging electric vehicles would be included.

Edge Road / Alternative route for B4009 / Britwell Road Junction

AM introduced this topic by stating that it is a very emotive subject with Britwell Road residents and asked whether alternative options had been considered?

JP answered that other options have been considered previously and that it is OCCs preferred option and they felt it was better than introducing a roundabout. He added that the priority has been bringing forward the edge road.

AM said there were concerns about light intrusion from construction traffic. There was acceptance that traffic would increase but could some mitigation measures for lighting be considered.

JP said that something could be included in the Construction Management Plan.

RS asked whether 3 years would be how long the 'interim' measures would be needed?

JP estimated construction of around 2.5 years but hoped the edge road may come sooner.

TP asked whether OCC has mentioned Grampian condition? JP said that was the kind of discussion happening.

MR asked whether in the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) sites B and C had been discussed.

JP said that discussions were going more down the line of planning obligations to get what is needed on a site by site basis i.e. OCC have moved on from MOU to S106 and planning obligations.

AM summarised the conditions before a vote was taken.

Summary:

Analysis of the extent to which the application meets the criteria in the WNDP Policy for Site A shows that the criteria are very largely met.

If WPC is minded to recommend the application for approval, the following conditions are proposed as there are some outstanding details to be determined:

1. A condition which requires agreement of a lighting scheme with SODC which would include consultation with WPC.
2. A condition which requires the agreement of SODC on a landscaping scheme which includes proposals for all types of fencing, and which would include consultation with WPC.
3. The planning conditions put forward by the SODC Countryside Officer should be adopted. There should also be a condition for the conservation and enhancement of the stream to be agreed with SODC and include consultation with WPC.

4. A condition which requires the agreement of SODC for a scheme for improving connectivity between the site, the town and the countryside which would include consultation with WPC.
5. A condition which requires proposals for traffic mitigation measures to be agreed by SODC which would include consultation with WPC.
6. A condition which requires proposals for a planting scheme to be agreed with SODC which would include consultation with WPC.

In addition, WPC would want to be consulted on proposals for a traffic management plan during the construction period.

Provision for the edge road is vital for the success of development of all three sites allocated in the WNDP. The Plan only requires the safeguarding of the route but ongoing work on the delivery and funding is making good progress. The aim of WPC is to achieve the completion of the edge road before the construction of new dwellings.

Further discussions are needed with OCC regarding the junction of the edge road with Britwell Road to reduce the impact on local residents as far as possible.

Vote: 7 in favour

NO OBJECTION - UNANIMOUS

4. Any other business
None

THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING CLOSED AT 9:30PM