

12th December 2023

Minutes of the proceedings of the PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE meeting held on this day in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Wokingham from 19:30 to 21:20

PRESENT

Councillors: Cllr Shepherd-Dubey (Chair), Cllr K Malvern, Cllr A Betteridge, Cllr W Dixon, Cllr Lack & Cllr A Croy.

IN ATTENDANCE

PT Officer.
2 members of the public

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Cllr N Nagella (Vice Chair)
Cllr L Timlin
Cllr B Alvi

MEMBERS' INTERESTS (Agenda Item 2)

Cllr Betteridge declared that he is a member of the Active Travel Group, item 6 on the Agenda is an Active Travel Group Consultation.

QUESTIONS FROM THE COUNCIL OR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Agenda Item 3)

None

As there were members of the public who had interests in Planning Applications 231331 & 231351 it was agreed that these be brought forward.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS (Agenda Item 8)

222306 Land Adjacent to Blagrove Lane Wokingham

****REVISED PLANS**** Outline application, with all matters reserved except for access, for the proposed erection of up to 350 dwellings (Use Class C3) and care home (Use Class C2), with new accesses onto Barkham Road and Blagrove Lane, landscaping and onsite SANG, following demolition of outbuildings and agricultural buildings.

A member of the public spoke against the application. He had previously sent a detailed document on all his objections which have been made available to the Committee, however in the 3 minutes he had to present to the Committee he had to shorten this to several major points. Which were as follows.

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____



This is an unwelcome and unacceptable development proposal that has raised a huge number of objections from residents, this is approaching 1,000 and rising.

- The proposed location is not a Strategic Development Location in the Core strategy and does not comply with policy CP11 as a development in the countryside.
- The development would see the boundary between Barkham and Wokingham removed.
- The proposals would have devastating affects on the local wildlife and ancient woodland. There would be felling of 164 trees.
- The development is not feasible in terms of local infrastructure. School capacity at maximum already and doctor surgeries at full capacity.
- The proposed junction on Barkham Road is on a dangerous bend on an already busy road where traffic will increase. There has recently been a major traffic accident at this very spot. Reading buses have stated that this is not safe for their buses using the junction.
- The closing of Blagrove Lane will cause major issues with traffic being forced through new junction at Evendons Lane and Finchampstead Road.
- Berkeley Homes sustainability and managing traffic demand are completely dependent on number 3 Bus being diverted through the new development.
- The Southern part of the proposed development is already prone to severe flooding, adding 350 houses will dramatically worsen the flooding potential.

Cllr Dixon raised a question regarding the developers claim that Wokingham has underdelivered on the 5-year land supply, the Committee debated this and believe this is in fact incorrect and that it has over delivered, and this makes that claim and reason for the development invalid.

The Committee still strongly oppose the application and feel that all previous objections remain, and that the proposal is worse as it removes a potential positive element, the Community Hub. The introduction of a care home, that is not required, does not improve the proposal.

This site does not have sustainable transport links and there is no regular bus service or roads suitable for traffic. The road infrastructure would need to be significantly improved to sustain traffic from this site. The Committee do not see a complete picture of the road development needed, such as how to reach the Finchampstead road and provide safe walking routes to school.

The current roads are already dangerous for cyclists and the local population increase if the development goes ahead will exacerbate the situation.

The Developer states that the Bus service is 3 buses an hour, this is not correct the bus timetable shows it is 1 bus hour and none after 8pm. This makes it a non-sustainable location.

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____



The proposed closure of Blagrove Lane will divert and increase traffic into Evendons Lane and Finchampstead Road worsening an already busy road and a further burden on these road networks.

The Committee would also like to add the following to the existing objections. The previous objections are listed underneath these.

CP9 – Scale and location of development proposals

CC03 - Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping

CP10 - Improvements to the Strategic Transport Network

CP4 - Infrastructure Requirements

PREVIOUS COMMENTS FROM P&T MEETING 06/09/2023

The Committee had the following comments.

The proposal of a SANG is nonsensical as it is removing fully adequate green areas with artificial green areas

The proposed junction onto Barkham Road is unsafe.

There is not the required infrastructure and services to sustain the development.

Removal of 70 trees to build road is not welcomed.

Negative impact on biodiversity.

Inadequate bus service.

The area is a quiet countryside area, and an urban development is not welcomed.

The following objections were made.

Concerns over developer access into Lesly Sears Park and Viking Field.

CP3 - General Principles for development

b) functional, accessible, safe, secure

c) ecological, heritage, landscape, geological

d) fauna and flora

f) sense of place

CP1 – Sustainable development

1) quality of environment

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____



- 7) agricultural land
- 9) flooding
- 10) attractive, safe, secure

CP6 - Managing Travel Demand

- c) Improve existing infrastructure network
- e) adverse effects on transport network
- f) Enhance road safety

CC02 – outside of local plan

CP7 – Biodiversity

- B) harm habitats
- C) compromise biodiversity

The Committee discussed who will represent the Town Council when this gets called in by Wokingham Borough Council. Cllr Dixon has volunteered. The member of the public who presented to the Committee will attend too. Cllr Dixon will liaise with them prior to the meeting.

ACTION: PT OFFICER, CLLR DIXON

PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MINUTES (Agenda Item 4)

**RESOLVED
30766**

It was proposed by the Cllr Croy and seconded by Cllr Betteridge, and it was that the minutes of the Planning & Transportation Committee meeting held on 14th November 2023 (pages 16861 to 16867) be received as a true and correct record and that they be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

ACTION: PT OFFICER

MONITORING REPORT (Agenda Item 5)

The Monitoring Report dated 6th December 2023 was received and considered.

SECURE BICYCLE STORAGE IN WOKINGHAM TOWN

The Planning officer updated the Committee on the progress of the project since the last P&T meeting.

Following the last P&T Meeting where the Committee asked for updates on the status of secure locker use, the PT Officer sent a document to the Committee which showed capacity and income. This showed that the usage can be improved, and the PT Officer will be working with SpokeSafe and our Marketing

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____



Officer on ways to improve the awareness of the Secure Lockers as an option for Cyclists in Wokingham Town Centre.

The environmentally friendly paint that will be applied to the locker roofs has now been tested and works well. This will be applied when we have a few days of dry weather, and the air temperature is correct for application. It needs to be above 7 degrees Celsius and be dry for 3 days to cure correctly.

A page on our website has been created with the details of the Secure Lockers with location, price and contact details.

SpokeSafe have introduced discounted pricing via the Booking App, the lockers are £1 a day hire normally, there are now options of Weekly for £5 and Monthly for £15. The Committee thought this was a good idea.

Cllr Betteridge stated that there has been comment that there is no charge for cars at Carnival Hub, yet for the Secure Lockers there is a charge. However, it was agreed that the Lockers give added security and that bikes can still be locked the standard way at the site.

The PT Officer has asked SpokeSafe again about the release mechanism whereby the locker would be available to book once a person retrieves their bike. SpokesSafe have stated that this is on their 'Road Map' but is not a top priority as they have not been asked this from any other clients.

BUS SHELTERS

There were no new updates.

ACTION: PT OFFICER

ACTIVE TRAVEL A329 PHASE 2 CONSULTATION (Agenda Item 6)

To review and consider the Wokingham Borough Council consultation on the A329 Reading Road (Wokingham town) Phase 2 cycle and pedestrian improvements. Any comments are required by 21st December 2023

Wokingham Borough Council have provided large plans for phase 2 and these were used for the Committee to visualize the proposal for this section, the Woosehill roundabout.

There was a question asked whether we had heard anything regarding comments made on the first phase, as yet there has not been any feedback.

As Cllr Betteridge is on the Active travel Committee, he explained the reasoning behind the plans. The current situation is that this is an accident blackspot which is hazardous for cyclists and pedestrians, several solutions were considered in depth prior to the final plan. Initially a 'Dutch' style roundabout was considered whereby pedestrians and cyclists were given priority however this is not appropriate as this site has a high car traffic flow and would be unsafe.

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____



The proposed solution is to have 3 'toucan' crossings on each 'arm' of the roundabout to create a safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

There were discussions on how the proposed solution would work in practice and one main concern was the two-way cycling section where it runs alongside a lane of car traffic which is oncoming. However the Committee support the proposal.

The Committee members were reminded that they can respond as individuals to the consultation.

It was agreed by the Chair that Cllr Betteridge would draft a response to the consultation on behalf of the Committee.

As the Town Council has the plans available for public viewing (via the Info Centre) the Chair asked whether this could be made more visible by having this as a notification outside the building. The PT Officer will investigate whether this is possible.

ACTION: CLLR BETTERIDGE, PT OFFICER

LANGBOROUGH ROAD CONTROLLED PARKING ZONE CONSULTATION (Agenda Item 7)

To receive and consider the planned controlled parking proposal. Comments are required by December 12th.

The committee support this parking scheme.

ACTION: PT OFFICER

COMMITTEE'S BUDGET (Agenda Item 8)

A report on the Committee's budget as of 31st October 2023 were received and noted.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS (Agenda Item 9)

**RESOLVED
30767**

The following applications were received and considered, and it was that the Committee would make comment as shown. This includes **222306**, noted above.

232782 Land north of London Road East of A329M

Full application for the change of use of agricultural land to Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG)

The PT Officer explained that this was outside of the Wokingham Town Boundary and that the Development linked is further outside the boundary in Bracknell and comments for that had closed.

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____



The Committee had no comments.

232775 St Crispins School London Road Wokingham RG40 1SS

Application for Listed Building consent for the proposed replacement of existing fenestration.

The proposals will improve the look of the school and the listed building. The Committee support this application.

232808 1-5 Broad Street Wokingham Wokingham RG40 1AX

Full application for the proposed alterations to roof/loft conversion to provide 2 no x 2 bedroom flats and replacement sash windows in rear elevation.

The Committee object to this application.

This is the third application in three months for the same location. The Committee noted that this was initially at 8 residential units, then 9 and this latest raises it to 11. This takes the development through the threshold to consider affordable housing contribution. Could this please be considered.

The Committee would also like assurance that plans are in place to keep pedestrians safe and traffic moving in this busy area during any construction.

232664 Luckley House School Luckley Road Wokingham RG40 3EU

Application for Listed Building consent for the proposed replacement of 2 no. existing roof lights and insertion of 2 no. additional roof lights.

The proposals will improve the look of the school and the listed building. The Committee support this application.

ACTION: P&T OFFICER

INFORMATION ITEMS (AGENDA ITEM 10)

The Chair stated that an application that the Committee discussed previously 223691 Lee Spring was being discussed at the next Wokingham Borough Planning meeting. There will not be a member of the Committee speaking at this meeting on behalf of Wokingham Town Council, however Cllr Dixon will be attending remotely.

Cllr Croy asked what has happened with Cllr Betteridge's question regarding whether Greenway consultations could be via the planning Committee. The PT Officer confirmed with the Town Clerk that the Greenways discussion had previously been through the Amenities Committee and as yet there hadn't been any further consultations on the Greenway passed through to us. There would be a discussion on where it was placed if this was forthcoming.

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____



CHAIRMANS SIGNATURE _____

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____

