

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the **Uplands Area Planning Sub-Committee**
held in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxon
at 2:00 pm on **Monday 1 April 2019**

PRESENT

Councillors: Jeff Haine (Chairman), Derek Cotterill (Vice-Chairman), Andrew Beaney, Richard Bishop, Nigel Colston, Julian Cooper, Charles Cottrell-Dormer, Merylyn Davies, Ted Fenton, David Jackson, Elizabeth Poskitt, Alex Postan and Geoff Saul.

Officers in attendance: Phil Shaw, Kim Smith, Joanna Lishman and Amy Barnes.

65. MINUTES

At the request of Councillor Poskitt it was agreed that paragraph 5 at page 5 of the minutes be amended to read “It was noted that Cardinal slates were available in a range of differing sizes and that the moulds were created from original examples”.

RESOLVED: That, subject to the amendment detailed above, the minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 4 March 2019, copies of which had been circulated, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

66. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

There were no apologies for absence or temporary appointments.

67. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

With regard to Agenda Item No. 5, (Application Number 18/03615/PROW - Diversion of part of Public Right of Way, Milton-Under-Wychwood) Councillor Haine advised that he was a Member of the Milton-Under-Wychwood Parish Council. He indicated that he would continue to Chair the meeting but would abstain from voting on the matter.

(In order to assist members of the public present, the Sub-Committee then considered the following report)

68. PROPOSED DIVERSION OF PART OF PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY MILTON-UNDER-WYCHWOOD 301/13 (WHOLE) AND MILTON-UNDER-WYCHWOOD 301/15 (PART) PUBLIC PATH DIVERSION ORDER 2019 – 18/03615/PROW

Members received a report requesting that the Head of Planning and Strategic Housing be given authority to make a Public Path Diversion Order 2019 and carry out the required statutory consultation upon it.

The Planning Officer presented his report containing a recommendation of conditional approval.

Councillor Beaney addressed Members and advised that he used this footpath regularly and proposed the officers recommendations as detailed in the report.

The Officer recommendation was proposed by Councillor Beaney and seconded by Councillor Bishop and on being put to the vote was approved.

RESOLVED: That the Head of Planning and Strategic Housing be authorised to make the Order and carry out public consultation, consistent with the draft appended to the report.

69. APPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

The Sub-Committee received the report of the Head of Planning and Strategic Housing giving details of applications for development, copies of which had been circulated.

RESOLVED: That the decisions on the following applications be as indicated, the reasons for refusal or conditions related to a permission to be as recommended in the report of the Head of Planning and Strategic Housing, subject to any amendments as detailed below:-

3 18/02841/FUL Land South East of 84-86 Grove Road, Bladon

The Planning Officer introduced the application and advised that a further representation had been received from a resident at number 74 Grove Road, who raised concerns about the ecology on the site. In response to this, the Planning Officer highlighted the condition relating to ecology mitigation measures in the report.

The report contained a recommendation of conditional approval subject to a Section 106 agreement.

Councillor Cooper stated that this was an interesting application on many grounds including the issues that the village faced. These included the level of traffic imposed on the village by the A4095 and the lack of a village shop. He felt it had been appropriate for the officers to set those tests, for example the Green Belt arguments, and noted that there were other areas of new development in the village including sites such as Lincoln Grove.

Councillor Cooper also felt that the Green Belt policy deserved a comprehensive review and should be brought to the Development Control Committee for consideration. The site at Bladon, in his opinion, should be in a World Heritage Site buffer zone. He referred Members to paragraph 1.12 of the report which contained the Parish Council's comments and supported the suggestion that the village should benefit from a pedestrian crossing over the A4095. This development would be a benefit to the village and he complimented the parish council on their comments. He reminded Members that the Parish Council had created first class play facilities in the village and this could be an opportunity to gain additional funds to enhance that facility.

Councillor Cooper proposed the officers recommendation as set out, subject to a note being added to the applicant requesting a S106 contribution towards traffic calming measures in Bladon village, specifically a pedestrian crossing across the A4095.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Poskitt who requested clarification on the parking measures to the front of the development. The Planning Officer advised that there was currently an informal parking arrangement in place and this application would formalise the situation and would provide access from the back gardens of the properties.

In response to a question from Councillor Poskitt, the Planning Officer advised as to the location of the site vis a vis the Conservation Area. Councillor Poskitt felt that it was important to pay attention to the comments from and concerns being raised by the residents of Bladon village, especially with regard to the S106 contributions. She felt this was a curious site which would be quite shady but having read the NPPF section on the Green Belt, felt that paragraph 137 relating to Urban Regeneration and putting derelict land to better use, could also be applied in this instance. In addition, the site had been used as a rubbish tip and needed cleaning up.

Councillor Beaney requested clarification on the key workers housing being proposed and asked who would make a decision on the tenants of these properties. The Planning Officer advised that details on allocation were still being agreed but that it could come down to nomination rights. Councillor Beaney referred to the plan showing the overview of the development, which he was still sceptical about. He queried why there was a courtyard style shape on the left hand side but only a partial one on the right. He asked if there was the possibility to include a condition to protect the central section of landscaping to protect the trees and stop additional housing being built.

The Planning Officer explained that the trees located in the centre of the development were very large and had grown on a raised band of rock. He felt it was unlikely that these would be removed or the area built on and he was confident that the woodland management agreement would stipulate the requirement that the surrounding areas would be kept as woodland.

Councillor Postan reminded Members that the purpose of the Green Belt was to protect Oxford City from urban sprawl and he was comforted by the fact that Blenheim Palace were keen to take this area into their ownership.

Councillor Beany queried the comments relating to affordable housing and asked if the number of dwellings was increased, whether this would the need to include an affordable housing provision because it would take the level over ten units.

The Planning Officer explained that Green Belt policy was always a popular political topic but often misunderstood. He agreed that its purpose was to protect against urban sprawl and to contain city growth. By allowing more units to be built on the site this could result in the provision of affordable housing but the overall development would then strain other planning policies such as Green Belt policy. However, if the Parish Council evidenced a demand for affordable housing, they could request an 'exception site' in the Green Belt which would meet local need. Whilst the architectural form was not prescribed, officers were comfortable with the style but agreed that it was not ground breaking design.

Councillor Postan reminded the Committee that WODC had already taken tens of thousands of houses, in order to restrict urban sprawl.

Councillor Davies was tired of the onslaught of Blenheim on the area and queried whether the site had been considered as a self-build site. In response, the Planning Officer advised that this site had not been considered for that use but felt assured that the Blenheim Estate appeared to be trying to hold onto its assets and contribute to the community.

Councillor Davies queried how many bedrooms each dwelling would provide as she had concerns that there would only be large, four bedroomed properties. In response and at the request of the Chairman, the applicant confirmed that there would mostly be two to three bedroomed properties with one four bedroomed dwelling.

Councillor Bishop supported the application and recognised the enhancement of the area. He stated that this was more akin to a brownfield site with additional nastiness attached, this proposal would tidy it up and he noted that due to the woodland screening, the site could not really be seen.

Councillor Colston supported the principle of the development but felt that the design was unfortunate because he did not like bungalows and thought that two storey housing would be better because it would be screened. He was reminded by Councillor Bishop that the increasing ageing population liked bungalows because a large numbers of stairs were difficult to navigate.

In response, Councillor Jackson disagreed because the low level design meant it was not obtrusive

The Officer recommendation was proposed by Councillor Cooper and seconded by Councillor Poskitt and on being put to the vote was carried.

Permitted, the applicants being advised that the Sub-Committee supports the Parish Council's request for a S106 contribution towards traffic calming measures in Bladon village, specifically a pedestrian crossing across the A4095.

16 18/03651/FUL Bowerham Ascott Road, Shipton Under Wychwood

The Planning Officer introduced the application which it was noted was part retrospective and contained a recommendation of approval. Following issues raised by residents about the impact that a potential two further bedrooms would have on traffic, the Planning officer confirmed that she had spoken to the Highways Engineer. They had advised that they could not demonstrate that the extra rooms would warrant harm.

Councillor Beaney stated that he was happy with the proposal but queried why there was no comment from the Conservation Officer in the report. He also queried whether the Conservation Area plan was up to date for this area and asked if the Council could insist that the applicant remove the door on the side elevation and replace it with a window.

In response, the Planning Officer stated that the Conservation Area boundaries were fixed but noted that there were not assessments completed for every area. The assessments had started to be completed alphabetically but the process was altered to take account of the areas that were experiencing the most growth. He assured Members that officers were working to reduce the backlog of assessments and that the map contained within the presentation was correct. Officers also advised that a response had been received from the Conservation Officer, verbally.

With regard to the replacement of the door, Officers did not feel this would be a reasonable request because the flat roof area beyond the door had already been conditioned to restrict its use.

Members were concerned that a number of the changes to doors and windows had been undertaken without permission. The Officer advised that this application sought to bring together all of the changes to the fenestrations. In addition, she had spoken to Building Control who had advised that the door would possibly require a guard or a Juliette balcony to address health and safety issues.

Councillor Postan remarked on the Velux window versus Dormer window debate. He felt that the fact that nature determined the space of an attic form was oxymoronic and further detail should be included in design guides but noted that this required a change in attitude. However, he felt able to support the recommendation.

The Planning Officer showed Members a photograph of the building and advised that it was in a 1970's style and so perhaps could be considered to be lacking architectural merit.

Councillor Fenton noted that this was approximately the fourth application that Members had been asked to approve retrospective changes to fenestrations. He queried whether officers had a firm grip on what developers were doing compared to what they had been given permission for.

The Planning Officer explained that it could be argued that the system was working correctly because officers had found out about what had been built and developers were required to either undo the works or submit an additional application. He reminded Members that historically, the Authority had a proactive enforcement officer compared to the current reactive system. He stated that he was looking into the reorganisation of the team to address this.

Councillor Fenton asked if this was something that the Building Regulations team could undertake but accepted that this was difficult since the introduction of the Improved Inspectors Scheme. The Planning Officer advised that the larger proportion of developments were not looked at by local authority staff but by the private sector. If the Council's officers looked to undertake an element of enforcement work, this could affect their reputation within the market sector.

Councillor Poskitt queried the wording of Condition 3 of the report as it seemed to end abruptly. The Planning Officer advised that this was a typo and there was no additional wording missing.

Councillor Colston agreed with Councillor Postan's comments regarding dormer windows and stated that he did not like Juliette balconies. Following a question from Councillor Postan, the Planning Officer stated that Officers were not able to define the use of the attic space because internal works did not require planning permission.

The Officer recommendation was proposed by Councillor Cotterill and seconded by Councillor Bishop and on being put to the vote was carried.

Permitted.

22 19/00288/FUL Flat 8 Sanders House, Churchfields, Stonesfield

The Planning Officer introduced the application and explained the report contained a recommendation of conditional approval and was before the Committee because the applicant was a member of staff.

Councillor Bishop proposed the report as per the officers recommendation and stated that this building was architecturally unusual. Historically, the building had been a factory for the production of computer keyboards before being converted to flats. The alterations did not impinge on anyone else and no objections had been received from residents because there was no overlooking.

Councillor Cottrell-Dormer agreed and was happy to second the proposal.

Councillor Poskitt requested clarification on what constituted a Cabrio Style window and was advised that the whole unit would shut flush to the roofline when closed.

The Officer recommendation was proposed by Councillor Bishop and seconded by Councillor Cottrell-Dormer and on being put to the vote was carried.

Permitted.

70. APPLICATIONS DETERMINED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS AND APPEAL DECISIONS

The report giving details of applications determined by the Head of Planning and Strategic Housing under delegated powers together with appeal decisions was received and noted.

Prior to the end of the meeting, the Chairman wished all those standing at the forthcoming elections the best of luck.

The meeting closed at 3.06 pm.

CHAIRMAN