

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the  
**Lowlands Area Planning Sub-Committee**  
Held in the Council Chamber at 2.00 pm on **Monday, 28 March 2022**

PRESENT

Councillors: Ted Fenton (Chairman), Joy Aitman (Vice-Chair), Maxine Crossland, Harry Eaglestone, Duncan Enright, Jeff Haine, Nick Leverton, Dan Levy, Michele Mead, Alex Postan, Carl Rylett, Harry St John and Ben Woodruff

Officers: Phil Shaw (Business Manager - Development Management), David Ditchett (Senior Planning Officer), Michelle Ouzman (Strategic Support Officer).

**52 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2022 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Members noted that the Planning officers had agreed to get back to Councillor Crossland regarding her question relating to the Delegated Decisions list from 28 February 2022. Item 4 on Page 90 – “Councillor Crossland noted this had been withdrawn, and asked why this was. The Officer was unsure of the reason and agreed to look into the application and report back.”

Officers confirmed that they would investigate and respond to Councillor Crossland directly.

**53 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Bolger. Councillor Postan substituted for Councillor Good, Councillor Mead substituted for Councillor Nicholls and Councillor St John substituted for Councillor Langridge.

**54 Declarations of Interest**

A declarations of interest was received from Councillor Leverton who stated that he had put a call out for assistance regarding a charity pickup. A local business related to application 21/03342/OUT replied and gave assistance with a free delivery. The Committee and Chair noted this statement, and it was agreed that it would not have an influence on this application.

Councillor Crossland stated she may have a declaration of interest as her son-in-law owned one of the units in the industrial estate. The Chairman and Councillors noted Councillor Crossland’s interest, it was agreed that it would not have an influence on the application.

**55 Applications for Development**

21/03342/OUT - Land South West Of Downs Road, Curbridge Business Park, Witney.

The Business Manager, Phil Shaw introduced the application for outline planning permission for a residential development comprising up to 75 dwellings, up to 40% affordable housing provision and public open space. (All matters reserved.)

Councillor Crossland stated she may have a declaration of interest as her son-in-law owned one of the units mentioned by Mr Shaw in the industrial estate. The Chairman and Councillors noted Councillor Crossland’s interest, it was agreed that it would not have an influence on the application.

Mr Nicholas Daruwalla spoke in support of the application. A copy of his statement is attached to the original copy of these minutes.

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Mr Shaw continued with his presentation and summarised that the Planning Department had received 31 enquiries about the land and there was a strong interest locally, with existing businesses adjacent to the land. The officers' recommendation was based in principle to policy and the Development Plan, which stated the importance to grow business in Witney. Mr Shaw also reminded Councillors that there was a noise barrier of over nine metres high within the application, which would be intrusive to the families within the proposed housing development.

Councillor Woodruff stated that he had watched this site for several months, had recently visited with Councillor Haine, walked the route, and found access only via an existing housing estate. He advised that he would much prefer housing on the site. Councillor Woodruff felt that Councillors would benefit from a site visit, and suggested they defer the decision until Councillors had seen the land.

Councillor Postan thought that the land would be better served with a local commercial business on site, as people could walk to work rather than travel. He also thought that the application proposal lacked sustainability details, and that housing built now would need to be brought up to sustainability standard in just a couple of years.

Councillor Haine concurred that he had visited the site, and that he was aware land had already been purchased to create commercial access for local business's at the adjacent depot., so they would not have to go via the housing estate for access. Mr Shaw concurred that land for new commercial access had been bought.

Councillor Crossland noted that the District Local Plan had taken a lot of serious hard work to create, and that this application was asking Members to disregard their own policies. She felt that other potential uses for the land were irrelevant, the application clearly went against Council policy and therefore felt Members should support the officers' recommendation and refuse the application. Councillor Leverton agreed, and added that the number of houses being developed would increase the daily traffic too, and he supported the officers recommendation.

Councillor Woodruff, requested clarification of the adjacent land purchase for business access, whether the land had definitely been purchased, and felt that if the decision was deferred for a site visit, it would give extra time to seek clarification of the purchase. The Chairman referred Councillor Woodruff to page 53 in the original report. paragraph 2.1, point 4 which read:

“ Referring to the third party ownership of the ransom strip bund, associates of our clients have now purchased the bund, enabling direct access”

Councillor Woodruff proposed that the application be deferred for a site visit. Councillor Eaglestone seconded this proposal.

On being put to the vote, the proposal was lost.

Councillor Enright stated Witney was a vibrant town, and felt the Committee should support the officers recommendation and the Local Plan. Councillor Levy and Postan both agreed.

Councillor Enright proposed that the application should be refused as per officers' recommendation.

Councillor Crossland seconded the proposal.

On being put to the vote, the application was

**Refused**

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21/01628/FUL - Church Farm, Church End, South Leigh, Witney

The Senior Planning Officer, David Ditchett introduced the application for a change of use of land to allow the siting of three glamping wagons, together with the erection of a bike storage shed and the provision of four parking spaces (amended).

A late submission from the Parish Council of South Leigh and High Cogges was received and was readout by the planning officer. The Parish Council reiterated that the proposal was contrary to the Neighbourhood Plan, particularly SLD6 and felt that the application should be refused. Councillor Haine had also received a statement from the Parish Council of South Leigh and High Coggs (SLHCPC), the statement included a strong request to refuse the application on grounds that it goes against the Local Plan. Councillor Haine read out the statement and a copy is attached to the original minutes.

Councillor Haine confirmed that he too thought the application does not comply with SLD6 and Local Plan policies OS2 – Points 2,4,5 and 9, General Principle OS4 – Points 2 and 5, E2, EH2, EH8, Neighbourhood Local Plan policies SLE1, SLE7 and SLD6.

Councillor Enright thought it was good to bring extra business to the farm and the proposal also had tourism opportunities for local communities, however, he was swayed by the statement from the Local Neighbourhood Plan

Councillor St John stated that he had read through the South Leigh and Coggs Parish Neighbourhood Plan and he thought it was a very good document. He went on to ask for clarification on the differences between Use Classes B and E.

Mr Ditchett confirmed that B Class related to General Industrial, and Storage or distribution Whereas Use Class E was for Commercial, Business and Service.

Both Councillors Levy and Postan thought the Committee should support the Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor Haine proposed that the application be refused, contrary to officers recommendations, on policy grounds, because it was contrary to Policies, WODC Local Plan OS2 – Points 2,4,5 and 9, General Principle OS4 – Points 2 and 5, E2, EH2, EH8 and SLHC Neighbourhood Plan SLE1, SLE7 and SLD6. Councillor Leverton seconded the proposal.

The proposal was put to the vote, and was carried.

For the reasons stated above, the application was

**Refused**

21/02106/FUL - Church Farm, Church End, South Leigh, Witney

The Senior Planning Officer, David Ditchett introduced the application for the construction of a pond for ecological enhancement and recreational purposes. Mr Ditchett advised that officers were recommending approval of the application.

Councillor Haine commented on the depth of the pond and the safety issues this may have. This led to Councillors having a discussion on the safety aspect of the application.

Councillor Haine proposed that the application be refused as there were safety concerns, this was seconded by Councillor Eaglestone. On being put to the vote, the proposal was lost.

Councillor Postan proposed that the application be approved as per officers recommendation. This was seconded by Councillor Levy.

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The proposal was put to the vote, and was carried that the application be

**Approved**

21/02779/FUL - 61 High Street, Standlake

The Senior Planning Officer, David Ditchett introduced the application for the demolition of an existing engineering workshop and the erection of two detached dwellings, with associated parking, private amenity space and landscaping.

Mr Ditchett confirmed that the engineering workshop had ceased trading in 2019 and advised that Officers were recommending approval.

Councillor Haine proposed to approve the application as per Officers recommendation and this was seconded by Councillor Leverton.

It was therefore agreed that the application be

**Approved**

## **56 Applications Determined under Delegated Powers and Appeal Decisions**

The report giving details of applications determined under delegated powers was received and noted.

The Meeting closed at 3.30 pm

CHAIRMAN