

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE		
DATE:	5 DECEMBER 2018	AGENDA ITEM:	7
TITLE:	VEHICLE PARKING - St. PATRICK'S HALL INQUIRY		
SERVICE:	PLANNING	WARDS:	CHURCH
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1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of new evidence and legal advice received since the original decision to refuse planning permission 172045/FUL, in respect of the vehicle parking impacts of the proposal.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

That the Local Planning Authority agrees not to maintain reason for refusal number 2 of refused planning permission 172045 in relation to planning appeal reference APP/E0345/W/18/3209702 (Public Inquiry).

Reason 2 reads as follows:

"The proposed development, by reason of the increase in residential accommodation and lack of parking provision, would lead to unacceptable additional pressure on parking on surrounding streets. As such the proposal is contrary to Policies CS20 and CS24 of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy and national policy contained within the NPPF and associated Planning Practice Guidance."

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Planning Applications Committee refused planning permission under reference 172045/FUL on 7 February 2018. The application description was *"Construction of 836 new student bedrooms, a cafeteria/bar, bin and bike stores, sub-station and energy centre, together with a new access link and landscaping. Demolition of the existing student accommodation block at New*

Court, the SETS building, the warden's house, no. 4 Sherfield Drive, the reception and common room, (resubmission of application ref. 161182)."

- 3.2 The officer recommendation was to approve the application subject to conditions and S106 legal agreement.
- 3.3 The applicant, the University of Reading, has subsequently submitted an appeal against the refusal to the Secretary of State, which is to be dealt with by way of a Public Inquiry, starting on 19 March 2019.

4. APPRAISAL

Transport Consultant Advice

- 4.1 Officers are currently involved in preparing the Council's case for the Inquiry. Transport consultants have been commissioned to deal with the parking reason for refusal. They have reviewed the matter and have undertaken further parking surveys on behalf of the Council using best practice methodology. The transport consultant has advised that the parking situation has changed materially since the decision was made by Planning Applications Committee. In particular, parking restrictions have been introduced along Northcourt Avenue in the area adjacent to the appeal site and these are being enforced. They have materially reduced previous issues related to on-street parking in Northcourt Avenue. In addition the recent survey work confirms that sufficient capacity exists both within the site and on street to accommodate anticipated parking associated with the appeal scheme.
- 4.2 As a result, the Council is not currently in a position to maintain a positive case on reason for refusal 2. The Council has appointed a barrister to represent it at the Inquiry. The barrister's advice is that if the Council *does* maintain the reason for refusal but fails to offer a positive case the Council will be at risk of paying the Appellant's costs in relation to the parking matter. He therefore advises that on the basis of the current evidence the Council should agree *not* to maintain the parking reason for refusal at the Inquiry. The Council's Planning Lawyer agrees with this advice.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 For the reasons set out above, it is recommended that the Local Planning Authority agrees not to maintain reason for refusal number 2 in respect of vehicle parking when presenting the Council's case at planning appeal reference APP/E0345/W/18/3209702 (Public Inquiry).