

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 21 JULY 2021

Present: Councillor Lovelock (Chair);
Councillors Challenger (Vice-Chair), Carnell, Emberson, Ennis,
Leng, McEwan, Page, Robinson, Rowland, Stanford-Beale and
J Williams

In remote attendance (non-voting): Councillor Duveen

Apologies: Councillor R Williams

RESOLVED ITEMS

17. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2021 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Emberson declared an interest in Item 34 (210549/REG3 & 210550/ADV - Wensley Road) as she was the Lead Councillor for Housing.

Councillor Carnell declared an interest in Item 36 (210018/FUL - Reading Golf Club) as his nephew was a member of Reading Golf Club.

Councillor Rowland declared an interest in Item 37 (210644/REG3 & 210745/LBC - Prospect Park) as she was the Lead Councillor for Culture, Heritage & Recreation.

Councillor Stanford-Beale declared an interest in Item 37 (210644/REG3 & 210745/LBC - Prospect Park) as she had been involved in the Playground Design Group.

19. QUESTIONS

Councillor Josh Williams asked the Chair of the Planning Applications Committee:

Planning Website Technical Problems

When a new planning application is loaded to the Council's planning website, residents are invited to submit comments, in support or objection, and these are usually displayed for other residents to view, read, and consider when making their own comments. These are published online so that local residents can see what others are saying and submit their own thoughts. They also give residents the assurance that their views are being seen and heard in the planning process.

Back in March residents contacted me to say that they couldn't see their responses to important planning applications loaded online. I contacted the Council and was quickly told that it was a technical issue that would be easily resolved. Since then I've been told

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that the problem is more complicated, and planning applications are still waiting for many comments to be loaded and viewed on the Council's website.

Can the Chair please tell us how many applications have been affected by this issue, what has been done so far to resolve the problem, and when residents' comments will again appear on the planning portal?

REPLY by the Chair of the Planning Applications Committee (Councillor Lovelock):

Many seeking to comment on planning applications do so using the Council's website in response to letters or notices seen inviting comments, in support or objection.

These comments are then usually made available for other residents and the applicant to view, read, and consider on the website.

However, this does not happen instantly unlike when putting a comment on to Facebook or Twitter. When submitting comments residents are told in acknowledgement:

“Thank you for your comments. They will be registered and passed on to the case officer who will take them into account when a decision is made on this proposal. However, because of the large number of comments we receive, planning officers will not normally reply to the points raised”.

The registration process normally involves:

- verifying that the comments relate to the correct application reference
- checking that the correspondent has not provided information about themselves or the applicant that would mean the Council would breach data protection guidelines if we were to publish them - there is case law on this
- checking the comments do not contain offensive or slanderous content
- redacting comments provided to remove any signatures or other personal data - such as email addresses

The planning technical support team try to carry out all the relevant checks and redactions so that they can be loaded up for public viewing normally within 2 days. However, can take longer when staff are on leave or when there are significant volumes of comments being submitted, such as with the Reading Golf Club application being presented tonight, which required officers to process the 3,000 or so comments received.

In addition to this work, with the change to IT provider there is a problem with the necessary software that loads up comments. The work around is to convert all comments to pdf format but this takes more time. As for how many applications have been affected by this issue, Officers have checked and it is believed to have been around 150.

IT services are working on solving the problem but it will need the system to be upgraded. In the meantime, all new documents and comments are being converted and uploaded as PDFs.

Officers are concentrating on doing this with new and current applications as comments come in and are leaving the processing of comments on older applications until the issue

is resolved unless they receive a specific request in which case the comments can be converted and re-uploaded directly.

The Planning Manager is also looking to change the acknowledgement message to manage expectations by stating that submitted comments may not be viewable for a number of working days but to be reassured that the comments will be seen by the case officer and will be taken into consideration.

20. POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted, at the meeting, a schedule of applications to be considered at future meetings of the Committee to enable Councillors to decide which sites, if any, they wished to visit prior to determining the relevant applications.

At the meeting consideration of application 201070/ADV - Land at Rose Kiln Lane was deferred for a site visit (see Minute 33 below).

Resolved -

That the under-mentioned application, together with any additional applications which the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services might consider appropriate, be the subject of an unaccompanied site visit:

201070/ADV - LAND AT ROSE KILN LANE
LED Screen hoardings, supported by hollow steel posts.

21. PLANNING APPEALS

(i) New Appeals

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a schedule giving details of one notification received from the Planning Inspectorate regarding a planning appeal, the method of determination for which she had already expressed a preference in accordance with delegated powers, which was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

(ii) Appeals Recently Determined

There had been no decisions made by the Secretary of State, or by an Inspector appointed for the purpose.

(iii) Reports on Appeal Decisions

There were no appeal decision reports submitted.

Resolved - That the new appeal, as set out in Appendix 1, be noted.

22. APPLICATIONS FOR PRIOR APPROVAL

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report giving details in Table 1 of ten prior approval applications received, and in Table 2 of fifteen applications for prior approval decided, between 10 June and 8 July 2021.

Further to Minute 5 of the meeting held on 2 June 2021, Councillor Page noted that the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee, to which the Council had submitted its response to the consultation on changes to Permitted Development Rights, would be publishing its report on 22 July 2021 and requested a report to a future Planning Applications Committee on the recommendations in the Select Committee report.

Resolved -

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That a report be submitted to a future meeting on the recommendations in the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee report on Permitted Development Rights.

23. PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT - DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT SERVICE - QUARTER 1 (APRIL - JUNE) 2021/2022

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on how the Planning Service had performed over the first quarter of 2021/22 in terms of meeting government set targets for dealing with planning applications and success at planning appeals. Details of the types of applications handled and appeal decisions for Quarter 1 (the period 1 April - 30 June 2021) were provided with comparison data from the previous year.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

24. STREET NAME ASSIGNMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT OFF HENLEY ROAD, CAVERSHAM

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report asking the Committee to agree a street name for a development site off Henley Road, Caversham. A plan of the site was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

A list of suggested appropriate street names was set out in the report and the report stated that, if none of the proposed names were considered suitable, the Committee should select an alternative from the Approved Street Names List which was attached to the report at Appendix 2. An updated version of the Approved Street Names List had been circulated to the members of the Committee prior to the meeting.

Resolved - That the name Willow View be used for the road.

25. STREET NAME ASSIGNMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT TO THE REAR OF HIGHGROVE STREET

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The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report asking the Committee to agree a street name for a development to the rear of 107-125 Highgrove Street. A plan of the site was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report set out two suggested appropriate street names that had been consulted on with Ward Councillors and the report stated that, if none of the proposed names were considered suitable, the Committee should select an alternative from the Approved Street Names List which was attached to the report at Appendix 2. An updated version of the Approved Street Names List had been circulated to the members of the Committee prior to the meeting.

Resolved - That the name Highgrove Mews be used for the road.

26. 210163/FUL & 210164LBC - BRISTOL & WEST ARCADE, MARKET PLACE

210163/FUL - Demolition of vacant former Bristol & West Arcade (173-175 Friar Street) and redevelopment of site including minor excavations at basement level to provide an 8-storey building to provide a hotel (C1 use) of up to 182 beds, creation of a bar/restaurant/gym at ground floor associated with the hotel and the provision of ancillary facilities including outdoor terrace, demolition of rear parts of 29-31 and 32 Market Place, the change of use of the retained units at 27-28, 29-31 and 32 Market Place at first, second and third floors to provide 8 residential units, retention of flexible Class E uses and public house (sui generis use) at ground and basement floors (amended description).

210164/LBC - Demolition of 20th Century additions to the rear of 29-31 Market Place and 32 Market Place with associated internal and external alterations to listed buildings.

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above applications. An update report was tabled at the meeting which provided additional information, including an amendment to the description of 210163, proposed amendments to the heads of terms in the S106 agreement for 210163 regarding affordable housing and High Street Heritage Action Zone contributions, and information on essential repair works carried out so far to the Market Place listed building.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

Objector Evelyn Williams and Nick de Lotbiniere, the applicant's agent, attended the meeting and addressed the Committee on this application.

Resolved -

- (1) That the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to grant full planning permission for application 210163/FUL, subject to completion of a S106 legal agreement by 31 August 2021 (unless a later date be agreed by the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services) to secure the Heads of Terms set out in the original report, with the amendments set out in the update report, and an amendment to Head of Term 5 to require that the trigger for completion of

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the essential works to the listed buildings at 27-32 Market Place was not linked with first occupation of the hotel but could come forward as soon as possible in order to bring the buildings back into an acceptable condition and use, with the trigger informed by the provision of the build programme;

- (2) That, in the event of the requirements set out not being met, the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to refuse permission;
- (3) That planning permission be subject to the conditions and informatives recommended in the original report, with an additional informative as set out below;
- (4) That the condition regarding submission and approval of details of the additional entrance column to the Friar Street frontage be approved in consultation with Ward Councillors;
- (5) That Listed Building Consent for application 210164/LBC be granted subject to the conditions and informatives set out in the original report.

27. 210349/FUL - 115 CHATHAM STREET

Demolition of the existing buildings on site and erection of a 3 - 5 storey building to provide 54 residential units (Class C3). Provision of private and communal external amenity areas, car and cycle parking and refuse storage.

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application. An update report was tabled at the meeting which confirmed that a bat survey and assessment had been received and there was no objection from Council Ecology officers to the application subject to inclusion of some proposed additional conditions set out in the report; the update report also gave an update on transport matters, set out the full text of an objection summarised in the original report and proposed amendments to the S106 heads of terms.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

Resolved -

- (1) That the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to grant full planning permission for application 210349/FUL, subject to completion of a S106 legal agreement by 18 August 2021 (unless a later date be agreed by the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services) to secure the Heads of Terms set out in the original report, with the amendments set out in the update report, as well as further amendments to the Heads of Terms as necessary, in consultation with transport officers and Ward Councillors, to ensure that the developer was required to fund provision of the car club, the vehicle and the bay for the period required;

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- (2) That, in the event of the requirements set out not being met, the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to refuse permission;
- (3) That planning permission be subject to the conditions and informatives recommended in the original report, with the additional conditions set out in the update report.

28. 210007/FUL - 124-128 CARDIFF ROAD

Demolition of No.124 and construction of a building for use as an extension to the existing waste recycling centre building at No. 128 with associated parking and landscaping.

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application. A verbal update was given at the meeting stating that the Environment Agency had formally confirmed they had no objections to the application subject to the appropriate proposed conditions.

Comments were received and considered.

Resolved - That planning permission for application 210007/FUL be granted, subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended.

29. 210583/FUL - 75 LOVEROCK ROAD

Change of use of 75 Loverock Road from B8 to B2 requiring minor alterations and erection of substation and external plant area.

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application.

Comments were received and considered.

Resolved - That planning permission for application 210583/FUL be granted, subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended in the report.

30. 210471/LBC - CAVERSHAM COURT ENVIRONMENTAL CENTRE, CHURCH ROAD

Listed Building Consent for the installation of a toilet facility in a store room in single storey outbuilding of the main Stable Block.

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application.

Comments were received and considered.

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Resolved - That, pursuant to Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992, listed building consent 210471 be granted, subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended.

31. 201141/FUL - 65 NORTHCOURT AVENUE

Construction of a 15 bedroom building (C2 use) with ancillary accommodation and associated works.

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

The report stated that the home's visiting policy was by appointment only and visits would be on a staggered basis which would control the demand for parking spaces. Officers confirmed that the current system had been introduced to manage access during the Covid-19 pandemic but had the effect of controlling the demand for parking spaces on site. The report recommended that, to ensure that the applicant continued to manage the on-site parking spaces, a Car Parking Management Plan should be required to be submitted by planning condition to ensure that there was no additional overspill onto the surrounding roads arising from the additional rooms.

The Committee expressed concern about the effect of the home's visiting policy on relatives' freedom to visit the residents but also sought reassurance on the potential impact caused by parking in roads around the home if the Car Park Management Plan was not followed and requested that further discussions be held with the applicant, Ward Councillors and transport officers on this matter to agree appropriate solutions within the Car Parking Management Plan.

Resolved -

- (1) That planning permission for application 201141/FUL be granted, subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended in the report, with the wording of the Car Parking Management Plan condition to be agreed in consultation with Ward Councillors;
- (2) That the Car Parking Management Plan be agreed in consultation with Ward Councillors.

32. 201070/ADV - LAND AT ROSE KILN LANE

LED Screen hoardings, supported by hollow steel posts.

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application.

Resolved - That consideration of application 2010/70/ADV be deferred for a site visit.

33. 210549/FUL & 210550/ADV - WENSLEY COURT (NO. 193), IRVING COURT (NO.203) AND RIVERSLEY COURT (NO. 205), WENSLEY ROAD

210549/REG3 - Various renovation works to the three tower blocks (Wensley Court, Irving Court and Riversley Court), including replacement of the external envelope and windows, extended and reconfigured entrance areas incorporating altered refuse and recycling facilities, replacement ground floor escape doors, external stairs and windows, roof level works, various landscaping works including planting and surface treatments, and external cycle parking stores.

210550/ADV - Non-illuminated fascia signs on west elevation of No. 193 Wensley Court and No. 205 Riversley Court, and east elevation of No. 203 Irving Court, all at ground floor level; Non-illuminated fascia signs on east and west elevations of No. 193 Wensley Court, No. 203 Irving Court and No. 205 Riversley Court at 13th and 14th floor level.

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above applications.

Comments and an objection were received and considered.

Resolved -

- (1) That, pursuant to Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992, planning permission 210549/REG3 be authorised, subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended;
- (2) That advertisement consent 210550/ADV be granted, subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended.

(Councillor Emberson declared an interest in the above application. Nature of interest: Councillor Emberson was the Lead Councillor for Housing. She addressed the meeting on the application but abstained in the decision.)

34. 201197/LBC - 5 THE BROOKMILL

Replacement of windows.

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application.

Comments were received and considered.

Resolved - That planning permission for application 201197/FUL be granted, subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended in the report.

35. 210018/OUT - READING GOLF CLUB, KIDMORE END ROAD, EMMER GREEN

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Outline planning application, with matters reserved in respect of appearance, for demolition of the existing clubhouse and the erection of a new residential-led scheme (C3 use to include affordable housing) and the provision of community infrastructure at Reading Golf Club.

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application. An update report was tabled at the meeting which corrected some errors in the original report, gave details of further comments received, gave further information on sustainability, healthcare, education and Section 106/CIL and amended Reason for Refusal 1 regarding loss of Undesignated Open Space and added an extra Reason for Refusal 6 regarding measures to adapt to climate change, decentralised energy provision and zero carbon homes.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

Objectors Clare Grashoff, Helen Lambert and Steve Harcourt, supporters Richard Stainthorp and Stephen Lee and the applicant's agent Jonathan Walton attended the meeting and addressed the Committee on this application.

Resolved - That application 210018/FUL be refused for the reasons set out in the original report, with the amendments and additional reason as set out in the update report.

(Councillor Carnell declared an interest in the above application. Nature of interest: Councillor Carnell's nephew was a member of Reading Golf Club.)

36. 210644/REG3 & 210745/LBC - PROSPECT PARK, LIEBENROOD ROAD

210644/REG3 - New playground with reinstatement of existing playground back to informal parkland.

210745/LBC - Listed Building Consent for new playground with reinstatement of existing playground back to informal parkland at Prospect Park a Grade II Registered Park and Garden.

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above applications. An update report was tabled at the meeting which gave details of further information received from Berkshire Archaeology and Berkshire Gardens Trust and information about the existing playground area.

Comments were received and considered.

Resolved -

- (1) That, pursuant to Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992, planning permission 210644/REG3 be authorised, subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended;

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- (2) That listed building consent 210745/LBC be granted, subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended, with the materials condition amended to require details of the installation of the play equipment to be submitted alongside the materials to ensure that there was no significant excavation, and the landscaping condition amended to require the two replacement trees to be located close to the playground to provide future shade.

(Councillors Rowland and Stanford-Beale declared interests in the above application. Nature of interests: Councillor Rowland was the Lead Councillor for Culture, Heritage & Recreation. She addressed the meeting on the application but abstained in the decision; Councillor Stanford-Beale had been involved in the Playground Design Group. She addressed the meeting on the application but abstained in the decision.)

37. 210806/HOU - 47 BEVERLEY ROAD, TILEHURST

Single storey rear extension with internal alterations to add WC.

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application.

Comments were received and considered.

Resolved - That planning permission for application 210806/HOU be granted, subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended in the report.

38. 210879/REG3 - 134 OXFORD ROAD

Install artwork on existing metal railings on a vacant site to the West of 134 Oxford Road

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application.

Comments were received and considered.

Resolved - That, pursuant to Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992, planning permission 210879/REG3 be authorised, subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended.

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and closed at 10.15 pm)