

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

PLANNING CONTROL COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES,
LETCWORTH GARDEN CITY
ON THURSDAY, 18TH NOVEMBER, 2021 AT 7.30 PM

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors: Councillor Ruth Brown (Chair), Councillor David Levett (Vice-Chair), Val Bryant, Morgan Derbyshire, Mike Hughson, Tony Hunter, Ian Mantle, Mike Rice and Tom Tyson*

In Attendance: *Simon Ellis (Development and Conservation Manager), Nurainatta Katevu (Legal Regulatory Team Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer), Melanie Stimpson (Democratic Services Manager), James Lovegrove (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer) and Tom Allington (Principal Planning Officer – Strategic Sites) and Sarah Kasparian (Senior Planning Officer – Major Projects)*

Also Present: *At the commencement of the meeting Councillor Adam Compton, Councillor Michael Muir and Herts County Councillor Fiona Hill approximately 12 members of the public, including registered speakers.*

20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 22 seconds

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ian Moody, John Bishop and Terry Tyler.

21 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – 33 seconds

There was no other business notified.

22 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – 37 seconds

- (1) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be recorded. The video recording would be available on NHDC YouTube channel and the audio recording via Mod Gov.
- (2) The Chair drew attention to the item on the agenda front pages regarding Declarations of Interest and reminded Members that, in line with the Code of Conduct, any Declarations of Interest needed to be declared immediately prior to the item in question.
- (3) The Chair gave advice to the registered speakers on the speaking procedure and time limits.
- (4) The Chair announced a comfort break would be taken around 9pm, at a suitable time in the proceedings.

- (5) The Chair advised that there was a change to the order of business and Item 6 would be taken before Item 5.

23 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 1 minute 58 seconds

The Chair confirmed the three registered speakers and the Member Advocate were in attendance.

24 20/01138/RM LAND SURROUNDING BURLOES COTTAGES, NEWMARKET ROAD, ROYSTON, HERTFORDSHIRE

Audio recording – 22 minutes 45 seconds

The Principle Planning Officer advised of updates to the report including:

- There had been 5 neighbour objections, not three as listed in the report. These concerned Brampton Road being used as vehicular access and access to Icknield Walk First School.
- Royston Town Council questioned whether the powerline would be underground – this had previously been confirmed by the applicant's agent.
- Royston Town Council had questioned lack of information on bus route on site, but this had been covered by Condition 7 of Outline Plan.
- Condition 5 to be updated to only include ecological requirements of this phase.
- Paragraph 4.47 should be £30,000 not £30,000k as written on report.
- Herts County Councillor had made contact to raise concerns regarding the loss of trees on site.

The Principle Planning Officer presented the report in respect of application 20/01138/RM supported by a visual presentation consisting of photographs and plans.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Ian Mantle
- Councillor Val Bryant
- Councillor Ruth Brown
- Councillor Tom Tyson

In response to questions, the Principle Planning Officer and Senior Planning Officer advised:

- Access paths were only indicative at this stage and were not included for consideration on this application. Condition 11 of the Outline Proposals outlined that the applicant would need to submit details of these.
- The mix of affordable housing is known and there will be 18 units (22%) of this phase which would be affordable.
- The affordable housing would be included across the site and would be replicated across all phases.
- Herts Ecology had a few sites in mind to spend Unilateral Undertaking ecology funds, but nothing had been agreed yet. It is required to be in the local area and officers were confident that it would be in North Herts, but not necessarily in Royston. NHDC would receive the funds and a relevant location would be identified.

The Chair invited Leigh Carpenter to speak against the application.

Leigh Carpenter thanked the Chair for the chance to address the Committee and gave a verbal presentation including:

- Good pedestrian access to the west could be achieved with good planning and was promised in the original Outline Proposals.
- Matters of tree maintenance, road safety and onward travel should be considered and assessed in the context of this application.
- There is little justification for the clusters of 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings.
- The proposed cycle route is unsustainable, as the route has a gradient of 13%.
- Access corridors as presented will require removal of trees and undergrowth with no attempt to deviate the corridors to avoid surveyed trees.
- Requested that Members defer the decision until further details can be provided.

The Chair invited Councillor Adam Compton to speak against the application as a Member advocate. Councillor Adam Compton thanked the Chair for the chance to address the Committee and gave a verbal presentation including:

- Main concerns included the tree retention on site, the non-vehicular access points, the parking allocated on plans and the proposed height of flat blocks.
- The paths indicated on the plans were wide and would require the removal of the trees and residents had highlighted more appropriate locations for the pedestrian access.
- The gradient of the proposed cycle route was not appropriate and there was no indication that bike storage facilities were included on site.
- The limited visitor parking on site would lead to an additional build up of parked cars on neighbouring roads.
- The proposed 3 storey height of the block of flats was out of line with the agreement that no building would exceed 2.5 stories.
- Original proposals had 325 dwellings between 2 and 5 bedrooms, but there were now 12 one-bedroom flats on the plans.
- The majority of the social housing units will be the 1 and 2 bedroom flats, which will only equate to 14% of bedrooms for this use.

The Chair invited David Fletcher to speak in support of the application, as agent of the applicant. David Fletcher thanks the Chair for the change to address the Committee and gave a verbal presentation including:

- Detailed discussions had been had with Officers at NHDC.
- Discussions had also been had with other partners and proposals were changed following concerns raised by the Highways Agency.
- The entrance from Newmarket Road would have deep landscaping and generous open space to provide a welcoming entrance.
- The 3 story flat block is on the lowest part of the site and had landscaping buffers to lessen the impact.
- There was a good mix of dwellings included on site.
- The Outline Application showed three points of access to the west, two of which were included within this phase. The detail of these access points fall outside this application, but tree protection was a key consideration in the final proposals.
- There was a desire to start building on site as soon as possible following the granting of permission.

In response to points made during public presentations, the Principle Planning Officer advised:

- Access paths on this application were only shown indicatively on this application.
- Permeability was important and would inevitably lead to some tree removal, but these plans would be developed to ensure this was minimised.

- Some of these trees were not of particular value and the overall value of the tree line could be preserved with the removal of appropriate trees.
- Cycle storage was included at the block of flats.

The Senior Planning Officer advised that the Outline Permission detailed that more than two stories would be considered with robust justification, which was felt was acceptable for this site.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Mike Rice
- Councillor David Levett
- Councillor Ian Mantle
- Councillor Ruth Brown

In response to questions, the Principle Planning Officer advised:

- Electric Vehicle charging points were included on the Outline Plan under Condition 14.
- While the access points were indicative at this stage, there were limited options given the points they would need to meet on existing streets.
- The detailed access points would be agreed subject to the condition included on the outline application and are required to be provided before commencement.
- It would be for NHDC Officers, in conjunction with County Highways, to decide whether these plans were suitable.
- The land that the access point crossed was not owned by the applicant but NHDC was the landowner for this area.
- Bin storage sites had been provided for the flats, but not for housing, but all houses will have access to their rear gardens where bins could be stored.

The Senior Planning Officer advised that the mid-terrace and semi-detached house would have suitable drag distances to the waste collection points across the site.

Councillor Ruth Brown noted that there was nothing specific within Condition 11 which sought to protect trees and, as Chair, proposed that wording be added to conditions to include this as a requirement. This was seconded by Councillor Mike Hughson.

Councillor David Levett, proposed with the additional wording on conditions and Councillor Morgan Derbyshire seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That application 20/01138/RM be **GRANTED** planning permission subject to the reasons and conditions outlined in the report of the Development and Conservation Manager and the following amendments to conditions:

- Condition 5 to be amended to the following:

“Prior to the occupation of the 83rd unit, the development hereby permitted shall be implemented in accordance with the ecological mitigation measures described in section 4 of the Ecology Addendum October 2020 where they relate to the first phase of development.

Reason - In the interests of Biodiversity”

- Condition 9 to be added with the following:

“Prior to the commencement of the development the applicant shall submit a programme for the delivery and adoption (or private management of) footpaths around the site, with public access secured in perpetuity including non-car access for cycles and mobility scooters to the established residential development off of Valley Rise. This programme will be agreed by the

Local Planning Authority in conjunction with Herts County Council Rights of Way. The agreed programme will be implemented in accordance with any agreed phasing programme and thereafter maintained in perpetuity. Any proposed footpaths shall be located and laid out to ensure that any loss of trees is minimised as much as is reasonably possible’.

Reason: To deliver a sustainable scheme of public rights of way for the incumbent population and the wider community.”

25 19/03032/FP LAND SURROUNDING BURLOES COTTAGES, NEWMARKET ROAD, ROYSTON, HERTFORDSHIRE

Audio recording – 2 minutes 25 seconds

Councillor Tony Hunter advised that he would be making a declaration of interest in both Item 5 and Item 6 following the presentation of the Principle Planning Officer.

The Principle Planning Officer had no updates on the report to advise.

The Principle Planning Officer presented the report in respect of application 19/03032/FP supported by a visual presentation consisting of photographs and plans.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Ruth Brown

In response to questions, the Senior Planning Officer advised:

- The new pedestrian crossing was included within the boundaries of this application, but had been previously approved.
- There would be further discussions and agreement at a later stage regarding the prevention of traffic through the emergency access point.

Councillor Tony Hunter advised that he had a declaration of interest in the application, as he had previously spoken in depth against the outline planning application. He noted that his objections relating to single vehicle access had now been addressed, but stated that there were issues relating to trees, wildlife and building height which concerned him.

Councillor Tony Hunter left the meeting.

The Chair invited Leigh Carpenter to speak against the application.

Leigh Carpenter thanked the Chair for the chance to address the Committee and gave a verbal presentation including:

- He was a representative of several local residents who had objected to the applications.
- There has been no communication or noted amendments to application following the consistent objections made.
- There were concerns regarding the powerline and whether this would be underground.
- An updated agriculture report and tree condition survey documents were included initially, but disappeared from the website in February 2021 without explanation.

The Chair invited Councillor Adam Compton to speak against the application as a Member advocate. Councillor Adam Compton thanked the Chair for the chance to address the Committee and indicated that he would respond to the Item 5 when taken.

The Chair invited David Fletcher to speak in support of the application, as agent of the applicant. David Fletcher thanks the Chair for the change to address the Committee and gave a verbal presentation including:

- The application had been devised with input from NHDC Officers, as well as Highways Authority and the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA).
- Western access for construction vehicles was vital to ensure that residents moving into dwellings in Phase 1 were provided a peaceful environment while the rest of the site was developed.
- Suggested that the 40MPH speed limit imposed on entry to Royston be extended west.
- Tree protection measures were employed at locations across the site.
- Collapsible bollards would prevent traffic travelling through the emergency access, outlined in Condition 5.
- Confirmed that discussions were in an advanced phase with UK Power Networks regarding putting the powerline underground.

The following Member asked questions:

- Councillor David Levett

In response to questions, David Fletcher advised that it was correct that the power line formed the site boundary of Phase 1.

Following the presentations, Councillor David Levett proposed and Councillor Morgan Derbyshire seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That application 19/03032/FP be **GRANTED** planning permission subject to the reasons and conditions outlined in the report of the Development and Conservation Manager.

26 20/02046/OP LAND OFF, YEOMANRY DRIVE, BALDOCK, HERTFORDSHIRE

Audio recording – 73 minutes 10 seconds

The Development and Conservation Manager advised of updates to the report including:

- Lead Local Flood Authority had given a further response since publication of report and had maintained their objection to the plans until design of the sustainable urban drainage be finalised.
- It had been requested that this be included as a condition rather than objection.
- Condition 17 has been included to allow space for any additional conditions the LLFA may impose.
- The recommendation would be updated to include 'subject to the removal of the objection of the LLFA'.
- If these objections were not removed, the application would return to Committee.

The Development and Conservation Manager presented the report in respect of application 20/02046/OP supported by a visual presentation consisting of photographs and plans.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Tom Tyson
- Councillor Mike Rice
- Councillor David Levett

In response to questions, the Development and Conservation Manager advised:

- The whole site had been allocated as open space, but had been allocated for development in previous local plans.
- There were no explicit issues with the site from the LLFA, they were requiring detailed plans of the Sustainable Urban Drainage System before removing objection.
- The site is not included under current land supply as there has been no permission granted.

The Chair invited Oliver Sanhaji to speak against the application.

Oliver Sanhaji thanked the Chair for the chance to address the Committee and gave a verbal presentation including:

- He was representing a number of local residents who were opposed to the development.
- Concerns and worry centred around the safety of access to and proximity to the school. It would be putting children and parents at risk.
- There were already major issues with parking on Downlands and Yeomanry Drive.
- The site is not proposed to connect through to the school access to prevent parking issues, but this is already an issue for nearby roads
- These plans put children and infants at risk.
- There would be a total loss of existing grass land and would be a total net loss on biodiversity.
- The space has been a vital to local residents.
- Whilst there was a need to address the shortage of homes, this should not be done by cramming housing into unsuitably sized and located sites.

The following Member asked a question:

- Councillor David Levett

In response to questions, Oliver Sanhaji advised the entrance referred to next to the site was a rear entrance to the school, but this was heavily used by residents of Clothall Common.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Tony Hunter
- Councillor Ruth Brown
- Councillor Morgan Derbyshire
- Councillor Mike Rice

In response to questions, the Development and Conservation Manager advised:

- Youth Provision is managed by Herts County Council and they will identify possible projects on which to spend S106 funds. They had identified the project in Hitchin as most suitable project.
- There would need to be a relevant project in Baldock in order for it to be spent there and HCC have not identified a site in Baldock for this.
- It could be looked at again and justified and spent on another possible project in Baldock if a suitable one was found.
- With there only being on access route to site, minimising impact of construction traffic would be difficult, but additions could be placed on conditions to avoid school drop-off and pick-up times.

Councillor David Levett noted that proximity to schools caused problems and that often entrances become crowded. However he did not believe the addition 23 dwellings on site would exacerbate this issue.

Councillor Mike Hughson proposed with the additional condition, and Councillor Mike Rice seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That application 20/02046/OP be **GRANTED** planning permission subject to the reasons and conditions outlined in the report of the Development and Conservation Manager, subject to the removal of objections from the Lead Local Flood Authority, and the following amendments to conditions:

- Condition 11 to be amended to the following:

“No development shall commence until a Construction Traffic Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter construction of the development shall only be carried out in accordance with approved plan. The Plan shall include the following details:

- a) construction vehicle numbers, type and routing;*
- b) Access arrangements to the site;*
- c) Construction traffic management requirements;*
- d) Construction and storage compounds (including areas designated for parking, loading / unloading and turning areas)*
- e) Siting and details of wheel washing facilities;*
- f) timing and delivery arrangements for construction vehicles (to avoid school pick up and drop off times);*
- g) Cleaning of site entrances, site tracks and adjacent public highway;*
- h) Provision of sufficient on-site contractor and construction vehicle parking;*
- i) Post construction restoration/reinstatement of the working areas and temporary access to the public highway;*
- j) Where works cannot be contained wholly within the site a plan shall be submitted showing the site layout on the highway including extent of hoarding, pedestrian routes and remaining road width for vehicle movements;*
- k) dust and waste minimisation plans and hours of operation and deliveries to and from site.*

Reason: In order to protect highway safety and the amenity of other users of the public highway and rights of way in accordance with Policies 5, 12, 17 and 22 of Hertfordshire’s Local Transport Plan.”

The meeting closed at 9.13 pm

Chair