

TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held at the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Royal Tunbridge Wells, TN1 1RS, at 6.30 pm on Wednesday, 22 March 2023

Present: Councillor Trevor Poile (Chair)

Councillors Atwood, Bailey, Fitzsimmons, Johnson, Le Page, Moon, Neville, Pope and White

Officers in Attendance: Richard Hazelgrove (Interim Development Management Team Leader), Peter Hockney (Development Manager), Jo Smith (Senior Lawyer) and Emer Moran (Democratic Services Officer)

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor Pound

CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

PLA121/22 The Chairman opened the meeting, introduced Committee members and officers in attendance, and outlined procedural matters of the meeting.

APOLOGIES

PLA122/22 Apologies were received from Councillors Bland, Britcher-Allan and Patterson.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

PLA123/22 Councillor Johnson declared an interest with regard to application PLA128/22 Showfields Estate Showfields Road Royal Tunbridge Wells Kent, they were a Commons Conservator however had not attended any meetings or been involved in any discussions related to that application as a Commons Conservator.

DECLARATIONS OF LOBBYING (IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROTOCOL FOR MEMBERS TAKING PART IN THE PLANNING PROCESS, PART 5, SECTION 5.11, PARAGRAPH 6.6)

PLA124/22 Councillors Atwood, Bailey, Fitzsimmons, Le Page, Moon, Pope, White, Neville and Poile advised that they had been lobbied by supporters on application PLA128/22 Showfields Estate Showfields Road Royal Tunbridge Wells Kent.

Councillor Le Page advised that he had been lobbied by objectors on application PLA129/22 Brokeswood Lodge, The Ridgeway, Southborough, Kent.

SITE INSPECTIONS

PLA125/22 Members had not undertaken any site visits.

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING DATED THURSDAY 2 MARCH 2023

PLA126/22 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting dated Thursday 2 March 2023 be recorded as a correct record.

REPORTS OF HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES (ATTACHED)

PLA127/22

APPLICATION FOR CONSIDERATION - 22/01576/FULL SHOWFIELDS ESTATE SHOWFIELDS ROAD ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS KENT.

PLA128/22 **Planning Report and Presentation** – The Head of Planning Services submitted a report in respect of application PLA128/22 Showfields Estate Showfields Road Royal Tunbridge Wells Kent and this was summarised at the meeting by Mr Richard Hazelgrove Interim Development Management Team Leader and illustrated by means of a visual presentation.

Updates and additional representation – None.

Registered Speakers – There was 1 speaker that registered in accordance with the Council's Constitution (Planning Committee Procedure Rules)

Supporter:

- Bob Heapy, Chief Executive Town and Country Housing.

Matters of clarification by Officers and Committee Members' questions to Officers included:

- i. Officers advised Members of a correction to a figure in the table at 3.0 in the report and confirmed that it should read 320 not 32.
- ii. The matter of the sewers and their protection was essentially for the applicant/owners to come to an agreement with Southern Water separately and was outside of the planning process. Condition 23 ensured that once that took place the details would be submitted to planning for discharge.
- iii. Condition 12 sought details of sustainability measures.
- iv. Kent County Council (KCC) Highways were involved extensively for the last few years with the proposals with regard to the parking provision and how it was provided. KCC were now satisfied in terms of numbers of spaces and how they were distributed over the estate.
- v. The issue of tenants that were decanted out of the buildings and then subsequently given alternative accommodation was a matter for Town and Country Housing Group, its tenants and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) housing advice team and was not a matter for the Council as Local Planning Authority.
- vi. Comments from Parking Services were addressed in paragraph 10.118 of the report.
- vii. Officers believed that there were traffic calming measures proposed to slow vehicles down along Showfields Road however, this had to be agreed by KCC as the owner of the road under a separate Section 278 agreement.
- viii. Officers confirmed the proposal resulted in a loss of trees however that included small and poor quality trees and it was advised that there was a substantial tree replanting scheme proposed with 130 replacement trees of varying mature sizes.
- ix. An explanation was given with regard to the Section 106 payments and why they had been scaled back and why the car club contribution was maintained.
- x. It was not a planning consideration whether the site was to be

connected to the gas grid.

Committee Member debate and Officer clarification included:

- i. Carbon reducing measures were welcomed and the developer was congratulated on the installation of the air source heat pumps which were considered a good innovation as well as the roll out of the car club which encouraged active travel.
- ii. Members raised concerns that it was not a like for like development and there was a net loss in housing in relation to the social rented tenure.
- iii. Officers advised that there would be a negative effect on the viability of the scheme had there been more social houses placed on the site.
- iv. Page 21 para 2.07 set out the dwellings and tenure types.
- v. Members considered the 5 story block at the entrance was overwhelming however noted it was a matter of opinion.
- vi. Members acknowledged the difficulty of putting the number of properties in the area however considered that it was a good development and an improvement to what was already there.

Decision/voting – On the basis that members were satisfied that all relevant planning considerations had been covered within the report, a motion was proposed by Councillor Bailey, seconded by Councillor Fitzsimmons and a vote was taken to approve the application in line with the officer recommendation.

Councillor Moon voted to refuse the application against the officer recommendation.

RESOLVED – That application PLA128/22 be granted subject to the plans, conditions and informatives as set out in the agenda report.

APPLICATION FOR CONSIDERATION - 22/03018/FULL BROKESWOOD LODGE, THE RIDGEWAYE, SOUTHBOROUGH, KENT.

PLA129/22 **Planning Report and Presentation** – The Head of Planning Services submitted a report in respect of application PLA129/22 Brokeswood Lodge, The Ridgewaye, Southborough, Kent and this was summarised at the meeting by Richard Hazelgrove Interim Development Management Team Leader and illustrated by means of a visual presentation.

Updates and additional representation – Since publication of the agenda report, Mr Hazelgrove updated:

- **Replacement condition 13:**

Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved (excluding demolition works), full details of surface water drainage systems shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that flood risks from development to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those risks to controlled waters, property and ecological systems.

- **Replacement informative 4:**

The applicant's attention is drawn to the comments of Kent County Council's Public Rights of Way Officer, specifically;

- No furniture, fence, barrier or other structure may be erected on or across Public Rights of Way without the express consent of the Highway Authority.
- There must be no disturbance of the surface of the Public Right of Way, or obstruction of its use, either during or following any approved development without the express consent of the Highway Authority.
- No hedging or shrubs should be planted within 1 metre of the edge of the Public Right of Way.
- Planning permission confers no consent or right to close or divert any Public Right of Way at any time without the express permission of the Highway Authority.
- No Traffic Regulation Orders will be granted by KCC for works that will permanently obstruct the route unless a diversion order has been made and confirmed. If the applicant needs to apply for a temporary traffic regulation order whilst works are undertaken, KCC would need six weeks notice to process this.

Registered Speakers – There was 1 speaker that registered in accordance with the Council's Constitution (Planning Committee Procedure Rules)

Supporter:

- Samuel Bowman, Managing Director Beau Architecture.

Matters of clarification by Officers and Committee Members' questions to Officers included:

- In terms of the buffer zone, 3 metres was considered appropriate as the site was already developed as a garden and was appropriate to the characteristics of the site as it was already in residential use.
- The use of the phrase "out of date" with regard to the Government and the National Planning Policy Framework which required local authorities to be able to demonstrate a five-year supply of housing, was explained.
- Officers confirmed that Woodland Trust were not a statutory consultee however, they were consulted by the Local Planning Authority where development potentially had an impact on ancient woodland.
- Members observed that the call in of an application created work for people and suggested that the person who called in the application should attend the Committee.

Committee Member debate and Officer clarification included:

- Members considered the development may be better with 2 dwellings on the site as it appeared squashed, this was addressed and Members were advised that they needed to consider the application before them.
- Concerns from Natural England mentioned in paragraph 7.07 of the report were acknowledged.

- iii. Concerns were noted about traffic movements.
- iv. Concerns about the sustainability of the site.
- v. Architecture was considered modern and attractive and nodded to the buildings already there.

Decision/voting – On the basis that members were satisfied that all relevant planning considerations had been covered within the report, a motion was proposed by Councillor Atwood, seconded by Councillor Le Page and a vote was taken to approve the application in line with the officer recommendation.

Councillor Moon voted to refuse the application against the officer recommendation.

RESOLVED – That application PLA129/22 be granted subject to the plans, conditions and informatives as set out in the agenda report.

APPLICATION FOR CONSIDERATION - 23/00420/FULL TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH COUNCIL TOWN HALL, MOUNT PLEASANT ROAD, ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS, KENT.

PLA130/22 **Planning Report and Presentation** – The Head of Planning Services submitted a report in respect of application PLA130/22 Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Town Hall, Mount Pleasant Road, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent and this was summarised at the meeting by Richard Hazelgrove Interim Development Manager Team Leader and illustrated by means of a visual presentation.

Updates and additional representation – None.

Registered Speakers – There were no speakers that registered in accordance with the Council's Constitution (Planning Committee Procedure Rules)

Matters of clarification by Officers and Committee Members' questions to Officers included:

- i. The report was taken as read.

Committee Member debate and Officer clarification included:

- i. It was considered that the change was going to enhance and bring life to the centre of the town.

Decision/voting – On the basis that members were satisfied that all relevant planning considerations had been covered within the report, a motion was proposed by Councillor Moon, seconded by Councillor Fitzsimmons and a vote was taken to approve the application in line with the officer recommendation.

RESOLVED – That application PLA130/22 be granted subject to the plans, conditions and informatives as set out in the agenda report.

APPEAL DECISIONS FOR NOTING 31 JANUARY 2023 TO 13 MARCH 2023

PLA131/22 **RESOLVED** – That the list of appeal decisions provided for information, be noted.

URGENT BUSINESS

PLA132/22 There was no urgent business for consideration.

Councillor Le Page gave his thanks to Officers of the Planning Committee and considered that the applications brought forward improved the landscape of the borough and improved the quality of life for the residents. A vote of thanks were proposed for the Chair.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

PLA133/22 The next Planning Committee meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 17 May 2023.

NOTE: The meeting concluded at 8.19 pm.