

## **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday, 23 June 2021**

**Present: Councillor Godfrey Bland (Chairman)  
Councillors Backhouse (Vice-Chairman), Atwood, Dr Hall, Hamilton, Poile, Pound,  
Warne, Hills, Fitzsimmons and Pope**

**Officers in Attendance:** Peter Hockney (Development Manager), Tracey Wagstaff (Senior Lawyer), Antonia James (Principal Planning Officer) and Mark O'Callaghan (Scrutiny and Engagement Officer)

### **Other Members in Attendance**

### **CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION**

PLA14/21 The Chairman opened the meeting, introduced Committee members and officers in attendance, and outlined procedural matters of the meeting.

### **APOLOGIES**

PLA15/21 Apologies were received from Councillors Funnell, Goodship and Patterson.

### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

PLA16/21 Councillor Atwood declared an interest in application 21/00848/FULL Breakstones, Speldhurst Road, Langton Green, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN3 0JL owing to having a direct relation to applicant.

Councillor Hills declared an interest in application 21/00848/FULL as well as he is a close personal friend of the applicant.

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

PLA17/21 Councillors Atwood, Fitzsimmons, Dr Hall, Hills, Poile, Pope, Pound, Backhouse and Bland advised that they had been lobbied by supporters on application PLA/21/00797/FULL Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust, The Tunbridge Wells Hospital, Tonbridge Road, Pembury, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN2 4QJ.

### **NOTIFICATION OF PERSONS WISHING TO SPEAK**

PLA18/21 Details of Members and members of the public who have registered to speak will be given under the respective planning applications.

### **SITE INSPECTIONS**

PLA19/21 Due to the current restrictions Members had not undertaken any site visits.

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING DATED 12 MAY 2021**

PLA20/21 Members reviewed the minutes. No amendments were proposed.

**RESOLVED** – The minutes of the meeting dated 12 May 2021 be recorded

as a correct record.

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING DATED 2 JUNE 2021

PLA21/21 Members reviewed the minutes. No amendments were proposed.

**RESOLVED** – The minutes of the meeting dated 2 June 2021 be recorded as a correct record.

## REPORTS OF HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES (ATTACHED)

PLA22/21

### APPLICATION FOR CONSIDERATION - 21/00797/FULL MAIDSTONE & TUNBRIDGE WELLS NHS TRUST, THE TUNBRIDGE WELLS HOSPITAL, TONBRIDGE ROAD, PEMBURY, TUNBRIDGE WELLS, KENT, TN2 4QJ

PLA23/21 **Planning Report and Presentation** – The Head of Planning Services submitted a report in respect of application PLA/21/00797/FULL Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust, The Tunbridge Wells Hospital, Tonbridge Road, Pembury, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN2 4QJ and this was summarised at the meeting by Antonia James, Principal Planning Officer and illustrated by means of a visual presentation.

**Updates and additional representation** – Representation received from the Parish Council – the Parish noted the changes to trees on site and comments from the Tree Officer but objected to parking stating that there were parking issues on residential roads in the village already.

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

Applicant

- Mr Doug Ward

**Matters of Clarification by Officers and Committee Members' Questions to Officers** – Members raised a number of questions and officers confirmed the following:

- Regarding mitigation of tree loss, there was a substantial loss of trees where the building would be sited but the building had been designed to mitigate this (size of footprint). The officer showed landscape/biodiversity enhancement plan which showed significant areas of planting including new tree planting. The applicant had tried hard to mitigate tree loss and increased biodiversity. There were no objections from the Landscape and Biodiversity Officer.
- There was a Grade II listed chapel located on the opposite side of the hospital site which was separated from the site by existing development, including car parking. Changes in topography also provided separation/screening. There were no objections from the Conservation Officer.
- Student learning was primarily based in Tunbridge Wells but some learning might be in Maidstone.
- Regarding parking enforcement, The NHS trust would undertake enforcement. A lot of student accommodation was car free. Upon registration, students would have to submit details of car ownership

and sign an agreement. Disciplinary action would be taken on those having a car on site who were not permitted to. A detailed travel plan would be monitored and reviewed, residents could therefore contact the hospital if there were any issues. They could also raise the issue with Kent Highway Services and TWBC Parking Services Team. Residents parking permits might also be introduced if required.

- There were double yellow lines along the Tonbridge Road in close proximity to the hospital, which would prohibit students from parking in this location.
- Localised impact on landscape – although the proposal would result in substantial loss of trees, the tree losses were localised and only visible within the site. The land fell away in a south easterly direction and the building was subservient to the main hospital building. Public Right of Way to the north of the site which was some distance from the proposed building and separated by existing woodland and the adjacent car park so any views of site would be very minimal. New planting would also act as screening from the south east.
- Should Policy TP6 of the Local Plan be ignored? For such a substantive development to have no parking seemed inappropriate. The parking standards set out within TP5 were maximum rather than minimum. Highways England and the Local Highway Authority raised no objections to the development on parking grounds. This development was sustainable with good public transport and pedestrian and cycle links. Students would have to sign a contract to not park on site and disciplinary action would follow if not adhered to.
- Regarding bird nesting, a detailed ecological assessment had been submitted which required vegetation removal at specific times of year under or under the supervision of an ecologist. This was covered by Condition 18.
- Only 4 parking spaces were to be provided and 8 accessible rooms proposed. One parking space on site was for disabled parking which had been deemed sufficient by the NHS. .
- There were only 7 new jobs created in connection with this application. The jobs related to those in paid employment working in facilities rather than the students themselves.
- It was confirmed there would not be a council tax or business rate benefit associated with this application, but this was not in itself a material planning consideration.
- The NHS Trust was already ticketing people for inappropriate parking and there was already concern over parking which might be increased by this development.

**Committee Debate and Officer Responses** – Members of the Committee took account of the presentations made and raised a number of questions and issues within their discussions. These included:

- Cllr Pound proposed an amendment to add residential parking with a larger provision for disabled students. The officer stated that parking provision within this application had had extensive consultation with Highways England and Kent Highways. Changes would amount to a different application that would require further consultation with those bodies. A decision was needed on this particular application. An informative to ensure provision of suitable facilities to those with additional needs could be accommodated. It was up the Trust how they ran the site as an employer but and informative could guide them in this respect. Cllr Pound informative – “at each student intake the

Trust should assess and provide adequate allocated parking for students with access needs as appropriate”.

- There was a pressing need to train more doctors in this country instead of sourcing from abroad.
- Accommodation on this site previously had been destroyed.
- This will not be the only example of conditions being imposed on residents to not own a car. Use of a car club may be beneficial on site.
- Nurses travelled quite a distance currently which showed how much the accommodation was needed.
- The site benefited from a good bus service which should be taken into account when considering parking provision.
- Most universities did not have a car policy so the measures that have been put in place as part of this application along with other travel provisions should not prove to be an issue.

**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 Dr Hall and seconded by Councillor Warne with an informative to approve, in line with officer recommendation subject to the additional informative along the lines that “at each student intake the Trust should assess and provide adequate allocated parking for students with access needs as appropriate”, and a vote was taken.

**RESOLVED** – That application PLA21/00797/FULL Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust, The Tunbridge Wells Hospital, Tonbridge Road, Pembury be granted subject to the plans, conditions and informatives as set out in the agenda report plus an additional informative regarding parking for students with access needs.

#### **APPLICATION FOR CONSIDERATION - 21/00848/FULL BREAKSTONES, SPELDHURST ROAD, LANGTON GREEN, TUNBRIDGE WELLS, KENT, TN3 0JL**

PLA24/21 **Planning Report and Presentation** – The Head of Planning Services submitted a report in respect of application PLA21/00848/FULL Breakstones, Speldhurst Road, Langton Green, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN3 0JL and this was summarised at the meeting by Peter Hockney, Senior Planning Officer 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** – Members raised a number of questions and officers confirmed the following:

- The officer advised the reason for the application was because the new fence was over the 2 metre limit allowed in normal permitted development. The additional 40cm height request was to allow for better privacy.
- The area of fence was along a single boundary which was not visible elsewhere. The Conservation Officer supported the application. Neither properties were listed but there were some heritage assets to

the properties which were formally farmsteads.

- There was concern raised by the Parish Council that it may set a precedent for other properties to put in similar requests.
- Regarding the fence height and the precedent this would give, it was unlikely the fence would be continued around the rest of the boundary. However, an application would be required for any future request.

**Committee Debate and Officer Responses** – Members of the Committee took account of the presentations made and raised a number of questions and issues within their discussions. These included:

- It was accepted the proposed fence was required for privacy reasons. The current fence was dilapidated and the new proposal had been agreed by the neighbours.
- More greenery could be incorporated with part trellis on the fence and it would have been preferable to incorporate some greenery into the screening rather than raise the height of the fence.

**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 Backhouse and seconded by Councillor Dr Hall and a vote was taken to approve the application in line with the officer recommendation.

**RESOLVED** – That application PLA21/00848/FULL Breakstones, Speldhurst Road, Langton Green be granted subject to the plans, conditions and informatives as set out in the agenda report.

#### **APPEAL DECISIONS FOR NOTING 22/05/2021 TO 14/06/2021**

PLA25/21     None.

#### **URGENT BUSINESS**

PLA26/21     There was no urgent business for consideration.

#### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

PLA27/21     The next Planning Committee meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 21st July 2021.

NOTE: The meeting concluded at 12.00 pm.