

# Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE

## Planning Committee

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 24 MAY 2017 AT 6.00 PM

DIDCOT CIVIC HALL, BRITWELL ROAD, DIDCOT, OX11 7JN

### Present:

Toby Newman (Chairman)

Joan Bland, Jeannette Matelot, Richard Pullen, David Turner, Ian White, Lorraine Hillier, Elaine Hornsby and Sue Lawson (Vice-Chairman)

### Officers:

Katherine Canavan, Sharon Crawford, Paula Fox, Nicola Meurer and Katherine Pearce

### Also present:

Felix Bloomfield

### 1 Declarations of interest

None.

### 2 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

The chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, outlined the procedure to be followed and advised on emergency evacuation arrangements.

### 3 Applications deferred or withdrawn

None.

### 4 Proposals for site visits

A motion, moved and seconded, to defer consideration of applications P16/S3254/FUL and P16/S3255/LB – Former farm buildings and pharmacy, Cholsey Meadows, off Reading Road, Cholsey for a site visit, was declared carried when put to the vote.



Listening Learning Leading

**RESOLVED:** To defer consideration of applications P16/S3254/FUL and P16/S3255/LB for a site visit to establish the impact of the proposed development on the setting of the listed building and parking arrangements.

## **5 Public participation**

The list showing 16 members of the public who had registered to speak was tabled at the meeting.

## **6 P16/S3441/O - Land South of Watlington Road, Benson**

Richard Pullen, one of the local ward councillors, stepped down from the committee and took no part in the debate or voting for this item.

The committee considered outline application P16/S3441/O for the erection of up to 120 dwellings (40% of which will be affordable) with associated access, public open space, landscaping and play space with all matters reserved except access on land south of Watlington Road, Benson.

Consultations, representations, policy and guidance and the site's planning history were detailed in the officer's report which formed part of the agenda pack for this meeting.

Officer updates: Two further letters of objection have been received reiterating concerns already expressed within the committee report. Correction to the report – The last sentence in 6.43 is incorrect and the whole of it should be deleted. A noise assessment was submitted with the application and there is no extant planning permission on the site.

Jon Fowler, a representative of Benson Parish Council, spoke objecting to the application. His concerns included the following:

- The application undermines the Benson neighbourhood plan, which has over-allocated 340 dwellings to the North;
- On top of the 400 already approved dwellings, this represents well over the recommended 15% growth as per the emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan;
- The application could jeopardise the proposed Edge Road relief road and other allocated sites; and
- Concern that the applicant has not considered the phase one habitat survey.

Stewart Fryatt, a local resident, spoke objecting to the application. His concerns included the following:

- This application is contrary to the neighbourhood plan, which is in its final stages before completion and therefore the wishes of the community of Benson;
- The application site has no vehicular access into the village, in which the facilities are already stretched;
- Concern for the impact of extra traffic in the village regarding noise and pollution;
- The application site is elevated and will dwarf Brook Street; and
- Loss of green areas will not be of benefit to the village or wider landscape.

Phil Brady and John Ashton, the applicant's agents, spoke in support of the application:

- The comprehensive transport assessment was based on a proposal of 180 dwellings, which has now been reduced to 120 dwellings;
- Highways are satisfied with the traffic impact mitigation of a package of measures through contributions;
- The range of market and affordable housing will help the district meet its housing shortage;
- A condition can be included to ensure bungalows are put in next to adjacent properties;
- A strategic landscaping condition can also be included to amend the green spacing proposals;
- There are no technical objections regarding transport, flood risk and ecology;
- The draft neighbourhood plan is yet to be submitted and can therefore only be afforded limited weight; and
- Following a question from the committee, it was confirmed that reserved matters could be submitted within 18 months.

Felix Bloomfield, one of the local ward councillors, spoke objecting to the application. His concerns included the following:

- The application will have a harmful impact on the landscape setting and neighbouring Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- Concern for the loss of high quality agricultural land;
- Adverse impact on schooling and local highways with other developments being taken into consideration;
- On street parking issues already in the immediate area; and
- The application site is not allocated in the neighbourhood plan and is contrary to policy.

Richard Pullen, one of the local ward councillors, spoke objecting to the application.

In response to questions, the officer confirmed that drainage, education and noise impact have all been considered and either mitigated by condition or contributions and have been approved by technical consultees.

The committee considered the application with advice from officers where appropriate. The committee did not agree that the proposed development would not have a detrimental impact on the landscape and rural setting of Benson, the setting of the Chilterns AONB and loss of high quality agricultural land.

The committee were advised that the neighbourhood plan does not carry significant weight at present.

A motion, moved and seconded, to refuse the application was declared carried on being put to the vote.

**RESOLVED:** to refuse application P16/S3441/O, for the following reasons:

1. The proposal, by virtue of its urban character and open location to the east of Benson, would represent a significant encroachment into the open countryside. As a result the proposal would detract from the undeveloped rural character and appearance of the site and its surroundings, and would fail to conserve the landscape setting of Benson and would detract from the setting

of the nearby Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Whilst all matters relating to design and layout are reserved for future consideration, the proposal, by virtue of its form and access arrangements would result in a development that would not be sufficiently integrated and connected to the wider built context and would fail to make a positive contribution to the quality of the character and functionality of the wider settlement. The adverse impacts of the development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh its benefits, and as such the proposal would not comprise sustainable development as defined by local and national legislation. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to paragraphs 7, 14 and 17 of the NPPF and sections 7 (Requiring good design) and 11 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment) and policies CS1, CSR1, CSEN1 and CSQ3 of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy and saved policies G2, G4, D1 and C4 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011.

2. The proposal involves the loss of a portion of grade 2 and 3a agricultural land, best and most versatile land, contrary to paragraphs 109 and 112 of the NPPF.
3. In the absence of a completed S106 legal agreement, the proposal fails to secure affordable housing to meet the needs of the district. As such, the development would be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy CSH3 of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy
4. In the absence of a completed S106 legal agreement, the proposal fails to secure on and off site infrastructure necessary to meet the needs of the development. As such, the development would be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy CSI1 of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy and Policies T1, R2 and R6 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011.

## **7 P16/S4254/FUL - 4A Farm Close Road, Wheatley**

Toby Newman, the local ward councillor, stepped down from the committee and took no part in the debate or voting for this item. Sue Lawson acted as chair.

The committee considered application P16/S4254/FUL for a side-extension to the existing flatted block to provide two two-bedroom flats, the provision of three off-street parking spaces with new highway access, secure cycle storage and bin enclosures at 4A Farm Close Road, Wheatley.

Consultations, representations, policy and guidance and the site's planning history were detailed in the officer's report which formed part of the agenda pack for this meeting.

Mark Busby, a local resident, spoke objecting to the application. His concerns included the following:

- The detrimental impact of the proposal's flank wall facing flats 8a and 8b's habitable rooms;
- Not satisfied with the distances considered to be acceptable in this case;
- This is overdevelopment of the site, out of keeping with the area and would be unacceptably oppressive; and
- There are severe parking issues in the area, which will be exacerbated by this development.

Marc Chenery and Mr Robinson, the applicant's agent and applicant, spoke in support of the application. Their comments included the following:

- The separation distances meet design guide requirements; and
- Highways are in support of the application.

Toby Newman, the local ward councillor, spoke objecting to the application on behalf of the parish council who were unable to send representation:

- The site visit took place at 2:00pm which does not reflect the parking problems in the immediate area; and
- Concern for the separation distances between the proposal and flats 8a and 8b.

The committee considered the application with advice from officers where appropriate. Although some members of the committee were satisfied with the statutory consultee responses and the application meeting policy requirements, other members did not agree that the impact on neighbour amenity was acceptable and would constitute overdevelopment.

A motion, moved and seconded, to approve the application was declared lost on being put to the vote.

A motion, moved and seconded, to refuse the application was declared carried on being put to the vote.

**RESOLVED:** to refuse planning permission for application P16/S4254/FUL for the following reasons:

The Development Plan sets out that new residential development will not be permitted if it would unacceptably harm the amenities of neighbouring properties, and in the interest of safeguarding amenity, sets out separation distance distances to windows serving habitable rooms.

By reason of the distance between neighbouring habitable rooms and the flank walls of the development, and the imposing height of the addition, the development would result in an enclosed and oppressive relationship with numbers 6A, 6B, 8A and 8B and compromise the outlook of neighbouring occupants. Having regard to the neighbouring block's orientation, the siting of the development would create a contrived and cramped relationship with adjacent properties.

The development is contrary to saved policies D1 and D4 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan, and the South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2016.

## **8 P16/S3284/O - Land South of Greenwood Avenue, Chinnor**

Ian White stepped down from the committee and took no part in the debate or voting for this item.

The committee considered outline application P16/S3284/O for the erection of up to 140 dwellings, new public open space, associated landscaping and site infrastructure with all matters reserved on land south of Greenwood Avenue, Chinnor.

Consultations, representations, policy and guidance and the site's planning history were detailed in the officer's report which formed part of the agenda pack for this meeting.

Officer update: the Chinnor neighbourhood plan is currently with the parish council for fact-checking and will be issued next week for examination, it therefore carries limited weight.

Martin Wright, a representative of Chinnor Parish Council, spoke objecting to the application. His concerns included the following:

- The planning inspector for the adjacent sites stated that retaining the proposed site area as a field would mitigate the harm of the sites allowed at appeal;
- The proposed density of the application does not fit in with the character of the area;
- The proposed access onto Greenwood Avenue would cause issues due to the lack of off street parking and narrow road; and
- Request there is a spine road through the three developments instead.

Maxine Pickard and Robert Dobbs, local residents, spoke objecting to the application. Their concerns included the following:

- Light pollution impact on local wildlife; and
- The inspector's comments concerning the retention of this field should not be disregarded.

Caroline Owen, the applicant's agent, spoke in support of the application:

- The application site will be a landlocked field in an urban setting, bordered by residential areas on four sides;
- The neighbourhood plan can only be afforded limited weight;
- The application will contribute to housing numbers in the village and provide 40% affordable homes;
- The forestry officer has no objections;
- Taylor Wimpey have indicated agreement to provide through-access, although the applicant has yet to discuss this with Bellway Homes. Future access through the adjacent sites can be secured at reserved matters;
- Agreed timescales can be reduced to 18 months; and
- The applicant would be willing to include a ransom strip condition.

Ian White, one of the local ward councillors, spoke objecting to the application. His concerns included the following:

- According to the planning inspector, by retaining this field, the harm of the adjoining sites will be mitigated;
- The application will cause harm to the setting of the rural community;
- Impact on local amenity regarding the substantial increase in traffic; and
- Concerns for road safety due to the narrow one-way access road.

The committee considered the application with advice from officers where appropriate. They did not agree that the impact on the landscape setting or character of the local area would be acceptable.

A motion, moved and seconded, to refuse the application was declared carried on being put to the vote.

**RESOLVED:** to refuse application P16/S3284/O for the following reasons:

1. The application site provides separation between two approved housing developments and mitigates against the harmful impacts that these

developments will have on the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would result in the loss of this intervening green space, consolidate the built up appearance of the area and diminish the rural, green and open character of the locality, which can be seen in views from the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. As such, the development would result in significant and demonstrable harm and would be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework, policies CS1, CSR1, CSEN1 and CSQ3 of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy and policies C4, G2 and G4 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011.

2. In the absence of a completed Section 106 legal agreement, the proposal fails to secure affordable housing to meet the needs of the District. As such, the development would be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework and policy CSH3 of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy.
3. In the absence of a completed Section 106 legal agreement, the proposal fails to secure infrastructure necessary to meet the needs of the development. As such, the development would be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework, policy CS11 of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy and policies R2 and R6 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011

## **9 P16/S3285/FUL - 17 and 19 Greenwood Avenue, Chinnor**

Ian White stepped down from the committee and took no part in the debate or voting for this item.

The committee considered application P16/S3285/FUL to demolish two dwellings and construct a new access road at 17 and 19 Greenwood Avenue, Chinnor

Consultations, representations, policy and guidance and the site's planning history were detailed in the officer's report which formed part of the agenda pack for this meeting.

Martin Wright, a representative of Chinnor Parish Council, spoke objecting to the application.

Roger Pickard and Samantha Boyd-Leslie, local residents, spoke objecting to the application. Their concerns included the following:

- Air pollution concerns due to the increased vehicle movements;
- Detrimental impact on residential amenity; and
- Access via Greenwood Avenue would be unnecessary if a spine road goes through all three developments.

Caroline Owen, the applicant's agent, spoke in support of the application:

- There are no technical objections to this application; and
- Proximity to existing homes is not under consideration.

Ian White, one of the local ward councillors, spoke objecting to the application. His concerns included the following:

- A construction traffic management plan would need to be included as a condition due to the problems getting in and out of the site;
- Impact on local amenity; and
- Concerns for road safety.

The committee considered the application with advice from officers where appropriate. They did not agree that to demolish two dwellings would be acceptable due to South Oxfordshire's lack of five year land supply and that the access road would detrimentally impact the character of Greenwood Avenue.

A motion, moved and seconded, to refuse the application was declared carried on being put to the vote.

**RESOLVED:** to refuse application P16/S3285/FUL for the following reasons:

The proposed access was submitted in association with a housing development on adjoining land (P16/S3284/O). Planning permission for this associated housing development has been refused and as such, the proposed access would not be required to deliver a scheme that would boost housing numbers. The proposed access would have an adverse visual impact on the character of the area and result in the loss of two existing homes. As such, these harms would significantly and demonstrably outweigh any benefits of the development and the proposal would be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework, policies CS1, CSS1 and CSQ3 of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy and policies G2 and D1 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011.

## **10 P17/S0875/RM - Land north of 12 Celsea Place, Cholsey**

The committee considered application P17/S0875/RM for the details of the layout, landscaping and scale of the approved scheme for 60 dwellings on land north of 12 Celsea Place, Cholsey (P15/0262/O).

Consultations, representations, policy and guidance and the site's planning history were detailed in the officer's report which formed part of the agenda pack for this meeting.

Officer updates:

Oxfordshire County Council Highways are satisfied with the amended plans and have no further comments. The council's Forestry Officer is also satisfied with the amended information regarding landscaping, subject to a couple of species of trees being changed. Four additional written representations have been received, one of which was circulated to members. These did not raise any new issues that have not already been summarised in the report.

Corrections to a couple of errors in the report: paragraph 2.2 states that 23 Affordable units will be provided. It should say 24 units. The report also states that the appeal was allowed prior to CIL being adopted and enforced. This is incorrect and the development will be CIL liable.

Mark Gray, a representative of Cholsey Parish Council, spoke objecting to the application. His concerns included the following:

- Disappointed that the developers have not worked with the parish at the neighbourhood plan stage;
- The existing site access is constrained as the neighbours don't have driveways – can this be considered by SOHA to install them?
- The open space adjacent to a main road is not ideal;
- Disproportionate number of three-bedroom dwellings; and
- Request that garages can't be converted.

Anthony Hines, a local resident, spoke objecting to the application. His concerns included the following:

- The landscaping buffer has been removed and replaced with tree planting, which could impact their amenity should species be inappropriate for urban gardens; and
- Concern that root structures could potentially damage drainage and hedging plants.

Henry Venners, the applicant's agent, spoke in support of the application:

- The access has been approved by Highways;
- The inspector allowed the outline application at appeal;
- The open space allocation more than meets guidelines and will be accessible to all due to the protected archaeological finds on site;
- 40% of the homes will be affordable and indistinguishable from other dwellings;
- Officers recommended removing the 5m landscaping buffer and planting mix can be secured by condition;
- The non-conversion of garages can be secured by condition; and
- Drainage is off-site and the responsibility of Thames Water.

The committee considered the application with advice from officers where appropriate. They requested removal of permitted development rights to convert garages into residential and were advised that the landscaping condition request refers to an outline application condition.

A motion, moved and seconded, to approve the application was declared carried on being put to the vote.

**RESOLVED:** to grant reserved matters approval for application P17/S0875/RM, subject to the following conditions:

1. Time limit.
2. Development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans.
3. Removal of permitted development rights Class A (extensions).
4. Removal of permitted development rights Class E (outbuildings).
5. Removal of permitted development rights: Garages to habitable accommodation.

## **11 P16/S3254/FUL & P16/S3255/LB - Former Farm Buildings and Pharmacy, Cholsey Meadows, Off Reading Road, Cholsey**

Applications P16/S3254/FUL and P16/S3255/LB to convert the existing buildings to provide 11 one-bedroom starter homes, six two-bedroom starter homes and one commercial unit (salon) and a farm shop, to include parking, access and landscaping a the former farm buildings and pharmacy, Cholsey Meadows, off Reading Road, Cholsey were deferred from consideration to allow for a site visit.

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm

Chairman

Date