

# Minutes

## OF A MEETING OF THE



Listening Learning Leading

## Planning Committee

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 30 JUNE 2021 AT 6.00 PM

FIRST FLOOR, 135 EASTERN AVENUE, MILTON PARK, MILTON, OX14 4SB

### Present:

David Bretherton (Chair), Tim Bearder, Sam Casey - Rerhaye (substituting for Councillor Peter Dragonetti), Lorraine Hillier, George Levy, Axel Macdonald, Jo Robb, Ian Snowdon and Alan Thompson

### Apologies:

Peter Dragonetti and Elizabeth Gillespie tendered apologies.

### Officers:

Paul Bateman, Will Darlison, Michael Flowers, Paula Fox, Paul Lucas, Marc Pullen, Susie Royse, Stuart Walker and Tom Wyatt

### In Attendance

Ken Arlett

### 155 Chair's announcements

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

### 156 Minutes of the previous meeting

**RESOLVED:** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 8 April 2021 as a correct record and agree that the Chair sign these as such.

Following the passing of the motion, a query was raised as to whether Councillor Sue Rowlands was the speaker on behalf of Rotherfield Peppard parish Council. It was agreed that this would be checked by the democratic services officer.

### 157 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

### 158 Urgent business

There was no urgent business.

## **159 Proposals for site visits**

It was proposed that a site visit be conducted for application P20/S4824/FUL, 18 Duke Street, Henley-on-Thames, due to concerns regarding waste and parking in the vicinity of the site. Due to these issues, a view was expressed that members would need to view the site in order to have a clear understanding of the concerns raised.

**RESOLVED:** to hold a site visit for application P20/S4824/FUL and defer the item until a visit had been completed.

## **160 Public participation**

The list showing members of the public who had registered to speak had been sent to the committee prior to the meeting. Statements received from the public were circulated to the committee prior to the meeting.

## **161 P21/V0167/FUL / P21/S0274/FUL - Land at Former Didcot 'A' Power Station, Milton Road, Didcot**

The committee considered applications P21/V0167/FUL and P21/S0274/FUL for a hybrid planning application consisting of:

- a. Full Planning Application for the erection of a single storey 8,692 m<sup>2</sup> Data Centre building (containing data halls, associated electrical and AHU Plant Rooms, loading bay, maintenance and storage space, office administration areas and screened plant at roof level), emergency generators and emission stacks, diesel tanks and filling area, electrical switch room, a water sprinkler pump room and storage tanks, a gate house/security building, MV substation, site access, internal access roads, drainage infrastructure, hard and soft landscaping and,
- b. Outline Planning Application for the erection of a two storey 20,800 m<sup>2</sup> Data Centre building (containing data halls, associated electrical and AHU Plant Rooms, loading bay, maintenance and storage space, office administration areas and screened plant at roof level), emergency generators and emission stacks, diesel tanks and filling area, electrical switch room, a water sprinkler pump room and storage tanks; details of appearance will be reserved, along with hard landscaping immediately around the building (as amended by plans and documents received 5th May 2021) on land at the former Didcot A power station, Milton Road, Didcot.

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.

The planning officer provided an update to the committee that as the application had been a cross-boundary application, it had been considered by the Vale of White Horse Planning Committee the previous week, where it had received approval for planning permission. The planning officer also reported that the Oxfordshire Skills Board had recently submitted a response, which supported the proposal, as it was regarded as providing high value employment, opportunities, and supported the digital economy.

The planning officer explained that the proposed application sought 8,692 m<sup>2</sup> of space for the first data centre, and outlying permission for an additional 20,800 m<sup>2</sup> for a second unit.

To ensure security, the site would be located within a secure compound which would include a security gatehouse. Furthermore, land would be retained to the west of unit two for potential future development, although this would be subject to a future application. The planning officer also highlighted that the power supply for the proposal would come from the National Grid, with a backup supply from diesel generators in the event of a power outage.

The planning officer added that, in principle, the proposal was acceptable and that the site had been allocated for re-development in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan and it accorded with the South Oxfordshire Local Plan. The height of the site was also considered acceptable and the contemporary design was considered suitable for the surroundings. Subject to conditions, the planning officer did not consider that this application would have a detrimental impact to its surroundings, and this included highway safety and transport remaining suitable. While it was noted that Sutton Courtenay Parish Council had voiced objections due to concerns on pedestrian and cycle connections, the planning officer contended that cycle and parking access was acceptable.

David Pryor, a representative of Boundary Park Sports Association, spoke objecting to the application.

Camilla Fisher, the agent, spoke in support of the application.

A question was raised with Camilla Fisher, the agent, regarding the net biodiversity gain and on why the biodiversity figures were used from the post-clearance site rather than its pre-clearance appearance. explained that there was a holistic analysis and that it was agreed with officers that they would align with a site-wide strategy. It was added that the 2014 baseline showed a total of eighty-nine biodiversity units across the site, and the committed developments to date left thirty-seven units to be completed. An additional question was raised with respect to the batteries which would be used at the facility. The committee highlighted that fifty-megawatt batteries were used in some existing developments and questioned why they were not being proposed. The agent explained that the proposed design relied on battery technology for continuous power supply in the event of a power outage. The challenge of these large batteries was their scale, as whilst they could provide short term support, they presented challenges during a long-term power outage. The committee also asked whether the limited availability of battery packs was due to supply or to the industry type. The agent responded that the technology was not advanced enough at this stage and this resulted in the decision not to use them.

A final question was asked to the agent on the lighting for the site and how the application would minimise light pollution for the surrounding area. The agent explained that it was a requirement to have surveillance on the external surroundings with a minimum of five lux on the fence line. It was also clarified that the outer fencing would have lights permanently illuminated during the evening, as this was required for the surveillance.

Councillor Ian Snowdon made a statement objecting to the application and considered himself to have become pre-determined. He would not take part in the debate nor vote on the item.

Councillor Axel MacDonald left the meeting and therefore did not participate in the voting on this application.

The committee enquired whether an energy audit had been conducted. It was informed that such an exercise had been completed and formed part of the application

documentation. It was acknowledged that although this was not included in the agenda pack for the meeting, it had been viewable online. An additional question was raised on the carbon calculation for the proposed development. The planning officer clarified that the calculation was available in the energy statement.

A motion moved and seconded, to defer the item until further information was available was declared carried on being put to the vote.

**RESOLVED:** to defer consideration of applications P21/V0167/FUL and P21/S0274/FUL pending the receipt of further energy-related information, to enable the committee to make an informed decision.

## **162 P21/S0560/FUL - Land between Swallow Barn and 2 Church End Cottages, Waterperry Road, Holton,**

The committee considered application P21/S0560/FUL for the erection of stable building and retention of associated access track and gate (as amended by drawing number 8195 BL A, to move the proposed stable further south and amplified by a proposed planting scheme received on 16/03/21) on land between Swallow Barn and 2 Church End Cottages, Waterperry Road, Holton.

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.

The planning officer confirmed that the application had been called in by the former district councillor Sarah Gray, due to concerns relating to potential neighbour impact. The application site was located near to Holton and comprised land between Swallow Barn and 2 Church End. The application sought to retain the stone track. The application also sought planning permission for an L shaped stable building around 65m into the site, to be used in connection with the keeping and grazing of horses, and this stable would replace the two detached stables currently erected which did not benefit from planning permission. It was confirmed by the planning officer that during the course of the application, the proposed stable building had been relocated to facilitate a reduced impact on Swallow Barn and would be located further south and with the addition of planting. These changes were not considered to be overbearing or oppressive and would not impact the privacy of the neighbouring property or cause overshadowing. The planning officer also clarified that paragraph 6.15 of the report referred to a 20m distance, and this was measured from the stable to the original garden area of Swallow Barn and not to the extended garden. The planning officer added that the impact on trees, surface water drainage, and highway impact had been assessed in consultation with technical officers, who had no objections subject to the conditions attached to the recommendations. There were covenants on the land restricting use, however these were not planning considerations and, as such, did not affect the officer's recommendation.

A statement by Holton Parish Council had been sent to the committee by the democratic services officer prior to the meeting.

A statement by Mr. and Mrs. Hargreaves, local residents, had been sent to the committee by the democratic services officer prior to the meeting.

Henry Venners, the applicant, spoke in support of the application.

A motion moved and seconded, to grant planning permission was declared carried on being put to the vote.

**RESOLVED:** to grant planning permission for application P21/S0560/FUL, subject to the following conditions;

- 1: Commencement three years – Full Planning Permission
- 2: Approved plans
- 3: Materials as on plan
- 4: Surface water drainage works (details required)
- 5: Tree Protection (General)
- 6: Landscaping implementation
- 7: Compliance with proposed block plan prior to first occupation
- 8: Private use of stables

### **163 P20/S4824/FUL - 18, Duke Street, Henley-on-Thames**

Application P20/S4824/FUL was deferred to allow for a site visit, to view the location. The application would be considered at a later meeting once the site visit had been conducted.

### **164 P20/S4181/FUL - 136, Reading Road, Henley-on-Thames**

The committee considered application P20/S4181/FUL for the change of use from dentist's surgery (Class E) to two 2-bedroom flats (Class C3) incorporating single storey rear extension and changes to elevations facing road to remove redundant shopfront (first floor northwest facing bedroom windows obscure glazed and fixed shut and cycle stands added to front garden as shown on amended plans received 18th December 2020 and proposed rear rooflights shown on amended elevations and section plans received 16th June 2021) at 136 Reading Road, Henley-on-Thames.

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.

The planning officer clarified that condition 6 in the report, which referred to the joinery and railing details, would also include brickwork, as windows were being adjusted to the proposed change of use. The committee was informed that the application was supported in principle by local plan policy H3 and neighbourhood plan policy H4. It was added that a dental surgery was not classified as an essential community facility under local plan policy CF1. The application had demonstrated that the market for dental surgeries in the area was saturated. It was added that the application would offer significant improvements to the living conditions for nearby residents, compared with unrestricted uses which could be taken with permitted development rights. Officers considered the proposed changes of use to two flats would be more compatible to surrounding properties and the rear extension would not impact neighbouring amenities. The shortfall in outdoor amenity space would be acceptable due to the site's sustainable location. The Oxfordshire County Council, the local highway authority had accepted the applicant's data for the transport statement, incorporating a 'parking beat survey', with the view that the dental surgery would generate greater traffic in comparison to a proposed residential dwelling. The planning officer also reported that the application was fully compliant with local plan policy TRANS5, which sought to ensure that new development would provide a safe and convenient access for all

users of the highway. Subject to the recommended conditions, officers considered that planning permission should be granted.

Councillor Ken Arlett, a representative of Henley Town Council, spoke objecting to the application.

Jonathan Parkinson, the applicant, spoke in support of the application.

The committee raised a question to the applicant regarding the upstairs flat relating to the roof lights. Considering the location within the conservation area, the committee enquired whether the roof lights could be opened or if residents of the dwelling would be required to sleep in a bedroom without a window. The applicant explained that an existing roof light would be capable of being opened. A second question was asked around the previous attempt at selling the dental site and whether it had been advertised for the wider commercial market. The answer was that the sale had been specifically targeted for use as a dental surgery.

The planning officer was asked about the residential parking scheme which came into force in November. An enquiry was made as to whether parking permits could benefit the property and whether conditions could be added. The officer explained that as the application site was not within the controlled parking area and it was explained that planning conditions relating to controlled parking were not within the remit of the authority. An additional question was raised on whether a condition could be added to require electric vehicle charging points. The officer clarified that a charge point condition could be added, although the site did not have a dedicated parking space.

A motion moved and seconded, to grant planning permission was declared carried on being put to the vote.

**RESOLVED:** to grant planning permission for application P20/S4181/FUL, subject to the following conditions;

- 1: Commencement of development within three years
- 2: Development in accordance with approved plans
- 3: Obscure glazing to north west facing windows
- 4: Rooflights (specified cill level and flush fitting)
- 5: Cycle parking to be provided in accordance with the approved plans
- 6: Joinery and brickwork and railing details to be agreed

The meeting closed at 7.50 pm

Chairman

Date

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