

# Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE

## Planning Committee

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 11 AUGUST 2021 AT 6.00 PM

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

### Present in the meeting room:

Councillors: David Bretherton (Chair), Peter Dragonetti (Vice-Chair), Ken Arlett, Lorraine Hillier, Alexandrine Kantor (substituting for Councillor Levy), Axel Macdonald, Sue Roberts (substituting for Councillor Gillespie), Jo Robb, Ian Snowdon, and Alan Thompson

Officers: Michael Flowers and Paula Fox

### Remote attendance:

Officers: Paul Bateman, Phil Moule, Susie Royce, and Cathie Scotting

### Apologies:

Tim Bearder, Elizabeth Gillespie, and George Levy tendered apologies.

### 174 Chair's announcements

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

### 175 Minutes of the previous meeting

**RESOLVED:** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 9 June 2021 as a correct record and agree that the chair sign them as such.

### 176 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

### 177 Urgent business

There was no urgent business.

### 178 Proposals for site visits

There were no proposals for site visits.



Listening Learning Leading

## **179 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.

## **180 P19/S0257/FUL - Land at Didcot Town Football Club, Bowmont Water, Didcot**

The committee considered application P19/S0257/FUL for the development of 25 apartments, replacement car parking spaces, and new sports pitches (as amended by drawings received 19 February 2020, site plan received 10 June 2020, drawings received 10 October 2020 and drawings and energy statement received 22nd January 2021), site plan received March 2021.

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 officer explained that the application had been presented to the committee as the officer's recommendation conflicted with the view raised by Didcot Town Council. The town council's objections had been raised for the following reasons:

- 1.) The application did not keep to the character of the surrounding area.
- 2.) An insufficient provision of car parking spaces.
- 3.) That additional traffic would cause increased pressure on local roads.
- 4.) The traffic and noise impact caused by the development.
- 5.) The loss of privacy to Oak Tree Health Centre

The planning officer also explained that since the application last went to the committee, a site visit had been conducted including its surrounding context on the 9 August 2021.

It was confirmed that the proposed development would provide a rate of 40 per cent affordable housing through shared ownership housing units. Additionally, the location of the site was in a sustainable location which was within a maximum fifteen minute walking distance to Didcot railway station and Didcot town centre. The planning officer also clarified that several amendments had been made to the proposal during the application process, which included the removal of a smaller block of two apartments. The proposal had also removed the provision of a variety of pitches for recreational use which would be replaced by the provision of affordable housing. Additionally, the design of the external appearance of the proposed development had been amended and improved along with visitor parking spaces.

In relation to the concerns raised around the proximity of the application to the health centre, the planning officer explained that it was considered that the proposal complied with the council's design guide in terms of separation distances and was therefore acceptable. In addition, the application provided a new forty space car park and would not see a loss in the provision for the Willowbrook Leisure Centre adjacent to the site. While there would be a reduction in thirty-two car parking spaces on the site (188 spaces reduced to 156), the officers considered that the sustainable location of the area would not be a sufficient reason to refuse the application.

The planning officer also suggested an additional condition which would be added should planning permission be granted. This condition would secure the provision of the replacement car parking area of forty cars prior to the commencement of the construction

of the properties. The applicant had agreed to the inclusion of this provision. The planning officer also reported that the Oxfordshire County Council, the highways authority, had removed their objection in regard to highway impact, as they considered that additional traffic movements would be minimal. It was also reported that the urban design officer considered that the proposed development was acceptable.

Councillor Eleanor Hards, a representative of Didcot Town Council, spoke objecting to the application.

Jennie McMillan, a local resident, spoke objecting to the application. Questions were raised to the speaker on the usage of nearby green space by local residents. Ms McMillan confirmed that it was used by a variety of people of various ages and was used for dog-walking and recreational purposes. An additional question was asked surrounding disabled access for the area with public transportation. Ms McMillan clarified that the bus services were infrequent and that whilst the train station was within travel distance, that recent increases in crime in the neighbouring area had made residents feel cautious about using the commuting route late at night.

Roger Neal, on behalf of Didcot Town Football Club, spoke in support of the application. The committee asked the speaker a question about the club's financial viability. However, the chair reminded the committee that the financial position of the applicant was not a material planning consideration that the committee could use in its decision making.

Councillors Victoria Haval and Andrea Warren, the local ward members, spoke objecting to the application. A question of clarification was raised on whether the local school catchment area included the Ladygrove estate and also whether the Willowbrook Centre was used by Ladygrove residents. The ward members clarified that the estate had a tight catchment area and some people within Ladygrove were within these boundaries. It was also confirmed that the Willowbrook was used by the residents of the estate regularly for the sports facilities.

A question was raised to the planning officer regarding Thames Water's identified issue surrounding the inability of the existing foul and surface water infrastructure to accommodate the development and whether this could restrict the maximum occupation by residents. The officer confirmed that Thames Water still needed to complete a survey and so this only remained a potential risk. It was also clarified that Thames Water had a legal obligation to support any upgrade of infrastructure required for new dwellings.

In response to an issue raised regarding the inappropriate height of the proposal, the planning officer reported that the proposed development was 11.2m.in height, but that there were existing buildings of similar height in Didcot; the Willowbrook Leisure Centre was 12m. tall and a three storey residential development in Bowmont Water was comparable to the 4-storey proposal, owing to its sloping roof design.

An additional question was raised on whether the site was located within an area that was at risk of flooding. The committee was assured that the proposed development did not lie within a flood plain.

In answer to a further question from the committee, the planning officer also confirmed that the application no longer contained a proposal for artificial pitching and now contained affordable housing. Additionally, it was confirmed, as part of this answer, that S106 funding

of £795 per dwelling would be used towards the improvement of the transport services, which would include bus services, within the Science Vale area.  
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 P19/S0257/FUL, subject to the following conditions;

1. Commencement development within three years - Full Planning Permission
2. Approved plans
3. Sample materials (prior to commencement)
4. Landscaping – planting plan (prior to commencement)
5. Landscape management plan
6. Tree protection details to be approved (prior to commencement)
7. Hours of operation – construction/demolition
8. Control of noise and dust (prior to commencement)
9. Air Quality – scheme for EV charging points
10. New car parking available at all times
11. SAP calculations for all apartments (prior to commencement)
12. Details of photovoltaic panels and air source heat pumps (prior to commencement)
13. Energy Statement Verification Report
14. Detailed foul water drainage scheme (prior to commencement)
15. Detailed surface water drainage scheme (prior to commencement)
16. Thames Water – water network upgrade / phasing plan
17. Details of pitch drainage, floodlighting, dugouts and perimeter fencing
18. Travel information pack
19. Construction Traffic Management Plan (prior to commencement)
20. Parking for flats to be provided prior to occupation and retained
21. Part M (4) Category 2
22. Contaminated Land Condition 1 (prior to commencement)
23. Contaminated Land Condition 2
24. Prior to the commencement of the development of the flats and the car parking serving those flats hereby approved, the proposed general car parking area to contain forty car parking spaces (as shown on drawing no. 1128-P01-E) located to the south of the football stadium shall be completed and be available for general parking on the site.

The meeting closed at 7.33 pm

Chair

Date

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