

# Minutes of a meeting of the **Planning Committee** held at the **New Council Chamber - Town Hall, Reigate** on **Wednesday, 6 July 2022 at 7.30 pm.**

**Present:** Councillors M. S. Blacker (Vice-Chair), J. Baker, P. Chandler, Z. Cooper, P. Harp, S. McKenna, C. Stevens, D. Torra, S. T. Walsh, N. D. Harrison (Substitute), J. Hudson (Substitute) and R. S. Turner (Substitute)

**In attendance:** Councillors Ashford, Chester and Sinden

**Attended remotely:** Councillors S. A. Kulka



## **12 Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 June 2022 be approved as a correct record.

## **13 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Bray, Michalowski and James King, Councillors Harrison, Turner and Hudson were their respective substitutes. An apology for absence had been received from Councillor Andrew King.

Councillor Kulka attended the meeting remotely and was unable to vote.

## **14 Declarations of interest**

Councillor Turner declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 9, Land and Cities Families Trust, due to a connection through the Twinning Association and via a previous employment.

## **15 Addendum to the agenda**

**RESOLVED** that the addendum be noted.

## **16 21/03303/F - Titan House, Crossoak Lane, Salfords**

The Committee considered an application at Titan House, Crossoak Lane, Salfords, for the demolition of existing buildings (2) and the erection of two any industrial processes (class e (g) (iii)), general industrial (use class b2) storage and/or distribution (use class b8) units with ancillary office accommodation, together with other associated parking, servicing landscape and infrastructure.

Robert Jeffrey, a local resident, spoke in objection to the development asking that the Committee refuse the application in order to give the applicant an opportunity to revise their proposal. Residents understood the land was designated as an employment area; however, the scale of the development in front of the houses at Empire Villas was the issue. Had the proposal been for construction at the southern side of the plot residents would not have objected. It was felt that the current proposal would be

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overbearing and overshadowing and did not make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of its surroundings. The history of the site was outlined, as was the distance of the proposed development to Empire Villas which would overshadow gardens, houses and the road.

Jim Blackmore, Vice-Chair at Salfords and Sidlow Parish Council, spoke in objection to the application stating at the last planning committee meeting the majority vote was against approval of this application. The north wall of the building had been lowered by half a metre, but it was still 40 feet high in front of Empire Villas. This had still not been reduced by enough to make the impact on the amenity of the neighbouring houses acceptable. The proposed 40 foot high wall in front of Empire Villas would be domineering and unpleasantly noticeable. Parts of the Core Strategy policy CS1, Paragraph 2.1.5 of the development plan and Policy DES1 were outlined. The policies in CS1 and DES1 were inclusive and all had to be satisfied, this application did not meet this criterion.

Paul Stoodley, CEO of the applicant Salmon, spoke in support of the application, explaining the company was a commercial property developer that had been creating jobs for over 30 years, including in this borough. The changes to the application were outlined including a reduction in height of the building by half a metre, reducing impact on neighbouring properties. HGVs would be unable to turn left when exiting the site and a sunlight and daylight report had been submitted which showed no major adverse effects (and this was calculated using the original proposed height of the building). The officer recommendation was to approve this application. It complied with the Local Plan and there was a lack of any material reasons for refusal. The site had been allocated for employment and this would bring significant economic benefit to the Borough.

Councillor Chester, a visiting member, spoke in objection to the application stating that residents were not objecting in principle to development at the site. However, the size and design of this proposal did not meet the criteria set out in policy DES1. The development would have an overshadowing effect on the properties at Empire Villas and a reduction of half a metre would not make a vast difference in this regard. Several properties would not meet BRE guidelines (light analysis) and this related to the effects on gardens and outdoor spaces. It was unclear if this information was available. The effects of loss of daylight on various properties at Empire Villas was outlined in detail. It was also difficult to see how the proposal adhered to policy DES1. There would be a significant loss of amenity to neighbouring properties. In terms of the height of the trees, it was stated that these were overgrown and had not been maintained at fence height by Titan as they should have been. These should not provide a baseline for comparison or mitigation against negative results, hence a comparison with no tree results would be most appropriate and residents should not suffer as a result of the failure than their neighbours to maintain their hedges. It was felt that there was a gap in policy between the DMP and DES1, where there was a transition between residential and commercial development.

Following a vote, it was **RESOLVED** that the application be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee so that reasons for refusal can be considered.

### 17 21/03215/F - Redhill Ambulance Station, Pendleton Road, Redhill

The Committee considered an application at Redhill Ambulance Station, Pendleton Road, Redhill for the demolition of existing ambulance station and ancillary buildings,

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construction of 8 dwelling houses with associated access and parking. As amended on 31/01/2022 and on 30/05/2022.

A request for deferment to consider reasons for refusal was proposed by Councillor Walsh and seconded by Councillor Blacker. **RESOLVED** that the application be **DEFERRED**.

**18 22/00181/F - Oakwood Sports Centre, Balcombe Road, Horley**

The Committee considered an application at Oakwood Sports Centre, Balcombe Road, Horley for the Creation of a Community 3G Football Turf Pitch (FTP) (11020 sq. metres) with associated features including: 3G football turf pitch (7460 sq. metres); 4.5m high ball stop fencing with entrance gates to form an enclosure around FTP perimeter; 1.2m high and 2.0m high pitch barriers with entrance gates internally within fenced FTP enclosure; 2.6m high maintenance equipment storage container (15 sq. metres) within fenced FTP enclosure; 15.0m high LED floodlights (6no.) around FTP perimeter; 4.0m high LED amenity light (1no.) along pedestrian access; Hard[1]standing areas for pedestrian access and circulation, portable goals storage, as well as vehicular access (807 sq. metres); 0.75m high grass flood defence crest around FTP perimeter (formed with recycled soils from the FTP construction (2753 sq. metres). (No change of use.) As amended on 21/04/2022 and on 13/05/2022.

**RESOLVED** that planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to conditions as per the recommendation and addendum and inclusion of lighting to condition 5.

**19 21/02108/F - 64 & rear of 62 Shelveys Way, Tadworth**

This application be **DEFERRED** due to lack of time at the meeting.

**20 21/00429/CU - Land and City Families Trust, Old Pheantry, Merrywood Grove, Lower Kingswood**

The Committee considered an application at Land and City Families Trust, Old Pheantry, Merrywood Grove, Lower Kingswood for the change of use of part of the building to a school.

Ben Summers, a local resident, spoke in objection to the application, explaining that the application has been made for allowing a privately-owned commercial business to operate in a rural residential environment, as it has done without planning consent since 2019. The site was at the end of an unnamed, single track non-adopted access road, which passed through an AONB, over which residents have a right to pass for access to their properties and which they were responsible for maintaining. The site was in a designated 'Area of Great Landscape Value' (CS2 & NHE1) and adjoined an AONB (CS2 & NHE1) and a 'Site of Special Scientific Interest' (CS2 & NHE2). Prior to the unapproved change of use the area was very quiet and now there was a high volume of traffic and the timings and the impact of this increase were outlined. Cars parked on the footpath (photograph was shown). The application conflicted against various policies and was a breach of the protection provided by being in the green belt. The application was unsustainable and there had been no meaningful change in the travel plan to deal with the issues identified in a previous report which had recommended refusal.

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Mr David White, a local resident, spoke in objection to the application stating that this application was withdrawn from February's Planning Committee meeting when the Planning Officer recommended the application be refused on the grounds that it constituted inappropriate development in the green belt; the proposal was contrary to parts of the Council's Core Strategy, sections of its Development Management Plan and some provisions of the NPPF and this remained the case. A new travel plan, which included the use of a minibus, had been submitted and it was questioned whether this was viable now and in the longer term, particularly when Highways England were to carry out the redevelopment of the Junction 8 roundabout. An overview of the route into the site was given in detail, with safety and environmental objections being raised.

Spencer Copping, the Agent, spoke in support of the application explaining that the site had been used since 1985 by Land and City Families Trust who were a registered charity that sought to provide accommodation for groups of people from deprived circumstances. In 2019, the charity started to lease a small part of the building to Merrywood House School, to be used as a Special Education Needs School and an overview of the offering here was given. Of the 16 pupils at the school, all travelled in by minibus except for one. Many staff also used the minibus to access the site and other modes of transport were outlined. There were provisions in place to encourage car-sharing and cycling amongst staff members, and a Travel Statement would be secured by way of condition. A former passing point along Merrywood Grove had been reinstated and would be secured via condition. The Planning Officers agreed that the vehicle movements to and from the school would not cause highway safety concerns, nor were there concerns regarding the free flow of traffic. The County Highways Authority raised no objection in relation to highway safety or capacity, and the County Rights of Way Officer also raised no objection. The site was in the green belt where the re-use of existing buildings was acceptable, provided the openness of the green belt was preserved. Various amendments had been made during the application process and these were outlined. The site also lay within an Area of Great Landscape Value and given the reduction in car parking and the well screened and contained nature of the site, officers confirmed that the impact of the change of use would not cause unacceptable harm to the character of the area, and the impact on local amenity was acceptable due to the distance of the site from neighbouring properties. The trees to be removed were of low quality and the proposal was to plant an additional 16 trees on site, this was alongside the additional landscaping already provided within the wider site.

Jeff Harris, Joint Chairman of the Trust, spoke in support of the application explaining the reason this was a retrospective application and that an application was submitted as soon as it became aware this was required. Tree planting had taken place and a passing place was constructed, signs were placed about speed of vehicles and the School purchased a minibus. Car-sharing was encouraged as was walking and cycling by staff. This has had a dramatic impact on the access and egress to the site and parking within it. Two guaranteed off-site meeting places for the minibus were available. Neither had any implication for local people and both well away from the site. In the 40 years the charity had been in situ, no complaints had been received. Since the application was submitted, staff, children and parents have been subjected to criminality and these were being investigated by the police. Objections had been lodged, however many of these were misinformed. There was a need for SEN education in the area. The report included reference from a Planning Inspectors decision to uphold a similar application in the borough, which noted that for such vulnerable children, travel by public transport, walking and cycling was not an option.

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Overall, there was no impact on the green belt and County Highways Authority raised no objections on safety grounds.

Councillor Ashford, a ward Councillor, spoke in objection to the application stating this school had a big impact on local residents. The fact that this was a special needs school was of no relevance to the application itself. There had been an increase in traffic and people had been hit by wing mirrors. This was not an appropriate location for a school and a more sustainable location should be found to continue the great work the school undertook with its pupils. There was concern regarding the travel plan as it contained errors. There were an additional 350 journeys being taken per week along a bridleway. Since the officer's original recommendation to refuse the application, the only change had been the submission of an inappropriate travel plan. This development was also in the green belt and an area of outstanding natural beauty.

Reasons for refusal were proposed by Councillor Walsh and seconded by Councillor Cooper, whereupon the Committee voted and **RESOLVED** that planning permission be **REFUSED** on the grounds that:

1. The change of use of the building (part of) and associated land by reason of the of the increased levels of activity at the site, increased traffic and car parking (including the laying of hard surfacing) would cause greater visual impact and activity at the site would fail to preserve the openness of the green belt and conflict with purposes of including land withing it. The application therefore constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt. In the absence of very special circumstances to outweigh these harms the proposal is contrary to Policy CS3 of the Reigate and Banstead Core Strategy, Policy NHE5 of the Reigate and Banstead Development Management Plan and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. The proposed school use is in an unsustainable location where it is unsuitable and impractical to consider walking, cycling or using local bus services or other forms of public transport. The new use would therefore be entirely reliant on car and an impractical minibus service for access and would therefore lead to an intensification of vehicle trips down what are narrow and unlit lanes. The increased intensification of the use of site and resultant increase in traffic and off site parking would also result in unacceptable harm to the amenity of neighbouring residents due to noise, disruption and inconvenience. The application would therefore be contrary to policy CS17 of the Reigate and Banstead Core Strategy, policies DES1, DES9 and TAP1 of the Reigate and Banstead Development Management Plan and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

### 21 21/03311/F - Alvis House, Park Road, Banstead

This application be **DEFERRED** due to lack of time at the meeting.

### 22 22/00557/F - 80 Croydon Road, Reigate

The Committee considered an application at 80 Croydon Road, Reigate for the Demolition of existing single-storey permanent structures (used as garages and storage) and the erection of 2No. self-built semi-detached 3-bedroom family dwellings

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with associated access, external amenity spaces, refuse storage and car and cycle parking.

Alex Maunders, spoke on behalf of the neighbouring property in objection to the application, stating that the development would be overbearing on the neighbouring property. The proposed properties were higher than the neighbouring property. Historically an application here was refused in 2002 and one was approved in 2003 and this had been for a single, 2 storey dwelling. The proposal would cut off light to the neighbouring property's garden and privacy would be compromised. There was no boundary treatment under condition 18 and this should be a pre-commencement condition like that of condition 19. Conditions were requested on the times works could be carried out at the site. It was recognised that development would take place at the application site, however proportionately this was too large a development. The neighbour welcomed the Committee to attend a site visit at the property.

Petya Tsokova, the agent, spoke in support of the application explaining that this development would provide homes for local residents and would improve the current street scene. The scheme was considered in context with neighbouring properties where there were pairs of semi-detached dwellings on narrow plots, this was therefore harmonious within the locality. The approach would be to have minimal disturbance to neighbouring properties with the proposed dwellings at sufficient distances away. In order to alleviate issues of overshadowing, access to light and privacy, the taller sections of the dwellings were concentrated towards the front of the property. On matters of highways safety, the scheme was designed to the Council's policy, with sufficient parking. The new proposed layout would limit presence on the kerbside and improve highways safety in the immediate area. The applicants would ensure minimal disturbance to neighbours during the construction process, including but not limited to ensuring protection to the existing boundary vegetation, limiting work on site within periods defined, and carefully removing any hazardous materials on site. The Case Officer has evaluated the application against the Council's policies and has found it acceptable in both principle and particulars.

A request for deferment to consider reasons for refusal and a site visit were proposed by Councillor Blacker and seconded by Councillor Walsh. **RESOLVED** that the application be **DEFERRED**.

### 23 Any other urgent business

There was none.

The meeting finished at 10.32 pm