

**DORSET COUNCIL - NORTHERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 30 JULY 2020**

**Present:** Cllrs Sherry Jespersen (Chairman), Mary Penfold (Vice-Chairman), Jon Andrews, Tim Cook, Les Fry, Matthew Hall, Carole Jones, Robin Legg, Bill Pipe, Val Potheary, Belinda Ridout and David Taylor

**Also present:** Cllr David Walsh

**Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):**

Lara Aintree (Senior Lawyer - Regulatory), Robert Lennis (Area Lead (Major Projects) Eastern), Simon McFarlane (Area Lead Planning Officer, Gillingham), Steve Savage (Transport Development Manager), Allison Sharpe (Business Support Officer), Helen Whitby (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and Fiona King (Democratic Services Officer)

**117. Apologies**

No apologies for absence were received at the meeting.

**118. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made at the meeting.

**119. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2020 were confirmed and signed.

Cllr Legg wished to record that his apologies had been given for the previous two meetings due to technical issues he had encountered whilst trying to access the meetings.

**120. Public Participation**

Representations by the public to the Committee on individual planning applications are detailed below. There were no questions, petitions or deputations received on other items on this occasion.

**121. Planning Applications**

Members considered written reports submitted on planning applications as set out below.

122. **2/2019/0318/OUT - Land Off Haywards Lane (West Of Allen Close)  
Child Okeford Dorset**

The Area Lead Planning Officer introduced the application to develop land by the erection of up to 26 No. dwellings, form vehicular and pedestrian access. The current proposals which sought outline permission (with only access for consideration) had been reduced by 6 dwellings from an initial proposal of up to 32 dwellings. It was proposed that the development would be served by a single vehicular access point and pedestrian crossing from Haywards Lane.

The Officer highlighted the proposed car park and advised that the only hedgerow to be removed would be to allow access to the site. However, if more hedgerow was removed there was a condition in place for that to be replaced. The site was considered to be a sustainable location and the Applicant had agreed to the S106 obligations, as listed in the report. The economic, social benefits and environmental benefits were highlighted and it was felt that there were no adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

The Transport Development Liaison Manager highlighted the vehicular access to the site with the visibility splay which was suitable for a 30mph approach speed. A transport statement had been submitted along with a technical note that had looked at the parking accumulation at the school. The impact was minimal in respect of the cars being parked on the side of the road. Highways felt there were no significant safety issues with the application and therefore had no objections.

A number of written submissions objecting to the proposal and a statement by the applicant were read out at the meeting and are attached to these minutes.

**Local Member for Child Okeford**

Cllr Sherry Jespersen made reference to the link through the site to Allen close and asked for further clarity as the Parish Council were not aware this was a permitted path. The Area Lead Planning Officer advised that the applicants believed there could be a permissive footpath, there was a faint line showing on the constraints map. Reference was made to a covenant or legal ownership that one of the neighbours had in place across the access into the site from Allen Close. Cllr Jespersen was still unclear if members were in a position to give permission for access as no such access existed and it appeared it was unsure who owned the land the other side of the locked gate. Officers advised that the red line boundary was discrete and the number of houses would be appropriate for the site. He made reference to other sites with open boundaries and people did cross them. A gate could be installed if it was felt this particular access was detrimental to neighbouring properties. The Transport Development Liaison Manager advised that the footway linked to Allen Close was an indicative opportunity and the southern pedestrian link onto Haywards Lane was sufficient.

In respect of Heads of Terms, Cllr Jespersen noted that a reference was made to allotments, but there was inclusion on site for allotments and there

was no indication they would be an attractive proposition. There was sufficient allotment provision within the village already. The Area Lead Planning Officer made reference to the provision made on and off site with a contribution of £308 offsite. He advised that when the S106 was confirmed it would show only be a contribution for off-site allotments.

Following a question about the newly dedicated footpath from Netmead Lane officers confirmed that this was a contribution request from the Rights of Way officer for the resurfacing of a public Right of Way nearby. It was confirmed that the Right of Way did not link directly to the site.

**Members comments and questions:-**

Cllr Penfold made reference to the car park and questioned if it was part of the application. She had not seen any support for the car park and the wondered if the villagers had been asked for their views. There was concern around who would own the car park and who would be responsible for its upkeep. Officers confirmed the application was for outline and access only. Members were looking at an illustrative drawing, the land was part of the site and showed the suitability of the site for up to 26 houses. Car parking did not need to be part of the detailed application. Nobody had been canvassed, the applicant had looked at various different layouts. The Chairman felt inclined to propose an informative note regarding the car park before going forward.

Cllr Taylor asked for clarification of the speed limit on Haywards. The Transport Development Liaison Manager confirmed that the existing speed limit was 60mph but it changed to 30mph approaching the village and this would remain. Following a question about the safety of crossing the road from the car park to the school, the Transport Development Liaison Manager advised it was considered to be a safe place to cross and was essential to the proposal. The appropriate crossing construction would be installed if the application was approved. The crossing would be within the 30mph limit area. The Area Lead Planning Officer added that this was an indicative layout and the parking area did not have to be part for the detailed layout at a later stage.

Cllr Hall queried using this opportunity to reduce speed to 20mph outside the school. The Transport Development Liaison Manager advised that there was no proposal to change the speed limits, village car parking did not identify a need for the limits to be changed and this was not part of the planning process. If there was a problem with the speed limit, the village would need to apply to the Council for a change.

Cllr Andrews asked about a Neighbourhood Plan for Child Okeford and wondered if the North Dorset Plan was still valid. Officers confirmed that whilst there was not a Neighbourhood Plan the North Dorset Plan was still valid and the village did have a Village Design Statement SPD (supplementary planning document).

Cllr Cook expressed concern at the rounding off of the settlement boundary especially for those members that represented rural areas. He felt it was important to look at the wider effects. Looking at the wider picture of Child

Okeford there are so many pieces of land that could have an application put forward as a result the essential rural character of the village would be changed and felt this small development could set a wider precedent.

Cllr Ridout highlighted that in the report there were objections raised by the landscape architect when the application was based on 30 dwelling, what was their view on the lower density? The Area Lead Planning Officer advised that the particular landscape officer had since left the Council but officers were satisfied that the reduction was reflective of the character of the area given the reduction in density to 20dph (dwellings per hectare). The officer had walked the site with landscape officers and the numbers of 26 dwellings were from informal discussions with them.

Cllr Pipe was satisfied that there seemed to be a natural rounding off of the settlement boundary, the trees and hedges provision had been highlighted and the 40 % affordable housing was noted. He asked would this housing be for local people to buy or would it be for rental from a housing association. The Area Lead Planning Officer advised that a proportion of housing would be for people to buy under shared ownership and some would be rented. There would be a proportion of the housing that would remain for local people.

Cllr Legg asked for confirmation that the cash benefit came from every house. Officers confirmed that all houses would pay a contribution. Following a discussion about the amount of weight members should give to the Village Design Statement, officers advised that with the shortage of the 5 year land supply they would suggest that members gave limited weight to the policies in this Statement. However, the Statement does not preclude development and the site is not in a conservation area. The density was akin to what was surrounding the site and had already been reduced.

Cllr Legg highlighted a point made by the Parish Council in relation to deferring the application pending the outcome of an appeal on another site in the village. The Area Lead Planning Officer advised against deferring this application in order to wait for a decision as the other site was very different and the merits of the cases should not be mixed.

Cllr Potheary was concerned for the safety of walkers to the shops and amenities as there was no pavement or dedicated footway. She also queried if the development would be sustainable. The Transport Development Liaison Manager advised that the grassed area opposite the proposed pedestrian crossing point would be upgraded to provide a footway and confirmed there would be safe access from this site and was confident there were no safety issues. There were links to the existing footway facilities also. The Chairman added that there was a small amount of pavement around the school and the bus stop.

Cllr Carole Jones highlighted that as the Village Design Statement was confirmed in 2007 members should only give limited weight to this. She felt that the fear of development was always greater than the reality of a lived in site and felt that a car park would be a valuable asset. The Chairman added

that the school had not indicated support for a car park. Cllr Jones felt that the application was sound and proposed the recommendation.

Cllr Fry queried how much weight should be given to the application as it was outside the village boundary. The Area Lead Planning Officer advised that members should really be assessing other matters such as character and sustainability and it would be difficult to defend on this. Other villages had taken on extensive growth and the Council was starting to push back on some, this was not the case here.

Following a discussion about the car park Cllr Fry, whilst being aware of the issues around ownership and liability, saw this as an asset. The Chairman noted that this was a concern to the village and the school had not requested it. The Area Lead Planning Officer advised that whilst this was an illustrative drawing, the points being made were relevant and could be addressed at the outline stage. However, an informative could be added to say that at the present time the Parish Council does not see the need for a car park. Therefore Condition 12 of the decision would need to be deleted. Members were content with is approach.

**Proposed: Cllr Jones**  
**Seconded: Cllr Andrews**

#### **Decision**

That delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning to grant permission subject to the addition of an informative, the amended conditions and a Section106 agreement.

123. **2/2019/1316/REM - The Brewery, Bournemouth Road, Blandford St Mary, DT11 9LS**

The Area Lead Planning Officer introduced the application to erect 63 No. dwellings with garaging, parking, landscaping and associated infrastructure. (Reserved matters application (Phase1) to determine layout, scale, appearance and landscaping, following grant of Outline Planning Permission No. 2/2017/1706/VARIA).

The relevant planning history relating to this application was highlighted to members along with the key planning issues. Recent photographs of the area were shown to members which highlighted that a number of the buildings had now been demolished.

Following work with the Applicant, officers were now content with the design, they felt this was a highquality development.

Key planning matters were highlighted to members:-

- Flood risk
- Matters of design: Layout, Appearance, Scale
- Heritage impact
- Neighbour amenity

- Other matters raised by local Councils

The majority of the matters raised were mainly of principle and these had now been resolved. This was a large site that needed a lot of remediation.

The Transport Development Liaison Manager highlighted that the site was accessed from the historic brewery access which was already an approved access. Onsite car parking was provided in accordance with council guidance. The proposed estate road layout had been tested for emergency and refuse vehicles to be able to pass and had been approved. Highways had no objections to the proposals.

A statement by the applicant was read out at the meeting and is attached to these minutes.

### **Members comments and questions**

The Chairman noted that this was a very significant development for Blandford St Mary.

Cllr Pipe enquired if there were any listed buildings status on any of the demolished or remaining buildings. The Area Lead Planning Officer advised that whilst the development was within the Blandford conservation area but the old brewery building was not listed.

Cllr Cook asked if the non-adoption of roads caused an issue for the Authority. The Transport Development Liaison Manager advised that it was up to the applicant if they wished to offer roads for adoption it was not compulsory. Highways just approve schemes from a safety point of view. Following a question about leasehold and freehold properties and any ground management fees, the Area Lead Planning Officer advised that the cost to remediate the site had been expensive and the applicant was working the Homes England to seek to provide some affordable housing. Contract terms were not normally something that the Council would be involved in.

Cllr Legg was surprised to see access of off private roads and thought there were policies around this. The Transport Development Liaison Manager was not aware of a specific policy relating to this and noted that a number of developers' sites remained private roads and developers could not be forced to make them adopted. In response to a question about whether it could then become a gated community, the Officer advised that an application could be put forward to put up a gate but that was not being proposed with this application.

Cllr Legg highlighted that outline permission was for 180 units, therefore phases 2-4 would be of a much higher density. The Area Lead Planning Officer confirmed this would be the case and noted that the future development was likely to include 3 storey properties.

Cllr Legg made reference to comments made in December regarding flood risk but was unable to any find later correspondence regarding satisfaction with the proposal. The Area Lead Planning Officer clarified the Lead Local

Flood Authorities position and updated members on the current position in relation to condition 23 which needed to be discharged prior to development.

Cllr Potheary was concerned about adequate parking being provided and whether the streets were wide enough to park in while still being wide enough for refuse and emergency vehicles to pass through. The Transport Development Liaison Manager advised that the car parking numbers complied with council's guidance and confirmed that the site had been fully assessed. In respect of a query about children crossing the road to school, the officer confirmed that pedestrian links had been fully assessed at the outline stage. Cllr Potheary was now content with this and felt this was a very attractive development that would sit well within Blandford and proposed approval of the application.

Cllr Ridout asked about the random siting of disabled slots. The Transport Development Liaison Manager advised that a certain number had to be allocated, and developers do try to scatter them around the site, officers had little say in where they were located. However, Highways had no issues with where they had been placed.

Cllr Hall made reference to the inclusion of French drains and asked if there was a condition to enable them to be cleaned out as much as possible. The Area Lead Planning Officer advised that not only was this an exceptional site in its proximity to the River Stour it was an existing site being redeveloped so officers were dealing with flood issues to the best of their ability.

Cllr Fry enquired about any plans for renewables on the site. The Area Lead Planning Officer advised this had not been addressed but the development would be built to building regulations standard and suggested that members of the public pushed for those regulations to be changed. He also added that the development was in a conservation area close to listed buildings. Members hoped that the developers would take every opportunity to make this important and significant development for Blandford a modern and sustainable development. Cllr Fry was content to second the proposal.

Cllr Jones expressed concern at the lack of play area and to see that considering the size of the development there was no provision. The Area Lead Planning Officer advised that immediately adjacent to the site was a large green space and skateboard park. Following a question concerning the provision of electric car charging points, the officer advised this could be added as an informative along alternative energies, but the uptake was a financial issue for developers.

**Proposed: Cllr Potheary**

**Seconded: Cllr Fry**

### **Decision**

That the application be approved subject to the conditions outlined in the appendix to these minutes.

**124. Dorchester Article 4 Directive**

The Area Lead Planning Officer updated members on the public consultation that had now been carried out in respect of the Dorchester Article 4 Directive. Members were shown a map which highlighted the conservation areas in Dorchester.

Cllr Fry thought this was useful in order to protect Dorchester's heritage.

The Chairman thanked officers for undertaking the work on this.

**125. Urgent items**

There were no urgent items of business.

**Duration of meeting:** 10.00 am - 12.51 pm

**Chairman**

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