

DORSET COUNCIL - NORTHERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 15 DECEMBER 2020

Present: Cllrs Sherry Jespersen (Chairman), Mary Penfold (Vice-Chairman), Jon Andrews, Les Fry, Matthew Hall, Brian Heatley, Carole Jones, Val Potheary, Belinda Ridout and David Taylor

Apologies: Cllrs Tim Cook and Emma Parker

Also present: Cllr Nocturin Lacey-Clarke, Cllr Byron Quayle and Cllr David Walsh

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

Philip Crowther (Legal Business Partner - Regulatory), Robert Lennis (Area Lead (Major Projects) Eastern), Steve Savage (Transport Development Manager), Hannah Smith (Planning Area Manager), Emma Telford (Senior Planning Officer), Guy Tetley (Engineer (Development Liaison)), Megan Rochester (Democratic Services Officer Apprentice), Allison Sharpe (Business Support Officer) and Fiona King (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

21. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Tim Cook and Emma Parker.

22. Declarations of Interest

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

With regards to Item 5b, Cllr Hall declared an interest in respect of predetermination, as the Local Member and as a local resident. Cllr Hall undertook to not take part in the debate and agreed to speak only as the Local Member for this item.

23. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2020 were confirmed and signed.

24. 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.

25. **Planning Applications**

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

26. **2/2020/0726/REM, Nordon, Salisbury Road, Blandford Forum, DT11 7UA**

The Area Lead Planning Officer introduced the application to erect 40 no affordable homes with associated internal access, parking, gardens and open space. (Reserved Matters application to determine scale, appearance and landscaping; following the grant of Outline Planning Permission No. 2/2018/0981/OUT). The application was before members as the property was owned by the Council.

Members were advised that although the Blandford Neighbourhood Plan had progressed, outline planning permission had already been granted for this site, therefore this would not be revisited.

The scale of development was 2 storey buildings which was in keeping with the area.

The key planning matters were highlighted:-

- Appearance, Scale and Landscaping
- Neighbour amenity; and
- Heritage impact

An additional condition had been added regarding the 4 trees in front of units 1,2,3 and 4 which was highlighted to members.

Members were advised that highway matters had been previously agreed in the outline permission.

A number of written responses were received and are attached as an annexure to these minutes.

Local Member for Blandford

Cllr Byron Quayle was speaking on behalf of himself and Cllr Noc Lacey Clarke.

He urged members to vote against the application, as he felt the site was over developed and would substantially change the town forever. The retention of trees was fundamental to this area along with the Nordon building. He was aware that outline permission for 40 dwellings had been given but felt that one-bedroom buildings would suit the area better. The original outline permission did not take into account the massive impact on traffic and his view did not address the needs of the town. He felt strongly that this was the wrong development.

The Chairman reminded members this was the final stage of this particular planning application. Matters of layout, demolition of the house, highways, access and the Section 106 Order had already been decided upon in 2018

and were not for discussion at this meeting. Members needed to focus on the appearance of the proposed units. The Section 106 Agreement had already been determined and specified only the amount of affordable housing. The Area Lead Planning Officer clarified the policy position in that just 30% was affordable. If there were attempts to try to secure any more in the Section 106, it could be taken out at a later date. Some providers did struggle to get more than 30% funding from Homes England. It was noted that Aster was a registered housing provider.

In response to some of the written representations, the Area Lead Planning Officer advised that the conservation area had not been ignored at the outline application. He also highlighted the large outdoor area play area highlighted. He also highlighted to members the group of trees that were being saved.

Members comments and questions

Cllr Jones asked if Aster would have leeway of putting some of the properties at full market value. The Area Lead Planning Officer advised that the policy position was that officers could only secure 30% as affordable housing but had made an agreement with Aster for 100% affordable. If more than 30% was specified it could make it difficult for registered landlords to secure further funding from Homes England. The Chairman added that she was confident that it was Aster's intention to build affordable homes on this site as a registered housing provider. The Committee's Solicitor confirmed that the Council could only seek to secure policy compliant levels.

Cllr Ridout asked in relation to Condition 4, the Landscape Management Plan, how long was long term in respect of maintenance timescales? The Area Lead Planning Officer advised that he could liaise with the applicant to make it longer to say 20 years. It was also noted that the 4 trees that were being saved had been added to the Plan.

Cllr Taylor asked for clarification on the trees and the affordable homes aspect. The Area Lead Planning Officer highlighted the matters that were able to be discussed today and reiterated that access and layout had already been decided. Matters of scale e.g. height and volume of the buildings was to be determined today. With regards to appearance, he had worked with the Conservation Officer to secure amended schemes which had been detailed in his earlier presentation. The Landscaping Officer had also been consulted.

Cllr Fry asked if a condition could be included to ensure 100% affordable homes. The Area Planning Manager advised that placing such a condition would prohibit Aster being able to bring the scheme forward as 100% affordable. Following a question about whether Historic England had made any comment on the scheme the Area Lead Planning Officer advised that no further comments had been received, they had just reiterated their disappointment in the original application.

Cllr Fry highlighted there was nothing about renewable energies mentioned in the report. The Area Lead Planning Officer advised that planning officers did not have the leverage to insist on matters such as solar panels, this was for the developer and building regulations to take forward. Planning Officers do

look for sustainable development and Blandford was a sustainable location to have this sort of development.

Cllr Andrews asked if a play area was deemed to be in a landscaping policy? The Area Lead Planning Officer advised that was part of what already had been decided and he understood the area was aimed more towards smaller children.

Cllr Heatley was also disappointed nothing was included on the energy performance of the development. The Area Lead Planning Officer advised that the developer has to meet building regulations and planning officers were not able to push the standards issue beyond what building regulations stipulate.

Cllr Ridout highlighted that members were looking for the best possible result and legacy for Blandford such as traditional design, feature buildings and the retention of a significant number of trees and although she was disappointed there was not more play area being provided she felt this had been achieved and was happy to support the proposal with the amendments as had been highlighted.

The Area Lead Planning Officer drew members attention to the update sheet which detailed some amendments to plan numbers.

Proposed Cllr Belinda Ridout

Seconded Cllr Brian Heatley

Decision

That the application be approved subject to the conditions, and the revised conditions as detailed in the update sheet both outlined in the appendix to these minutes.

27. WD/D/19/001344, Land at Littlefield, Sherborne

Cllr Hall declared an interest in this application – predetermination

The Senior Planning Officer introduced the application to erect 10no. dwellings with associated amenity, landscaping and infrastructure including widening of the access road.

Key Planning issues were highlighted:-

- Principle of Development
- Affordable Housing
- Highways Safety; and
- Residential Amenity

There had been no objections from highways as any issues that had been raised had been addressed with a condition

Members' attention was drawn to the update sheet which included a slight amendment to condition 11 to allow more flexibility in the scheme for a pedestrian dropped kerb.

Local Member for Sherborne

Cllr Matt Hall

As an elected councillor for this area and a local resident he was very aware of the site. He supported building on this site and the types and numbers of dwellings. However, he did not support the application as by the side of Littlefield there was a long trail of vehicles that parked there regularly. He felt the road was effectively a blindspot and failed to see how the access was safe. He was struggling to see how large lorries would be able to access the site. He felt that the widening of the access road was a misnomer as it was not that part of the road that was the issue. With reference to the pedestrian access he felt this could have been widened. In his view the lack of a traffic management plan was unbelievable and should be added as a condition. He felt the 10 houses would feel imprisoned rather than part of the community and urged members to refuse.

In response to the highways issues raised by Cllr Hall, the Highways Engineer advised that Littlefield was not an unusual road in Dorset and visibility was acceptable and it was in a low speed environment. There were footways either side of the roadways and room for 2 vehicles to pass. He did not feel there were reasons to refuse on highways terms.

Members comments and questions

Cllr Taylor felt the houses would be very overlooked.

Cllr Andrews made reference to the access road into Littlefield and felt the issues occurred outside of working hours. Nos 9 and 10 in the development were a 2 storey building which overlooked the gardens of 2 bungalows and he felt this would overshadow them. The Senior Planning Officer highlighted that there were only 2 small windows that would overlook the bungalows and they would have obscured glazing, one would also be fitted with a restrictor. She did not feel this would be a significant impact on those properties.

Cllr Fry asked if access via Noake Road had been considered. The Chairman reminded the councillor that the application being considered was the one before them. Cllr Fry was concerned with the proposed access in respect of emergency vehicles and refuse lorries being able to access the site. The Highways Engineer advised there was sufficient width and would be dealt with via building regulations.

In response to a question about space standards, the Senior Planning Officer confirmed that all dwellings met the minimum required space standards. It was also confirmed that the energy efficiency rating of the proposed properties sat outside the planning process.

Cllr Heatley considered whether a condition could be included around traffic management plan as he was concerned about lorries during the construction period. The Senior Planning Officer felt this was not necessary in this instance to make the scheme acceptable.

Cllr Andrews made reference to the fact that in the past the site was a garage site and emergency vehicles could not get through. He was concerned about this going ahead with this access and proposed refusal.

Cllr Fry suggested deferring the decision to ask planning officers to visit the site outside of working hours and to speak with the applicant to try and find a solution with regards to the access. The parking Manager was concerned members were trying to solve wider parking issues on a scheme for 10 dwellings. The Application was acceptable in highways terms and therefore felt it would be difficult to try and look at something that could impact on other highways. The issues around access would be dealt with through building regulations and would be covered by separate legislation.

The Area Lead Planning Officer felt the focus was more of amenity concerns in respect of inappropriate and inconsiderate parking.

In terms of the NPFF, and with particular consideration to paragraph 109, highway safety and the residual cumulative impacts on the surrounding road network are material considerations. The Transport Liaison Development Manager highlighted that the issue with existing indiscriminate parking causing obstruction was a Police issue to enforce and control and that emergency vehicles should be able to get access the site. There is sufficient parking for this site which conforms with the Authority's guidance . He advised that, in his opinion, there are no sustainable highway reasons for refusal and that there are no highways cumulative impact issues

Following a discussion Cllr Andrews withdrew his proposal to refuse permission.

Cllr Jones felt there were no reasons to refuse permission due to inconsiderate parking and proposed the recommendation to grant. Cllr Penfold seconded this proposal. On being put to the vote this was not carried.

Cllr Fry proposed deferring the application for a site visit if possible, and further discussions with the applicant. He added that it would be helpful for officers, the applicant and the developer to meet out of hours to see the issues raised by members. Cllr Taylor seconded this proposal. On being put to the vote this was carried.

The Chairman thanked the officers for all the work done so far on this application.

Proposed Cllr Les Fry
Seconded Cllr David Taylor

Decision

That the application be deferred for a site visit, if possible, and further discussions with the applicant.

28. Urgent items

There were no urgent items of business.

29. Exempt Business

There were no exempt items of business.

Duration of meeting: 10.00 am - 12.30 pm

Chairman

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