

## **NORTHERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 9 APRIL 2024**

**Present:** Cllrs Jon Andrews, Tim Cook, Les Fry, Brian Heatley, Carole Jones, Stella Jones, and Val Potheary

**Apologies:** Cllrs Mary Penfold, Toni Coombs, Emma Parker, and David Taylor

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

Lara Atree (Senior Lawyer - Regulatory), Mike Garrity (Head of Planning), Joshua Kennedy (Democratic Services Officer), Robert Lennis (Lead Project Officer), Hannah Smith (Development Management Area Manager (North)), Megan Rochester (Democratic Services Officer) and Cass Worman (Planning Officer)

**76. Declarations of Interest**

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

**77. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March were confirmed and signed.

**78. Registration for public speaking and statements**

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.

**79. Planning Applications**

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

**80. P/OUT/2020/00026 - Land At E 389445 N 108065, North and East of the Blandford Bypass, Blandford Forum, Dorset**

Cllr Tim Cook had not taken part in the site visit; therefore, it was agreed that he would not take part in the debate and would leave the room.

Mike Garrity, Head of Planning, informed members that there had been some changes to legislation and legal advice had been sought. He informed members that they were to determine whether the previous decision to grant would have been different and that formally, planning permission had not been granted. The Head of Planning noted that the material changes had not changed the officer's recommendation, and this would be set out in further detail in the officer's presentation. In the interest of transparency, Mr Garrity made reference to an email which had been circulated prior to the meeting by the Local Ward member who had referred to the secretary of state, at this time, there had been no objections from Dorset Council and the committee were to continue determining the application, prior to the previous committee meeting which was held in October 2023 where members received a detailed presentation and debate.

With the aid of a visual presentation including plans and aerial photographs, the Case Officer identified the site and explained the proposal and relevant planning policies to members. Photographs of the site location map, illustrative masterplans and constraints maps were shown. It was confirmed that the applicant had not submitted any additional or new information since the previous committee decision. Mr Lennis informed members that the section 106 agreement had been working positively and updated them of the National Planning Policy framework updates, including changes to section 3 of the NPPF which sought to support the beauty in placemaking, it was supported with a bespoke and detailed design code. Changes had also been made to the Housing Land Supply; it was previously 5 years, but current changes have now made it 4 years. The Housing Delivery test was now advised to be at 75% as opposed to 110%. These arrangements would apply for a two-year period from the publication date of the revised framework. Blandford Neighbourhood Plan was also updated and was made with a detailed design code. The Case Officer made note to section 15, outlining changes to footnote 62, impacts of agricultural land as well as providing detail to changes to Levelling UP and Regeneration Act. The proposed enhancement would further the purpose for which this national landscape was designated.

Members were reminded of the original officer presentation with a comparison of the updated conditions, providing context of the site. The Case Officer outlined the application, providing visual aids of parameter plans, illustrative designs of building scale. Details of tree protection plans, and open space strategies were highlighted. There were no objections received from highways officers and no changes were made to paragraph 60 of the NPPF. The officer's recommendation was to consider the recent changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and to legislation through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act are such that they should not result in a change to the overall planning balance previously made on this application. Members recognised that the benefits of this scheme were 'many and weighty' and would 'boost the supply' of housing, outweighing the identified conflict with the development plan.

## **Public Participation**

Mr Richard Burden was the first objector to address the committee. His representation stated that agricultural land would have been destroyed by streets

and housing. He noted that the NPPF gave great weight to the enhancement of protecting landscapes. He did not feel as though this application complied nor did it give protection. Mr Burden looked at the revised section and, in his opinion, had been understated. He referred to the site sloping fields which were clearly visible, disrupting views to and from the landscape. The objector did not see any benefits and highlighted the need to re-examine the NPPF. He hoped the committee would reconsider and refuse.

Mr Rupert Hardy spoke in objection. He highlighted the harm to the AONB and noted that the officer's report suggested that the land was not significant, however, in his opinion, the loss of the land would have had significant effects and caused harm. Mr Hardy's representation on behalf of the CPRE noted the importance of protecting Dorset countryside. He commented on planning targets and as they had been met, did not feel as though there was a need for further development. Mr Hardy asked the committee to either refuse or defer the proposal.

Mr Martin Richley, a Pimperne resident, spoke in objection to the proposal. He raised concerns regarding impacts on the AONB, Cranborne Chase National Landscape as well as potential harm to a range of animals, birds, and bats. He did not feel as though the proposal was situated in a sustainable location nor did it support an important gap between town and country. Mr Richley highlighted the existing farmland and its contribution to food security needs; he was disappointed that this would be destroyed by concrete and bricks. He asked the committee to reconsider and urged them to reject the development.

Mr Steve O'Connell spoke in objection to the proposal. He noted his previous experience with planning committees and understood the planning balance. However, like other objectors, did not feel as though there was an overriding need for open market housing and had concerns regarding school land. Mr O'Connell could not see any highways benefits as he felt as though it would increase traffic and was concerned of the impacts on the AONB. The public objector did not feel as though the neighbourhood plan had been considered and urged the committee to reconsider their decision.

Local MP, Simon Hoare addressed the committee, urging them to refuse the application. He noted that this was the first time since 2015 that he had made a representation at planning committee, therefore, hoped this represented his strong objection. Mr Hoare felt as though the proposal was contrary to planning policy and noted the impact on the AONB. Included in his representation were concerns regarding the housing land supply and felt that the argument presented had been misleading. He urged the committee to defer the proposal and seek expert legal advice or refuse completely.

Ms Carole Tompsett spoke in support on behalf of the Blandford neighbourhood plan group. She highlighted the needed infrastructure within the area and the suitability of the site location. Ms Tompsett's representation stressed the need for affordable housing and was pleased that the council had worked closely with

developers to create a high-quality development. She felt as though the proposal would have expanded the town and local villages, attracting investment opportunities. It was noted that the plans before members met and exceeded all stipulations. Ms Tompsett hoped the committee would support the officer's recommendation.

The agent made a representation in support of the proposal, noting that he had listened carefully to the previous committee meeting. Mr Hoskinson discussed the history of the site and how it had been shaped by both Blandford and Pimperne neighbourhood plans. He referred to the design and access statement and felt as though the proposal was an exceptional application. Mr Hoskinson assured members that careful consideration had been given to the site and the applicant had worked hard with officers. Only three policy changes had been made and he urged committee members to recognise the good design with the provision of public open space as well as educational benefits. Asked members to support as previously done. The agent hoped members would support and allow the opportunity to deliver a high-quality application.

The applicant spoke in support of the proposal and was pleased to address the committee. Mr Wyatt was proud of previous completed developments which had delivered high quality homes with good employment rates working with quality developers. The applicant discussed ongoing nutrient neutrality problems from within Dorset as well as highlighting the local need. He discussed the housing crisis, including the current number of households on waiting lists. Mr Wyatt felt as though the proposal was critical to the housing land supply and pledged to create affordable, well designed, quality homes in sustainable settings. He hoped the committee would support the officer's recommendation.

Cllr Peter Slocombe addressed the committee on behalf of Pimperne Parish Council. He was disappointed with some of the illustrative drawings shown in the officer's presentation as he did not feel as though it represented the parish boundary. Cllr Slocombe strongly objected to the addition of houses in Pimperne as they did not have a housing need in the area, as well as this he did not feel as though the proposal complied with the Pimperne Neighbourhood Plan but conflicted it. Pimperne Parish Council did not feel as though the benefits outweighed the harm and therefore, urged the committee to refuse.

Cllr Alan Cross spoke in support of the proposal and highlighted that the Town Council welcomed the changes and was strongly supported. He discussed the site location and felt that the proposal would have delivered high quality homes which were urgently required. Cllr Cross emphasised the provision for a new school and the future requirements of this. In addition to this, his representation also discussed retail and community facilities which would have benefited all residents. On behalf of Blandford Town Council, Cllr Cross urged the committee to accept the updated proposals.

The Local Ward member spoke in objection to the proposal and felt as though the committee had two decisions, strongly object or defer to allow for further consideration and improvements. Cllr Jespersen was concerned about the harm that would be done if granted and discussed the importance of complying with neighbourhood plans. The Local Ward member addressed the changes and felt that they were significant. Cllr Jespersen was aware of the history of the site, however, in the interest of fairness, believed that the committee should have either refused or deferred the proposal until the next committee meeting which was scheduled to take place in June 2024.

### **Members questions and comments**

- Clarification between Housing Land Supply Test percentages.
- Concerns regarding the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act policy changes.
- Impacts on the AONB.
- Confirmation on what was considered as exceptional circumstances.
- Letton Park not situated within the AONB.
- Questions regarding the constraints of the area for development as well as points of clarification as to whether it was the only suitable site for school provision.
- Possibility of GP site and location.
- Affordable housing list requirement for social housing.
- Conflicting views from both Pimperne and Blandford Neighbourhood Plans. Members queried what weight could be given during the decision-making process.
- Cllr Pothecry welcomed the reduction of the housing land supply and the titled balance. She strongly supported neighbourhood plans and found the plan before committee attractive. However, was unable to find exceptional circumstances. Therefore, she proposed to defer. There was no seconder, therefore, the motion fell.
- Well designed development and a clear local need.
- Members supported their previous decision and did not feel as though any of the changes impacted their decision.

Having had the opportunity to discuss the merits of the application and an understanding of all this entailed; having considered the officer's report and presentation; the written representatives; and what they had heard at the meeting, a motion to **APPROVE** the officer's recommendation to **SUPPORT** as recommended, was proposed by Cllr Stella Jones, and seconded by Cllr Jon Andrews.

**Decision:** To SUPPORT the officer's recommendation to consider that the recent changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and to legislation through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act are such that they should not result in a change to the overall planning balance previously made on this application. Members recognised that the benefits of this scheme were 'many and weighty'

and would 'boost the supply' of housing, outweighing the identified conflict with the development plan.

81. **P/FUL/2024/00163 - Land Adjacent Piddlehinton Enterprise Park Church Hill Piddlehinton**

**The Case Officer provided members with the following updates:**

- There was an error in the officer report at paragraph 9.0 page 108, Puddletown Parish Council was referred to, whereas it should have read Piddle Valley Parish Council.
- The Ward Member following issue of the agenda and officer report requested that details of the Management Plan which previously in 2014 formed part of a planning condition regarding ongoing management of the site & security arrangements was updated and made available. This had subsequently been carried out, and an updated April 2024 Management Plan was now available to view on the application online. Both the Ward Member and the Parish Council had clarified that they were happy with the details as set out in the updated 2024 Management Plan.
- Following the publication of the agenda, a further representation had been received from Brian Twigg, planning agent to the objector(s) to the scheme who was registered to speak on this item. This representation pointed out that the red line on the submitted plan did not include the roadway to the West of the site: The Applicant did not own the roadway but did have the right to use that roadway with or without vehicles at all times (as confirmed by the Title Deeds). The roadway was already in use for accessing the application site and had been for many years. In addition, the site was technically also accessible from the highway at the lower end of the site within the red line plan which had been submitted. The representation also raised further concerns with regards to serving Notices on relevant landowners. The Applicant had sent the required Notices to the owners of the relevant land and sufficient time was allowed for those owners to submit a further representation if they so wished. The Council had been provided with copies of the letters and Notices, which could be found on the Council's website, and were satisfied that the correct Notices had been served.

With the aid of a visual presentation including plans and aerial photographs, the Case Officer identified the site and explained the proposal and relevant planning policies to members. Photographs of the site location were included, and the history of the site was explained to members. The Case Officer informed members that the location and impact on visual amenity was considered acceptable and a bespoke solution had been provided to protect Poole harbour catchment. There were no concerns regarding flooding, highways or impacts on neighbouring amenities. Therefore, the officer's recommendation was to grant approval subject to conditions set out in the officer's report.

**Public Participation**

Mr Twigg addressed the committee and explained his previous experience within planning. He had made previous objections to the proposal, questioning the need, sustainability of the location and the site access. Mr Twigg did not feel as though the proposal addressed national validation requirements and his representation also included his concerns regarding the implications on biodiversity and an increase in traffic movements. He hoped the committee would refuse the officer's recommendation.

**Members questions and comments**

- Clarification on site access and comments from Highways Officers.

Having had the opportunity to discuss the merits of the application and an understanding of all this entailed; having considered the officer's report and presentation; the written representatives; and what they had heard at the meeting, a motion to **APPROVE** the officer's recommendation to **GRANT** planning permission as recommended, was proposed by Cllr Jon Andrews, and seconded by Cllr Valerie Pothecry.

**Decision:** To GRANT the officer's recommendation for APPROVAL subject to conditions set out in the officer's report.

82. **Urgent items**

There were no urgent items.

83. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business.

**Decision List**

**Duration of meeting:** 10.00 am - 12.33 pm

**Chairman**

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