

Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 21 September 2023 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Tom Kelly (Chair), Georgette Polley (Vice-Chair), Paul Arnold, Mark Hooper (Substitute for Sue Shinnick) Steve Liddiard, Jacqui Maney, Terry Piccolo and Lee Watson

Steve Taylor, Campaign to Protect Rural England Representative

Apologies: Councillors Sue Shinnick

In attendance: Tracey Coleman, Chief Planning Officer
Matthew Gallagher, Major Applications Manager
Nadia Houghton, Principal Planning Officer
Jonathan Keen, Principal Planning Officer
Matthew Ford, Highways Manager
Julian Howes, Senior Highways Engineer
Daniel Kozelko, Legal Representative
Kenna-Victoria Healey, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being live webcasted, with the recording to be made available on the Council's website.

29. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 August 2023 were approved as a true and correct record.

30. Item of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

31. Declaration of Interests

The Chair of the Committee advised he was employed by DP World and would be removing himself from the Chamber and the meeting for Item 13, London Gateway Logistics Park Local Development Order (Plot 2050).

Members were also advised that Item 9, 22/01673/FUL: Belhus Park Golf And Country Park, Belhus Park Lane, Aveley, RM15 4PX had been removed from the agenda.

32. Declarations of receipt of correspondence and/or any meetings/discussions held relevant to determination of any planning application or enforcement action to be resolved at this meeting

The Chair of the Committee declared the following correspondence on behalf of the committee, and it was agreed this had been received by all Members:

- An email from Mr Sutton, Agent for Item 8: 22/01672/FUL: Thurrock Football Club Ship Lane, Aveley, RM19 1YN.
- Emails in favour and objection from residents for Item 8: 22/01672/FUL: Thurrock Football Club Ship Lane, Aveley, RM19 1YN.
- An email from the Agent for Item 10: 22/01685/FUL: Sandown Nurseries, Sandown Road, Orsett

The Vice-Chair declared she had received an email from Ms Sisterson objection to Item 8: 22/01672/FUL: Thurrock Football Club Ship Lane, Aveley, RM19 1YN.

Councillor Piccolo declared he had received correspondence in relation to Item 10: 22/01685/FUL: Sandown Nurseries, Sandown Road, Orsett.

33. Planning Appeals

The Chair of the Committee introduced the report and sought if Members had any questions, during which the Principal Planning Officer explained the appeals published within the report had been received in the previous month and any recent appeals would be published within the next agenda.

Councillor Maney left the Chamber at 6.08pm

34. 22/01672/FUL: Thurrock Football Club Ship Lane, Aveley, RM19 1YN (Deferred)

Major Applications Manager presented the application and during his update advised on late representations and highlighted the following:

- The site was located in the Green Belt
- It was noted that the connected application 22/01673/FUL for a 3G pitch at Belhus Park had been withdrawn by the Agent.
- An updated response received from Sport England (SE) raised no objection to the proposal on the basis of the specific considerations in the response letter. This was subject to conditions and/or a s106 agreement for a financial contribution towards 'offsite playing field mitigation', transfer of freehold of site to Grays FC or alternative sports body and a Community Use Agreement. SE noted that £570,000 "would not be sufficient" to fund a full artificial 3G pitch and floodlighting. (£1.1m would be likely to be required). The contribution could cover other sports infrastructure items for example at Belhus Park – but there has been no feasibility study.
- Contribution proposed by applicant wouldn't deliver a 3G pitch, so scope of proposal would have to be widened if accepted. Thurrock Council Sport and Leisure Manager advises 3G pitch would cost £900,000 - £1million. There is a funding gap and no way to make up that gap to fund a full 3G pitch at this time.

- Additional neighbour letter from resident in objection.
- Email from Cathy Sisterson in relation to lack of HGV movements on Ship Lane.
- A prior approval application for demolition of the Football Club has been submitted (but this is a different application)

During discussions the following points were acknowledged:

- Mitigation of the former football pitches raised no objection from consultation with Sport England, who made it clear that the funding being provided wouldn't deliver a full size 3G floodlit pitch and so the money would have to deliver either a smaller pitch or would have to be used for other sporting facilities.
- The HGV turn point would be located within the PDI site and although expected to be used solely for the PDI site, it would be available for errant HGV drivers to be able to use if, they were heading north from Junction 31 of the M25, which they shouldn't be doing.

During the debate Members commented as follows:

- The Chair of the Committee stated he felt the £570,000 offered as part of the application was sufficient to develop a new pitch and that by approving the application it would encourage business rates and jobs into the Borough.
- Councillor Watson confirmed she was still against the application and agreed with Officers recommendation to refuse. Sport England had clearly stated the funding provided was not enough to complete the proposed 3G development off site and on top of this the application was detrimental to the Green Belt. She considered business rates should not be taken into consideration.
- Councillor Arnold echoed that he too was still against the application and agreed with Officers recommendation to refuse. Could not support it on the level of destruction to the Green Belt with such limited benefits, including very low level of job provision.
- Steve Taylor noted that a reason put forward by the applicant was proximity to the Strategic Road Network (SRN) but the SRN was all over the country and there didn't appear to be any other locations in the UK considered/discounted. Concern also about low level of job provision. Concern also about number of battery vehicles, in time, being stored on site.
- Councillor Polley spoke in favour of granting permission for the application given the lack of sports provision in the Borough and to enable an option to tackle obesity in the Borough. She mentioned she felt the application was at a different place from when it was first presented and welcomed the proposal of jobs into the Borough – there would be support jobs in the Borough as well as the onsite jobs. She continued by commenting even if Members were to refuse the application, it was still possible for the PDI centre to be developed in Aveley. The 2-year timeline since the previous refusal had made a big

difference in terms of background circumstances. A petition of 4000 signatures of support had been received in support, nothing similar in objection had been received.

Councillor Kelly observed that during the debate it was clear the vote in favour of the officer's recommendation of refusal was split. The Members for and against were as follows:

For: (2) Councillors Paul Arnold and Lee Watson

Against: (2) Tom Kelly (Chair) and Georgette Polley (Vice-Chair)

Abstained: (0)

With the Chair having the casting vote, Councillor Kelly proposed that the 6 reasons listed with the report be put forward to support a recommendation for approval of the application, which was seconded by Councillor Polley.

A motion for approval was therefore put forward. The Council's Legal Advisor also provided advice to the Chair regarding the Council's required next steps to the National Planning Casework Unit should the new motion be agreed.

For: (2) Tom Kelly (Chair) and Georgette Polley (Vice-Chair)

Against: (2) Councillors Paul Arnold and Lee Watson

Abstained: (0)

The Chair exercised his casting vote and the application was approved, subject to conditions, s106 Agreement and referral to the Planning Casework Unit (as a departure from policy).

Councillor Maney returned to the Chamber at 6.49pm

35. 22/01673/FUL: Belhus Park Golf And Country Park, Belhus Park Lane, Aveley, RM15 4PX (Deferred)

The Chair advised the application had been removed.

36. 22/01685/FUL: Sandown Nurseries, Sandown Road, Orsett

The report was presented by the Principal Planning Officer, during which he summarised the following the application:

- The site was located within the Green Belt.
- The development proposed was inappropriate development by definition and was therefore harmful to the Green Belt.
- Very Special Circumstances had been put forward and considered, however do not overcome the harm to the Green Belt.

- Any backland development would be deemed unacceptable.
- There was a lack of visitor parking which had not been addressed.
- There was likely to be harm to neighbour amenity because of access arrangements.

Further to questions to Planning and Highways Officers it was acknowledged that the turning head which was located between the houses, appeared to be a standard size however officers had raised concerns in relation to the 90 degree bend, particularly with refuse vehicles and some larger emergency service vehicles. It was possible they could due to the overrun of the vehicle swept path oversail the land part of the first property.

Members heard the road was designated as a shared surface, so it was expected that both vehicles and pedestrians could use in it. There had been the indication that it is able to have two-way traffic flow upon it.

Speaker statements were heard from:

Statement of Support: Mr R Forde, Principal Director at Smart Planning (Agent)

During debate Members raised their concerns commenting:

- The development was not in keeping with the local area and it felt like this application was to be used to fill in the gaps on the previous development.
- The road proposed as part of the application and the 90-degree bend could cause difficulty for refuse and emergency vehicles.
- The proposed location was part of the Green Belt.

Councillor Watson proposed the officer's recommendation of refusal and was seconded by Councillor Liddiard.

For: (8) Councillors Tom Kelly (Chair), Georgette Polley (Vice-Chair), Paul Arnold, Mark Hooper, Steve Liddiard, Terry Piccolo, Jacqui Maney and Lee Watson.

Against: (0)

Abstained: (0)

37. 22/01284/TBC: Garage Area Rear Of 33 To 53 Vigerons Way, Chadwell St Mary, Essex

The report was presented by the Principal Planning Officer, during which he summarised the following the application:

- The site was Previously Developed Land in a built-up area.
- Was seeking provision of 7 new Council dwellings.

- The design, appearance and layout were all acceptable
- The site was within easy walking distance of open space and local shopping parade.

The following was highlighted from Members questions:

- Rear access from the west of the site was to be protected and to remain in place for neighboring homes to access garages and gardens.
- Highway Officers confirmed they had no concerns relating to parking for application, as parking was being offered for each dwellings.
- The design for the scheme was chosen as it was deemed the dwellings would blend in with other designs within the area.

Speaker statements were heard from:

Statement of Support: Mr S Robinson, Agent/Architect, Agent (via MST)

Through the debate Members stated they were in favour of the development and several of them liked the proposed design of the dwellings and the modern approach to the rear of the development. Officers were asked during construction there would be communication with residents living in the area.

Councillor Polley Vice-Chair of the Committee proposed the officer's recommendation of approval subject to conditions and was seconded by Councillor Watson.

For: (8) Councillors Tom Kelly (Chair), Georgette Polley (Vice-Chair), Paul Arnold, Mark Hooper, Steve Liddiard, Terry Piccolo, Jacqui Maney and Lee Watson.

Against: (0)

Abstained: (0)

38. 22/01706/TBC: Broxburn Drive, South Ockendon, Essex

The report was presented by the Principal Planning Officer, during which she summarised the following the application:

- Would provide 100% affordable Housing, Education and Healthcare contributions.
- Would introduce contemporary architectural design, and high-quality materials to complement the site.
- Would improve the current layout of the estate providing improvements in communal amenity space, improved natural surveillance, pedestrian access and landscaping.
- Although would impact neighbouring amenity, highways and visual amenity were all considered acceptable.

During questions the following was acknowledged:

- A consultation had been held with residents living close to the development and a construction management plan was in place.
- There was a higher level of noise mitigation, given part of the development's location to Ockendon Train Station.
- Officers had sought advice from the Urban Design team in relation to the application design to ensure that it fitted with existing Council housing and the character of Ockendon.

Speaker statements were heard from:

Statement of Support: Ms F Harte, Agent (via MST)

During the debate stage Members had differences of opinion as to the design of the proposals, however, all were in agreement to support the application which offered affordable housing to Thurrock residents and complimented officers for their work with consulting with residents as part of the application.

Councillor Polley Vice-Chair of the Committee proposed the officer's recommendation of approval subject to conditions and was seconded by Councillor Watson.

For: (8) Councillors Tom Kelly (Chair), Georgette Polley (Vice-Chair), Paul Arnold, Mark Hooper, Steve Liddiard, Terry Piccolo, Jacqui Maney and Lee Watson.

Against: (0)

Abstained: (0)

Councillor Kelly left the meeting at 8.25pm

39. London Gateway Logistics Park Local Development Order (Plot 2050)

Major Applications Manager presented the report as published within the agenda.

At 8.36pm the Committee agreed to suspend standing orders to allow the agenda to be completed.

During conversations and following questions from Members it was acknowledged:

- LDO 1.5 was to bridge the gap between LDO1 ending and LDO2 commencing. It was also limited to floorspace.
- In terms of a timeline it, was still early stages and matters such as an EIA screening need to take place, as part of the process.
- Members were advised the local planning authority had received Counsel Advice due to the complexity.

The Legal Representative addressed Members advising them, officers were aware that from LDO 1 the order would be time limited, as this was limited to ten years. He continued by stating it was possible to impose other limits to achieve limitation on how these orders existed, how they interact with past and future orders, which was something that had to be done in relation to the interaction with LDO 1.

Members heard how the Council also had the power to revoke these at any time and explained that 61A, (6) of the Town & Council Planning Act 1990, provided a local planning authority to revoke a local development order any time and the Secretary of State also had power to do that. Meaning there were controls that as a Council Members could make sure that LDO 1.5 couldn't be controlled.

During the debate it was commented that Members had concerns for the local road network being overloaded and could foresee highway issues for residents as well as those commuting to London Gateway. It was further considered that the infrastructure that surrounded this area needed support and it was important for London Gateway to take responsibility on how they manage what goes into London Gateway into consideration.

Overall, the Committee thanked Officers for being proactive and for trying to offer solutions to these challenges.

RESOLVED:

To note this report and delegate authority to the Head of Service - Development Services and Major Applications Manager to progress preparation of LDO1.5 in respect of up to 85,000 sq.m. of commercial floorspace, including the stages of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening and also including delegated authority to undertake statutory consultation and publicity as soon as draft LDO1.5 and supporting documentation is complete.

The meeting finished at 9.01 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk**

