

## **Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 30 November 2023 at 6.00 pm**

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

**Apologies:** Steve Taylor, Campaign to Protect Rural England Representative

**In attendance:**  
Nadia Houghton, Principal Planner  
Chris Purvis, Major Applications Manager  
Julian Howes, Senior Highway Engineer  
Caroline Robins, Locum Solicitor

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Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

### **49. Minutes**

The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023 will be presented at the January 2024 meeting of the Planning Committee.

### **50. Item of Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

### **51. Declaration of Interests**

No interests were declared.

### **52. 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 Vice-Chair confirmed that members of the committee (Councillors Kelly, Maney, Piccolo & Shinnick) undertook a site visit of Greystead, Parkers Farm Road, Orsett on the 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

### **53. Planning Appeals**

Planning Appeals were discussed.

- Councillor Polley inquired about the appeal of 63 Wharf Road, Stanford-le-Hope. The Principal Planning Officer advised that the appeal had only very recently been received in the last 48 hours, and after the publication date of the agenda. The details of the appeal will be in the next agenda.
- Councillor Polley asked how the Local Authority is holding up on appeals. Officer directed members to page 8 of the agenda and an appeal performance table.
- Councillor Arnold expressed his disappointment and frustration with the appeal decision at 63 Wharf Road and informed the Committee he believes it to be a poor decision and a shame for residents of the area. The Officer was surprised by the decision given the planning history at the site and a summary would be picked up next month.
- Councillor Watson sought clarity and asked if there was a way to challenge the decision. The Officer informed the Committee that legal advice had not yet been obtained but would be sought. Officers will update Members next month on the issue within the appeal summary.
- Councillor Liddiard noted an appeal that was lodged in Sycamore Close, Tilbury for a felling of a Sycamore Tree and argued against the felling of the tree. Officer informed the Committee there had been a history of refusing the TPO applications for the felling of the tree, the Local Authority is aware of the importance of the tree and is defending its decision at appeal.

**54. 23/00813/HHA: Greystead, Parkers Farm Road, Orsett**

The Principal Planning Officer presented the application, briefly reminding members of the previous presentation, and highlighted the following points:

- The application is for a garage extension in the Green Belt and a site visit took place on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023 where Members viewed the site. The garage is 60sq metres and would sit in line with the existing driveway.
- The application is recommended for refusal.

Members asked the following questions:

- Councillor Shinnick asked where the building would be in line with the conifer trees at the site.
  - Estimate of 2 metres from the boundary.
- Councillor Piccolo asked if there were any photos of the parked cars.
  - Officer went through the images of the site including the vehicles on site for the Committee.

During the debate the following was highlighted:

- The Chair opened stating the site visit was useful and you could see the area was enclosed and that a garage could improve the situation as currently the cars were covered by tarpaulin. The Chair could see both sides of the argument and noted it wasn't an easy decision. The Chair noted the recommendation and how the application could damage the Green Belt but also noted the merits of the application.
- Councillor Arnold stated that the application was a development in the Green Belt that wasn't necessary. The building may not be seen, but it would still be there and foresaw other applications of a similar nature being submitted across the borough. Councillor Arnold also stated a line had to be drawn in the sand somewhere.
- Councillor Maney stated it is not wherever the building would be visible or not but the fact the garage would be on the Green Belt. Councillor Maney was also concerned by the scale, was conflicted and understood why the application was submitted by the resident.
- Councillor Piccolo was glad he visited the site and noted the site would not be visible from any angle and believed that the area/view would improve if the cars were able to be put in a garage. Councillor Piccolo argued for an exception to be made.
- Councillor Liddiard stated if the premise is used that buildings can't be seen in the Green Belt and therefore allow them applications would increase in number and cause chaos and was of the opinion the application should be refused.
- Councillor Watson didn't understand why the building needed to be so big and agreed with Councillor Liddiard and said we shouldn't set a precedent.
- Councillor Polley noted that it had been said the building couldn't be seen due to the conifer trees and added that conifer trees can become diseased and/or felled and are not there for time immemorial. Councillor Polley also noted that the Committee's decision can influence the future. There had been continued extensions to the footprint of the property and supported the officer's recommendation.
- The Chair closed the debate stating he saw both sides of the argument and called for a vote.

The Chair, Councillor Kelly read the officers recommendation.

Councillor Liddiard recommended refusal.

Councillor Watson seconded it.

**For: (6)** Councillors G Polley, P Arnold, S Liddiard, J Maney, S Shinnick and, and L Watson

**Against: (2)** Councillors T Kelly, T Piccolo

**Abstained: (0)**

**55. 22/01606/FUL: Titan Works, Titan Road, Grays**

The Major Application Manager presented the application and highlighted the following points:

- The application relates to the demolition and clearing of all existing buildings on the site for redevelopment of 28 units.
- 39,636sq metres of employment land floorspace. The site covers an area 13.79 hectares, of which 9.12 hectares is usable. The site sits 17 metres lower than the surrounding ground level.
- The proposal seeks to build small, medium and two large sized business units for general industrial, storage and/or distribution usage. Area is designated as an employment area.
- The application is recommended for approval.

Members asked the following questions to the Major Application Manager and Highways Principal Engineer:

- Councillor Arnold asked if there would be any improvement to the junction on Hogg Lane
  - Highways team is seeking improvements.
  - Models show it would not impact on the junction at Hogg Lane, there would be an impact at the site, but queues are not expected.
- Councillor Arnold further asked if the well-established trees on the site would be protected.
  - No plans to remove trees. Plans to increase trees.
  - Tree lined avenue would remain.
- Councillor Polly had concerns regarding site access and asked if the Fire Brigade had been consulted and what the emergency evacuation plan would be.
- Councillor Polly further inquired about the travel plan and asked if a shuttle bus service to the unit could be added to the lease agreement.
  - Only one vehicle access
  - Units would be built to meet fire safety regulations.
  - Evacuation procedures fall under health and safety legislation.
  - Site is a flood zone, and a flood evacuation plan would need to be put in place.
  - Car club places proposed onsite.
  - If there is a requirement for a shuttle bus a service could be set up in the future.
  - Site will have better pedestrian access to town centre and railway station.
- Councillor Liddiard asked if the area is currently derelict and what the net increases of jobs would be.
  - Business operations in the area are low.
  - 86 jobs on site currently, with a predicted increase to 650 jobs.
- Councillor Maney asked how close the existing houses were to the site and if there would be an impact.

- All buildings would be in the confines of the quarry, with nothing projecting above the cliff face.
- Councillor Watson overall liked the plan but had a few concerns. One concern was regarding possible future flooding and asked if there was a flood would there be any contamination coming from the units and how it would be managed. A second concern was regarding the road network and asked what the impact would be with increased HGV traffic. How far out did the traffic model look. Councillor Watson also asked if only £50,000 had been highlighted for pedestrian work.
  - In high-risk floodplain but there is no objection from the Environment Agency.
  - Site has contamination at present and would be decontaminated before any occupation of the site.
  - The road network has been assessed as part of the application. Planned modification at the Treacle Mine roundabout, an additional lane will come down from North Stifford interchange to improve traffic flow.
  - A contribution has been asked of the applicant towards pedestrian improvements.
  - A Lorry routing management plan would be put in place to ensure lorries and HGVs would have to enter in left and exit right.
- Councillor Shinnick asked if the HGVs will be able to turn right and if it would be better for the HGVs to use the roundabout.
  - Only able to turn right, road is wide enough.
- Councillor Piccolo noted there would be increased traffic to the site and asked if access would be made easier if a yellow box junction was set up.
  - Modelling shows it would not be necessary.
- Councillor Piccolo further asked who would be monitoring the junction.
  - Improvements would be made as necessary.
- Councillor Arnold had seen issues at the junction and fears backups on Hogg Lane would cause issues in the area. Councillor Arnold is not confident that HGVs would follow set out travel plans.
- Councillor Arnold further asked if there were any provisions in place for solar panels to be put in by the applicant.
  - Applicant produced an energy statement. At least 20% of energy from used by units would be from renewable sources.
- Councillor Watson asked if there was an asbestos plan.
  - Not known, asbestos sits outside of planning legislation.
- Councillor Polley asked who would monitor the site to make sure operators at the site respect residents.
  - Conditions are in place for developer to respect residents.
  - If residents complained, it would be investigated.
- The Chair, Councillor Kelly noted the possibility of increased business rates due to increased floor space and asked if there is a commitment timeline.
  - Business rates are not a material planning consideration.

- Conditions would be, start in 3 years, phasing arrangement with demolition in May 2024 with development completion in September 2025

Speaker Statements were heard from:

Statement of Support: Alastair King of Chancerygate

During the debate the following was highlighted:

- The Chair welcomed the plan and noted it would be a good regeneration opportunity for Grays including: the new pedestrian access, jobs, boost to economy. Councillor Kelly also understood the concerns with HGV movement but was content with the traffic modelling. CCTV could be added at the access point to monitor HGV movement if there was an abuse of left hand turns.
- Councillor Arnold identifies there could be a loss on natural habitat and had concerns regarding HGV traffic, its cumulative effect and possible gridlock in the borough. Highway issues cannot be disregarded. Councillor Arnold also added that the scheme was fantastic, and the pedestrian access to the town centre could improve business. The current site looks tired and welcomed regeneration to the area.
- Councillor Polley agreed with Councillor Arnold. Councillor Polley welcomed job creation and hoped the development would bring life and energy to Grays High Street. Councillor Polley also shared her concerns regarding the road network. Councillor Polley noted she would not like the security barrier by the entrance potentially blocking traffic on Hogg Lane.
- Councillor Watson shared her worries regarding the road network but liked the development, its training plan, the consideration to biodiversity. Councillor Watson noted the loss of 43 trees but appreciated the gain to the area: increased footfall and the opportunity to bring more life into Grays.
- Councillor Piccolo thinks the development is great, it would be well hidden, and any noise would be mitigated. Councillor Piccolo shared his concerns with the impact the site would have on the traffic on Hogg Lane. There are no residents on Hogg Lane to lodge a complaint. Monitoring on Hogg Lane would need to be put in place and the entrance and exit of the site.
- Councillor Maney noted it would be a good development for Grays but also shared the same concerns regarding the road network and local wildlife.
- The Chair closed the debate and summed up the concerns of the members and asked what options are available for CCTV monitoring the site exit and entrance.
- The Major Application Manager answered questions that came up in the debate.

- With regards to the environment, conditions for detailed landscaping, tree planning, and biodiversity are in place and it would improve the ecology of the site.
- Security barrier would be at the bottom of the access.

The Chair, Councillor Kelly recommended approval.  
Councillor Polley seconded it.

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

**Against: (0)**

**Abstained: (0)**

**56. 23/00033/FUL: Units 1 to 8 Including Burger King, Thurrock Shopping Park, Weston Avenue, West Thurrock**

The Major Application Manager presented the application and highlighted the following points:

- The application relates to the demolition and clearing of all existing buildings on the site to allow redevelopment for a two-story distribution warehouse with a total floorspace of 61,983sq metres.
- The site is situated on the western side of the Lakeside basin at Thurrock Retail Park
- The application is recommended for approval.

Members asked the following questions to the Major Application Manager and Highways Principal Engineer:

- Councillor Watson shared her concerns with the amount of HGV traffic that needs to use junction 31 of the M25 and asked how junction 31 could cope and what would be done to help the movement around the junction for the surrounding towns and villages.
  - Could potentially reduce traffic at junction 31 as traffic would be taken off in models.
- Councillor Watson stated she would challenge those findings and was of the opinion that junction 31 could not handle additional traffic.
  - If approved, future models for other developments would need to consider the traffic generated by this application.
- Councillor Watson asked what the purpose was of the triangle of land in north of the site.
  - Remain as car park.
- Councillor Watson asked if gates would be installed at the entrance and exit of the site to stop car cruising and racing.
  - The road does not loop round the building. The road shown is on an upper level and is not connected to the ground level road.

- There are existing barriers at the site.
- Councillor Watson was also concerned with the amount of traffic needing to use the roundabout on Weston Avenue.
- The Chair was interested in the design and noted it was the first building of its type. The Chair asked for the number of traffic movements in a day and if it was 24-hour operation.
  - Currently
    - 1,211 vehicles in Saturday peak between 13:00pm – 14:00pm.
    - 144 vehicles in the morning peak.
    - 543 vehicles in afternoon peak.
  - Worst case scenario model.
    - 86 vehicles in Saturday peak
    - 385 vehicles in the morning peak.
    - 197 vehicles in afternoon peak.
  - 24-hour operation
- The Chair asked if the units could be operated by separate companies.
  - Yes, 2 companies 1 per floor.
- Councillor Watson asked what the impact of 24-hour operation would have on the residents in Lakeside.
  - A traffic route plan would be put in place to avoid residential areas.
- Councillor Watson asked what would be done to monitor HGV traffic.
  - Most direct route would not go through residential areas to minimise driver mileage.

*The Chair paused the meeting for a break at 20:12pm*

- Councillor Polly shared her concerns regarding junction 31 of the M25 and would not like to the borough only to be a distribution employment zone. Councillor Polly asked if there was existing retail space in Lakeside to absorb the retail business currently on the site.
  - From a customer view there are other retail options available.
  - Moving business to nearby vacant units.
- Councillor Polly asked if the likely operators were known and looked for a sense of scale for the building. Councillor Polley also had worries about the signage being a distraction for drivers.
  - Operators are not yet known.
  - Building would be 33.6 metres high and the clocktower is 33.5 metres high.
  - Signage is not part of the application but an idea of where the signage could go. Signage has to be applied for separately.
  - Highways would look at signage and advertisements to ensure they wouldn't distract drivers.

*The Chair suspended standing orders so the meeting could continue beyond 20:30pm*

- Councillor Arnold asked if the clocktower was a protected building.



- The Chair asked if signage covered all four sides.
  - Plans show likely areas.

Speaker Statements were heard from:

Statement of Support: Jayme McArthur of British Land (Applicant & Landowner)

During the debate the following was highlighted:

- The Chair opened the debate, the Lakeside area is changing, and we should monitor every one of those changes. Councillor Kelly was impressed by the design of the warehouse and the 50/50 split of traffic. He welcome the economic growth the development could bring.
- Councillor Liddiard liked the development and was not worried about the 24-hour operation as the operator could stagger the hours to avoid peak times.
- Councillor Polley noted Thurrock has been promoted as the logistics hub for the East of England for the past 20 years and welcomed the innovative ideas. Councillor Polley was also comforted that the landowner also owned the retail park next to the proposed site as there would be an incentive to be a good neighbour.
- Councillor Polley also noted that the east facing slips needed to be looked at as well as amenities for drivers.
- Councillor Arnold could see problems with the road network and commented that there must be a breaking point at some point for the network. Councillor Arnold could see the benefits to the borough but also the disadvantages for the road network.
- Councillor Piccolo liked the application and the staggered [\[RC1\]](#) times of operation. 24-hour operation could help the road network. The impact is lessened by being near the highway network. Councillor Piccolo noted there were many vacant units in Lakeside and moving business could revitalise the area.
- Councillor Watson shared her concerns with Councillor Arnold with the added concerns of the local residents and received no reassurance that the lorries would not use residential roads. Councillor Watson argued that it is not about the jobs or the building but the stress on the road network and residents in Lakeside.

The Chair, Councillor Kelly recommended approval.  
Councillor Liddiard seconded it.

**For: (6)** Councillors Tom Kelly (Chair), Georgette Polley (Vice Chair), Paul Arnold, Steve Liddiard, Jacqui Maney and Terry Piccolo.

**Against: (1)** Councillor Lee Watson

**Abstained: (1)** Councillor Sue Shinnick

The recording of the meeting can be viewed from the following link:  
[Planning Committee - 30th November 2023 at 6:00pm - Thurrock Council committee meeting webcasts \(public-i.tv\)](#)

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[\[RC1\]](#) Check this shouldn't read 'staged'

**The meeting finished at 9.00 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](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)**