

# Minutes

of a meeting of the

## Planning Committee

held on Wednesday 19 August 2020 at 5.00 pm

This was a virtual meeting

Open to the public, including the press

### Present:

Members: Councillors Max Thompson (Chair), Val Shaw (Vice-Chair), Jerry Avery, Ron Batstone, Eric Batts, Diana Lugova, Robert Maddison and Janet Shelley

Officers: Paul Bateman, Candida McKelvey, Penny Silverwood and Stuart Walker

Also present: Councillor David Grant

### PI.136 Election of Chair

Councillor Val Shaw, Vice Chair, in the chair.

The committee had a vacancy for chair of the committee created by the resignation of the Chair, Councillor Bob Johnston. A proposal was made in respect of Councillor Max Thompson. A motion, moved and seconded, to elect Councillor Max Thompson Chair of the Vale of White Horse Planning Committee, was declared carried on being put to the vote.

**RESOLVED;** that Councillor Max Thompson is elected Chair of the committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

### PI.137 Chair's announcements

Councillor Max Thompson in the Chair.

The Chair had no announcements but ran through housekeeping arrangements appropriate to a virtual meeting.

### PI.138 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

## **PI.139 Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on Wednesday 29 July 2020, were agreed to be a correct record of the meeting. It was agreed that the Chair sign them as such.

## **PI.140 Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **PI.141 Urgent business**

There were no urgent business.

## **PI.142 Public participation**

The committee noted the list of members of the public registered to speak at the meeting. The committee had received prior to the meeting statements which had been made, which would be placed on the council's web site.

## **PI.143 P18/V0259/O - Land South of Steeds Farm, Coxwell Road, Faringdon**

The committee considered application P18/V0259/O for outline planning permission for up to 125 dwellings and associated public open space. All matters except access reserved (as amended by plans and documents received 2 May 2018, 3 May 2018 and 31 October 2018). Viability assessment submitted 10 April 2019, amended viability assessment submitted on land South of Steeds Farm, Coxwell Road, Faringdon.

Consultations, representations, policy and guidance, and the site's planning history were detailed in the officer's report, which formed part of the agenda pack for the meeting.

The planning officer reported that a late objection had been received by officers, which considered that the application represented a lack of infrastructure and facilities, the urbanisation of Great Coxwell, and would have a detrimental effect upon the community of Faringdon. These issues had been addressed in the report to the committee.

The planning officer advised the committee that in April 2019 parish boundaries in the vicinity of the site were changed and the application site now fell within the Faringdon Town administration boundary. The application site did however remain within the designated area of the made Great Coxwell Neighbourhood Plan, therefore it was this neighbourhood plan that formed part of the Development Plan to which the application would be assessed against, along with the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 (LPP1) and Part 2 (LPP2).

The committee noted that main recommendation 1 referred to an overage clause. The planning officer reported that this condition would be amended in the event of outline planning permission being granted.

Referring to the principle of development, the planning officer reported that the proposal was part of the South of Faringdon strategic housing site, allocated for housing by Core Policy 4 of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 (LPP1). The principle of development was therefore acceptable, unless material considerations indicated otherwise. Core Policy 20 stated that Vale of White Horse District Council – Planning Committee Minutes

development at this strategic allocation would be supported where development met the requirements set out within the Site Development Template, and in accordance with the Development Plan taken as a whole. The Site Development Template stated that the overall allocation would deliver around 200 homes, subject to masterplanning.

In meeting housing needs, there was a presumption in favour of sustainable development under policy CP4 of LPP1. The government also expected allocated sites to make optimal use of their potential to achieve efficient use of land. 125 units had been assessed against all relevant planning considerations and no technical objections had been raised. Therefore, officers considered that an increase of up to 125 dwellings on the approximate number of 200 was, in principle, reasonable, and did not result in a significantly different development to that outlined in the Local Plan. The final number of dwellings would be determined at application stage and there was no cap on the number. Sustainability was a major presumption. Only access into the site was to be considered at this stage. Appearance, layout, scale and landscaping were all reserved for future consideration.

The planning officer advised that access was proposed via a new junction onto Coxwell Road in the south east corner of the site, with a right-hand turn lane into the site from Coxwell Road. The access plan, accompanied by other application drawings, was attached at Appendix 2 of the report, and a plan was displayed to the Committee at the meeting. Pedestrian access points to connect to the adjacent development on the northern part of the allocation would be provided at Reserved Matters stage.

The planning officer provided detailed information to the committee concerning building heights, following a question. The committee was informed that a Building Heights parameter plan had been submitted that indicated that buildings with higher ridge heights of up to 9.5 metres (typically 2.5 storey properties) would be located in the north east corner of the site close to Coxwell Road, and adjacent residential development. Development around the periphery of the site to the west and south would be limited to up to 8.5 metres ridge height (typically 2 storey properties) where the site met the rural edge and rose slightly in the west. Policy NDS9 of the Great Coxwell Neighbourhood Plan required that new development should be no higher than two storeys, with roof space behind dormers. Officers considered this to be 2.5 storey accommodation, and whilst it was likely that the rooflines of the development would be seen in some glimpsed long distance views from higher land to the south west, the development would be seen in the context of the existing urban edge of Faringdon, which was acceptable.

The committee was shown slides of views to and from the site, notably its relationship to the Grade 1 listed Great Barn; the submitted heritage statement confirmed that views of the development to and from the barn would be limited.

The planning officer reported that the National Policy Planning Framework advised that planning obligations should only be sought where they met all of the following tests in paragraph 56: namely, 'necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; directly related to the development; and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development'.

In addition, Core Policy 7 of LPP1 provided that development would only be permitted where the necessary physical infrastructure and service requirements to support the development could be secured. If infrastructure requirements could render the development unviable, proposals for major development should be supported by a viability assessment.

The planning officer reported that the developer had submitted a viability assessment which identified that the proposed development would not be viable if all of the proposed infrastructure costs were sought with a scheme that was policy compliant in terms of affordable housing. In reviewing the assessment, officers had sought to ensure that developer contributions towards essential infrastructure were prioritised alongside affordable housing to make the development acceptable, in line with Core Policy 7 requirements of LLP1.

The planning officer reported that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was adopted in September 2017 and implemented in November 2017. The monies accrued would fund infrastructure and support growth. In general, off-site mitigation would be sought via CIL and on-site elements and direct mitigation would be sought via a S.106 agreement. This site however was within Zone 3 and was exempt from CIL charges. Off-site mitigation would therefore be sought via a S.106 agreement.

Councillor Dr. Mike Wise, a representative of Faringdon Town Council and of Great Coxwell Parish Council, spoke objecting to the application. A statement he had submitted jointly on behalf of both councils had been circulated to the Committee in advance of the meeting.

Nathan McLoughlin, the agent, spoke in support of the application. A statement he had submitted had been circulated to the Committee in advance of the meeting.

Councillor David Grant, a local ward councillor, spoke objecting to the application. A statement he had submitted jointly with Councillor Bethia Thomas, the other Faringdon ward councillor, had been circulated to the Committee in advance of the meeting.

The committee expressed concerns at the seemingly inadequate infrastructure provision, particularly leisure facilities and healthcare provision. It also considered that the affordable housing provision proportion could be increased and that the development appeared to be presented in split phases to avoid optimum affordable housing numbers. The planning officer confirmed that this was not a split site development (which commonly occurred with much smaller sites).

The planning officer reported that following review, amendments to the viability assessment had been made to ensure essential infrastructure to support the development was prioritised, as required by Core Policy 7 of LPP1. Officers considered on this basis, and in consultation with housing development officers, that the scheme could only viably provide 24.8% affordable housing provision with a tenure split of 52% affordable rented and 48% shared ownership.

The planning officer referred the committee to the table at paragraph 5.5 of the report, which listed the contributions which had been requested from the developers. A total of £683,606 had been accrued. In reviewing the viability assessment which had been submitted, officers had sought to ensure that developer contributions towards essential infrastructure were prioritised alongside affordable housing, to make the development acceptable; a table at paragraph 5.57 itemised the contributions necessary in the light of the viability assessment, which were considered essential by officers, and which were considered fair and proportionate. These had been agreed with the applicant.

The committee remained concerned that the affordable housing element of the proposal, as a material consideration, was not adequate and that infrastructure provision (by reason

of lower than expected S.106 funds) did not meet the needs of such a substantial development. For these reasons they were unable to support the proposal.

A motion, moved and seconded, to refuse outline planning permission was declared carried on being put to the vote.

**RESOLVED;** to refuse outline planning permission for application P18/V0259/O for the following reasons;

1. Inadequate affordable housing.
2. Insufficient projected S.106 funds for infrastructure provision.

The meeting closed at 6.30 pm