

# Minutes

of a meeting of the

## Planning Committee

held on Wednesday, 23 June 2021 at 6.00

pm

in the First Floor, 135 Eastern Avenue,  
Milton Park, Milton, OX14 4SB



**Open to the public, including the press**

### Present in the meeting room:

Members: Councillors Max Thompson (Chair), Val Shaw (Vice-Chair), Ron Batstone, Cheryl Briggs, Jenny Hannaby, Diana Lugova, Ben Mabbett, Mike Pighills and Janet Shelley

Officers: Paul Bateman and Emily Hamerton

### Remote attendance:

Councillor Paul Barrow and Councillor Richard Webber  
Officers: Martin Deans, Susie Royse and Stuart Walker

Number of members of the public: 3

### PI.44 Chair's announcements

The chair welcomed the two new members to the committee, Councillor Cheryl Briggs and Councillor Ben Mabbett.

### PI.45 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

### PI.46 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

### PI.47 Urgent business

There was no urgent business.

### PI.48 Public participation

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A list showing members of the public who had registered to speak had been sent to the committee prior to the meeting. Statements received from the public were circulated to the committee prior to the meeting.

## **PI.49 P21/V0293/FUL - Land at Park Farm, East Challow**

The committee considered application P21/V0293/FUL for a variation of conditions 1 (approved plans), 5 (car parking) & 6 (boundary details in accordance with specific plan) on application P18/V0744/RM. Reserved Matters application following Outline Approval P16/V0652/O (as varied by application no. P17/V2884/FUL) for the appearance, landscaping, layout and scale. Development of up to 88 dwellings including 40% affordable housing, landscaping and other associated works with all matters reserved with the exception of access) on land at Park Farm, East Challow.

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 the application site formed part of a wider area on which the council had permitted 88 dwellings and that development had commenced, with some dwellings completed and others under construction. This application would not increase the number of dwellings on the site and, if approved, would result in a cumulative decrease in floor space by some 109.4 sqm. The applicant had proposed changes in relation to eight approved house types within the scheme; there were no changes in the overall number of dwellings and all proposed house types were compliant with the 'nationally described space standards'. The change in housing mix, if approved, would result in the loss of one 2-bedroom unit and a gain of one 5-bedroom unit. There were also proposed adjustments to the boundaries of certain plots, resulting in one garage and parking space being re-located and a double garage being replaced with a single garage (its associated plot being reduced from 4-beds to 3). Also, some hardstanding between two plots would be replaced by green space. There were some minor adjustments to garden sizes, but it was emphasised that these revised areas continued to comply with policy guidance. The proposed changes were considered necessary to align more closely with present housing market demand. The planning officer advised the committee that these proposed changes would require alterations to the relevant proposed planning conditions (conditions 1, 5 and 6) and that the recommended revised wording was set out in appendix 1.

Mr. Nicholas Daruwalla, the applicant, spoke in support of the application. He stated that the developer was most supportive of proposed condition 7, for 'electric charging point for each dwelling with on plot parking', which was beyond the council's climate change requirements and would result in an improved application. In response to a question relating to reasons for the changes in housing mix, the applicant responded that at the present time the market required mid-sized housing, compared with executive style properties, as the latter category were taking longer to sell. Therefore, the changes should help to increase occupancy rates.

The democratic services officer had sent to the committee prior to the meeting a statement by Mr. Steve Gillott.

In response to a question regarding the relationship of this planning application and a possible future application, the planning officer displayed a plan depicting the extent of an alternative layout which might be completed, which could result in a different layout, but it

was emphasised that the plot changes being considered in the application at this meeting would remain unchanged.

In response to a question regarding paragraph 1.9 of the report, which stated that ‘there would be an uplift of 11 dwellings on the Park Farm overall’, the planning officer stated that the committee were being requested to consider this application’s area only, and that a future undetermined application for an uplift of 10 dwellings, had the possibility of resulting in an uplift of 1 dwelling.

In response to a question regarding possible changes to the S.106 agreement to reflect the proposed changes to the housing mix, the planning officer reported that variations were permitted without the need for a new agreement. The alterations, which did not increase house numbers, would not have implications for increased traffic generation and therefore there would be no further mitigation required in respect of highways safety, and consequently no additional financial contribution would be required. With respect to a question regarding the number of 4-bedroom houses, the planning officer confirmed that this proposal was in line with the Strategic Housing Market Assessment for market housing. In response to a further question regarding paragraph 5.21 and Thames Water’s involvement, the planning officer reported that as that agency had signed off on the original application and that there was no proposed change to house numbers, there was no expectation of a response to the variation.

The committee considered that the retention of the 40 percent affordable standard on this site was to be supported and that the minor changes to house types and plots would not affect residential amenity and would help with the quicker occupancy of the 20 affordable units. Additionally, the proposals for electric vehicle charging points and revised landscaping, incorporating additional street trees, were welcomed.

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

**RESOLVED:** to grant planning permission for application P21/V0293/FUL subject to the following conditions:

1. Approved plans

#### Pre-Commencement Conditions

2. Surface and foul water drainage scheme to be agreed

#### Pre-Occupancy or Other Stage Conditions

3. Landscaping implementation
4. Road and footway construction to each dwelling to be provided before each occupation
5. Parking and turning spaces for each dwelling to be provided prior to occupation of each plot
6. Boundary treatments as approved plans
7. Electric charging point for each dwelling with on plot parking

#### Post Occupancy Monitoring and Management Conditions

8. Construction hours – 7.30 to 18.00 Monday to Friday 8.00 to 13.00 Saturday no works on Sunday or bank holidays

Informative

1. Broadband provision

**PI.50 P21/V0167/FUL and P21/S0274/FUL - Land at Former Didcot 'A' Power Station, Milton Road, Didcot**

The committee considered applications P21/V0167/FUL and P21/S0274/FUL for a hybrid planning application consisting of the following, on land at the former Didcot 'A' Power Station, Milton Road, Didcot;

a) Full Planning Application for the erection of a single storey 8,692 m<sup>2</sup> Data Centre building (containing data halls, associated electrical and AHU Plant Rooms, loading bay, maintenance and storage space, office administration areas and screened plant at roof level), emergency generators and emission stacks, diesel tanks and filling area, electrical switch room, a water sprinkler pump room and storage tanks, a gate house / security building, MV substation, site access, internal access roads, drainage infrastructure, hard and soft landscaping and

b) Outline Planning Application for the erection of a two storey 20,800 m<sup>2</sup> Data Centre building (containing data halls, associated electrical and AHU Plant Rooms, loading bay, maintenance and storage space, office administration areas and screened plant at roof level), emergency generators and emission stacks, diesel tanks and filling area, electrical switch room, a water sprinkler pump room and storage tanks; details of appearance will be reserved, along with hard landscaping immediately around the building (as amended by plans and documents received 5th May 2021).

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 as hybrid applications, permission was being sought for a single - storey data centre building and related buildings and works, and an outline application for a larger, two – storey building, with landscaping and related buildings. Landscaping and appearance were reserved matters. With reference to paragraph 1.4 of the report, the planning officer confirmed that the land lay within the Didcot Garden Town zone, and not within the zone of influence, as had been stated. Also, as this was a cross-boundary application, the South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) Planning Committee would be considering the application on 30 June 2021.

The planning officer reported that the development plan for this proposal comprised the adopted Vale Local Plan 2031, Part 1 (LPP1), the adopted Vale Local Plan 2031, Part 2 (LPP2) and the adopted SODC Local Plan 2035 (SOLP). There was currently no made or draft neighbourhood plan for Sutton Courtenay or Didcot. The site was allocated for redevelopment in LPP1 and through the grant of outline planning permissions, which remained extant, the principle of commercial development at this location had been established. Development of the site for the data centre use (Use Class B8) complied with policies CP6 and CP16 of LPP1 and policies STRAT1 and STRAT3 of the SOLP, and was therefore acceptable in principle, unless material considerations indicated otherwise.

The planning officer reported that height of the development was acceptable to officers, and the proposed design would represent a positive contribution to the surrounding area. The proposed landscaping was also acceptable, and it was considered that the development would have no detrimental impact upon the amenity of existing or future residents in developments adjacent to the south west corner of the site. Transport and highway safety issues would not present any problems, and the impact on the existing roads network was considered to be negligible. Officers considered that these applications would considerably benefit the future mixed-use development of the wider Didcot power station site. The parking arrangements for vehicles and cycles on the site were acceptable and the size and width dimensions for the proposed frontage landscape bund were satisfactory. There were adequate measures for species protection and, in terms of biodiversity, there would be a net gain at this site. There were no outstanding matters in respect of drainage and land contamination. The committee was recommended to approve the applications, subject to conditions, as set out in the report and to the conclusion of a legal agreement.

Camilla Fisher, on behalf of the developer, spoke in support of the applications.

Councillor Richard Webber, the local ward councillor, spoke to the applications.

The planning officer responded to points made by Councillor Webber. It was confirmed that the committee was being asked to permit both units; the only matters reserved for Unit 2 were in respect of its appearance and landscaping. The concerns of the Sutton Courtenay Parish Council regarding possible standard B8 use with associated heavy goods vehicle movements were acknowledged; any alternative use would require planning permission; this proposal related to a data centre only. Landscaping proposals had been worked up with the countryside officer and the landscape officer, and biodiversity, landscaping and visual impacts were acceptable, with alterations having been made. The Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) was leading on the production of a construction traffic management plan, which specifically included wheel washing facilities. There had been discussions with the developer regarding heat generation in the interests of 'greener' solutions, but at present there was no possibility of an outlet for piping-off heat to residential properties in the area, primarily because of existing infrastructure. However, an amendment to the application confirmed that there were now plans for excess heat to be used for offices on the site. A Community Employment Plan was being prepared prior to the occupation of Unit 1, which allowed construction of Unit 1 to proceed so as not to impede progress of the development. The council's economic development team and the developer had been discussing wording for the condition relating to Unit 2, and the signing off on the appropriate condition, 13, was therefore proceeding well. In terms of the legal agreement, lower contributions, compared with other types of development would be a feature of this scheme. The reason for this was that as the proposals were not residential, where mitigation would be required to facilitate a population increase, for example play areas and education, the only district council contribution would be in respect of public art. The parish council's concerns about Housing Infrastructure Funds being fairly allocated to the local area were noted and the committee was advised that OCC had been carefully monitoring the situation.

Also in response to a question, the planning officer reported that it was intended that a publicly accessible route would be provided around the data centre site, incorporating a route by the watercourse, down the western boundary, coming out on to Milton Road (not under the carriageway) and merge with the cycleway on the main road. The delivery of this route would be fully compliant with OCC standards. Responding to a further question regarding landscaping and possible pre-planting, the planning officer reported that

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proposed condition 12 dealt with minor landscaping. Pre- planting had not been specifically discussed with the developer, but would feature in the landscaping scheme ahead of the publicly accessible route being delivered.

The committee concluded that the application represented a good use of the land, with commendable biodiversity measures and good revised landscaping proposals, and that it should be supported.

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

**RESOLVED:** that authority to grant planning permission for applications P21/V0167/ P21/S0274/FUL is delegated to the head of planning subject to;

- (a) The completion of a S.106 legal agreement and
- (b) The following conditions:
  - 1. Approved Plans
  - 2. Submission of Reserved Matters for unit 2
  - 3. Commencement of full permission
  - 4. Commencement of outline permission
  - 5. Materials in accordance with approved plans
  - 6. Energy statement verification – unit 1
  - 7. Energy statement submission – unit 2
  - 8. Energy statement verification – unit 2
  - 9. Foul and surface water drainage scheme for unit 2 to be agreed
  - 10. Drainage construction compliance report before occupation
  - 11. Contaminated land remediation strategy prior to occupation
  - 12. Revised landscape scheme to be agreed prior to occupation
  - 13. Community Employment Plan to be agreed prior to occupation
  - 14. Vehicle and cycle parking provision in accordance with approved plans prior to occupation
  - 15. Construction Traffic Management Plan
  - 16. Tree Protection
  - 17. Lighting in accordance with approved plans
  - 18. Diesel generator testing
  - 19. Emergency use of generators
  - 20. Travel plan implementation
  - 21. Restricted use – Data centre only
  - 22. No extra office floor space without permission
  - 23. Informative – land drainage consent
  - 24. Informative – contaminated land
  - 25. Informative – planning obligation

The meeting closed at 7.05 pm