

# Minutes

of a meeting of the

## Planning Committee



held on Wednesday, 26 July 2023 at 7.00 pm in Meeting Room 1, Abbey House, Abbey Close, Abingdon, OX14 3JE

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

### **Present in the meeting room:**

Councillors: Max Thompson (Chair), Val Shaw (Vice-Chair), Ron Batstone, Cheryl Briggs, Jenny Hannaby, Diana Lugova, Robert Maddison, Mike Pighills and Jill Rayner  
Officers: Emily Hamerton (Planning Manager), Ben Silverthorne (Democratic Services Officer) and Emily Barry (Democratic Services Officer)

### **Remote attendance:**

Officers: Susie Royce (Broadcasting Officer), Katherine Canavan (Planning Officer) and Edward Church (Senior Countryside Officer)

## **26 Chair's announcements**

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the meeting procedure to be followed. He also explained the emergency evacuation procedure.

## **27 Apologies for absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

## **28 Minutes**

**RESOLVED:** to approve the minutes of the meetings held on 21 June 2023 and 5 July 2023 as correct records and agree that the Chair sign these as such.

## **29 Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **30 Urgent business**

There was no urgent business.

## **31 Public participation**

The committee noted the list of the members of the public who had registered to speak at the meeting.

## **32 P22/V2377/FUL - Louie Memorial Pavilion, Arnolds Way, Oxford, OX2 9JD**

The committee considered planning application P22/V2377/FUL for the demolition of existing single storey scout hut and single storey Louie Memorial Pavilion. Erection of new single storey community and sports pavilion to replace existing. Associated external works, car parking, access, landscaping and site works (as amended), on land at Louie Memorial Pavilion, Arnolds Way, Oxford, OX2 9JD.

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 introduced the report and highlighted that the application was for a replacement community building and that permission had been granted for a similar scheme in 2019. The planning officer noted that five statements of objection had been received and circulated to the committee. She went on to advise the committee that the pavilion was in use by a local youth club but that the scout hut was no longer suitable for public use.

The planning officer informed the committee that the application site was located to the south of Arnolds Way, Botley and located adjacent to Matthew Arnold school. There was a car park on the site in the same ownership as the pavilion and scout hut. The planning officer noted there was a wildlife corridor on the site and that it was located in close proximity to an area of local fen and Hutchcombe's Copse, an area of ancient woodland. The planning officer informed the committee that the proposed building was in a similar location to the existing building but that when viewed from Arnold's Way it would extend further across. The planning officer showed the committee images which compared the 2019 proposal with the current proposal noting specifically the differences in height between the existing buildings, the 2019 proposals and the current proposal. She concluded that whilst the current proposal was slightly higher than the 2019 proposal, they were broadly the same. The planning officer confirmed that officers had considered the floorspace and height of the building in relation to its position on the site and the impact on openness and concluded that both the community use and changing facilities met the requirements for very special circumstances to allow development in the green belt.

The officer concluded that the key considerations for this application related to development in the green belt, ensuring due regard had been had to the Public Sector Equality Duty, consideration of how equivalent or improved community facilities have been provided and ecology and biodiversity both in terms of drainage onsite and ensuring the local wildlife sites and the lowland fen were not affected. Officers had considered the proposal alongside local and national policy requirements and noted the previously approved scheme in 2019 and, subject to the conditions set out in the officer's report, recommended approval.

Councillor Adam Rankin spoke on behalf of Botley and North Hinksey Parish Council, in support of the application.

Martin Dowie spoke objecting to the application.

Rob Goacher and Daniel Wadsworth (Jessop and Cooke Architects Limited), the agent representing the applicant, Caroline Potter, Ali Hogg and Peter Newton, spoke in support of the application.

Councillors Debby Hallett and Emily Smith, local ward councillors, spoke in support of the application.

The committee had conducted a site visit prior to the meeting. The committee asked the senior countryside officer why he was satisfied with the application from an ecological perspective. The senior countryside officer confirmed that he had raised no objections on the basis of drainage hydrology harm to the fen due to the evident thought which had been put into the design. He confirmed he had objected initially on the basis that out of date ecological information had been provided which made no reference to the potential damage to the offsite fen from an increase in impervious surface which could result in increased flows into watercourse. The senior countryside officer went on to outline that the drainage system put forward for the application did not divert water offsite but instead captured the water and moved it into porous soakaways equivalent to the existing undeveloped land. He also confirmed that the proposed drainage system had enough volume for 1 in 100 year storms plus 40 per cent and there was therefore no reasonable ground to object.

The committee requested a specific comment from the senior countryside officer on the impact on the wildlife corridor. The senior countryside officer confirmed that the vegetation which had grown up would be retained and under the proposal the building was being pulled away from the wildlife corridor. He confirmed the lighting scheme had been carefully considered and would not exceed 2 lux, with 3 lux being the level at which impact could occur.

The committee enquired as to why the figures being used with regards to the level of usage by the Scout group were from 2018. The planning officer confirmed that this was the most representative data from recent years. Later figures were impacted by Covid and since then the Scout hut had ceased to be used. She confirmed that the application included more figures but that these had not been included in the committee report as they were speculative figures on potential use of the building.

The committee asked for clarification that the positioning of the building allowed for sufficient space in the car park for buses or minibuses. The planning officer confirmed the positioning was similar to the scheme granted permission in 2019 and that the car park allowed for minibuses.

The committee noted that the leisure team had recommended further discussion between the applicant and the Scout group in their consultation response and asked if this engagement had been actively encouraged. The planning officer confirmed that the officer who had responded had not been familiar with the history of the site and the previous discussions and engagement which had been carried out.

The committee asked the planning officer to comment on the equality and diversity aspect of the application and requested confirmation that due consideration had been given to this. The planning officer confirmed that in looking at the public sector equality duty officers believed that the scouts had been using the facilities for a long time and users of the Scout organisation have protected characteristic of age. When making the assessment officers had to understand if the group as users of that space would have the same opportunities available to them under the new application. Not all elements had to be accommodated but officers had to consider the current usage. The planning officer was satisfied that equivalent provision had been made. The planning officer confirmed she had looked into building current use, what had been done with design to accommodate Scout needs and slots made available to them and she was therefore of the view that equivalent provision could be accommodated within the proposed building.

A motion, moved and seconded, to propose the application was carried on being put to the vote.

The committee noted that it was clear a great deal of work had gone into the assessing the application and that the public sector equality duty had been considered. The committee was in agreement that the facility required modernisation. It also noted an enthusiasm within the local community for the facility and that the facility would be a community asset for all.

The committee commented that it had had concerns in relation to the potential for harm to the alkaline fen and the wildlife corridor but it was satisfied that the architect had taken a great deal of care in addressing these issues and had prioritised them in the application. The planning officer confirmed that condition 15 would ensure the scheme was implemented in accordance with submitted reports and also required a maintenance strategy to ensure that the proposed drainage continued to work.

**RESOLVED:** to approve planning application P22/V2377/FUL, subject to the following conditions:

Standard:

1. Work to commence within 3 years
2. In accordance with approved plans

Pre-commencement:

3. Tree protection
4. Levels plan
5. Secured by Design Accreditation

Pre-occupation:

6. Schedule of materials to be submitted
7. Scheme of biodiversity enhancements
8. Detailed landscape / planting mitigation strategy, including management plan to secure biodiversity benefits
9. Details of hard landscaping, parking area and boundary treatments
10. Vehicular access and visibility splays
11. Closure of existing access
12. Turning area, driveway and parking provision
13. Cycle parking

Compliance:

14. Lighting strategy
15. Surface water and foul drainage scheme

The meeting closed at 8.21 pm