

# Minutes

of a meeting of the

## Planning Committee



held on Wednesday, 10 November 2021 at 6.00 pm  
in First Floor Meeting Space, 135 Eastern Avenue,  
Milton Park, OX14 4SB

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

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

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

Officers: Paul Bateman and Emily Hamerton

Guest: Councillor Eric de la Harpe

### **Remote attendance:**

Officers: Penny Silverwood and Susie Royse

## **9 Chair's announcements**

The chair ran through housekeeping arrangements appropriate to an in-person meeting which was being simultaneously broadcast.

## **10 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cheryl Briggs and Diana Lugova.

## **11 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 7 July 2021 were agreed to be a correct record of the meeting. It was agreed that the chair sign them as such.

## **12 Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **13 Urgent business**

There was no urgent business.

## **14 Public participation**

The committee had received statements which had been made by the public in respect of the application. These had been circulated to the committee some days prior to the meeting.

## **15 P21/V0024/FUL - Land to the West of Wootton Road, Abingdon-on-Thames**

Councillor Ben Mabbett arrived at the meeting partway through the discussion on this application and therefore did not participate in the vote upon it.

The committee considered application P21/V0024/FUL for the erection of a Class E discount food store with associated access, parking and servicing areas, landscaping, and associated works. Amended plans including revised landscaping, parking and retail information received 9 June 2021 and amended highways details received 5 August 2021 and 10 September 2021 and 29 September 2021. Additional retail information received 15 October 2021 on Land to the West of Wootton Road, Abingdon-on-Thames.

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 proposal has been amended following technical officer comments relating to highways, landscaping, trees, and design.

Mr. Ian Marshall, Principal Transport Engineer, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), was present at the meeting virtually, who would answer any questions from the committee regarding highways issues.

The planning officer clarified that the council could not control the end user of the proposed development through the planning system, and therefore the application had to be considered on the basis on the use class applied for, with no weight to be attached to any intended end users. The proposal had received 13 letters of objection, 7 concerns, 290 letters of support, and 35 individuals had registered support on the Aldi Ltd. website. The planning officer also reported that since the publication of the agenda, two objections had been received. A further objection had been made on behalf of Tesco Stores Ltd., alleging that the retail sequential test had not been made correctly. Officers had been supported by an independent retail consultant and council officers were satisfied that there were not any available sites within a reasonable timeframe, or suitable, in and around Abingdon. Planning officers advised that Fairacres Retail Park was not considered to be a sequentially superior site, as it would not offer linked trips to the application site over the application site. The Planning officer provided clarity regarding the wording of NPPF paragraph 87 and guidance from the Planning Practice Guidance. Officers advised the committee that the proposal would not adversely affect the viability or vitality of Abingdon town centre.

The planning officer reported that an objection from the Oxfordshire Cycle Network, had been received, which considered that the proposed development did not encourage sustainable living and was not in line with LTN1/20 and OCC cycle standards. The Network was also concerned that an existing BT kiosk obstructed the cycle route. The officer gave details of the priority arrangement for cyclists and advised that officers considered it to be appropriately located. The planning officer reported that there were plans for the kiosk to be set flush to the ground and which, therefore, would not impede cyclists.

With reference to paragraph 5.5 of the report, the planning officer reported that in accordance with CP4 of Local Plan Part 1 (LPP1) and the Site Development Template, development on this site should predominantly provide residential uses and that therefore this proposal was contrary to this policy. An application for residential development on the wider part of the allocated site, encompassing the entire field to the west of Wootton Road, was submitted in 2018. A separate location to the east of this site had received planning permission for residential development, which at present was being built out. Also, an application for residential development on the wider part of the allocated site, encompassing the entire field to the west of Wootton Road, was submitted in 2018. Whilst the application was later withdrawn, during the assessment of the application, it was demonstrated that the immediate north-east corner of the site could not accommodate residential development due to excessively high noise levels from road traffic. As a result, during pre-application discussions for this retail proposal, officers advised that, on balance, a development of this section of the site for alternative uses, such as retail, could be supported, providing that it would not prevent, or be detrimental to, the deliverability of residential development on the remainder of the allocation. In response to a later question from the committee, regarding a nominal number of 'lost' dwellings from the food store site, the planning officer responded that such an assessment was not relevant, due to the unsuitability for housing development on this part of the site.

The planning officer reported that the proposed main access was located in the south eastern corner of the application site, formed with a right turn lane onto Wootton Road. Pedestrian access was also provided into the site in this location, as well as an additional pedestrian access into the site further north along Wootton Road. Following receipt of amended plans, the access had been designed to give priority to users of the existing cycle path along Wootton Road, with 'give way' markings to be installed for vehicles at the access. The priority to cyclists would help to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport, as supported by policy CP35 of the LPP1. The existing shared cycle/footway along Wootton Road measured 2.7m. in width, which was marginally below the 3.0m. width normally required by Oxfordshire Cycle Design Standards. Providing the additional 0.3m. width on the cycle path would result in the loss of the existing hedgerow. A Thames Water easement

prevented any planting in the area running behind the existing hedgerow, and thus it would not be possible to replace the hedgerow further back within the site. Council officers considered that the retention of the existing hedgerow was very important to the visual amenity of the proposed development and the character of Wootton Road in providing a transition from the built form of Abingdon to the more rural, green belt land to the north. Mr. Ian Marshall reported that 2.7m was acceptable to the OCC and that the width would be maintained through the routine inspection and maintenance regime. The committee noted that a toucan crossing was proposed to be installed across Wootton Road, which would be secured by a S106 agreement. In response to a question from the committee regarding the definition of such a crossing, the planning officer reported that the design allowed for pedestrians and cyclists to cross at the same time.

Councillor Jim Halliday, a representative of Abingdon Town Council, spoke to the application.

Mr. Alan Williams, the agent, spoke in support of the application. In response to a question from the committee regarding energy conservation measures to be installed in the proposed foodstore building, Mr. Williams responded that heat from the chiller units would be recycled. In response to a suggestion that 4 electric vehicle (EV) units seemed to be a small number, Mr. Williams replied that infrastructure would be installed to allow for 16 to 20 units to come onstream if usage demanded.

Councillor Eric de la Harpe, a local ward councillor, spoke in support of the application.

In response to a question from the committee regarding possible noise disturbance to residents resulting from deliveries, the planning officer replied that proposed condition 15 required that a delivery and servicing management plan would be submitted by the developer.

In response to a question from the committee regarding a 'kink' in the cycle path and whether this impaired visibility, Mr. Marshall replied that this part of the cycle path had been assessed as having good forward visibility and that there was no justification for a realignment. Visibility would be assured through the maintenance of the hedgerow. In a follow up question, Mr. Marshall was asked if the proposed right turn out of the store could create traffic tail backs; he replied that the turning was of standard design and in compliance with guidance. OCC had specifically studied the issues of traffic queuing at this location and had concluded that the situation would be acceptable.

The committee asked whether there was provision for improved cycleways at north Abingdon, Wootton, St. Helen Without and Sunningwell. The planning

officer replied that the OCC had not requested such infrastructure from this application but that CIL funding could be used for such a project.

The committee noted the proposed provision for cycle parking and noted that 16 spaces were allocated for customers and four for staff. The planning officer reported that proposed pre-commencement condition 9 required that cycle parking details be submitted to the council for approval.

The committee had concerns regarding lighting, noting paragraph 5.63 of the report that, 'whilst some lighting information had been provided in support of the application, there were conflicts between the proposed lighting and the proposed tree planting, and that the lighting plan had not been updated to reflect the most recent amendments to the layout and landscaping'. The planning officer advised that proposed condition 16 required external lighting details to be submitted prior to the occupation of the site, which should deal with the latest position on site, particularly the reduction of any nuisance to residents.

The committee requested the OCC representative for an update on the proposals for the south facing slip roads on the A34 near Abingdon. Mr. Marshall reported that a public consultation was ongoing, with scoping work being undertaken at the present time. There had been a considerable amount of dialogue regarding the effect of the proposals upon surrounding small villages. The OCC website gave full details to the public, and Vale of White Horse councillors would be kept advised.

The committee concluded that the proposed development was acceptable and should be permitted, with the proviso that the appropriate condition 9 should stipulate a minimum of 16 cycle parking spaces for customers.

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

**RESOLVED:** that authority to grant planning permission for application P21/VV0024/FUL is delegated to the Head of Planning Services, subject to the subject to the following conditions:

1. Completion of a S106 agreement with Oxfordshire County Council to secure a contribution towards travel plan monitoring and public transport services and infrastructure and the provision of a TOUCAN crossing along Wootton Road;
2. Conditions as summarised below:
  1. Time limit for commencement
  2. Approved plans

### Pre-commencement Conditions

3. Slab levels to be submitted
4. Biodiversity offsetting scheme
5. Surface water drainage scheme to be submitted
6. Foul drainage scheme to be submitted
7. Landscaping scheme to be submitted
8. Landscape maintenance and long-term management plan to be submitted
9. Cycle parking details to be submitted
10. Construction Traffic Management Plan to be submitted
11. Community Employment Plan to be submitted

### Details to be submitted prior to occupation

12. Public Art strategy to be submitted
13. SUDS compliance report to be submitted
14. Travel plan to be submitted
15. Delivery and Servicing Management Plan to be submitted
16. External lighting details to be submitted

### Compliance

17. Implementation of ecological mitigation and enhancement measures
18. Implementation of Arboricultural assessment and tree protection plan
19. Provision of rapid electric vehicle charging points
20. Noise levels
21. Implementation and management of landscaping scheme
22. Visibility splays to be provided
23. TOUCAN crossing to be provided
24. Building to be used for Class E retail foodstore only
25. Total Class E floorspace shall not exceed 1842sq.m and net sales area shall not exceed 1315sq. m
26. Class E floorspace shall be used for a maximum of 1052sq.m convenience goods and a maximum of 263sq. m comparison goods
27. No mezzanine or first floor level to be constructed
28. No subdivision to two or more units

### Informatives

1. S106 agreement attached
2. Amount of biodiversity units required to offset
3. Land Drainage Consent
4. Consent required from OCC for works in the public highway
5. Groundwater Risk management permit may be required

The meeting closed at 19:15