

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Planning Committee



held on Wednesday 27 March 2024 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, Robert Clegg, Amos Duveen, Jenny Hannaby, Robert Maddison and Jill Rayner
Officers: Adrian Duffield (Head of Planning), Cathie Scotting (Planning Officer), Darius Zarazel (Democratic Services Officer) and Emily Barry (Democratic Services Officer)

Remote attendance:

Officers: Paul Harrison (Highways Officer) and Susie Royse (Broadcasting Officer)

90 Chair's announcements

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, outlined the procedure to be followed and advised on emergency evacuation arrangements. The chair went on to note that Mr Rawling, a previous Chief Planning Officer at Vale of White Horse District Council, had brought to his attention that the 8 April 2024 would mark 50 years since the first meeting of the Vale of White Horse District Council planning committee. The chair agreed with the sentiments Mr Rawling had expressed in congratulating the committee on being the most visible democratic interface between local government and the populace.

91 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Scott Houghton, who was substituted for Councillor Robert Clegg, and Councillor Mike Pighills, who was substituted for Councillor Amos Duveen.

92 Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 6 March 2024 as a correct record and agree that the Chair sign these as such.

93 Declarations of interest

Councillor Ron Batstone declared that he had attended a protest in relation to the construction of the South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO) and as such it may be perceived that he was pre-determined in relation to item 7 on the agenda, P23/V2559/FUL.

Councillor Batstone confirmed that he would stand down from the committee and not participate in the debate or vote for this item.

Councillors Robert Clegg and Robert Maddison declared that they were ward members for item 8 on the agenda, P23/V2852/S73. Councillors Clegg and Maddison confirmed that they would stand down from the committee and not participate in the debate or vote for this item.

94 Urgent business

There was no urgent business.

95 Public participation

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

96 P23/V2559/FUL - Land to the South of Hanney Road Cow Common, OX13 6AP

Councillor Ron Batstone declared a non-registerable interest in this item as a result of his attendance at a protest against the construction of South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO). Councillor Batstone stood down from the committee during the consideration of this application and did not participate in the debate or vote.

The committee considered planning application P23/V2559/FUL for the temporary clay compaction trial (including compaction trials, pit, with associated stockpiles and topsoil mounds), construction compound, security fencing, access tracks and formation of access from Hanney Road, overground surface water drainage pipe, alongside other associated works (as amplified by landscape information received 18 January 2024 and amended / additional information received 14 February 2024), on land to the south of Hanney Road, Cow Common, OX13 6AP.

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 came before the committee at the request of the local ward member. The application sought temporary permission for engineering works associated with a clay compaction trial. The results of the trial would inform SESRO construction. The planning officer informed the committee that the application did not consider the wider reservoir proposal and that this would be a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project and would be assessed under the relevant legislation by central government.

The planning officer advised there had been two updates since the publication of the agenda. One further letter of objection had been received from a resident raising concerns regarding the reservoir proposal. The second update was that the County Archaeologist had responded advising that a number of archaeological features had been identified at the south of the site and whilst it was not believed these would be impacted by the trial works, vehicular movements to and from the site could cause damage. As such, an additional condition was requested for the provision of protective fencing around these areas.

The planning officer then went through the plans and advised the committee that the site was flat and currently in agricultural use. There were no landscape or ecology designations

and no designated heritage assets nearby. The site was largely in flood zone one but a small section of the site connecting to Cow Common Brook fell into flood zone three.

The planning officer advised the committee that the application sought consent for a period of up to 12 months to carry out the trial which included the creation of a borrow pit and removal and storage of top soil. She went on to inform the committee a compound would be constructed on the frontage of the site but there would be an earth mound screening this with access to the site being from Hanney Road. The planning officer advised there would also be water storage and treatment areas on the site before water was discharged into the brook. She also showed the committee section plans of the borrow pit and informed the committee that the indicative heights of the stock piles were a maximum of 5.5 metres and these would be located in the centre of the site.

The planning officer concluded that the principle of development was acceptable and there were no technical objections to the application. The impacts of the development could be mitigated through the proposed conditions including the additional archaeology condition as follows:

No development shall commence until the area of archaeological interest identified by the archaeological evaluation, as detailed in the Wessex Archaeology evaluation report dated March 2024, has been secured through protective fencing to avoid any impacts during construction. The fencing shall remain in place until the completion of the trial and the restoration of the site.

Mark Beddows and Councillor Andy Cooke spoke, objecting to the application.

Mark Mathews, the agent representing the applicant, spoke in support of the application.

Councillor Sally Povolotsky, a local ward councillor, spoke on the application.

The committee enquired as to whether it would be possible to restrict the hours of operation further than as set out in the proposed condition already. The planning officer advised that this would be possible but that doing so could result in the works taking longer to complete. The committee asked the planning officer if they knew how much restricting the hours could increase the predicted timeframe by and she advised they were unable to predict this. The committee were concerned about traffic at peak hours and asked if it would therefore be possible to restrict the hours of operation in line with school holidays. The planning officer indicated that this would likely cause confusion and made enforcement and monitoring difficult. The committee went on to ask if it was possible to require the applicant to complete the works within four weeks in order to minimise disruption to residents. The planning officer advised that this would be overly restrictive, and four weeks was the delivery time put forward in the programme by Thames Water.

The committee asked the planning officer to comment on the ecology concerns which had been raised by one of the speakers. The planning officer advised that a biodiversity impact assessment and species reports had been provided by the applicant and that the ecology officer had advised that the measures set out to protect the relevant species were sufficient.

A motion, moved and seconded, to approve the application with an additional condition in relation to protective fencing and an amendment to the condition on the time of operation to Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm and Saturday 8am to 1pm, was carried on being put to the vote.

The committee reflected that it was important to listen to residents' views in relation to their experiences of traffic in the area. Some members considered if it would be more appropriate for operating hours to be earlier to avoid rush hour but it was felt that noise disruption was also a concern and therefore longer operating hours would not allow respite from this.

RESOLVED: to approve planning application P23/V/2559/FUL, subject to the following conditions:

1. Commencement
2. Temporary consent
3. Approved Plans
4. Surface Water management details
5. Lighting details
6. Archaeology
7. Visibility Splays
8. Construction Traffic Management Plan
9. Constriction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) – Biodiversity
10. Noise mitigation
11. Hours of operation
12. Unexpected land contamination
13. Protective fencing – Archaeology

Informative

1. Flood risk activity permit
2. Discharge permit
3. Highways advice

97 P23/V/2852/S73 - Aldi Stores Ltd Wootton Road Abingdon

Councillors Robert Clegg and Robert Maddison declared a non-registerable interest in this item as they were local ward members. Councillors Clegg and Maddison stood down from the committee during the consideration of this application and did not participate in the debate or vote.

The committee considered planning application P23/V/2852/S73 for the Variation of condition 1 (Approved plans), 3 (TOUCAN crossing) and 4 (Surface Water Drainage in accordance with approved details) in application P23/V/0101/S73. Amended drainage plan submitted 29 January 2024 and amended highways plans received 23 February 2024. s73 application to vary conditions 2 (approved plans) and 5 (surface water drainage) on application P21/V/0024/FUL to allow an alternative drainage system to be installed, on Land at Aldi Stores Ltd Wootton Road Abingdon.

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 came before the committee at the request of the chair.

The planning officer informed the committee that the application sought changes to the approved highway access and timeframe for completion of the drainage and toucan crossing. She informed the committee that Paul Harrison, an officer from the local highways authority, was present to answer any questions they may have in relation to highways

matters. The planning officer confirmed that the store and associated access had been constructed. The planning officer advised that when originally submitted the application sought to retain the access as built which involved the removal of a raised table and of give way markings for cyclists and vehicles compared to the approved scheme. She informed the committee that through negotiations with the local highways authority the proposal now included give way markings for vehicles and cyclists and the requirement that the TOUCAN crossing be implemented within 6 months. However, due to safety reasons, the raised table would not be reinstated. This was accepted by the local highways authority.

The planning officer advised that an amendment was proposed to condition 3 to require that the revised access works were completed within 6 months. She informed the committee that the local highways authority had advised that this was a reasonable time period for implementation of these works.

The planning officer concluded that overall, officers were satisfied that the amended access arrangements would maintain priority for pedestrians and cyclists along the existing combined path. The application was therefore recommended for approval subject to the conditions set out in the agenda.

Mark Giddins, spoke on behalf of Abingdon Town Council, on the application.

Alan Williams, the agent representing the applicant, spoke in support of the application.

Councillors Andy Foulsham and Robert Maddison, local ward councillors, spoke on the application.

The committee asked the highways officer if they felt that the TOUCAN crossing had been located correctly and if it would be possible to move it if they were of the view it could be situated better. The highways officer confirmed that the crossing had been designed and previously approved but that the location had been deemed appropriate at that time.

The committee asked the highways officer to expand on why the raised table was a safety issue. The highways officer advised that the previously proposed gradient would mean that there would not be sufficient clearance for 2 wheeled vehicles to steady themselves. Additionally, he highlighted that in icy conditions all vehicles would have difficulty mounting the ramp.

The committee asked if the suggestion made by one of the speakers to have a colour change to demonstrate the cycle path would be possible. The highways officer advised this was not a requirement but that it could be possible and the highways authority would not object to this.

The committee raised concerns around the speed at which drivers travel on Copenhagen Drive and the difficulty this causes when exiting the site. The highways officer appreciated the committee's concerns but advised it was not a matter for consideration as part of this application. He informed the committee that the visibility provided was in line with the speed limit of the road.

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

The committee reflected that clearly a lot of work had been done with regard to this application. It highlighted that the local highways authority had confirmed there could be no more safety amendments.

The committee were keen that the demarcation of the pedestrian and cycle path was explored with highways and agreed that this was added to the application as an informative.

The committee discussed that the TOUCAN crossing may serve to focus drivers minds and slow traffic which the committee had earlier raised as a concern. The committee wished for it to be noted that the completion of the TOUCAN crossing was urgent, as reflected in the requirement for it's completion within six months.

RESOLVED: to approve planning application P23/V2852/S73, subject to the following conditions:

1. Approved plans
2. SUDS compliance report to be submitted within six months
3. Access works and TOUCAN crossing to be constructed within six months
4. Surface water drainage scheme in accordance with approved details to be completed within six months
5. Foul drainage scheme in accordance with approved details (P22/V0370/DIS)
6. Landscaping scheme in accordance with approved details (P22/V0370/DIS)
7. Landscaping maintenance and long-term management plan in accordance with approved details (P22/V0370/DIS)
8. Cycle parking in accordance with approved details (P22/V0370/DIS)
9. Construction Traffic Management Plan in accordance with approved details (P22/V0439/DIS)
10. Community Employment Plan in accordance with approved details (P22/V1155/DIS)
11. Public Art strategy in accordance with approved details (P22/V1612/DIS)
12. Travel plan in accordance with approved details (P22/V1448/DIS)
13. Delivery and Servicing Management Plan in accordance with approved details (P22/V1448/DIS)
14. External lighting in accordance with approved details (P22/V1448/DIS)
15. Implementation of ecological mitigation and enhancement measures
16. Provision of electric vehicle charging points
17. Noise levels
18. Visibility splays
19. Building to be used for Class E retail foodstore only
20. Total Class E floorspace shall not exceed 1842sq.m and net sales area shall not exceed 1315sq.m
21. Class E floorspace shall be used for a maximum of 1052sq.m convenience goods and a maximum of 263 sq.m comparison goods
22. No mezzanine or first floor level to be constructed
23. No subdivision to two or more units

Informative: Highways advice to explore possibility of delineated cycle path

The meeting closed at 8.18 pm