

Planning and Rights of Way Committee

2 February 2021 – At a meeting of the Committee held at Virtual meeting with restricted public access.

Present: Cllr High (Chairman)

Cllr Kitchen, Cllr Atkins, Cllr Baldwin, Cllr Barrett-Miles, Cllr Burrett, Cllr Goldsmith, Cllr McDonald, Cllr Millson, Cllr Montyn, Cllr S Oakley, Cllr Patel and Cllr Sudan

Apologies were received from

Absent:

Also in attendance:

Part I

1. Declarations of Interest

1.1 In accordance with the County Council's Code of Conduct, the following interests were declared:

- Councillor Kitchen and Councillor Baldwin both declared a personal interest in planning application WSCC/049/20 Horsham Fire Station and Training Centre, as Councillors for Horsham District Council.

2. Minutes of last Meeting of Planning Committee

2.1 Resolved - That

- (1) the Committee requires that Council Officers and the Chairman consider a request for updates on outstanding applications and delegated decisions for planning matters be provided either at each meeting of Planning and Rights of Way Committee or circulated to Committee members between meetings; and
- (2) the minutes of Planning Committee held on 8 September 2020 be agreed as a correct record, and that they be signed by the Chairman.

3. Minutes of the last meeting of Rights of Way Committee

3.1 Resolved - That

- (1) the Committee requires that Council Officers and the Chairman consider a request for updates on rights of way matters – outstanding actions and delegated decisions – be provided either at each meeting of Planning and Rights of Way

Committee or circulated to Committee members between meetings; and

- (2) the minutes of minutes of Rights of Way Committee held on 3 November 2020 be agreed as a correct record, and that they be signed by the Chairman.

4. Urgent Matters

4.1 There were no urgent matters.

5. Planning Application: Regulation 3

5.1 In accordance with the Council's Constitution on Planning and Probity on Planning and Rights of Way, Councillor Millson relinquished her seat as a member of Planning and Rights of Way Committee in order to speak on the application as the local member, County Councillor for Horsham Riverside. Councillor Millson took no part in the debate and voting on the application.

5.2 The Committee considered a report by the Head of Planning Services, as amended by Agenda Update Sheet No. 2, which incorporated all previous updates listed in the original Agenda Update sheet (copies appended to the signed copy of the minutes). The report was introduced by Edward Anderson, who gave a presentation on the proposals, details of the consultation and key issues in respect of the application.

5.3 Mrs Trudie Mitchell, Chairman, Horsham Denne Neighbourhood Council (HDNC) spoke on the application and raised some objections. In general, HDNC supports the application and appreciates amendments made to reduce the overall size of building. The gold coloured metal cladding on the Live Fire Training tower is building is too garish; the tower and proposed colour are completely out of character with the location and existing building materials, and because the building faces the setting sun there are safety concerns for traffic on the adjacent A24. A more subdued colour should be considered. Highwood roundabout presents problems for both motorists and pedestrians. Confusing lane markings on the slip road approaching the roundabout means motorists switch lanes unexpectedly. It is very difficult to access the only footpath to Broadbridge Heath due to poor sight lines at the crossing points and the 40mph speed limit means vehicles approach too quickly for safe crossing. Problems will be exacerbated by the introduction of emergency vehicles and fire station traffic. It was suggested that traffic signals should be installed during construction of the development.

5.4 Mr John Lacey, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (WSFRS) spoke in support of the application. Fire fighter training is mandatory and currently this is either undertaken at small fire stations or outside the county. West Sussex has no purpose-built, specialist training facility. This would be the first new fire station in West Sussex since 1974. Fire training has had to change to meet new risks and realistic training needs to be delivered, which needs to be done in a safe environment. The development is designed to be a centre of excellence, using state of the art technology and training delivery methods. The

facility would also address some of the matters raised in the 2018 HMIC inspection by providing facilities that attract a more diverse workforce. The site has been identified in planning policy for over a decade and was included in the outline planning permission for Highwood village. WSRFS has engaged the community in plans for the site and will continue to do so during construction and operation. The development has been adapted to make it more ascetically pleasing and to be environmentally sustainable. The development is sited near the major road network to allow quick access to road traffic incidents, this saving time and lives. The automated lights will reduce the need for the use of sirens. Training outdoors will comply with noise emissions regulations and no outdoors training will take place between 22.00 and 07.00 hours; however, any changes to these times would not make the training centre viable.

5.5 Councillor Morwen Millson, County Councillor for Horsham Riverside spoke on the application as the local member. Residents regularly raise concerns about the exit from Highwood development onto the roundabout and about the speed of traffic exiting the estate and also speed on the A24 slip road, which is often in excess of the 40mph limit. Pedestrians and cyclists find it impossible to cross at this junction. The Fire Station development may make the problem worse, although it is acknowledged that there would not be that many additional traffic movements. The junction needs improving although the lack of money to do so is noted, but there may be enough community support to put forward a proposal for a Community Highways scheme. The Risk Assessment recognises an increased safety risk, so this remains a concern. The information provided in the Transport Assessment about likely car sharing, use of other modes of transport to the site and use of mini-buses for trainees needs to be investigated. A condition was proposed: that the applicant works closely with West Sussex Highways to solve the perceived safety issues at the junction between the Boulevard and roundabout with the A24 Slip road, and that ameliorative measures should be introduced during the construction period. Otherwise, the condition recommended by Trudie Mitchell would be supported.

5.6 In response to points made by speakers, Planning Officers clarified that the Committee report provided details about highways capacity and road safety. Pre-existing issues relating to the Highwood roundabout and the A24 do not arise out of the construction of the proposed development and so cannot be considered as material to determination of this application. It would not be for the developer to resolve these issues. A Highway Safety Audit has been submitted and has been considered as part of this application process and consultation with Highways and Horsham Environmental Health had shown no overriding concerns.

5.7 During the debate the Committee raised the points below and a response or clarification was provided by the Planning, Highways and Legal Officers, where applicable.

Cladding on the Live Fire Training Facility (LFTF)

Points raised – The reason for the choice of gold coloured cladding on the LFTF was queried. The proposed gold cladding would be a distraction to motorists on the A24. The proposed colour does not

match the surrounding landscape or buildings. It was suggested that the cladding colour should be a more muted colour; green or muted gold were suggested. It was suggested that a new condition be added on the matter of cladding, for the purposes of visibility and consultation, and it was agreed by the Committee that the local member be consulted regarding the choice of cladding colour. It was further suggested and agreed by the Committee that the Chairman and Vice-chairman of Planning and Rights of Way Committee should also be consulted.

Responses – The reason for the proposed gold colour for the mesh cladding on the LFTF is to obscure views of fire fighters training on the gantries. The fire protective uniforms worn by the fire fighters is a buff/gold colour, and the similar colour of the cladding would help to minimise to distraction, particularly to motorists using the A24. Horsham District Council's Landscaping Officer noted that the colour could be seen as indicative of summer fields. However, it was agreed the matter of choice of colour is subjective. The Committee was encouraged to provide an indication of preferred choice of colour to give direction to the developer. It was clarified that it was not possible to specify by condition that a particular colour of cladding be defined because the developer would need to consider the matter and provide options. It was confirmed that the local member and the Chairman and Vice-chairman of Planning and Rights of Way Committee would be consulted on the choice of cladding colour should a condition be proposed and agreed by the Committee that would require details of the cladding material for the Live Fire Training Facility to be submitted to and approved by the Planning Authority.

Named contact for community engagement during construction

Point raised – It was noted that it is encouraging that the local community would be able to engage with the process and that there would be a named contact for anyone with concerns to raise, as per the Construction and Environmental Management Plan.

Response – None required.

Highways safety – A24 and Highwood Mill roundabout

Points raised – The existing issues regarding the A24 and the Highwood roundabout, as highlighted by Mrs Mitchell and Cllr Millson, were noted, and broad concerns were expressed about safety in this location.

Responses – Points regarding existing concerns about the A24 and Highwood roundabout are covered in minute 5.6 above. It was confirmed that a road safety audit was undertaken at the time of planning permission for the wider Highwood/West of Horsham development; the design was based on the traffic assumptions for the development, which included provision for a fire station this proposed site. The accident record for the Highwood interchange

does not show a problem, although it is acknowledged that residents may have difficulties getting out of the junction from the Highwood Hill development.

Highways safety – A24 access to the Fire Station and Training Centre development

Points raised – Clarification was sought on the impact of fire tenders exiting and entering the site via access by the A24 slip road. A query was raised about what is to prevent other vehicles using this entryway. It was suggested that an angular approach on at this entryway would be helpful.

Responses – The use of the access via the A24 slipway would be controlled by wig-wags. The positioning of the wig-wags is based on approach speeds, so there would be sufficient sightlines. The wig-wags would be activated via transponder from the cabs of the fire tenders. The addition of high friction road surfacing would aid traffic in slowing and stopping safely.

Highway capacity

Point raised – It was suggested that in relation to the Transport Assessment, an additional condition is required to ensure that there is a Travel Plan for the development.

Response – The suggested amendment should be considered by the Committee.

Drainage

Point raised – Clarification was sought on how the ecology pond - which is important for surface water drainage - would be secured (as shown within the blue-line boundary of the development).

Response – Provision of an ecology pond is part of the wider discharge of conditions for the Highwood Hill development and the matter has, therefore, been addressed.

Blue line boundary of the development / Ecological buffer zone

Points raised – Clarification was sought that the land shown as within the blue-line boundary of the development area is not scheduled for development. Details of the ecological exclusion zone were sought.

Responses – The land edged in blue is an ecological buffer zone which has been established around the site to prevent the re-colonisation of Great Crested Newts, as outlined in the Ecological Mitigation Strategy. No trees would be permitted to be removed, particularly on the eastern boundary. The County Council Ecologist has raised no objections.

Landscaping

Point raised – It was suggested that condition 10 'Landscaping Scheme' be amended to require a ten-year replanting scheme rather than the proposed five-years, so as to ensure long-term planting.

Response – The suggested amendment should be considered by the Committee.

Construction and Environmental Management Plan

Point raised – It was suggested that condition 5 'Construction and Environmental Management Plan' be amended to include limitations on external lighting and also to cover waste management matters including prevention of the burning of waste and storage and also include provision for domestic waste and recycling.

Response – The suggested amendments should be considered by the Committee, but would be considered acceptable.

Community facilities

Point raised – Clarification was sought on the purpose for and likely use of the proposed community facilities at the development.

Response – The site was designated for use as a fire station in the Land West of Horsham Masterplan. The provision of community facilities is intended for anticipated school visits, Duke of Edinburgh scheme, Fire Break events, etc. Community provision is welcomed.

Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for double yellow lines on The Boulevard

Points raised – Clarification was sought on the position of the proposed double yellow lines outside the stretch of The Boulevard that includes the frontage of Highwood Mill Extra Care housing facility and around the corner of the road. Clarification was also sought on whether WSFR are content that the proposals are a safe arrangement to allow access for the fire tenders. Concern was raised that the TRO process is very slow and that the TRO might not be implemented in time. It was suggested that a condition be added to ensure that the TRO is in place prior to commencement of operations at the site. A further suggestion was made, that an Informative be added to clarify to the applicant the process that they must follow.

Responses – The plans showing the proposed double yellow lines is indicative and the exact position would be determined by the TRO. However, the intention is that lines will be on both sides of the road outside Highwood Mill Extra Care housing facility, although on the south side where there are parking laybys the double yellow lines would only be between the bays. It was confirmed that there are existing double yellow lines on the north side of The Boulevard that

extend around corner, and it was explained that part of this road is already a rural clearway. The TRO process lies outside the planning system, which states that conditions cannot be laid down where they are subject to another regulatory process. Therefore, it would be unreasonable to include a requirement to ensure that a TRO is in place. However, an additional Informative would be considered acceptable should the Committee wish to pursue this.

Informative b)

Point raised – An error in Informative b) was noted; reference to 'Arun District Council' should read 'Horsham District Council'.

Response – Apologies were offered to the Committee regarding the error.

Informative c)

Point raised - An error within Informative c) was noted; reference to 'condition 7' should read 'condition 10'.

Response – Apologies were offered to the Committee regarding the error.

5.8 Cllr Goldmith proposed the addition of a new condition regarding cladding materials, as follows:

Cladding

- x. Prior to construction above slab level of the Live Fire Training Facility, a sample and/or details including the colour of the cladding material of that building, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved details.**

In all other aspects of the proposed development it shall be constructed in accordance with the approved external materials *proposed* within the approved Planning Statement and Elevation Plans.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory development

The proposal was seconded by Cllr Atkins and was put to the Committee and approved unanimously.

5.9 Cllr S Oakley proposed that an additional condition requiring a Travel Plan for the development. The form of wording of the condition was delegated to the Head of Planning Services. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Atkins and was put to the Committee and approved unanimously.

5.10 Cllr S Oakley proposed an amendment to condition 5 – Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), requiring further measures to be added after the existing point 9 of the condition, as follows:.

Condition 5 – Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)

...

- 10. Details of all proposed external lighting to be used during construction and measures used to limit the disturbance of any lighting required; lighting shall be used only for security and safety.**
- 11. Waste management including prohibition of burning at the scheme, and for the storage and disposal of waste providing maximum recycling opportunities and disposal and control of litter.**
- 12. Provision of temporary domestic waste and recycling bin collection points during construction.**

...

The proposal was seconded by Cllr Atkins and was put to the Committee and approved unanimously.

5.11 Cllr S Oakley proposed an amendment to condition 10 – Landscape Scheme, requiring a ten-year maintenance programme, with changes to the condition, as follows:.

Condition 10 – Landscape Scheme

...

- 6. A written ~~five-year~~ **ten-year** maintenance scheme

The approved scheme shall be implemented in full, with all planting carried out and completed by the end of the first planting season (November – March) following the commencement of the development. Any seeding which fails, plants which die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased within the next ~~five~~ **ten** years shall be replaced in the next planting season in accordance with the approved details.

...

The proposal was seconded by Cllr Atkins and was put to the Committee and approved unanimously.

5.12 Cllr Burrett proposed that an additional Informative be included, which shall encourage the developer to ensure that double yellow lines are in place before the building is put into use; this would be via the Traffic Regulation Order process. The form of wording of the condition was delegated to the Head of Planning Services. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Atkins and was put to the Committee and approved unanimously.

5.13 The substantive recommendation including changes to Conditions and Informatives as set out in Appendix 1 and as amended by Agenda Update Sheet No. 2 and also as amended by the inclusion of new conditions and amendments to conditions, as approved by the Committee and noted in minutes 5.8 to 5.12 above, was proposed by Cllr Atkins. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Barrett-Miles and approved unanimously.

5.14 Resolved – that planning permission be granted subject to the Conditions and Informatives as set out in Appendix 1 of the report and amended as agreed by the Committee.

6. Date of Next Meeting

6.1 The next scheduled meeting of Planning and Rights of Way Committee will be on Tuesday, 2 March 2021 at 10.30 a.m.

6.2 In accordance with regulations in response to the current public health emergency. This meeting may be held virtually with members in remote attendance and with public access via webcasting.

The meeting ended at 12.59 pm

Chairman