

MINUTES
of the
PLANNING COMMITTEE
held on 9 August 2022 at 7:00pm

Present:

Councillor J A Sosin (Chair)

Councillors L Ashley, H Ayres, S Dobson, J Frasca, P Hughes, J Lardge, R Lee,
G H J Pooley, R J Poulter, T E Roper and I Wright

Also present: Councillors W Daden and M Steel

1. Chair's Announcements

For the benefit of the public, the Chair explained the arrangements for the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E Sampson and C Shaw, who had appointed Councillors J Frasca and H Ayres as their substitutes. Councillor R Hyland also submitted belated apologies.

3. Declarations of Interest

All Members were reminded that they must disclose any interests they knew they had in items of business on the meeting's agenda and that they must do so at this point on the agenda or as soon as they became aware of the interest. If the interest was a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest they were also obliged to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of the meeting. Any declarations are recorded in the relevant minute below.

4. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 5 July 2022 were confirmed as a correct record.

5. Public Question Time

Several questions were asked and statements made on the applications at Item 6 and 7. Details are given under the relevant minute numbers below.

6. Strategic Growth Site North of Woodhouse Lane, Broomfield, Chelmsford – 20/02064/OUT

The Committee considered an outline application for residential development for up to 512 dwellings, including affordable housing and custom build homes (Use Class C3), a Local Centre (Use Classes E, F.1 and F.2), formal and informal open space, and associated infrastructure on land to the north of Woodhouse Lane, Broomfield, which had been allocated as a strategic growth site in the Local Plan. All matters except for primary access were reserved. A Green Sheet of additions and alterations had been distributed before the meeting.

A representative of the applicant attended the meeting to speak in support of the application. A statement and question had been submitted by a member of the public, who expressed concern about the effect of the development on already over-stretched health services in the area. A representative of Broomfield Parish Council attended to emphasise the view of the Parish Council that the development should not proceed without the provision of the link road, which should preferably be open to all hospital-related traffic, including the public. In the light of the NHS Trust's recent statement that it would not maintain the link road, the Parish Council was of the view that the application should be deferred until the arrangements for the construction and maintenance of the road were clear. A local ward councillor spoke to endorse the Parish Council's view and another, whilst also supporting the need for a link road and welcoming the proposed cycle and pedestrian routes, asked whether the dwellings to be constructed to the east of the reservoir would add to existing flooding problems. She also asked to how many of the new homes the Council would have nomination rights.

In response to those questions, officers informed the Committee that

- as part of the Section 106 agreement land would be secured for the development of a health care facility as well as a financial contribution towards it;
- the drainage strategy submitted with the application had been examined by the flood authority, which had found it to be acceptable and concluded that the development would not add to flooding in the area;
- thirty-five per cent of the up to 512 dwellings to be constructed would be affordable and if 180 were provided 113 would be for affordable rent with nomination rights to the Council and would include three and four bed properties, which were in high demand at present;
- the Highway Authority would prefer the provision of the link road as the best means of reducing traffic congestion on roads around the hospital and it was understood that the applicant would be working with the NHS over the question of its maintenance. However, if the road could not be provided the next favoured option was to provide a long-term, subsidised Park and Ride service to the hospital for staff, patients and visitors.

It was clear from the members' discussion of the application that the Committee was of the view that the development could not proceed without the link road or, as an alternative, the provision of a Park and Ride service. The Committee asked whether the application should be deferred until it was known whether or not the link road would definitely be built. Officers said that if the Committee were minded to approve the application, subject to the completion of the S106 agreement and compliance with conditions, as well as the construction of the link road being secured, discussion would continue between the Council, the applicant and

the NHS Trust with a view to reaching agreement on its provision and maintenance. If the delivery of the link road could not be secured, the application would be brought back to the Committee to consider the Park and Ride option. If that option was not acceptable to the Committee, the Committee would be entitled to reach a different conclusion about whether the development were acceptable.

In response to further questions from members, officers said that:

- the provision of both the link road and Park and Ride service, which some members felt would be the ideal solution to traffic congestion, may be possible in the future but was unlikely at this stage;
- the NHS Trust wanted the link road to be barrier-controlled and for the use of staff only. As it would be on land owned by the Trust, it could not be adopted by the Highway Authority and used by the public without the Trust's agreement;
- there would be a legally enforceable condition in the Section 106 agreement that the link road would be completed before occupation of the 200th dwelling;
- the closure of Woodhouse Road would still be required even if the link road was not provided as it was integral to the plan to reduce rat-running and secure walking and cycling facilities;
- strategic traffic modelling carried out as part of the production of the Local Plan had indicated at that time that the provision of a link road could reduce traffic on Hospital Approach by between 10-20% and that it would be needed if the development proceeded. The modelling had taken into consideration the use of the link road by hospital staff only. No further traffic modelling was planned but a detailed transport assessment had been submitted with the outline application. It was confirmed that a cycle route would be provided as part of the link road;
- the biodiversity net gain from the residential development of just over 10% did not include the proposed tree planting;
- the First Homes element of the affordable housing that would be provided as part of the Section 106 agreement would not be limited to one-bed properties but would be a mix of sizes determined by the developer and the national price cap in accordance with market demand;
- regarding the properties that would be suitable for use by those with disabilities, the Council would seek to achieve adapted properties that were accessible at the time of completion, rather than properties that could be adapted later. A range of property sizes was also being sought which reflected the needs of those on the housing register who were wheelchair users.

Members accepted the assurance of officers that the application would be brought back to the Committee if discussions over the link road were not successful.

RESOLVED that planning application 20/02064/OUT in respect of the strategic growth site to the north of Woodhouse Lane, Broomfield, Chelmsford be approved, subject to

- the completion of the Section 106 agreement referred to in the report to the meeting,
- the conditions set out on pages 23 to 38 and
- securing delivery of the link road.

7. Broomfield Hospital, Hospital Approach, Chelmsford – 21/00881//FUL

An application had been received for the formation of a new link road between Woodhouse Lane and Broomfield Hospital, including associated drainage, the closure of sections of Woodhouse Lane, and ancillary infrastructure. A Green Sheet of additions and alterations had been distributed before the meeting.

RESOLVED that planning application 21/00881/FUL in respect of Broomfield Hospital, Hospital Approach, Chelmsford be approved, subject to

- the completion of the Section 106 agreement referred to in the report to the meeting.
- the conditions set out on pages 12 to 15 and
- securing delivery of the link road.

8. Planning Appeals

RESOLVED that the information on appeal decisions between 17 June and 27 July 2022 be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm

Chair