

Medway Council
Planning Committee
Wednesday, 29 June 2022
6.30pm to 7.50pm

Record of the meeting

Subject to approval as an accurate record at the next meeting of this committee

- Present:** Councillors: Mrs Diane Chambers (Chairman), Buckwell (Vice-Chairman), Adeoye, Carr, Curry, Fearn, Hackwell, Howcroft-Scott, Hubbard, McDonald, Potter and Thorne
- Substitutes:** Councillors:
Opara (Substitute for Tranter)
Van Dyke (Substitute for Chrissy Stamp)
- In Attendance:** Julie Francis-Beard, Democratic Services Officer
Dave Harris, Head of Planning
Wayne Hemingway, Head of Democratic Services
Joanna Horne, Planning Solicitor
Robert Neave, Principal Transport Planner

89 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chrissy Stamp and Tranter.

90 Record of meeting

The record of the meeting held on 1 June 2022 was agreed and signed by the Chairman as correct subject to the following amendment to minute no. 24 A) MC/21/2272:

Provision of 100% affordable housing for the adjacent ~~Creval~~ site.

91 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

There were none.

92 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other significant interests (OSIs)

There were none.

Other interests

Councillor Potter referred to planning application MC/22/0828 – Former Splashes Leisure Centre and declared a non-pecuniary interest both locally and through the Council.

He also referred to planning application MC/21/3235 – Land off Lower Rainham Road, Rainham Gillingham Medway and declared a non-pecuniary interest as the local Ward Councillor and as a local resident. Councillor Potter requested to address the Committee as Ward Councillor on both planning applications. He stated that he would remove himself from the Committee and take no part in the determination of the application.

93 Planning application - MC/22/0828 Former Splashes Leisure Centre Bloors Lane Rainham Gillingham

Discussion:

The Head of Planning outlined the application in detail and showed the outline plan of the previous leisure centre and a superimposed plan of the new application. The new application would not encroach onto the formal area of Cozenton Park or the car park.

The replacement leisure facilities would be slightly larger and, in principle, was acceptable. There would be 6 electric charging points, 7 disabled parking bays and additional cycle spaces.

The new facilities on the ground floor would include a 25m fitness pool, a leisure pool, changing facilities, café area, reception, offices, first aid room, toilets and a chemical storage area. On the first floor there would be a multipurpose fitness area / party area, administrative and storage areas and a fitness gym.

The Head of Planning informed the Committee that this was a well-designed scheme and included measures to deal with energy efficiency including roof top air source heat pumps and photovoltaic panels. Materials used would be of a better quality than the previous leisure centre.

With the agreement of the Committee, Councillor Potter addressed the Committee as Ward Councillor and outlined the following points in support of the application.

- There would be adequate space and flexibility for different uses in the fitness / party / café area.
- Following a meeting held with Councillor Potter and the Head of Planning local residents had an opportunity to express any concerns

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they had with the scheme. The outcome was residents felt reassured about the wider community safety.

- Engagement with the construction company and local residents would be really important.

The Committee discussed the planning application noting the points outlined by the Head of Planning and the points raised by the Ward Councillor.

There was a concern expressed about the location of the café whether it would be beneficial for it to be accessible from outside and overlooking the park or the leisure pool rather than the 25m fitness pool.

To mitigate any disturbance to local residents, the Head of Planning confirmed that under Condition 3, the Construction Environmental Management Plan would deal with these issues.

Decision:

Approved with conditions 1 to 22 as set out in the report for the reasons stated in the report.

94 Planning application - MC/21/3235 Land Off Lower Rainham Road Rainham Gillingham Medway

Discussion:

The Head of Planning outlined the application in detail and explained that when Members previously approved this application a discussion had taken place about access from Macklands Estate to the site. A consultation with residents had taken place in May 2022 giving two options regarding the boundary of the Bellway development site.

Option A sought opinion on the provision of an access to link both estates: and

Option B sought opinion on no access along this boundary and retain the solid wall land embankment to keep both estates separate.

A total of 81 responses were received, 4 supporting Option A and 77 supporting Option B.

With the agreement of the Committee, Councillor Potter addressed the Committee as Ward Councillor and informed the Committee that he had originally made representations against this development but welcomed this consultation. Option B would ensure a solid separation between the two estates with no access.

Following discussion on this item, the Head of Planning apologised that this did not appear as a complete report with recommendations and appraisal and suggested Members may wish to defer this application for further information.

Decision:

Consideration of this application was deferred at the request of the Head of Planning in order to complete a report with recommendations.

95 Planning application - MC/22/1002 153 Fairview Avenue Wigmore Gillingham Medway

Discussion:

The Head of Planning outlined the application in detail and explained a further letter of objection had been received and was included in the supplementary agenda advice sheet.

The Principal Transport Planner explained to the Committee that the two previous applications had been refused. Both had gone to appeal and were dismissed.

He stated that the Highways Authority had lodged an objection to this application due to a lack of information to make an informed decision.

As part of this application, the applicant undertook a parking survey conducted on a Thursday and Saturday in the vicinity of Bredhurst Road, Fairview Avenue and the parking area in front of the shops. During peak times of 4pm – 5.45pm there were high levels of parking pressures, but spaces were available as the evening progressed and it was deemed there would be sufficient parking to accommodate the change of use.

The Committee discussed the planning application noting the points outlined by the Head of Planning and the Principal Transport Planner.

There were concerns raised that the premises had already been refused planning permission twice before and nothing had really changed. Residents and public health had also expressed objections and there were concerns about the number of take away units in that parade of shops.

Members also discussed the close proximity to Fairview Community Primary School.

The Committee voted on the officers' recommendation for approval with conditions 1 – 4 as set out in the report. On being put to the vote, the proposal was lost.

During further discussions, Members suggested adding additional conditions regarding no deliveries and reviewing the opening and closing times due to the location of the school, should the application be approved.

Members also commented that this application had been to appeal twice, and should this application be refused, the applicant would have the opportunity to appeal the decision for a third time.

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The Head of Planning reminded the Committee that whilst the first appeal had been dismissed on over-concentration and highways/parking grounds, the second appeal had been dismissed on highways/parking grounds only.

Decision:

Refused on the grounds of over-concentration, and highways and parking matters with the Head of Planning being granted delegated powers to approve the final wording of the refusal grounds in consultation with the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Opposition Spokesperson.

96 Planning application - MC/22/0605 Council Office Gun Wharf Dock Road Chatham

Decision:

Consideration of this application was deferred at the request of applicant.

97 Planning application - MC/22/0609 Council Office Gun Wharf Dock Road Chatham

Decision:

Consideration of this application was deferred at the request of applicant.

98 Performance Report 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022

Discussion:

The Committee received a report setting out performance for the period 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022.

The Head of Planning drew attention to a downturn in applications being received in the current quarter which could be due to the economic climate. In the reporting 6 month period performance by officers exceeded the national target for all types of applications.

The number of appeals continued, and more applications were dismissed rather than allowed. Medway's target was 30% and in the last two quarters more appeals had been allowed, just over 40%.

The Head of Planning stated that the number of units under construction between 2018 and 2021 had increased dramatically. This could have been due to the housing crisis and housing need in Medway. He advised that from permission to construction the timescale for commencement of construction was approximately 18 months to 3 years.

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The Head of Planning informed the Committee that he was reviewing the procedures for any enforcement action taken and officer anonymity would be a priority.

The Head of Planning advised the Committee that he had been allowed to recruit a Tree Officer instead of a Planning Officer and that a tree consultant had now been appointed to assist dealing with the backlog of outstanding tree applications. The Head of Planning felt there was significant pressure and additional support was needed to deal with tree applications.

The Committee commended the Head of Planning and his team for their performance during the past 2 quarters of 2021-22.

Following questions from Members, the Head of Planning explained that even with a tree consultant helping the backlog of all the tree applications this could take approximately six months or significantly longer to clear.

The Chairman referred to the compliments that the team had received over the past six months.

Decision:

The Committee noted the report and requested that the Head of Planning express the Committee's appreciation for the levels of achievement to staff within the Planning Service.

99 Report on Appeal Decisions 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022

Discussion:

The Committee received a detailed report setting out a summary of appeal decisions for the period 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022.

The Head of Planning gave a summary of the appeal decisions referred to in Appendix A to the report.

Members thanked the Head of Planning and his team for dealing with these appeals and noted that planning was not an exact science and Members would on some occasions balance planning issues differently to officers.

Members requested a report of those applications that had been dealt with under the delegated authority of the Head of Planning and Planning Officers and the numbers of those that had been approved and refused within a certain period of time.

Decision:

The Committee noted the report.

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Chairman

Date:

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