

Medway Council
Planning Committee
Wednesday, 19 April 2023
6.30pm to 8.05pm

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, Curry, Fearn, Hackwell, Hubbard, McDonald, Potter, Thorne and Tranter

Substitutes: Councillors:
Price (Substitute for Chrissy Stamp)
Sands (Substitute for Crozer)

In Attendance: Julie Francis-Beard, Democratic Services Officer
Dave Harris, Head of Planning
Joanna Horne, Planning Solicitor
Alison Munck, Enforcement Officer
Arron Nicholls, Derelict and Empty Properties Officer

761 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Carr, Crozer, Lammas, Prenter and Chrissy Stamp.

762 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

The Chairman informed the Committee that two previous decisions from 5 April 2023 had been amended and were in the supplementary agenda advice sheet.

763 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other significant interests (OSIs)

There were none.

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Other interests

There were none.

764 Planning application - MC/23/0161 Aburound House, Woodlands Road, Gillingham, Medway

Discussion:

The Head of Planning outlined the application in detail for the demolition of an existing single storey building and construction of two blocks comprised of 18 apartments with associated parking, landscaping and refuse and cycle storage.

The Head of Planning explained, following concerns from Members, that the windows located in Block B had been amended and would be fitted with obscure glazing to avoid overlooking of the adjoining property.

The amended application took into account the height and outlook of the design and the fourth floor had now been removed from the planning application.

A viability assessment had been verified by an Independent Development Consultant who concluded that the development was only a viable scheme if it contained 18 affordable homes and £20,000 of S106 contributions. The contributions were set out on page 33 of the report.

The Head of Planning confirmed there was an outstanding issue that needed to be resolved, which was Kent County Council (KCC) Biodiversity. This required additional information from the applicant which they had received in March 2023 and KCC had been reconsulted and their comments were awaited. As part of the recommendation, receipt of comments from KCC Biodiversity raising no objections to the proposal, delegated authority should be given to the Head of Planning to impose any subsequent conditions requested by KCC.

The Committee considered the application noting that any discussion regarding the distribution of the S106 contributions should be in consultation with the relevant Ward Councillors.

A Member suggested including, under Conditions 18 and 19, using specific native and local trees within the planting scheme and installing bird boxes and bee holes.

The Head of Planning confirmed that although the materials and detailing were critical in an application, officers of the Planning Team do go and review the finished site and look at the materials used, landscaping and design noting what worked well on a scheme and what not so well. Members were regularly updated and they also reviewed sites to learn lessons from the applications and designs. The Head of Planning confirmed he would ask whether ground source or air source heating could be included in the scheme.

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The Head of Planning confirmed that where possible, mature trees would be saved however if that was not possible additional planting would be installed.

The Head of Planning confirmed that the distribution of the S106 contributions would be in consultation with the Ward Councillors.

Decision:

Approved subject to:

- A) Receipt of comments from KCC Biodiversity raising no objections to the proposal and delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning to impose any subsequent conditions requested by KCC.
- B) The submission of a Unilateral Undertaking under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to secure:
 - i) £4,410 to assist with development of public realm improvements to Gillingham Town Centre.
 - ii) £3,339.90 to improve equipment and facilities at Twydall Library.
 - iii) £3,499.56 for the provision, improvement and promotion of waste and recycling services to cover the impact of the development.
 - iv) £4,923.90 to support the creation of a new swimming gala timing system and improved facility for club and community users at Medway Park.
 - v) £3,705.66 towards enhancement and/or expansion of community facilities 9 Agenda Item 4 which will serve the new residents of the development.
 - vi) £4,965.84 towards Designated Habitats Mitigation.
- C) The imposition of conditions 1 to 27 as set out in the report for the reasons stated in the report.

765 Planning application - MC/23/0277 100 King George Road, Weeds Wood, Chatham, Medway

Discussion:

The Head of Planning explained that this application had been significantly amended and outlined the application in detail for the construction of a two storey side/part single storey side/rear extension; dormer to the rear together with a porch and rooflights to the front. The original scheme had been amended to reduce the extent of the box dormer which originally went across the full width of the house, therefore, the proposed scheme now had 4 bedrooms as opposed to 5. This created an improved street scheme and did not cause any impact on neighbours.

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Decision:

Approved with conditions 1 to 4 as set out in the report for the reasons stated in the report.

766 Performance Report - 1 July 2022 to 31 March 2023

Discussion:

The Committee received a report setting out performance for the period 1 July 2022 to 31 March 2023 which the Head of Planning explained.

A number of compliments had been received and were listed on page 67 of the report.

Members expressed their thanks to the Head of Planning and his team for all their hard work and to acknowledge the impressive performance statistics, set out on pages 45 to 48 of the report, and how the team had achieved this, knowing the length of time each application could take.

Members noted the challenges with recruitment and the Head of Planning confirmed that recruitment had been an issue nationally, not just a Medway challenge.

The Head of Planning confirmed that a Tree Consultant had been brought into support the Senior Tree Officer and they had reviewed all the applications submitted in 2020 - 2021, they were nearly through all those for 2021 – 22 and were up to date with applications submitted in 2023.

Members thanked the Planning Team for all the guidance they had been given at the Planning Committees, they were very impressed with how the Planning Department worked and the dedication of staff. Members were very proud of what Medway had achieved.

Decision:

The Committee noted the report and expressed thanks to all staff for all their hard work, commitment and performance despite significant resource issues.

767 Appeals - 1 July 2022 to 31 March 2023

Discussion:

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

Members thanked the Head of Planning and his team for all the hard work involved in appeals.

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Members explained that reviewing these appeals helped when making future decisions. They also understood the process Inspectors went through to make their decisions.

Several Members expressed their disappointment regarding the outcome of the appeal for Otterham Quay Lane. Medway Planners were in attendance and Members expressed their disappointment at the level of support received from Swale.

Some Members were concerned with a possible change of use for the former Lloyd's building on Gillingham Business Park and the fact that housing developments could be constructed there.

Decision:

The Committee noted the report.

768 Section 106 Agreements - July 2022 to March 2023

Discussion:

The Committee received a report setting out the Section 106 Agreements for the period of July 2022 to March 2023.

The Head of Planning confirmed that he was happy to receive any emails relating to Section 106 Agreements and either the S106 Officer or the Head of Planning would respond directly outside of the meeting.

Decision:

The Committee noted the report.

769 Exclusion of the press and public

Decision:

The Committee agreed to exclude the press and public from the meeting during consideration of agenda item 10 (Derelict Buildings – 1 October 2022 to 30 March 2023) and agenda item 11 (Enforcement Proceedings – 1 July 2022 to 31 March 2023) because consideration of these matters in public would disclose information falling within paragraph 6 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as specified in agenda item 9 (Exclusion of Press and Public) and, in all the circumstances of the case, the Committee considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

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770 Derelict Buildings - 1 October 2022 to 30 March 2023

Discussion:

The Committee received a report informing members of the action taken by the Derelict and Empty Homes Officer with regard to key buildings and associated land in the Medway area during the period 1 October 2022 – 30 March 2023.

The Chairman acknowledged the work the Derelict and Empty Property Officer had achieved and confirmed it was good to see derelict buildings being brought back into use.

Decision:

The Committee noted the report and recognised the significant improvements to properties in Medway.

771 Enforcement Proceedings - 1 July 2022 to 31 March 2023

Discussion:

The Head of Planning gave a summary of the enforcement proceedings referred to in Appendix A of the report.

The Head of Planning confirmed that he was happy to take any questions and respond directly outside of the meeting.

Decision:

The Committee noted the report and recognised the resource issues and thanked the team for their hard work especially the Senior Enforcement Officer.

Chairman

Date:

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