

**Planning Committee (South)**  
**21 APRIL 2020**

Present: Councillors: Brian Donnelly (Chairman), Tim Lloyd (Vice-Chairman), John Blackall, Chris Brown, Karen Burgess, Jonathan Chowen, Philip Circus, Paul Clarke, Michael Croker, Ray Dawe, Nigel Jupp, Lynn Lambert, Mike Morgan, Roger Noel, Bob Platt, Josh Potts, Kate Rowbottom, Jim Sanson, Diana van der Klugt, Claire Vickers and James Wright

Absent: Councillors: Jack Saheid

PCS/70 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting from 18th February 2020 were agreed to be an accurate record. It was stated they would be signed by the Chairman after the COVID 19 crisis had abated.

PCS/71 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

With regard to application DC/18/2402, Councillor Circus noted that previously he had been told to declare an interest and refrain from taking part. It had subsequently been decided that his wife's interest did not preclude him from voting.

There was also a discussion around Councillor rights to make representation in the virtual meeting and it was clarified that it was no different from a meeting at the Council offices.

PCS/72 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

PCS/73 **APPEALS**

The list of appeals lodged, appeals in progress and appeal decisions as circulated was noted.

Councillors sought clarification about whether decisions from the Planning Inspectorate were on hold because of the COVID 19 situation. The Head of Development explained that the Planning Inspectorate was not progressing on site visits so consequently there was a delay in progressing live appeals.

PCS/74 **DC/19/1707 - ABINGWORTH NURSERIES, STORRINGTON ROAD, THAKEHAM**

The Head of Development reported that this application sought permission for revised layout for Phase 3 of the Abingworth Meadows development (Original application ref: DC/10/1314) to provide for 75 1-, 2-, 3- and 4-bed dwellings including 26 affordable dwellings and community studio workshops. The proposed dwellings would lie to the south of the existing attenuation pond area and north of proposed allotments. The scheme also included associated parking and landscaping and the provision of five workshop units totalling 570m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace. The proposal included an on-site affordable housing provision of 35%, which equated to 26 dwellings. The proposed 75 dwellings would comprise a housing mix of 17x one bedroom units (including flats), 32x two bedroom units, 23x three bedroom units, and 3x four bedroom units, formed of a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced dwellings. An addendum clarified that it was 8 not 9 dwellings which were to be provided for the over 55s and they were to be towards the western side of the central green space not the eastern side as previously stated.

The addendum also contained further concerns from Thakeham Parish Council regarding proposed land levels. This led to a proposed further condition requiring further detailed land level information to be submitted in relation to certain plots. It was further recommended that an informative be added regarding surface water drainage. The addendum also contained a discussion from Thakeham Parish Council regarding rights to install solar panels. It has been clarified with the developers that they were now open to residents installing suitable solar panels on the Abingworth properties. Previously, they had restricted solar panels to the Abingworth Meadows properties and the Parish Council objected to this.

The application site was located on the southern side of the Abingworth Development Site, south of the site's central greenspace and attenuation feature. The site was currently separated from the development site with hoarding, and was currently used as a compound for the storage of materials and machinery. The site was bound by established mature trees to the eastern boundary, currently borders open fields to the south, and neighbours Abingworth Hall Hotel to the west. The surrounding area was semi-rural in character, formed of small hamlets of residential development to the west and north of the site, in addition to the mushroom farm site to the north-west, and sporadic residential farmsteads located within the surrounding open countryside. The Horsham District Landscape Capacity Assessment stated that Thakeham and Abingworth were located in the Wealden Greens and National Character Area. The site also fell within area F1 – Pulborough, Chiltington and Thakeham Farmlands in the Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment. Overall the landscape was characterised by an undulating landscape comprising a mix of arable and horticultural uses.

Thakeham Parish Council objected to the application. There had been 60 representations objecting to the application. 2 members of the public provided

statements which were read out by Horsham District Council's Democratic Services Officers in support of the application and the applicant's agent also provided a statement in support of the proposal which was read out by a Democratic Services Officer. The statement from Thakeham Parish Council objecting to the proposal was also read out by a Democratic Services Officer.

Members considered the officer's planning assessment which indicated that the key issues for consideration in determining the proposal were principle of development, affordable housing and housing mix, layout, amount and scale, design, appearance & character, landscape impact and design, arboricultural impacts, amenity impacts, public rights of way, ecology, drainage, air quality / sustainability, workshop provision, allotments and highways access and parking.

Members also discussed the scale of the proposed increase in housing units and it was noted that Thakeham had had proportionally the most housing in the District. Some Councillors felt the proposed increase in units represented overdevelopment and that it would exacerbate the existing air quality issues in Thakeham and Storrington. The lack of public transport to the site was also raised. The Head of Development clarified that each application was assessed on its merits and there were no longer maximum numbers of units given for sites. The proposed increase in units fell within the built up neighbourhood boundary and there had been no objections from Highways. It was also considered that the proposal was a better use of the site with smaller units which were in accordance with the current housing study.

Councillors also asked for clarification regarding whether the proposed workshop units represented an increase or decrease from the original plans. The Planning Officers said it was a decrease from the original planning approval in 2013. As part of the current proposal, amendments had been received increasing the size of the proposed workshops at the request of the Planning Department.

There was further discussion around whether to allow solar panels to offset the carbon footprint.

The issues with the development around loss of hedgerows and impact on air quality were balanced against the proposed community benefits of the new development. There was a discussion around a proposed mini bus to be provided by the developer.

The Head of Development noted that the original planning consent had been granted over 10 years ago and it was not unusual for plans to be amended in that time to reflect changing market conditions.

The officer recommendation was to approve the proposal subject to conditions as reported.

RESOLVED

That planning application DC/19/1707 be granted subject to the conditions as reported and with the additional condition set out in the committee addendum.

PCS/75 **DC/18/2402 - RYECROFT NURSERY, FRYERN ROAD, STORRINGTON**

The application sought permission for the erection of a detached chalet-style dwelling on the south eastern corner of Ryecroft Nursery to provide a rural workers dwelling for the nursery owner and family. This application was deferred from the January 21st 2020 Committee Meeting to allow the applicant time to submit more supporting information on their business case.

The application site was located off the western side of Fryern Road in a rural area 480 metres south of the built-up area of West Chiltington.

An addendum was submitted providing further evidence to support the applicant's business case. The additional details were assessed by the Council's Agricultural Consultant who commented that the details were not sufficient and upheld their objection to the proposal.

Three people had their statements in support of the application read out by Horsham District Council's Democratic Services Officers and Storrington and Sullington Parish Council also spoke in support.

Members considered whether the new information submitted by the applicant overcame the concerns regarding the viability and sustainability of the business. It was felt that the present circumstances in which the business was supplying food to the local community were hard to assess long term because the COVID 19 circumstances were exceptionally unusual. Members further discussed whether the business was viable and whether there was a functional need for someone to live on site. This centred around the extent to which there would be livestock present. There was further discussion around whether the proposed dwelling was larger than necessary and what would happen were permission for a dwelling granted if the business then failed.

The Councillors voted on the Officer's recommendation to refuse planning permission. The Councillors voted against this recommendation.

As the motion to refuse permission was not carried, an alternative motion was proposed by Councillor Dawe and seconded by Councillor Sanson to delegate approval to the Head of Development in consultation with local ward members to finalise conditions.

It was stated that the reason for the overturn was that the proposal was considered to meet the tests for a rural workers dwelling in accordance with Policy 20 of the HDPF.

RESOLVED

That planning application DC/18/2402 be delegated for approval to the Head of Development in consultation with ward members.

*The meeting closed at 5.10 pm having commenced at 2.30 pm*

CHAIRMAN