

MINUTES

of the

PLANNING COMMITTEE

held on 6 August 2019 at 7:00 pm

Present:

Councillor J A Sosin (Chair)

Councillors L Ashley, H Ayres, A Davidson, S Dobson, P V Hughes,
R J Hyland, R Lee, G H J Pooley, R J Poulter, T E Roper, C Shaw,
R J Shepherd, M Springett and I Wright

Also present: Councillors K Bentley, G B R Knight and C Tron

1. **Chair's Announcements**

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

2. **Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

3. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. **Public Question Time**

Members of the public attended to ask questions and make statements on item 6 on the agenda. Details are recorded under the relevant minute numbers below.

5. **Declarations of Interests**

All Members were reminded to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) or other registerable interests where appropriate in any of the items of business on the meeting's agenda. Those declared are referred to in the relevant minute numbers below.

6. **Beaulieu Park, White Hart Lane, Chelmsford – 19/00581/REM**

Councillor S Dobson declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item insofar as she had previously had discussions with the Essex Bridleways Association in connection with development in the Beaulieu Park area, although not in respect of the site the subject of this application.

The Committee considered an application for the construction of 300 dwellings (a mix of one-, two- and three-bed units with 81 affordable units and nine wheelchair accessible units) with associated infrastructure, servicing, landscaping and car parking spaces in Zones K and L of the Beaulieu Park development at White Hart Lane, Chelmsford. A Green Sheet of additions to the report was distributed which set out the comments of Little Waltham Parish Council on the application.

The applicant and their agent spoke in support of the application. They said that the design of the development had evolved in accordance with the requirements of the City and County Councils as regards scale, material, traffic and parking. The application also took into account existing residents' comments about ecology and green space, it provided a range of affordable accommodation units and work had begun on the next phase of the radial relief road in accordance with the obligation in the legal agreement. Amendments had been made to the Regiment Gate elevation, increasing the set back of units and the courtyard walls, introducing pergolas and further tree planting.

Two councillors for wards adjacent to the development area attended to speak against the application. They and local residents were concerned about:

- the fact that the development would be on the green wedge between the Beaulieu and Channels developments;
- the separation between properties in the new development and existing houses, the residents of which were not aware that development of this nature was anticipated when they purchased their properties. Existing residents feared a loss of residential amenity and privacy and that the height of properties on both sides of Regiment Gate would create a canyoning effect;
- the potential for antisocial behaviour elsewhere in the Channels development to be replicated here; and
- the fact that the radial relief road was not due to be completed until October 2021 and that the new development would therefore add to the current traffic problems in the area.

Both councillors concluded that a revised scheme of a lesser scale would be more appropriate for the site.

Responding to those points, officers said that:

- the overall development of the Beaulieu area was being built in accordance with the approved parameter plans which included requirements for the provision of a considerable amount of green space of various types;
- the area the subject of the application had always been zoned for residential development, something which current residents would have been made aware of when purchasing their properties;
- the scale and height of the buildings on the new development met the standards in the Making Places Supplementary Planning Document;

- the staged provision of the radial relief road was triggered by the number of properties actually occupied rather than the number built;
- the distance between properties on either side of Regiment Gate was adequate and not all were fronting the road and the houses opposite; and
- a considerable amount of infrastructure, including roads, schools and a neighbourhood centre, had already been provided as a result of the Beaulieu development.

The Committee's ensuing discussion centred on the affordable housing element of the development. Members were informed that it comprised 27% of the units, less than the current 35% target. The outline application had been made in 2009 and approved in 2012 and there was a heavy infrastructure levy on the scheme provided through a Section 206 agreement. A detailed viability assessment had concluded that 27% was an acceptable level of provision and two review mechanisms were in place to assess whether a greater percentage could be delivered. The viability assessment looked at the effect the proportion of affordable housing had on the economic viability for the developer of the overall scheme; it did not assess whether the accommodation was affordable for those occupying it. The mix of housing types in the affordable housing element across the Beaulieu development as a whole was satisfactory and reflected housing need. The tenure type of the private component of the site was at the discretion of the developer, with a mix which included shared ownership.

On other aspects of the application, the Committee was told that the density of the development was assessed having regard to the approved Design & Access Statement and the key development principles for each site allocation as set out in the North Chelmsford Area Action Plan. As mentioned earlier, this and other elements of the Beaulieu development provided adequate green spaces and play areas and the trigger points for the provision of the radial relief road also applied to the introduction of bus services. The road bordering the north of the development site, whilst not having a footway, would have traffic calming and a 20mph speed limit.

The Committee was of the view that its questions about the application had been answered satisfactorily and that there were no sound policy grounds on which to refuse it.

RESOLVED that application 19/00581/REM in respect of Zones K and L at Beaulieu Park, White Hart Lane, Chelmsford be approved, subject to the conditions detailed in the report to the meeting.

(7.05pm to 8.09pm)

7. Planning Appeals

RESOLVED that the information on appeal decisions between 28 June and 24 July 2019 be noted.

(8.09pm to 8.10pm)

8. **Urgent Business**

There were no matters of urgent business brought before the Committee.

The meeting closed at 8.10pm.

Chairman