



PLANNING COMMITTEE

MEETING : Tuesday, 6th June 2017

PRESENT : Cllrs. Taylor (Chair), Lewis (Vice-Chair), Lugg, Morgan, D. Brown, Dee, Hansdot, Toleman, J. Brown, Fearn, Finnegan and Walford.

Officers in Attendance

Anthony Wilson, Head of Planning

Nick Jonathan, Solicitor, One Legal

Adam Smith, Principal Planning Officer, Major Developments

Tony Wisdom, Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES : Cllr Hanman

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR.

The appointments of Councillor Taylor as Chair and Councillor Lewis as Vice-Chair made at the Annual Meeting of the Council were noted.

2. APPOINTMENT OF PLANNING POLICY SUB-COMMITTEE

The appointment of Councillors Taylor (Chair), Lewis (Vice-Chair), David Brown, Lugg and Dee to the Planning Policy Sub-Committee made at the Annual Meeting of Council were noted.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Walford declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in application 17/00224/REM due to the proximity of, and the impact of the application upon his home. He retired to the Public Gallery during the consideration of this item.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 4th April 2017 were confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

5. LATE MATERIAL

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Late material in respect of Agenda item 7, Former Debenhams Playing Field, Estcourt Road/Estcourt Close had been circulated.

6. FORMER DEBENHAMS PLAYING FIELD, ESTCOURT ROAD/ESTCOURT CLOSE. - 17/00224/REM

The Principal Planning Officer presented the report which detailed an application for the approval of reserved matters of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for the provision of new student accommodation (up to 200 beds) and associated highways, parking and ancillary works, pursuant to outline planning permission ref. 15/01190/OUT.

He advised Members that this application for approval of reserved matters for the student accommodation represented the last of the three main parts of the University development of this site submitted for reserved matters approval and he noted that the previously granted outline permission had included means of access.

He referred Members to the late material which contained information relating to the soft landscaping proposals, the comments of the Environment Agency and the proposed finished floor levels.

He had requested further clarification on the finished floor levels and had received further information that afternoon which indicated that the increase in levels to secure the suggested maximum finished floor levels for the buildings were larger than originally thought likely, and he set out the respective approximate increases for each building and that the proposed building floor levels/storeys would be larger than a normal residential property. He noted that given the considerable separation distances from the proposed buildings to the existing residential properties neighbouring the site, it was likely that the impact of levels increases would remain acceptable, but that the matter still required resolution, potentially by condition, in accordance with the Officer recommendation

Stephen Marston, Vice-Chancellor of the University, addressed the Committee in support of the application.

Mr Marston thanked the Committee for the opportunity to speak in support of the application. He stated that the application was the final part of the development of the Oxstalls Campus. The application would provide an additional 200 student bedrooms and further student accommodation would be provided on the Blackfriars site.

He advised that it was envisaged that a further 2,000 students would attend the Business School and the total would increase to 4,000 students.

The growth of the University would bring major benefits to the City. He noted that many students preferred to live in Cheltenham at the present time due to the lack of critical mass in Gloucester but he believed that this would change as a result of this application.

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He referred to the curvilinear layout of the buildings and the landscaping proposed, including the planting of 64 new trees, and he noted that discussions were continuing on tree planting and floor levels.

He noted that seven objections had been received, most of which referred to the location and height of the buildings. He advised that the buildings would be sited as far as possible from residential properties without impinging on the flood zone.

He referred to concerns regarding issues such as behaviour, noise and traffic and he confirmed that the University was fully committed to compliance with the proposed conditions. He advised that the windows had been designed to reduce noise transmission.

He asked Members to support this application which would make a major contribution to the growth of the City and the County.

Councillor Morgan welcomed the assurances regarding screening and tree planting which he believed were vital to building a good relationship between the University and local residents. He asked Officers to ensure that the maximum amount of screening reasonable be made available immediately.

He expressed concerns regarding the location of the waste compactor which he believed was in the worst possible position and asked if it could be moved as far away from the residential properties as possible as he wished to ensure that every reasonable safeguard was in place to protect the amenity of residents.

The Principal Planning Officer advised that the Environmental Health Officer had discussed the compactor equipment and its operation with the University's Engineer and had advised that the requirements of the noise condition could be achieved. He stated that there were no technical grounds to insist on the relocation of the equipment but he would have further discussions with the applicants if the Committee resolved this.

The Vice-Chair agreed that the landscaping needed to be implemented early and that mature trees should be planted. He asked about the gated access. He supported exploring the relocation of the compactor.

The Principal Planning Officer undertook to circulate technical notes on the compactor to the Committee.

He explained the arrangements for the gated access at Estcourt Close and advised that the access was intended to be used at the start and finish of the academic year to enable students and their belongings to be dropped off or collected, and at other times by disabled students, maintenance and emergency vehicles. He noted that the outline planning permission contained a condition requiring the submission of details of the management of the access and also a condition requiring that the student tenancy agreement would prohibit students from bringing a car to the City.

He advised Members that the University had explained that the compactor would be used between the hours of 9.00 am and 6.00pm. It was expected that the process which operated on a cycle of less than three minutes would be used approximately

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three times each day and the manufacturer stated that the compactor operation would not exceed 80 decibels.

Councillor Dee asked about the nature of the waste to be compacted, whether the process would be sealed and how far the equipment was located from the nearest residential property. The Principal Planning Officer undertook to provide further information and advised that the proposed location of the equipment was approximately 10 metres from the boundary of the nearest property.

The Chair asked how often the site would be visited by service vehicles and the Principal Planning Officer undertook to provide that information. It was suggested that Members could discuss the information about the compactor between themselves and the Chair/Vice Chair would decide on the acceptability.

The Chair liked the design which was located as far away from residential property as possible without impinging on the flood zone. He believed that the wider University proposals would bring about a welcome change in the vibrancy of the City centre.

Councillor Morgan stated that he had been approached regarding the erosion of nesting sites and roosts for swifts and he asked for consideration to be given to their needs. The Principal Planning Officer undertook to raise the issue with the Council's ecologist.

In conclusion, the Principal Planning Officer confirmed that he could seek further technical information and possible relocation of the compacting equipment and consider enhancement measures for swifts.

RESOLVED that the Head of Planning be authorised to grant reserved matters approval subject to the resolution of the issues and the conditions contained in the report and any further appropriate conditions deemed necessary, and also subject to determination of the acceptability of the proposed compactor and its location by liaison with the Chair and Vice Chair, and consideration of specific measures for swifts in the ecological enhancement.

7. SECTION 106 MONITORING - PROGRESS REPORT 2016/17

The Chair advised Members that due to the cancellation of the April meeting Mr Andrew Birchley, who had now left the Council's employment, had been unable to thank Members in person for their support over the eleven years he had served the Council and he had asked that the Chair convey his thanks to the Committee.

The Head of Planning presented the report which presented details of new Section 106 agreements entered into, contributions received during the 2016/17 financial year and outlined future arrangements for Section 106 monitoring.

Councillor David Brown asked who would be the contact for enforcement and Section 106 matters. The Head of Planning advised that it would be the City Centre Improvement and Environment Manager or himself.

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RESOLVED that the report be noted and that the thanks of the Committee be conveyed to Andrew Birchley.

8. DELEGATED DECISIONS

Consideration was given to a schedule of applications determined under delegated powers during the period 1st March to 30th April 2017.

RESOLVED that the schedule be noted.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, 4th July 2017 at 6.00pm.

Time of commencement: 6.00 pm

Time of conclusion: 6.46 pm

Chair