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Minutes of a meeting of the District Planning Committee held on 09 August 2017 from 2.00 p.m. to 3.35 p.m.

Present: Robert Salisbury (Chairman)
John Wilkinson (Vice-Chairman)

Ginny Heard
Christopher Hersey
Colin Holden
* Absent

Bob Mainstone*
Edward Matthews
Norman Mockford

Anthony Watts Williams*
Peter Wyan

Also Present: Councillors Margaret Hersey, Andrew MacNaughton, Garry Wall and Norman Webster.

1. SUBSTITUTES AT MEETINGS OF COMMITTEE – COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 4

The Committee noted that Councillor Margaret Hersey is substituting for Councillor Bob Mainstone.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Committee noted that apologies had been received from Councillor Anthony Watts-Williams and Councillor Bob Mainstone.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

4. MINUTES

The Minutes of 13th July 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. APPLICATIONS AND OTHER MATTERS CONSIDERED

DM/17/0331 Gamblemead, Fox Hill, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 4QT

Steve King, Planning Applications Team Leader, introduced the report by referring Members to the Update Sheet. He noted the amendment to the wording on page 10 of the report and referenced the additional comments by the Highway Authority continuing to state that they had no objections to the application. Finally, he concluded the reference to the Update Sheet by drawing Members attention to the comments regarding Ashdown Forest on page 41 and the resulting amendments to the conditions proposed for the application.

He stated that this application was for the demolition of the existing area of Gamblemead and the erection of 151 dwellings within the site. Fox Hill Village is to the north of the site with the Fox & Hounds pub to the eastern side. The existing access is located on the south-eastern side of the development with the southern boundary consisting of trees and hedging with open field beyond.

He then explained that outline planning permission was granted for 99 dwellings on the site in July last year and that this consent established the principal of development and the means of access into the site. He reminded Members that this was a full planning application proposal with full details of this on page 21.

He went on to show Members a Block Plan of the site stating that the access would be the same as in the previously approved application with all units being two storey buildings designed with a traditional approach and that play equipment would be added to the area. Many properties within the site will also be provided with a garage and there would be rear court parking on some units in order to ensure that the development is not dominated by car parking.

He then moved on to highlight some of the issues with the application. He noted that as stated in pages 24-27 of the report the site is not allocated in the development plan for residential development. Furthermore, he referenced the absence of a 5 year land supply being demonstrated until written confirmation was received from the District Plan Inspector. In this case as the site would affect the setting of a listed building and this would cause less than substantial harm to the setting of the listed building, the relevant test in the NPPF was against paragraph 134, which requires an unweighted balance of the less than substantial harm to the setting of the listed building weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

The Team Leader advised that it is the officers view there would be little if any difference between the current scheme and the previously approved scheme in relation to the strategic gap between Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill.

He then went on to address some of the issues represented within the report. Amid concern regarding access to the site, he reminded Members that the access proposed was the same as the previously approved application and that both West Sussex and East Sussex Highway Authorities had no concerns with this. Moreover, he stated that back-to-back distances between existing homes and the proposed development are sufficient to reduce concerns over amenity. In addition, he explained that there were to be 45 units of affordable housing and officers were happy that these were appropriately distributed. He stated that the application would result in less than substantial harm to the setting of the listed building but this remains an issue members must take into account when assessing the pros and cons of the proposed development..

The Planning Applications Team Leader concluded the report by showing Members pictures of the proposed development and recommending the application for approval.

Frances Wallace and Stephanie Went both spoke against the application. In addition, David Went spoke against the application as a member of Fox Hill Residents Association. Oliver Bell spoke in support of the application as an Agent.

Councillor Garry Wall, District Ward Member for Haywards Heath – Franklands, gave a balanced outline of the application. He stated that he was aware of the challenges and demands of housing supply within the area and the increasing number of

housing applications caused a balancing act between residents concern and housing need within the district. He raised several questions which he believed the members of the committee should discuss. Are the previously approved 99 units enough for the site? Will there be an impact on the built up boundary? Furthermore, he mentioned the potential loss of amenity for the existing residential area and the impact on transport on an already busy road.

The Chairman opened discussion of the application by referencing the lack of a 5 year land supply. He clarified that the process for this was ongoing but it is anticipated that this will reach a resolution by January 2018. He confirmed however, that the principle of development is established.

The Vice Chairman raised some issues that Members may wish to discuss. These were the Highway Authority's view on the increase of houses, if there were any drainage issues with the proposed site and whether there would be any loss of amenity for existing residential buildings.

One member raised concern for the huge effect on transport that this application could cause. He stated that Fox Hill is a fast road and that new vehicles would now be joining that road and in the majority of cases heading towards Haywards Heath.

The representative from the Highways Authority answered these concerns by stating that the cumulative impact of the scheme together with other committed sites in the area had been taken into account by the Highway Authority. The representative from the Highway Authority advised that the pavement would be widened as part of this development. He confirmed that the Highway Authority had no objection to the application.

Another member asked as to whether the affordable houses were made with the same design elements of other properties within the site. In addition, he asked to seek clarification on the policing costs as referenced on page 84 and as to whether this was usual practice.

Tom Clark, Head of Regulatory Services and Monitoring Officer, responded to the policing query by stating that this was a new practice and clarified that this is being paid in agreement with the applicant.

Steve King, followed this up by confirming that the policing costs were a new practice but likely to be more common in larger developments such as this. He advised that there had been Court cases relating to this matter elsewhere in the country where it had been confirmed by the Courts that such infrastructure contributions were lawful. In addition, he confirmed that the affordable housing design would be the same as for the rest of the site.

Fiona Bishop, Team Leader & Drainage Engineer, then sought to alleviate any concerns Members were to have regarding drainage. The drainage system would be able to collect water at source and the runoff created by the development will be stored in detention basins and slowly released into the river.s. She confirmed that there is enough storage on site to hold all water required up to and including the 1 in 100 year rainfall event + climate change and that this may help reduce river flooding downstream. She continued by stating that the site meets drainage standards as required.

A member wished to clarify that the new drainage system wouldn't affect the existing residential buildings of Fox Hill Village. Fiona Bishop responded to this by stating that

Fox Hill Village was at a higher level than the site and therefore surface water from the application site would not flow into Fox Hill Village. In addition, ground water testing will be undertaken and that the drainage proposals are sufficient.

Another member referenced the letters of objection on page 11 and in particular those relating to the green corridor and loss of residential amenity in Scrase Hill Terrace. Steve King answered this by informing Members that the applicant was keen to maintain some screening and does not wish to remove this if it can be avoided.

One member raised concern for the application. She was not supportive of the original 99 home application and she believes that 151 homes is a step too far. She also cited the environmental issues affected with this application and the loss of amenity to exiting residents.

The Chairman asked for confirmation of the detail of the education contributions. Steve King responded to this by advising that there would be contributions and stated that West Sussex County Council are responsible for education within the area and that they had no concerns with the application.

As no other members wished to speak, the Chairman then moved the application as recommended, 7 members voted in favour of the application and 2 voted against.

RESOLVED

To grant planning permission subject to the completion of a section 106 planning agreement to secure the necessary infrastructure contributions and affordable housing and the conditions listed in Appendix A as amended in the Update Sheet.

6. ITEMS CONSIDERED URGENT BUSINESS

None.

Chairman.