

**Minutes of a meeting of District Planning Committee
held on Thursday, 16th July, 2020
from 2.00 pm - 3.30 pm**

Present: R Salisbury (Chair)
D Sweatman (Vice-Chair)

R Bates	R Jackson	N Walker
E Coe-	C Laband	R Webb
Gunnell White	A Peacock	R Whittaker
S Hatton		

Absent: Councillors J Henwood

Also Present: Councillors A Eves, N Webster and G Marsh

1. ROLL CALL AND VIRTUAL MEETINGS EXPLANATION.

The Chairman commenced the roll call to confirm the Members present.

Carolyn Forster, Business Unit Leader for Legal Services, advised that new regulations have recently been introduced to enable the Council to hold its meetings to include those participants attending remotely. To ensure the smooth running of such remote meetings it has been necessary to amend some of the Council procedure rules and such rules have been amended by Tom Clark / the Head of Regulatory Services in accordance with urgency powers in the scheme of officer delegation to keep the Constitution legally updated.

2. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

None.

3. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS IN RESPECT OF ANY MATTER ON THE AGENDA.

None.

4. TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE DISTRICT PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 18 JUNE 2020.

The Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 18 June 2020 were agreed as a correct record after a minor amendment and signed electronically by the Chairman.

5. TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN AGREES TO TAKE AS URGENT BUSINESS.

None.

The Chairman confirmed all Committee Members had received the Agenda Update Sheet. He welcomed the speakers and he highlighted the public speaking procedure.

6. DM/19/5212 - ARDINGLY COLLEGE, COLLEGE ROAD, ARDINGLY ,WEST SUSSEX, RH17 6SQ.

Joseph Swift, Senior Planning Officer introduced the report seeking planning permission for the construction of a new 193 space car park and new vehicular access from College Road to serve Ardingly College, along with associated landscaping. He highlighted the amendments on the agenda update sheet. He noted the provision of electric car charging points and relocation of trees within the site. He confirmed there were no details of how the redundant car parking spaces would be landscaped. Members were reminded that the application is in the countryside, and the development is not supported by Council policies and was contrary to the Development Plan. The proposal is deemed to cause less than substantial harm to the listed buildings, the benefits of the proposal do not outweigh the identified harm and the proposal will unduly urbanise the site.

Mr Ben Figgis, of Ardingly College, spoke in support of the application. He noted the future growth in vehicular traffic at the college and the occurrence of several near misses in the college car parks.

Mr J James, resident of Ardingly, spoke in support of the application. He noted the current congestion of traffic around the college and that the application would provide a suitable solution to benefit the wider community of Ardingly.

Mr G Dixon, agent, spoke in support of the application. He highlighted that part of the car park is within the built core of the college and that the proposed car park had been reduced in size.

Ward Member, Cllr Gary Marsh spoke in support of the application. He noted the recent developments within the local area of his Ward, all within the High Weald Area of Outstanding National Beauty, AONB. He commented that three public schools in Mid Sussex are within the AONB have listed buildings and development at those sites has been permitted. He highlighted the sympathetic car park lighting, the provision of electric car charging points and transplanting existing hedgerows and trees. He noted the lack of public transport to the college site and that vehicular traffic to the site may increase due to the potential increase in day pupils, a result of the pandemic.

The Chairman explained the technical language in the report regarding harm to heritage assets and he confirmed that Members were aware of the meaning of the terminology for the scale of the application in the AONB.

Members discussed the issues of sightlines on College Road, screening of the car park from the road, the proximity of the reservoir car park; the temperature of the lighting to protect the local wildlife and the provision of minibuses.

The Senior Planning Officer advised West Sussex Highways had raised no objections to the proposed access to the car park, and they had not received details of the lighting temperature and if approved a condition could be included.

The Chairman noted that the reservoir car park was on private land and Ardingly PC has a policy in their Neighbourhood Plan to find a new car park for the village.

Extensive minibus routes are provided by the college, but there has been little take up by the parents and the same for the Car Share App designed by the college. The Planning Officer confirmed that Cllr Marsh comments was in relation to there being no public bus routes go to the college not the mini bus routes provided by the College.

Several Members commented on the approved development and condition of buildings within the AONB. They noted safety issues around colleges and the proposed one-way system and drop area. It was highlighted that Ardingly Parish Council support the proposal, some Members noted that they supported the application.

The Chairman confirmed that the Parish Council did not object to the car park but objects to right hand turns from the exit and reminded Members that Policy ARD 18 and its supporting text states that any application should enhance the setting of listed buildings within the AONB.

A Member reminded the Committee that every case is judged on its merits and the Committee should refer to the relevant Planning Policies to ensure protection of the AONB. He supported the Officer's recommendation to refuse the application.

Members discussed the future use of any redundant car park should the proposal be granted, the safety of school children and the less than significant harm which must be weighed against public benefits. It was highlighted that West Sussex Highways had completed two speed surveys and there was a possibility of extending the speed limit beyond the proposed car park. Which several Members approved.

A Member expressed concern that the proposal would permanently alter the landscape, he highlighted the High Weald Unit have objected to the proposal and in their comments they think site 4 has been undervalued as an alternative location for a car park which would be less detrimental to the area. He noted that the Committee needs to be consistent on planning decisions.

A Member suggested adding conditions for the type and use of the lighting to protect the local habitat, and future proofing the car park by requiring the cables for additional electric vehicle charging points above the current allocation to improve the sustainable transport provision.

A Member queried whether full use would be made of the proposed car park due to the current pandemic and he opposed the application.

The Chairman noted the comments of Members and speakers, and advised that planning it is a balancing matter, there are policies to assist the Committee's decision. The approval of boarding accommodation had supported the economy and business of the college. He highlighted that the college had done little to spread the arrival/ and departure times of vehicles but commended the college on the minibus provision.

The Chairman took the Members to the recommendations and Councillor Walker proposed that the Committee refuse the application in line with the Officer's recommendation, this was seconded by Councillor Sweatman.

The Business Unit Leader for Legal Services took a recorded vote and the Committee voted with five in favour and six against the motion.

	For	Against	Abstained
Councillor R Bates		✓	
Councillor E Coe-Gunnell White		✓	
Councillor S Hatton		✓	
Councillor R Jackson		✓	
Councillor C Laband		✓	
Councillor A Peacock	✓		
Councillor R Salisbury	✓		
Councillor D Sweatman	✓		
Councillor N Walker	✓		
Councillor R Webb	✓		
Councillor R Whittaker		✓	

There was a short adjournment for the officers to prepare the detailed reasons for approval and the draft conditions of the application.

Councillor Laband proposed that the Committee approve the application, and this was seconded by Councillor Jackson.

The Business Unit Leader for Legal Services took a recorded vote and the Committee voted with seven in favour and four against the motion.

	For	Against	Abstained
Councillor R Bates		✓	
Councillor E Coe-Gunnell White		✓	
Councillor S Hatton		✓	
Councillor R Jackson		✓	
Councillor C Laband		✓	
Councillor A Peacock	✓		
Councillor R Salisbury	✓		
Councillor D Sweatman	✓		
Councillor N Walker	✓		
Councillor R Webb		✓	
Councillor R Whittaker		✓	

The Chairman confirmed that Planning legislation holds that the determination of a planning application shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

National planning policy states that planning should be genuinely plan led. The application site lies within the countryside and therefore policy DP12 of the DP is the proper starting point for assessing the application. To comply with policy DP12 the proposal must maintain or enhance the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District and either be necessary for agricultural purposes or be supported by a specific policy reference elsewhere in the plan, a Development Plan Document or a Neighbourhood Plan.

The proposal is not for the purposes of agriculture and is not fully supported by a specific policy elsewhere within the Development Plan as it is only partially within the

built core of Ardingly College as defined by the Neighbourhood Plan. As such the principal of development as a whole is contrary to the Development Plan.

Within the school grounds there are a number of grade 2 listed buildings. In this case, and as the report details under the impact on heritage assets assessment section, it is considered that less than substantial harm will occur to the designated heritage assets.

Case law has confirmed that when an authority finds that a proposed development would harm the setting of a listed building or the character or appearance of a conservation area, it must give that harm considerable importance and weight.

In cases where less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset has been identified, paragraph 196 of the NPPF is applicable. This states that less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

The proposal would remove 83 spaces and 20 temporary spaces from within the college campus in closer proximity to the Grade II Listed Building, reduce vehicle movements centrally through the college and in turn improve pedestrian health and safety with the college grounds. The proposal is to support the existing use and future growth of the College which is a major local employer which provides economic benefits for the local rural economy.

While it is accepted that the new car park would have a slight to moderate impact on the AONB in terms of landscape character and views, these impacts would reduce over time as the screening matures. At the same time replacing the existing hardstanding within the north and west quads of the main school campus, surrounding the main College building is considered to enhance the landscape and improve scenic beauty at this point of the High Weald AONB which is given great weight. In addition, it is considered that the economic benefits to the College outweigh the identified harm and the great weight given to the protection of the AONB.

The provision of a car park is to meet existing demand and is not considered to alter the way in which people access the College, while also providing electric vehicle charging points and mini bus parking which will encourage sustainable transport methods.

There will be a neutral impact in respect of highway safety, impact on neighbouring amenities, drainage, trees, ecology and the impact on the Ashdown Forest.

Overall the planning balance considers the public benefits of the proposal outweigh the conflict with the development plan as a whole and the less than substantial harm to the setting of the surrounding listed buildings, while in part enhancing the character of the wider High Weald AONB within the main school campus and the identified slight/moderate visual impact of the new car park on the landscape character and wider views which will reduce as the screening matures.

The Committee agreed that any amendments to the conditions proposed would be approved in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-chairman.

RESOLVED

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.
Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
2. No external materials shall be used other than those specified on the approved plans and application form without the prior approval of the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: To protect the appearance of the building and the area and to accord with Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014 – 2031.
3. No development shall commence until an Ecological Mitigation and Enhancement Plan has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The approved details shall be implemented in full unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority and evidence of this submitted to the local planning authority prior to use of the car park.
Reason: to prevent loss of, and contribute to a net gain in, biodiversity, in accordance with policies DP37 and DP38 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and 175 of the NPPF.
4. No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, had secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority.
Reason: This site is of archaeological significance and it is important that it is recorded by excavation before it is destroyed by development and to accord with Paragraph 189 of the NPPF.
5. Prior to the commencement of construction full details of a hard and soft landscaping scheme shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land, and details of those to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of development. These works shall be carried out as approved. The works shall be carried out prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with the programme agreed by the Local Planning Authority. Any trees or plants which, within a period of five years from the completion of development, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.
Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to accord with Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.
6. No part of the development shall be first occupied until such time as the vehicular access serving the development has been constructed in accordance with the details shown on the drawing titled 'Car Park Plan and numbered 10208/200 P4.
Reason: In the interests of road safety and to accord with the NPPF and Policy DP21 of the District Plan.
7. No part of the development shall be first occupied until a Travel Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Travel Plan once approved shall thereafter be implemented as specified within

the approved document. The Travel Plan shall be completed in accordance with the latest guidance and good practice documentation as published by the Department for Transport or as advised by the Highway Authority.

Reason: To encourage and promote sustainable transport and to accord with the NPPF and Policy DP21 of the District Plan.

8. No development shall take place until an expanded landscape master plan has been submitted and approved, which shall include details of permanent landscaped areas to replace the parking areas within the main campus and a long term management plan of these landscaped area. These areas, shall be constructed in accordance with the approved plans within the next planting season following the completion of the new car park and shall not be used for the parking of vehicles unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect and enhance the character of the valued landscape and to comply with Policy DP16, DP26, and DP34 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

9. The development hereby permitted shall not commence unless and until details of the proposed surface water drainage and means of disposal have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The car park shall not be brought into use until all the approved drainage works have been carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the proposal is satisfactorily drained and to accord with the NPPF requirements Policy DP41 of the District Plan (2014 - 2031).

10. Notwithstanding the lighting details submitted no development shall commence until a revised external lighting scheme for the proposed car park has been submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The proposed lighting scheme shall be construed in accordance with the revised scheme.

Reason: To protect and enhance the character of the valued landscape and to comply with Policy DP16 and DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

The Business Unit Leader for Legal Services confirmed that the Officer's report with reason and justifications, and conditions appropriate to planning.

7. QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.2 DUE NOTICE OF WHICH HAS BEEN GIVEN.

None.

The meeting finished at 3.30 pm

Chairman