

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 6 DECEMBER 2023, AT 7.00
PM

PRESENT: Councillor Y Estop (Chairman)
Councillors R Buckmaster, S Bull, R Carter,
M Connolly, S Copley, I Devonshire,
J Dunlop, G Hill, S Marlow, T Stowe and
S Watson

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors D Andrews and V Glover-Ward

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Neil Button	- Team Leader (Strategic Applications - Development Management)
Rachael Collard	- Principal Planning Officer
Peter Mannings	- Democratic Services Officer
Sara Saunders	- Head of Planning and Building Control
Victoria Wilders	- Legal Services Manager

242 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors V Burt and A Holt. It was noted that Councillor M Connolly was substituting for Councillor V Burt and Councillor S Bull was substituting for Councillor A Holt.

243 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Chairman's announcements.

244 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

245 MINUTES - 20 SEPTEMBER 2023

Councillor Copley proposed and Councillor Devonshire seconded, a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendment to minute 147:

Councillor Estop said that she had referred to footpath E2 that had not been included in footway improvements in condition 19.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2023, be confirmed as a

correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendment to minute 147:

Councillor Estop said that she had referred to footpath E2 that had not been included in footway improvements in condition 19.

246 3/23/0579/FUL - DEMOLITION OF SCHOOL AND ERECTION OF REPLACEMENT SCHOOL WITH ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING AND PARKING. SITING OF TEMPORARY TEACHING ACCOMMODATION DURING PERIOD OF CONSTRUCTION AT PINWOOD SCHOOL, HOE LANE, WARE, HERTFORDSHIRE, SG12 9PB

The Head of Planning and Building Control recommended that in respect of application 3/23/0579/FUL, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions set out at the end of the report.

The Chairman said that she wanted to put on the public record that yesterday (5th December 2023) Members of the Development Management Committee had been sent via email a "Councillor Briefing Note" on Pinewood School Planning for our Future" by Rebecca Darling of Stonyrock.

She said that Officers had reviewed the briefing note and had confirmed that the content merely related to a summary of the proposals which were covered off in the presenting officer's report and presentation. There was no new information contained in this note.

The Chairman said that, for the purposes of transparency, she would ask for a show of hands in a moment from members who have read the briefing note. She would then ask each member who had raised their hand to confirm that they have come to the committee this evening with an open mind to determine the application.

The Chairman said that no new information was contained in the note. Councillors Buckmaster, Bull, Copley, Dunlop, Stowe and Watson all confirmed that they had read the briefing note and had come to the meeting with an open mind to determine the application.

The Team Leader (Strategic Applications - Development Management) presented the application to the Committee and summarised in detail the main issues for Members to consider. He detailed the location of the site and presented Members with a detailed set of elevation drawings and electronic plans.

The Team Leader (Strategic Applications - Development Management) detailed the dominant materials that were intended to be used and presented a series of CGI images of the proposed development. Members were reminded that the site fell within the Ware Neighbourhood Plan area.

The Team Leader (Strategic Applications - Development Management) referred in detail to the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) considerations that had been considered when the application had been prepared. Members were

advised that the building would achieve a net zero carbon impact in operation at handover and a fabric first architectural principle had been applied.

The Team Leader (Strategic Applications - Development Management) said that neither the Arboricultural Officer nor the Landscape Officer had raised objections to the application. Members were advised that there would be a 17.7% net gain in biodiversity on the site. A community use strategy would be conditioned to cover the community use of the sports facilities.

Members were advised that Officers felt that very special circumstances had been demonstrated to justify provision of development within the green belt. Officers felt that the application can and should be determined favourably notwithstanding the conflict with the development plan. Officers felt that the application should be approved subject to conditions.

Mr Bob Robinson addressed the committee in support of the application.

Councillor Carter asked about the anticipated lifespan of the proposed new buildings. She commented on the matter of the school not providing additional SEND spaces and referred to the carbon cost of demolishing the old buildings and constructing the proposed new buildings.

Councillor Stowe asked for some clarification in respect of the 118 square metres below the current footprint that had referred to by the applicant. He

referred to a figure of 434 square metres that had been mentioned by officers.

The Team Leader (Strategic Applications - Development Management) said that the temporary buildings were not taken in account and the key consideration was the elevation drawings and the indications of the increased height of the buildings and the proposed larger footprint.

Officers considered that the proposed development was a larger built form on the site and they had concluded that the scheme could be defined as inappropriate development. The Team Leader (Strategic Applications - Development Management) explained that officers had looked at the scheme in the context of the very special circumstances that outweighed the matter of inappropriate development.

The Team Leader (Strategic Applications - Development Management) said that the matter of lifespan of buildings was not a matter that the Officers or Members should be taking in account when considering an application for a permanent building. He said modern technologies meant that buildings were designed to be sustainable for the life of the building.

Councillor Buckmaster asked if there could be any guarantee which stipulated that the reinstatement of the playing fields and the MUGA could be insisted upon once the demountable classrooms were removed from the site. She said that she could not see a condition for this in the report.

The Team Leader (Strategic Applications - Development Management) said that there would have to be specific wording for that reinstatement. He referred to the plan for the landscaping scheme and said that the conditions would have to specifically stipulate that playing fields must be restored upon completion of the development.

Members were advised that condition 10 could be amended to include the words completely restored in respect of the playing fields. Councillor Bull asked what assurances had been given in respect of the future shared use of the sports facilities for the public.

The Team Leader (Strategic Applications - Development Management) said that condition 9 required there to be a community use agreement covering how the facilities would be managed and how the community could come and go from the site. This would also cover the standard of the facilities in consultation with Sport England.

The Legal Services Manager referred to the formal legal document in respect of the community use agreement.

Councillor Marlow sought and was given assurances regarding fire safety and the quality of the construction methods to be used given the extremely vulnerable nature of the users of the proposed development.

Councillor Hill referred to the poor quality of the road surface on Hoe Lane and expressed a concern over the lack of any traffic calming. He asked if Hertfordshire

Highways could re assess this situation in light of the fact that there were three schools in the vicinity.

The Team Leader (Strategic Applications - Development Management) said that Members should consider the additional traffic resulting from the proposed development and whether this itself would result in a significant or severe impact in NPPF terms. The highways advice was that the impact did not justify any additional mitigation through the conditions or the legal obligations of the section 106 legal agreement.

Councillor Hill asked if there could be a ban on construction traffic travelling past the schools during the access and drop off times for the schools. The Team Leader (Strategic Applications - Development Management) said that there would be construction management conditions which would seek to impose controls on construction movements.

Councillor Dunlop asked what consideration had gone into the design of the temporary accommodation given the vulnerable nature of the occupants of the building. He made some observations in respect of the hardstanding. He referred to the calming impact of green space and trees in terms of providing a much more calming and comfortable environment for SEND students. He asked if there was any opportunity to expand this provision and he referred in particular to expanding the provision of the proposed sensory garden.

The Team Leader (Strategic Applications - Development Management) said that the playground

had been designed for key stages three and four and this looked slightly largely as it was facilitating for both key stages. He said that this had been designed to the relevant department for education standards and there was no specific planning guidance to dictate the size of that space.

The Team Leader (Strategic Applications - Development Management) said that the additional proposed landscaping had been reviewed by the landscaping officer and he considered this to be acceptable. The landscape officer had also commented that this integrated well with the current landscaping and with the wider landscape plan. The application was also compliant with the requirements of the District Plan in terms of improvements to landscaping.

The Team Leader (Strategic Applications - Development Management) responded to a number of further questions from Members in respect of the demountable classrooms, hours of construction and drainage.

Councillor Stowe proposed and Councillor Watson seconded, a motion that application 3/23/0579/FUL be granted planning permission, subject to the conditions set out at the end of the report and subject to the following revision to condition 10:

10. Within 24 months of the commencement of development the temporary accommodation including classrooms, offices, hall, and kitchen/dining accommodation as shown within plans 2162201 Rev S-3, 2162204 Rev S-0, 2162205

Rev S-1 shall be removed from the site in their entirety and the land completely restored to playing fields.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that application 3/23/0579/FUL be granted planning permission, subject to the conditions set out at the end of the report and subject to the following revision to condition 10:

10. Within 24 months of the commencement of development the temporary accommodation including classrooms, offices, hall, and kitchen/dining accommodation as shown within plans 2162201 Rev S-3, 2162204 Rev S-0, 2162205 Rev S-1 shall be removed from the site in their entirety and the land completely restored to playing fields.

247 ITEMS FOR REPORTING AND NOTING

RESOLVED – that the following reports be noted:

- (A) Appeals against refusal of planning permission / non-determination;
- (B) Planning Appeals lodged;
- (C) Planning Appeals: Inquiry and Informal Hearing Dates; and

(D) Planning Statistics.

248 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 8.06 pm

Chairman

Date