

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of Planning Committee

Monday, 6 June 2022 at 7.00 pm

Councillors Present:

R D Burrett (Chair)

Y Khan (Vice-Chair)

Z Ali, A Belben, K L Jaggard, Y Khan, S Malik, S Mullins, M Mwangale, S Pritchard and S Raja

Officers Present:

Siraj Choudhury Head of Governance, People & Performance

Jean McPherson Group Manager (Development Management)

Marc Robinson Principal Planning Officer

Clem Smith Head of Economy and Planning

Jess Tamplin Democratic Services Officer

1. Disclosures of Interest

The following disclosures of interests were made:

Councillor	Item and Minute	Type and Nature of Disclosure
Councillor A Belben	CR/2021/0844/FUL – 9 Mill Road, Three Bridges (Minute 4)	Personal interest – a neighbour of the site, who had raised an objection to the application, was known to him.
Councillor A Belben	CR/2022/0034/TPO – 8 Haversham Close, Three Bridges (Minute 5)	Personal interest – the applicant was known to him.
Councillor Burrett	CR/2022/0034/TPO – 8 Haversham Close, Three Bridges (Minute 5)	Personal interest – the applicant was known to him.
Councillor Jaggard	CR/2022/0034/TPO – 8 Haversham Close, Three Bridges (Minute 5)	Personal interest – the applicant was known to her.

The Head of Governance, People & Performance highlighted that the applicant for agenda item CR/2022/0034/TPO – 8 Haversham Close – was Brenda Burgess, a currently elected Crawley Borough Council Councillor. Those Committee members that had not declared an interest in the application confirmed that they knew or knew of Councillor Burgess, however a specific declaration of interest was not required as Councillor Burgess did not fall under the category of relative or friend. It was considered that all Committee members were able to approach the application with an open mind.

2. Lobbying Declarations

Councillor Pritchard had been lobbied regarding agenda item 5 (minute 4), planning application CR/2021/0844/FUL – 9 Mill Road, Three Bridges, but had not expressed views on the application in advance of the meeting.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 25 April 2022 (included in the supplemental agenda published on 6 June 2022) were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. Planning Application CR/2021/0844/FUL - 9 Mill Road, Three Bridges, Crawley

The Committee considered report [PES/403a](#) of the Head of Economy and Planning which proposed as follows:

Erection of 1 x attached three bed dwelling in side garden space, and erection of single storey side and rear extension and internal alterations to existing dwelling.

Councillors Ali, A Belben, Burrett, Jaggard, Mwangale, and Pritchard declared they had visited the site.

The Principal Planning Officer provided a verbal summation of the application, which sought planning permission for an extension to 9 Mill Road in Three Bridges and a separate three bedroom house to the side of the existing property. The Officer updated the Committee that, since the publication of the agenda, the following amendments to the report were required:

- Part of paragraph 5.28 was now to read, 'The proposals could also provide adequate cycle parking *in the rear garden*'.
- Part of paragraph 5.29 was now to read, 'According to Policy CH5, a *two* storey 3 bedroom dwelling for 4 persons should provide a minimum internal floorspace of 90 sqm'.
- Part of paragraph 5.35 was now to read, 'The plans show that the FFL of the extension would be the same as the existing dwelling which would be +69.8m which would be 300mm higher than the *external ground level* at the rear of the existing dwelling'.

The Committee noted that, following the publication of the agenda, a supplemental agenda had been published which included a clearer plan of the application site.

Brenda Burgess, Ward Councillor for Three Bridges, spoke in objection to the application. Matters raised included:

- Local residents were concerned about the proposed development's effect on the streetscene.
- Mill Road was narrow with cars tightly parked – works vehicles may have difficulty accessing the site and this could cause congestion in the vicinity.
- A previous planning application for a dwelling at the same site had been refused.

The Committee then considered the application. Following a question from a Committee member, the Planning Officer explained that there had been two previous planning applications at the same site – a first which was for a separate dwelling and had been refused, and a second which was for an extension and had been permitted. It was clarified that these applications were separate to that in front of the Committee, but some weight should be given to the reasons for both the prior permission and the prior refusal in assessing the current application.

One of the previous applications was refused on flood risk grounds only. The only fundamental difference in the application now under consideration compared to the previously-refused application was a significantly reduced flood risk at the site following a re-assessment by the Environment Agency (EA), which had now placed the site in the lowest flood risk zone. It was noted that, according to the flood map created by the EA in November 2021, the application site was now predominantly in flood zone 1 (low probability) with a small part of the site in zone 2 (medium). Previously the site had been in zone 3 (high) and the risk of flooding had formed the reason for the refusal of the previous application for a dwelling at the site.

Committee members discussed the reasons for the change in flood zone – that the EA had updated its flood risk map as part of a routine review – and noted that the application complied with various flood-resilience requirements and advice. A Committee member raised a concern that a different flood map of the area, sourced from the Government's website, showed that the site was at a high risk of flooding. Planning officers agreed that it was unclear which classification was more recent and therefore the flood risk zone could not be confirmed at the meeting.

The Committee continued discussion of the application to help determine whether it would be able to make a decision at the meeting. Concerns were raised regarding an existing lack of on-street car parking on Mill Road – it was considered whether the application could lead to more cars needing to be parked on the road and therefore further pressure on the availability of parking spaces. The Principal Planning Officer clarified that in-person surveys undertaken by Crawley Borough Council officers had identified that there was parking capacity in the nearby streets and it was not therefore considered that the area was under parking stress. West Sussex County Council also had no objection to the proposal in terms of the impact upon the parking and the safe and efficient operation of the highway. A Committee member highlighted that the area was in a controlled parking zone (CPZ) so the number of cars parked would differ throughout the day based on the operation of the CPZ. It was confirmed that the surveys were undertaken outside of CPZ operation hours, at 17:45, 19:30, and 21:00. It was noted that the previous application for a dwelling at the site was refused on the grounds of flood risk, not on parking grounds. It was also heard that parking standards were taken into account on a case-by-case basis – in this case, the site was considered to be in a sustainable location close to local facilities with good public transport links and this mitigated the need for the creation of off-street parking spaces. The Committee felt that WSCC should be requested to undertake a site visit to assess the impact of the development.

Cycle storage facilities were discussed by the Committee. It was identified that there was no cycle storage at the front or to the side of the existing dwelling due to the small size of the site, so any bicycles were proposed to be carried through the house and stored in the rear garden. Concerns were raised about the practicality of this proposal and that it may discourage bicycle usage.

A Committee member raised the matter of water usage in relation to both the existing and proposed houses, and questioned how the development could be water neutral. In response, the Principal Planning Officer confirmed that the Council's specialist consultants had confirmed that the proposals were water neutral. The proposal to remove one bedroom from the existing dwelling implied a decrease in occupancy and therefore a decrease in water usage. It was also proposed to install water-saving fittings and fixtures including grey water recycling for toilet flushing for both of the resultant dwellings. Natural England had been consulted as required with regard to water use at the development, but had not responded (the consultation period had not yet finished).

The Committee also discussed the site access for works vehicles during the construction period; concerns were raised regarding the narrowness of Mill Road. It was noted that WSCC had not imposed a construction management plan on the application – this was due to the small area of the site, which meant that it was not possible to allocate certain areas for specific facilities (e.g. skips, vehicle wheel-washing) throughout the construction period. A Committee member requested that WSCC be asked for clearer information regarding construction vehicles' access to the site. Clarification of this was to be sought before the next scheduled meeting of the Planning Committee.

RESOLVED

As the Committee had become aware of two different maps which contradicted one another regarding the flood risk level at the site, it was clear that further clarification of this matter was required as this was fundamental to the consideration of the application. The Head of Governance, People & Performance advised that the Committee could defer the application to its next meeting on the basis that it required additional information. Planning officers were therefore requested to seek clarification from the EA regarding the flood risk level. Committee members were advised that if they decided to defer the application, they would be required to approach the matter at the next meeting with an open mind and a willingness to take into account all available information.

The Committee agreed that the application be deferred to the next scheduled meeting of the Planning Committee on 12 July 2022, to allow officers to obtain clarification of the flood risk at the application site, and from West Sussex County Council in relation to the highway.

5. Tree Preservation Order Application CR/2022/0034/TPO - 8 Haversham Close, Three Bridges, Crawley

The Committee considered report [PES/403b](#) of the Head of Economy and Planning which proposed as follows:

T1 sycamore: fell secondary sucker growth and smaller stem (circa 50 - 75mm) encroaching garage and car parking area. Crown spread of tree to remain unaffected.

T2 sycamore: lateral prune south aspect over property by approx. 1.5m to appropriate growth points to ensure minimum of 2m clearance from house. Remaining crown spread of approx. 3m.

T3 oak: crown reduce by approx. 2m to appropriate pruning points. Final height of approx. 10m and crown spread of approx. 5m on all aspects.

Councillors Ali, A Belben, Burrett, Jaggard, and Pritchard declared they had visited the site.

The Principal Planning Officer provided a verbal summation of the application, which sought consent for works to three trees, two of which were subject to Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). The Officer updated the Committee that, since the publication of the report, the recommendation had been changed to read 'T1 sycamore: *remove* secondary sucker growth and smaller stem...' to clarify the nature of the works.

Brenda Burgess, the applicant, spoke in support of the application. Matters raised included:

- Works to the trees were sought due to branches encroaching on the property – full felling was not desired.
- Trimming of the trees had been undertaken in the past, but due to quick growth, works were once again required.
- Clarity was sought over which specimens were currently subject to TPOs.

The Committee then considered the application. Following a query regarding the frequency of works to protected trees, the Planning Officer explained that applications for works were made as and when trimming was required, and not according to a set timeframe – tree growth could be inconsistent and pre-scheduled works may not be appropriate for the health of the tree at those times. There was no charge for applications for works to protected trees.

The Planning Officer confirmed that the oak tree (T3) was not subject to a TPO. It was also clarified that removal of deadwood from protected trees did not require an application for consent.

RESOLVED

Consent subject to conditions set out in report PES/403b.

6. Supplemental Agenda

The Committee noted that the items included in the supplemental agenda, published on 6 June 2022, had been considered as part of the proceedings of the meeting.

Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Planning Committee concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.13 pm

R D Burrett (Chair)

