

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of Planning Committee

Tuesday, 23 April 2024 at 7.30 pm

Councillors Present:

S Pritchard (Chair)

M Mwagale (Vice-Chair)

Z Ali, J Bounds, J Charatan, K L Jaggard, K Khan, Y Khan, S Mullins and A Nawaz

Officers Present:

Siraj Choudhury

Head of Governance, People & Performance

Heather Girling

Democratic Services Officer

Alex Sanders

Acting Principal Planning Officer

Clem Smith

Head of Economy and Planning

Hamish Walke

Acting Group Manager (Development Management)

Absent:

Councillor M Morris

1. Disclosures of Interest

The following disclosures of interests were made:

Councillor	Item and Minute	Type and Nature of Interest
Councillor Ali	Planning Application CR/2023/0734/FUL - Crawley College, College Road, Three Bridges, Crawley (minute 5)	Personal interest – Member of WSCC
Councillor Nawaz	Planning Application CR/2023/0734/FUL - Crawley College, College Road, Three Bridges, Crawley (minute 5)	Personal interest – Board Advisor for Town Centre BID of which the representative is a member.

Councillor Nawaz	Planning Application CR/2022/0609/FUL - Linac House & Adjoining Land, Fleming Way, Northgate, Crawley (minute 6)	Personal interest – Board Member for Manor Royal BID of which the representative is a member.
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2. Lobbying Declarations

The following lobbying declarations were made by councillors:

Councillor Nawaz had been lobbied but had expressed no view on both applications CR/2023/0734/FUL and CR/2022/0609/FUL.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 2 April 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. Planning Application CR/2023/0734/FUL - Crawley College, College Road, Three Bridges, Crawley

The Committee considered report [PES/458a](#) of the Head of Economy and Planning which proposed as follows:

Erection of a new 4 storey Sussex and Surrey Institute of Technology Building, and the reconfiguration of the car parking layout with associated hard and soft landscaping and new substation.

Councillors Ali, Charatan, Jaggard, K Khan, S Mullins, Mwangale, Nawaz and Pritchard declared they had visited the site.

The Principal Planning Officer provided a verbal summation of the application, which sought permission for the second redevelopment of the Crawley College site for a new Institute of Technology building.

The Committee was informed of clerical corrections to the report as follows:

- The fifth line of paragraph 5.33 should read 'An additional 7 trees will be provided to replace those that are to be removed'.
- The second line of paragraph 5.46 should read 'Roof water will be collected via a rainwater harvesting tank and used for flushing the WCs in the new building'.

The Officer updated the Committee that, since the publication of the report discussions regarding the Surface Water Management Plan and Method Statement had taken place which had led to recommended amendments to pre-commencement condition 4. Furthermore, updates and final comments had been received from WSCC as the Lead Local Flood Authority and from Water Environment regarding water neutrality which had led to recommended additional conditions 26, 27 and 28:

Pre-Commencement Conditions

That the Committee was requested to grant delegated authority to the Head of Economy and Planning to amend Condition 4 from a pre-commencement condition to a condition requiring the implementation of the Surface Water Management Plan and Method Statement, subject to agreement from consultees that the Surface Water Management Plan and Method Statement were acceptable.

New Conditions

26. The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until details of the maintenance and management of the sustainable drainage scheme have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage scheme shall be implemented prior to first occupation of the building and thereafter managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details in perpetuity. The details of the scheme to be submitted for approval shall include:
- a) a timetable for its implementation;
 - b) details of SuDS features and connecting drainage structures and maintenance requirement for each aspect; and
 - c) a management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development which shall include the arrangements for adoption by any public body or statutory undertaker, or any other arrangements to secure the operation of the sustainable drainage scheme throughout its lifetime.
- REASON: To ensure that the development achieves a high standard of sustainability and ensure the flood risk is adequately addressed and not increased in accordance Policy ENV8 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015 – 2030 and Policy EP1 of the Draft Crawley Borough Local Plan 2023 – 2040.
27. The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until a Landscape Management and Maintenance Plan which covers a period of no less than 15 years has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Landscape Management and Maintenance Plan shall include:
- a) programme for implementation, including landscape establishment period;
 - b) long term design objectives;
 - c) long term management responsibility and maintenance schedules for all landscaped areas; and
 - d) expected water volumes for irrigation and confirmation that following establishment no further irrigation of planting is required.
- The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
REASON: In the interests of visual amenity of the area and to ensure Water Neutrality is achieved in accordance with policies ENV2 and CH3 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015 – 2030 and Policies DD1 and SDC4 of the Draft Crawley Borough Local Plan 2023 – 2040.
28. There shall be no external water use for irrigation purposes following the agreed landscape establishment period or for any other purpose.
REASON: To ensure that the development is water neutral in accordance with Policies ENV2 and CH3 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015 – 2030 and Policies DD1 and SDC4 of the Draft Crawley Borough Local Plan 2023 – 2040.

It was explained that the Committee was recommended to delegate the decision to permit the application to the Head of Economy and Planning. The Officer then gave details of the various relevant planning considerations as set out in the [report](#).

Gordon Easden, a member of Active Travel Crawley, spoke in objection to the application. Matters raised included:

- Supportive overall for the proposed facility and welcomed the timing of the construction of the new cycle storage and the S106 funding to support the travel monitoring plan.
- However, it was critical that the measures to support active travel were in place to result in reduced noise and air pollution, improved health and a quieter town.
- Concern regarding the roundabout at the south-eastern corner of the site which was not deemed easy or safe to navigate for pedestrians, wheelchairs, buggies or cyclists. Both this development, and the future Telford Place development posed significantly increase movements across the junction and any further contribution to improve this junction for active travel users would be welcomed.

John Cooban, a local resident, spoke in objection to the application. Matters raised included:

- It was important to bring about a more favourable design option in recognition of the importance of existing mature trees into new development proposals close to the town centre.
- Trees were a material planning consideration and was gratified that the scheme had been amended to accommodate the oak tree by moving the building further away, together with other safeguarding measures. This showed a sympathetic and improved relationship to the oak tree and surroundings.

Paul Rolfe, the applicant (Chichester College Group) spoke in support of the application. Matters raised included:

- The proposed Institute of Technology would bring a range of benefits including boosting educational participation amongst residents in Level 4, house a green construction hub, funded by the Crawley Towns Fund and bring three Universities to the town where currently there were none, through the Institute of Technology Consortium.
- The proposal would support Crawley residents into secure, higher paid work and for them to stay and thrive in the town.
- Relationships with the council, schools, local employers, and community organisations had been strengthened and the scheme was supported by business, further and higher education to bring transformational opportunities to the people and businesses of Crawley.

The Committee then considered the application. There was general support for the proposal, particularly with regards to improving education participation. However, queries were raised regarding the reduction in parking spaces and the allocation of permits for the spaces available. The Officer confirmed that Crawley College would allocate the spaces provided and consultation had been undertaken with regards to the site. Whilst the vehicle parking standards were not met across the entire college campus, based on existing staff/student numbers and the proposed increase, the predicted daily numbers implied that the College could meet the parking demand for the site. A very limited number of permits would be available for students. The proposal was situated in a highly accessible location where there were numerous alternative sustainable travel options and other car parks were identified within the town for private car use.

The Committee had sympathy with the speaker's concerns about access to the site, in particular the roundabout at the south-eastern corner of the site. It was felt access and travel should be made safe and convenient and clarification was sought as to whether improvements could be made to the Telford Place site which would facilitate access and junction manoeuvrability across the two sites.

Whilst Officers agreed with Active Travel Crawley and the concerns raised, the mechanisms to address Active Travel were the subject of ongoing discussions with West Sussex Council. It was recognised that the site masterplan was approved in 2022 detailing future development. The emerging Crawley Borough Local Plan 2023-2040 included an annex which would seek contributions towards sustainable transport but due to the implementation timescales of the new policies, the contributions within that annex had yet to be applied. In terms of the Telford Place development this application already had a resolution to grant by the Local Planning Authority. It would deliver improvements south of the roundabout in the east/west sector, but the developer could not be required to carry out further improvements.

Some Committee members agreed that contributions for sustainable transport should be sought as part of the proposal for sustainable transport and improvements, but some were hesitant and were keen not to encumber the College. As the proposal was consistent with the relevant economic policies of the adopted and emerging Crawley Borough Local Plan 2023-2040, which had reached a very advanced stage, the overall weight of the emerging Crawley Borough Local Plan 2023-2040 in Development Management decisions had significantly increased with the emerging policies being awarded substantial weight. As a result of the points raised in the debate, the Committee hoped that its views would be considered throughout future negotiations and discussions.

Committee members raised the following points as part of the discussion on the application:

- Clarification sought about the café on the ground floor of the building not including provision for food preparation facilities or appliances for dishwashing. It was explained that the café would be selling pre-packaged food, snacks and hot and cold beverages only and any utensils/packaging used would be disposed of as this was part of the water neutrality agreement. Committee members expressed a view that whilst supportive of water neutrality, it was hoped any packaging or utensils should be environmentally friendly as possible.
- It was queried whether solar panels would be installed as part of the development given any potential connection to the district heat network would be in the future. The Officer confirmed that solar panels were part of the development and subject to condition.
- Concern raised whether the distance between the proposed new facility and the closest neighbouring property may cause overshadowing. The Officer highlighted that as the properties were not back-to-back, they were angled away from the proposed building, the windows facing the proposal were secondary windows and there were large trees on the boundary. The proximity was not considered to have substantial impact on neighbouring properties and therefore acceptable.
- Following a query regarding the recommendation, it was confirmed that consistency would be applied with reference to water neutrality conditions for submitting applications where these timescales permitted.

RESOLVED

Delegate the decision to permit the application to the Head of Economy and Planning subject to the satisfactory conclusion of the required Habitats Regulations consultation with Natural England, the conclusion of a Section 106 legal agreement to

secure the Travel Plan and monitoring fee of £3500 and Water Neutrality Measures, the conditions and informatives set out in report PES/458a (including amended and additional conditions)

5. Planning Application CR/2022/0609/FUL - Linac House & Adjoining Land, Fleming Way, Northgate, Crawley

The Committee considered report [PES/458b](#) of the Head of Economy and Planning which proposed as follows:

Redevelopment of the site for three commercial buildings – Unit 1 (Class B2 Use), Units 2 and 3 (Class B8 Use) and associated servicing, parking and landscaping.

Councillors Ali, Charatan, Jaggard and Nawaz declared they had visited the site.

The Acting Group Manager (Development Management) provided a verbal summation of the application, which sought permission for the demolition of the existing buildings on the site and the subsequent redevelopment of the site by the construction of 3 separate commercial units, as now amended. The proposed Unit 1 would be used for Class B2 - general industrial and the proposed Units 2 and 3 would be used for Class B8 - storage and distribution.

The Officer updated the Committee that, since the publication of the report discussions regarding water neutrality were continuing which could lead to recommended changes relating to Conditions 4 and 32.

Condition 4 currently restricted the hours of operation to unit 1 and the Applicant was seeking to demonstrate that the site would remain water neutral even if unit 1 operated on a 24hr/day basis. Further information had been submitted and was being assessed. If subsequently agreed with Natural England this would remove the need for this Condition and would result in an amendment to Condition 32.

In terms of Conditions 4 and 32, the Committee was requested to grant delegated authority to the Head of Economy and Planning, if appropriate, to delete Condition 4, and amend the documents referred to in Condition 32, subject to the conclusion of consultation and agreement with Natural England.

Amended Conditions

That the Committee was requested to grant delegated authority to the Head of Economy and Planning to:

- Delete Condition 4, if appropriate, following satisfactory appropriate assessment and consultation with Natural England that the applicant can demonstrate water neutrality on the basis of 24 hour per day operation of Unit 1 and
- Amend the documents referred to in Condition 32, subject to the satisfactory conclusion and consultation with Natural England.

The Officer then drew the Committee's attention to the first pages of the report which identified the plans and drawings which had been considered as part of the application. The Committee was advised that amendments to the following drawing references were required:

- Drawing numbers CBC 0001 'Proposed Elevations Unit 3' 19032-HNW-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-2321 'Site Sections As Proposed' and 19032-HNW-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-2340 'Typical Sections As Proposed' had been updated and superseded by drawing 19032-HNW-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-2340 'Typical Sections – As Proposed' and could therefore be deleted from the list of approved drawings.

- The following drawing numbers would be deleted: 19032-HNW-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-2900, 19032-HNW-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-2901, 19032-HNW-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-2902 and 19032-HNW-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-2903

It was explained that the Committee was recommended to delegate the decision to permit the application to the Head of Economy and Planning subject to the recommendation in the report and the above changes. The Officer then gave details of the various relevant planning considerations as set out in the [report](#).

Rory Joyce, the agent (Brunel Planning) spoke on behalf of the applicant, in support of the application. Matters raised included:

- The proposal would enhance the core economic function and support continued growth of Manor Royal.
- Each phase would be able to be operated successfully within the overall site and be used for world-leading research, development, and manufacturing.
- It would also include enhanced landscaping and provide bio-diversity net-gain, a BREEAM excellent rating and be water neutral.

Dee Mathieson, spoke on behalf of Elekta Limited in support of the application. Matters raised included:

- The Crawley campus was the largest centre in the world.
- The proposal would provide a large local, employment opportunity within the town.
- Application would be key to continue manufacturing, designing, researching for better cancer treatment in Crawley.

Committee members the following points during the discussion:

- Clarification was sought as to the lorry parking provision. It was confirmed this was considered to be acceptable for the proposed use of unit 1 as it met the specific needs of the end user and did include a Travel Plan, sustainable transport options, cycle parking provision and EV ducting. Whilst Elekta could vacate the building in the future, any potential new occupier would be aware of the parking provision before taking the unit. Units 2 and 3 fully met the Council's parking standards.
- Following a query from a Committee member regarding the usage for units 2 and 3, it was heard they would be for B8 use (storage and distribution).
- Clarity was obtained about the relationship with the Premier Inn Hotel and potential sensitivity to noise. However, it was not considered that any significant disturbance would be caused.

RESOLVED

Delegate the decision to permit the application to the Head of Economy and Planning subject to the satisfactory conclusion of the required Habitats Regulations consultation with Natural England, the conclusion of a Section 106 legal agreement to secure works access, Travel Plan and Monitoring Fee of £3500, Employment and Skills Plan, Air Quality mitigation measures on-site to a value of £33,096, the conditions and informatives set out in report PES/458b (including amended/deleted conditions as appropriate)

Following the conclusion of the meeting, the Chair took the opportunity to thank the Committee for its work during the year and wished all Councillors well and good luck in their future endeavours. All Officers involved in the Planning Committee were also thanked for their support throughout the municipal year.

Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Planning Committee concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.08 pm.

S Pritchard (Chair)