

## Crawley Borough Council

### Minutes of Planning Committee

Monday, 8 February 2021 at 7.00 pm

#### Councillors Present:

J Purdy (Chair)

J Hart (Vice-Chair)

L M Ascough, A Belben, I T Irvine, K L Jaggard, M Mwangale, M W Pickett, T Rana and P C Smith

#### Officers Present:

Dimitra Angelopoulou	Senior Planning Officer
Valerie Cheesman	Principal Planning Officer
Mez Matthews	Democratic Services Officer
Marc Robinson	Principal Planning Officer
Linda Saunders	Planning Solicitor
Clem Smith	Head of Economy and Planning
Jess Tamplin	Democratic Services Support Officer

#### 1. Disclosures of Interest

The following disclosures of interests were made:

Councillor	Item and Minute	Type and Nature of Disclosure
Councillor P Smith	Planning application CR/2018/0172/FUL – Gatwick School, 23 Gatwick Road, Northgate, Crawley (Minute 4)	Personal Interest – a Local Authority Director of the Manor Royal Business Improvement District
Councillor P Smith	Planning application CR/2018/0172/FUL – Gatwick School, 23 Gatwick Road, Northgate, Crawley (Minute 4)	Personal Interest – a member of Crawley Cycle and Walking Forum, a consultee on the application
Councillor Irvine	Planning application CR/2020/0037/FUL – Land Parcel Russell Way (Former TSB Site), Three Bridges, Crawley (Minute 5)	Personal Interest – a member of Crawley Cycle and Walking Forum, a consultee on the application

Councillor Purdy	Planning application CR/2020/0037/FUL – Land Parcel Russell Way (Former TSB Site), Three Bridges, Crawley (Minute 5)	Personal Interest – employed by UK Power Networks (a consultee on the application that did not provide a response)
Councillor P Smith	Planning application CR/2020/0037/FUL – Land Parcel Russell Way (Former TSB Site), Three Bridges, Crawley (Minute 5)	Personal Interest – a member of Crawley Cycle and Walking Forum, a consultee on the application
Councillor Irvine	Planning application CR/2020/0192/RG3 – Breezehurst Playing Fields, off Breezehurst Drive, Bewbush, Crawley (Minute 6)	Personal Interest – a member of Crawley Cycle and Walking Forum, a consultee on the application
Councillor Irvine	Planning application CR/2020/0192/RG3 – Breezehurst Playing Fields, off Breezehurst Drive, Bewbush, Crawley (Minute 6)	Personal Interest – Cabinet member for Housing
Councillor Irvine	Planning application CR/2020/0192/RG3 – Breezehurst Playing Fields, off Breezehurst Drive, Bewbush, Crawley (Minute 6)	Personal Interest – a member of the High Weald Area of Natural Beauty Joint Advisory Committee, a consultee on the application
Councillor Purdy	Planning application CR/2020/0192/RG3 – Breezehurst Playing Fields, off Breezehurst Drive, Bewbush, Crawley (Minute 6)	Personal Interest – employed by UK Power Networks (a consultee on the application that did not provide a response)
Councillor P Smith	Planning application CR/2020/0192/RG3 – Breezehurst Playing Fields, off Breezehurst Drive, Bewbush, Crawley (Minute 6)	Personal Interest – a member of Crawley Cycle and Walking Forum, a consultee on the application

## 2. Lobbying Declarations

The following lobbying declarations were made by Councillors:-

Councillors A Belben, Hart, Irvine, Jaggard, Mwangale, Purdy, and P Smith had been lobbied regarding application CR/2018/0172/FUL – Gatwick School, 23 Gatwick Road, Northgate, Crawley.

### 3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 12 January 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### 4. Planning Application CR/2018/0172/FUL - Gatwick School, 23 Gatwick Road, Northgate, Crawley

The Committee considered report [PES/359a](#) of the Head of Economy and Planning which proposed as follows:

Permanent change of use from offices (B1) to co-educational school (D1), including new external over-cladding, new windows and doors, new build sports hall and stairway, revised car parking, external play areas and landscaping.

Councillors A Belben, Jaggard, Mwagale, Purdy, and P Smith declared they had visited the site.

The Principal Planning Officer (VC) provided a verbal summation of the application, which consisted of the change of use of the two main buildings linked by a smaller adjoining building, and external alterations and an extension. The application also included proposals for a sports hall, multi-use games area, and various parking arrangements. The site had been operating as a school with limited pupil numbers since 2014, initially under permitted development rights and subsequently under two temporary permissions – this application sought to increase the maximum number of pupils to 1020. The Officer advised that the Local Plan and Government policy emphasised the importance of establishing new educational facilities. The Officer outlined various aspects of the application related to traffic and parking management that had been adapted since the refusal of the previous application in 2015.

#### Updates

The Officer highlighted the addendum to the report which had been published as a supplementary agenda. The addendum referred to the Local Planning Authority's consideration of the Public Sector Equality Duty and protected characteristics in regard to the application, specifically in terms of noise levels at the site.

The Committee heard that a further representation had been received since the report was published which consisted of a public petition of 1,441 signatures in support of the application.

The Committee was asked to note that there was an error in paragraph 5.82 of the report – it should read '39 parent spaces' rather than '19 parent spaces'.

The Officer then updated the Committee that conditions 9, 13, and 16 had been amended following negotiation with the applicant and agent since the report was published. The amended conditions read as follows:

*'9. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the completion of the development, and any trees or plants which within a period of five years from the completion of the 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 amenity and of the environment of the development in accordance with Policy CH3 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015 - 2030.'*

*'13. The provisions of the Car Park Management Plan (January 2021) shall be implemented and operated as approved for the lifetime of the development, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.*

*REASON: To ensure the safe operation of the car park and in the interests of highway safety, in accordance with policies CH3 and IN4 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015 – 2030.'*

*'16. Prior to the commencement of development of the sports hall, there shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a report assessing the technical, environmental and economic feasibility of using high-efficiency alternative energy systems in the construction of the building, and outlining how the development has incorporated any appropriate technologies. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.*

*REASON: In the interests of environmental sustainability, in accordance with policy ENV6 of Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015-2030.'*

In line with the Council's Virtual Committee Procedure Rules, one statement submitted by members of the public in regard to the application was read to the Committee.

A statement from the agent (JLL) on behalf of the applicant (the Education and Skills Funding Agency) had been prepared in conjunction with the Gatwick School, and highlighted matters including:

- The suitability of both the building and the location for an educational facility.
- The additional facilities to be provided, such as a sports hall and multi-use games area, which were projected to benefit the pupils and the wider community by offering rental of the spaces to local business and groups.
- The measures introduced (e.g. a staggered timetable and a 'kiss and drop' parking arrangement) to satisfy West Sussex County Council's (WSCC) Highways department's original concerns regarding traffic flow.

The Committee then considered the application. Committee members expressed concerns regarding access, parking, and surroundings given the location of the school and the high numbers of cars accessing the site. It was heard that Travel Plans and a Car Park Management Plan had been developed and the school had implemented a staggered timetable to spread out vehicle movements, and staff and parent parking proposals had been amended. Concerns about the sustainability of the location were mitigated by the various conditions and the Section 106 agreement, which would require highway improvements and a nearby pedestrian crossing among other matters. The Committee expressed support for the revised proposals and it was noted that significant work had been done on the application, such as further traffic modelling, which had offered an updated understanding of the traffic flow at and around the site. The Committee recognised that WSCC's Highways department no longer objected to the proposals.

The Officer gave the following information in response to further questions from Committee members:

- Pupils may not necessarily live in Crawley as the free school did not have a catchment area. Those living elsewhere may travel to school with family who may work in Manor Royal. Pupils may also travel by bus, of which an

additional service was proposed to be run by Metrobus (subject to a financial contribution secured via a Section 106 agreement).

- The site was approximately 350 metres from the end of a proposed future southern runway at Gatwick airport; the existing runway was further away than this. Committee members expressed concerns about possible air pollution. An air quality assessment had deemed the air quality at the site acceptable but this related only to road traffic sources or virtual organic compounds.
- On receipt of a suggestion from a Committee member proposing pedestrian access to the school via a railway bridge (between Tinsley Green and Tinsley Lane), it was explained that this was outside of the remit of this application and had not been requested by WSCC's Highways department.

Committee members discussed the importance of providing quality education and the need to create more school places in Crawley.

A recorded vote was taken on the recommendation in accordance with the Council's Virtual Committee Procedure Rules. The names of the councillors voting for and against the recommendation, along with any abstentions, were recorded as follows:

For the recommendation to permit:

Councillors Ascough, A Belben, Hart, Irvine, Jaggard, Mwangale, Purdy, Rana, and P Smith (9).

Against the recommendation to permit:

Councillor Pickett (1).

Abstentions:

None.

## **RESOLVED**

Permit subject to the completion of a Section 106 agreement to secure the elements set out in paragraph 5.153 of report PES/329a, and the conditions set out in the report with conditions 9, 13, and 16 amended as follows:

'9. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the completion of the development, and any trees or plants which within a period of five years from the completion of the 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 amenity and of the environment of the development in accordance with Policy CH3 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015 - 2030.'

'13. The provisions of the Car Park Management Plan (January 2021) shall be implemented and operated as approved for the lifetime of the development, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure the safe operation of the car park and in the interests of highway safety, in accordance with policies CH3 and IN4 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015 – 2030.'

'16. Prior to the commencement of development of the sports hall, there shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a report assessing the technical, environmental and economic feasibility of using high-efficiency alternative energy systems in the construction of the building, and outlining

how the development has incorporated any appropriate technologies. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.  
REASON: In the interests of environmental sustainability, in accordance with policy ENV6 of Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015-2030.'

**5. Planning Application CR/2020/0037/FUL - Land Parcel Russell Way (Former TSB Site), Three Bridges, Crawley**

The Committee considered report [PES/359b](#) of the Head of Economy and Planning which proposed as follows:

Erection of L shaped 4 storey building comprising 59 x flats with associated landscaping, refuse and cycle storage, infrastructure works and parking court at the rear (amended plans received).

Councillors A Belben, Jaggard, Purdy, and P Smith declared they had visited the site.

The Senior Planning Officer provided a verbal summation of the application. The proposed development was situated on a brownfield site which was an allocated deliverable housing site in the Local Plan. The building was said to be of an acceptable size and design, and the proposed provision of 20% affordable housing units had been justified in viability terms. The provision of 40 parking spaces represented a shortfall of between 29 and 42 spaces based on the Council's indicative parking standards, but due to the sustainable location of the site, local car ownership data, the submission of a Travel Plan, the provision of sufficient cycle parking, and WSCC's Highways department having no objection, the parking provision was considered to be acceptable on balance.

In line with the Council's Virtual Committee Procedure Rules, a statement submitted by members of the public in regard to the application were read to the Committee.

A statement from the agent (Savills) on behalf of the applicant (Bellway Homes) highlighted matters including:

- The site was an allocated key housing site and had been vacant for over 20 years; the application sought to regenerate the site.
- The proposal sought to utilise the available space by maximising the number of homes at the site, 12 of which would be affordable housing units.
- Design aspects of the proposal allowed for an improved street scene, natural surveillance of its surroundings, and enhancements to structural landscaping.

The Committee then considered the application. Committee members expressed support for the sustainable location of the development and the condition to secure fixed solar panels on the roof of the building. A Committee member suggested the creation of a ramp at the eastern side of the site to allow for easier cycle access between Russell Way and the Tilgate Drive footpath/cycle path (the existing access was via a steep ramp and steps). The Officer confirmed that this had not been required by WSCC's Highways department and was therefore not included in the Section 106 agreement.

A recorded vote was taken on the recommendation in accordance with the Council's Virtual Committee Procedure Rules. The names of the councillors voting for and against the recommendation, along with any abstentions, were recorded as follows:

For the recommendation to permit:

Councillors Ascough, A Belben, Hart, Irvine, Jaggard, Mwangale, Pickett, Purdy, Rana, and P Smith (10).

Against the recommendation to permit:  
None.

Abstentions:  
None.

## **RESOLVED**

Permit subject to the conclusion of a Section 106 agreement and the conditions set out in report PES/359b.

### **6. Planning Application CR/2020/0192/RG3 - Breezehurst Playing Fields, off Breezehurst Drive, Bewbush, Crawley**

The Committee considered report [PES/359c](#) of the Head of Economy and Planning which proposed as follows:

Erection of 85 affordable houses & flats, comprising:

18 x one bedroom flats

38 x two bedroom flats

9 x two bedroom houses

17 x three bedroom houses

3 x four bedroom houses

Access roads, car parking, sports pitch, open space & associated works (amended plans and description).

Councillors A Belben, Purdy, and P Smith declared they had visited the site.

The Principal Planning Officer (MR) provided a verbal summation of the application, which sought permission for a development of 85 units on part of the land at Breezehurst playing fields. The proposals included access via new roadways and a total of 140 parking spaces. Improvement works to the remaining section of the playing field and playing fields off-site were proposed to be secured via conditions and a Section 106 agreement.

The Officer updated the Committee that paragraph 2.3 of the report should make reference to the removal of five trees rather than three trees. It was also clarified that the wording of the recommendation was to become 'to permit subject to the completion of the S106 Agreement *and the following conditions*'. The Officer then provided the following updates regarding the plans and drawings to be considered:

- Drawings 16 (House Type 4A Floor Plans & Elevations) and 17 (House Type 4B Floor Plans & Elevations) had been superseded;
- Drawings 18 (Apartment Block A – Ground & First Floor Plans) and 19 (Apartment Block A – Second Floor & Roof Plans) were corrected to revision P04, rather than P03;
- Drawing 24 (Apartment Blocks B, C, D & E – North & South Elevations) was correct to revision P05, rather than P04;
- Drawings 28, 29, 30, 31, and 32 (Street A, B, C, and D Elevations) remained relevant but were not to be included on the decision notice.

In line with the Council's Virtual Committee Procedure Rules, three statements submitted by members of the public in regard to the application were read to the Committee.

Three statements from neighbours to the site – Hannah Wheeler, Myra Goodenough, and Nichola Godwin – raised the following matters:

- The green space had a community feel and was currently of benefit to many local residents who had concerns about the loss of the space and the future plans for the remaining section of the field.
- A lack of communication regarding the potential for development at the site.
- Concerns regarding the disruption, noise, and dust caused by building works, as well as the impact on traffic after completion of the development.

The Committee considered the application. Discussion ensued regarding the loss of a section of the playing fields and Committee members expressed sympathy for the neighbours affected by this. The Officer explained that Bewbush had a good provision of playing fields but that their quality and usability was poor. The works to the retained section of the playing fields would improve the quality of sports provision locally, and the Section 106 agreement would secure from the applicant ongoing financial contributions to the maintenance of the playing fields for 15 years. It was confirmed that the site was a key housing site as allocated by the Local Plan in 2015, which had undergone a consultation process in 2012. The Officer assured the Committee that permitting this application would not set a precedent for the construction of future developments on green spaces throughout Crawley as each site was considered on its own merits.

Regarding the timescale for the works to the retained playing fields, the Officer explained that this would be confirmed via a schedule of works as part of the Section 106 agreement and the conditions. It was estimated that the remaining section of the playing field would be upgraded after the erection of the dwellings as it would be used in part as a haul route to the site during construction to limit disturbances to neighbours by vehicle movements.

Other matters discussed were:

- The requirement for a Construction Management Plan and the need for dust suppression measures.
- Support for the provision of electric vehicle charging points – allocated to all houses and to at least 20% of communal parking spaces. The allocation of parking would be subject to control by the Council as the applicant.
- The withdrawal of Sports England's initial objection, which was due to the proposals to improve the retained on and off-site sports pitches and the methods of ensuring the implementation of this.
- The location of the windows in the four blocks of flats close to the A2220 (Horsham Road). To mitigate noise from the road, it was proposed to have single windows in the majority of rooms which faced north-east, north, or north-west. These would provide natural light and an outlook. The small number of south-facing openings were to areas such as hallways and were likely to be non-opening to prevent noise issues for future residents.
- The path and area to the north of the site (between the proposed development and existing houses in Douster Crescent and Waterfall Crescent) was to consist of borders of open railings and newly planted trees, and would not be an alleyway or other confined space.



Committee members commended the 100% provision of affordable housing. The Committee also expressed support for the proposed layout and access, including the traffic calming measures.

Councillor Pickett left the meeting during the discussion and was not present for the vote on the item.

A recorded vote was taken on the recommendation in accordance with the Council's Virtual Committee Procedure Rules. The names of the councillors voting for and against the recommendation, along with any abstentions, were recorded as follows:

For the recommendation to permit:

Councillors A Belben, Hart, Irvine, Jaggard, Mwagale, Purdy, Rana, and P Smith (8).

Against the recommendation to permit:

Councillor Ascough (1).

Abstentions:

None.

## **RESOLVED**

Permit subject to the conclusion of a Section 106 agreement and the conditions set out in report PES/359c (as amended).

## **Closure of Meeting**

With the business of the Planning Committee concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.53 pm

**J Purdy (Chair)**