

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of Planning Committee

Tuesday, 30 August 2022 at 7.30 pm

Councillors Present:

R D Burrett (Chair)

Y Khan (Vice-Chair)

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

Officers Present:

Russell Allison Housing Enabling and Development Manager

Valerie Cheesman Principal Planning Officer

Siraj Choudhury Head of Governance, People & Performance

Marc Robinson Principal Planning Officer

Clem Smith Head of Economy and Planning

Jess Tamplin Democratic Services Officer

Also in Attendance:

Councillor M G Jones

1. Disclosures of Interest

The following disclosures of interests were made:

| Councillor | Item and Minute | Type and Nature of Disclosure |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Councillor Ali | Section 106 Monies – Q3 2021/22 to Q1 2022/23 (Minute 6) | Personal interest – a West Sussex County Councillor. |
| Councillor Burrett | Section 106 Monies – Q3 2021/22 to Q1 2022/23 (Minute 6) | Personal interest – a West Sussex County Councillor. |

2. Lobbying Declarations

As the two planning applications on the agenda were addendum reports and had been previously permitted by the Committee, Committee members were advised that it was not necessary for those who had been lobbied on the application upon its first consideration to declare this lobbying a second time.

No further lobbying declarations were made.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 12 July 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. Planning Application CR/2020/0024/FUL - Longley House, East Park, Southgate

The Committee considered report [PES/405a](#) of the Head of Economy and Planning which proposed as follows:

Demolition of Longley House (offices) & erection of building ranging between 4 to 9 storeys to provide 121 x residential units (class C3) with associated sub-station, car/cycle parking, tree works, public realm improvements and landscaping.

Councillors Ali and Mwangale declared they had visited the site since the application was previously considered by the Committee.

The Principal Planning Officer (VC) provided a verbal summation of the application, which the Committee previously resolved to permit on 3 November 2020. The application had since been affected by the Natural England (NE) position statement on water neutrality and therefore required further consideration solely on this matter. The proposed development's estimated water usage was likely to be higher than the current usage as office space. Water neutrality was to be achieved, however, through a combination of on-site water efficiency measures (water-saving fixtures/fittings, grey water recycling, and limitations to the watering of the landscaping and washing of vehicles) and off-site offsetting measures (through the Crawley Homes Water Neutrality Retrofit Programme).

The Officer updated the Committee that, since the publication of the report, the recommendation had needed to be updated to refer to the consultation with NE and the conclusion of the S106 legal agreement. The recommendation was therefore to delegate the decision to permit the application to the Head of Economy and Planning subject to the conclusion of consultation with NE, the conclusion of the S106 agreement, and the conditions as set out in the agenda.

Henry Courtier, the agent, spoke on behalf of the applicant in support of the application. Matters raised included:

- Since the original application had been permitted, the applicant had worked collaboratively with Crawley Borough Council's Housing and Planning teams to propose a scheme that achieved water neutrality.
- The proposals sought to implement water efficiency measures on-site and to utilise the Retrofit Programme.
- The granting of permission for these matters would allow work to begin on the delivery of the scheme, which was to provide 121 affordable homes in Crawley town centre.

The Committee then considered the application. Committee members sought clarification on the reasons for the application being put forward prior to others which had been delayed by water neutrality requirements. Officers explained that the two applications on the agenda had been previously permitted by the Committee and the

S106 agreements had almost been completed, so these applications were further progressed than other cases. It was also confirmed that it was the responsibility of a developer to present water neutrality solutions to the Local Planning Authority, and presently, the two applications on the agenda were the sole larger residential applications which had done so.

A Committee member noted that the development's estimated water usage was based on an 88% occupancy rate; it was queried as to whether this could lead to an underestimation of water usage. The Planning Officer clarified that this was not 88% of the total units being occupied, but 88% of the total number of people that could occupy the entire development.

Concerns were raised that the proposed limitations on vehicle washing would simply displace the water that would have been used to wash vehicles on-site to elsewhere in the borough. Officers confirmed that further detail was to be provided as part of the Section 106 agreement.

The Retrofit Programme was discussed in detail. Officers confirmed that the scheme was ongoing and data would be analysed to evaluate its success as it continued. So far 100 homes had been fitted with the flow regulator fitting and this was being rolled out selectively. Tenants were not required to have the fitting installed; those that did were able to have it removed if they changed their minds within six months.

Further questions were put to officers regarding the operation of the flow regulators. It was highlighted that the fittings had been shown to regulate and improve, rather than decrease, water pressure. Although the fittings did not reduce water usage when a specific volume of water was required, they did reduce usage through showers and hand washing. It was hoped that tenants would also see a benefit in the form of lower water bills.

A Committee member suggested that in the future, the Retrofit Programme be streamlined by installing water-saving fixtures and fittings between Crawley Homes tenancies, while properties were empty.

RESOLVED

Delegate the decision to permit the application to the Head of Economy and Planning, subject to the conclusion of consultation with Natural England, the conclusion of a Section 106 agreement, and the conditions set out in report PES/405a.

5. Planning Application CR/2020/0192/RG3 - Breezehurst Playing Fields, Breezehurst Drive, Bewbush

The Committee considered report [PES/405b](#) 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).

Councillor Mwagale declared she had visited the site since the application was previously considered by the Committee.

The Principal Planning Officer (MR) provided a verbal summation of the application, which the Committee previously resolved to permit on 8 February 2021. The application had since been affected by the Natural England (NE) position statement on water neutrality and therefore required further consideration solely on this matter. The proposed development's estimated water usage was to be higher than the current usage at the same site as it was currently undeveloped land in the form of a playing field. Water neutrality was to be achieved, however, through a combination of on-site water efficiency measures (water-saving fixtures/fittings, grey water recycling, and rainwater harvesting) and off-site offsetting measures (through the Crawley Homes Water Neutrality Retrofit Programme).

The Officer updated the Committee that, since the publication of the report, the recommendation had needed to be updated. The recommendation was therefore to delegate the decision to permit the application to the Head of Economy and Planning subject to the conclusion of consultation with NE, the conclusion of the S106 agreement, and the conditions set out in the agenda.

Lisa Venn, Crawley Borough Council Built Environment Manager, spoke on behalf of the applicant in support of the application. Matters raised included:

- The applicant had worked closely with the architects and with Crawley Homes to prepare the application for 85 affordable homes which was previously permitted by the Committee.
- This application was to be amended to address water neutrality requirements.
- The current Local Plan required water usage to fall below 110 litres per person per day. With the inclusion of the proposed water efficiency measures, water usage by future residents of the development was estimated to average 87 litres per person per day.

The Committee then considered the application. Committee members raised several queries, to which the officers provided the following clarifications:

- As the site was a playing field, and it did not have an irrigation system, there was currently no water used at the site.
- The estimated water usage differed between the houses on site (90.3 litres per person per day) and the flats (83 litres per person per day). This was to account for extra water used at the houses for watering gardens and washing cars.
- The applicant was required to prove to the Local Planning Authority that the development had met the water neutrality requirements during or post construction but prior to occupation.
- Southern Water would fit water meters at all of the dwellings.

Committee members highlighted the importance of saving water and praised the innovative solutions to the unprecedented issue of water neutrality.

RESOLVED

Delegate the decision to permit the application to the Head of Economy and Planning, subject to the conclusion of consultation with Natural England, the conclusion of a Section 106 agreement and the conditions set out in report PES/405b.

6. Section 106 Monies - Q3 2021/22 to Q1 2022/23

The Committee considered report [PES/401](#) of the Head of Economy and Planning.

The Head of Economy and Planning presented the report, which summarised all the Section 106 (S106) monies received, spent, and committed to project schemes between quarter 3 of the financial year 2021/22 and quarter 1 of 2022/23.

A Committee member requested further information on the decision process for allocating S106 monies. It was confirmed that the monies received through a planning application tended to be spent on projects in the same area as the development providing the funding. Recent changes to S106 agreements had led to more limitations on the ways in which the monies were allocated and spent.

A query was then raised as to why works to certain children's play areas across the borough had been funded before others – it was confirmed that there was a rolling programme of works which prioritised those most in need of refurbishment which was agreed between officers and a councillors' working group.

It was also clarified that each S106 contribution needed to be allocated or spent by a certain date which was established as part of each individual agreement.

RESOLVED

That the update on S106 monies received, spent, and committed between quarter 3 of the financial year 2021/22 and quarter 1 of 2022/23 was noted.

Closure of Meeting

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

R D Burrett (Chair)