

Planning Committee – Meeting held on Thursday, 9th January, 2014.

Present:- Councillors Carter (Chair), Dar (Vice-Chair), Hussain, Mittal, Plenty, Rasib, Smith and Swindlehurst

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillor Plimmer

PART I

64. Apologies for Absence

None.

65. Declarations of Interest

Agenda Item 8: P/02523/011 – 27, Cheviot Road, Slough

Councillor Swindlehurst declared that he had facilitated a meeting between the Applicant and Planning Officers at the beginning of the application process but he had not attended the meeting. He confirmed he had an open mind and would debate and vote on the item.

66. Guidance on Predetermination/Predisposition - To Note

Members confirmed that they had read and understood the guidance note on Predetermination and Predisposition.

67. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 28th November 2013

The minutes of the meeting held on 28th November, 2013, were agreed subject to the deletion of the sentence, 'Councillor Hussain declared an interest in agenda item 9, P/06960/017, Baylis Court School For Girls, Gloucester Avenue, Slough, SL1 3AH in that the application site was situated in her Ward. She participated in the debate and voted on the item'.

68. Human Rights Act Statement - To Note

The Human Rights Act statement was noted.

69. Planning Applications

Details were tabled in the amendment sheet of alterations and amendments received since the agenda was circulated. The Committee adjourned for ten minutes to allow Members the opportunity to read the amendment sheet.

A Ward Member addressed the Committee in respect of P/02523/011: 27, Cheviot Road, Slough.

Resolved –That the decisions be taken in respect of the planning applications as set out in the minutes below, subject to the information,

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including conditions and informatives set out in the reports and the amendment sheet tabled at the meeting.

70. P/14486/001 - Unit 1, Prescott Road, Colnbrook, Slough, SL3 0AE

Application	Decision
Erection of 2789 square metre warehouse building with ancillary office space and associated parking following demolition of existing buildings	Delegate to the Strategic Lead Planning Policy for the completion of a S106 Agreement, consideration of a tree report, finalising conditions and final determination.

71. P/06684/015 - Queensmere Shopping Centre, Wellington Street, Slough, Berkshire, SL1 1LN

The Strategic Lead, Planning Policy, presented a report outlining a revised design for the proposed Queensmere Shopping Centre Scheme. At its previous meeting on 28th, November, 2014, the Committee had commented on a previous proposed scheme and in light of concerns submitted the detail had been altered. Changes made to the Scheme were outlined, and included:

- All towers would now be of the same thickness, barring the circular tower.
- The design of the towers had been changed to provide more natural light and a more distinctive skyline.
- Penthouses were now included on the top floor.
- Better materials would be used, including greater use of glazing.
- Promise of better internal quality.
- Removal of horizontal dwellings closer to street level, thereby removing 'clutter' and improving shop façade.

It was emphasised that the new plans, incorporating the above changes, were not yet out for consultation.

The Officer invited Members to comment on the revised Scheme.

In the ensuing debate Members expressed individual views and raised a number of questions/ comments as follows:

- The Scheme as now amended was a marked improvement, but was not a flagship scheme and there remained a way to go before concerns were fully satisfied.

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- Was there a risk of solar gain with the addition of glass? The Officer confirmed that the buildings would comply with regulations to ensure this was not an issue.
- The 'silver' theme was an improvement over painted concrete. Could this be extended throughout the scheme? The Officer confirmed this point would be noted for future consideration.
- How confident was the Officer that the Heart of Slough project would increase footfall into Slough? The Officer advised that research and statistics had found that with the addition of big 'anchor stores' that there would be a significant return on investment.
- Concerns remained regarding the height of the towers vs. the height of St. Ethelbert's Church. It appeared that the height was not in accordance with the Council's Core Strategy which had indicated a limit to 15 floors. The Officer confirmed that professional advice was to make the towers even higher/slimmer, though a medium between the two has been attempted. He also advised that the height had been capped at the height of the church spire. The Design Panel had advised that the height was not a problem but it was important to incorporate good design with the height.
- Members did not feel that the Scheme was retail led, and suggested that the towers and development of 800 residential units were predominantly designed to attract young professionals who would look to take advantage of rail links into London. There remained the concern that by attracting this demographic there would be little positive impact on footfall and successful retail within Slough
- There also remained concerns regarding the addition of what appeared to be elevator shafts external to the towers, which result in a protruding spike over and above the top level of the towers and it was felt that the concern was that this was not aesthetically pleasing. The Officer confirmed clarity would be sought regarding whether these were a design choice, or a functional requirement of the buildings.
- Concerns were raised that signposting and sightlines from Slough railway Station to the High Street would be unclear as the towers would be obscuring the view. This could lead to issues with patrons being unsure how to get to the High Street.
- The view from Mackenzie Street towards the towers was also deemed not aesthetically pleasing and it was very important to get this right.
- The single circular tower was deemed not to be congruent with the remainder of the Scheme, though the design of this building was praised.
- Where would car parking be sited? The Officer confirmed that there would be no additional car parking but the existing car park would be re-modelled.
- It was felt that the development would be improved by the provision of some two and three bed flats instead of the predominant one bed design of the scheme.

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Resolved- That the comments and views submitted by the Committee be noted and relayed to the Applicant.

72. P/02523/011 - 27, Cheviot Road, Slough, SL3 8LA

The Committee considered a supplementary report to provide Members with an update on the progress of the application.

It was noted that although the Applicants had agreed the obligations and financial contributions of the final draft Section 106 Agreement which they had been aware of since the Planning Committee held in May, 2013, they had advised that at the present time they were unable to meet the funding obligations required for final signing of the Agreement. The Applicants had indicated that it could take approximately 6 months to acquire the necessary funds but had advised they would use the building in accordance with its current authorised use as a social club.

The Committee discussed the report and it was agreed unanimously that the Applicants had been afforded sufficient time to complete the arrangements and that the final signing of the S106 Agreement should be completed no later than 5 pm on Friday 7th February, 2014 as set out below.

Application	Decision
Change of use from Licensed Members Social Club (sui generis) to Islamic Community and Teaching Centre and place of worship (class D1) and retention of second floor flat (class C3)	That the final signing of the S106 Agreement be delayed until no later than 5 pm on Friday 7 th February, 2014, to allow the Applicants enough time to secure the funding necessary to meet the financial obligations contained in the Draft Agreement. In the event that the S106 Agreement is not signed within this time limit, that the Strategic Lead Planning Policy be authorised to refuse planning permission for the reasons set out in the report.

73. Duty to Co-operate: Berkshire Wide Memorandums of Understanding

The Strategic Lead, Planning Policy introduced a report seeking Member approval of the three Memorandums of Understanding that set out the basis for meeting the Duty to Co-operate for strategic plan making.

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The Officer advised that the Duty to Co-operate was introduced by the Government in the Localism Act 2011, which was intended to ensure that plan making took account of adjoining areas. This placed a legal duty on local planning authorities to engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis to maximise the effectiveness of plan preparation in taking account of strategic cross boundary matters.

The guidance made it clear that Councillors and Officers had responsibility for leading discussions and negotiations about the strategic matters in their local plans and it would be necessary to involve the Committee in Member level issues raised by adjoining authorities.

The Committee noted that Officers had recently made representations to the Hearing on the Ascot, Sunninghill and Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan examination on the grounds that it was premature to go ahead with the plan as it stood in advance of the production of the Borough wide Local Plan.

It was noted that one of the problems with the Duty to Co-operate was that although Authorities had to be fully engaged in the process, there was no "duty to agree." As a result, there was no mechanism for resolving disputes.

Following discussion, Members agreed the Recommendations as set out in the report.

Resolved:

- (a) That the Memorandum of understanding for Strategic Planning and the Duty to Co-operate on Planning Matters in Berkshire be agreed;
- (b) That the Memorandum of Understanding for Minerals and Waste Planning in Berkshire be agreed
- (c) That the Memorandum of Understanding for the preparation of Waste Local Plans in the South East of England be agreed.

74. Planning Appeal Decisions

Resolved- That details of recent Planning Appeal decisions be noted.

75. Members Attendance Record

Resolved- That the Members Attendance Record for 2013/14 be noted.

76. Date of Next Meeting - 20th February, 2014

Resolved – That the date of the next Planning Committee be confirmed as 20th February, 2014.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.07 pm)