

Planning Committee – Meeting held on Wednesday, 7th September, 2016.

Present:- Councillors Dar (Chair), M Holledge (Vice-Chair), Ajaib (Co-Chair), Chaudhry, Plenty, Rasib and Swindlehurst

Also present under Rule 30:- None.

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor Smith

PART I

45. Declarations of Interest

All Members declared an interest in respect of Planning Application P/00475/009 – Spring Cottages, Upton Park, Slough, in that they had received a letter from the Applicant's Agent relating to the application. Members confirmed that they had not responded to the letter and would approach the application with open minds.

Councillors Ajaib & Chaudhry declared an interest in respect of Planning Applications P/02465/013 - 226 High Street, Slough: P/00475/009 - Spring Cottages, Upton Park, Slough: and P/00943/008: 72-74 Stoke Road, Slough in that the application sites were situated within their Ward (Central).

46. Guidance on Predetermination/Predisposition - To Note

Members confirmed that they had read and understood the guidance on predetermination and predisposition.

47. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 3rd August, 2016

Resolved - That the minutes of the last meeting, held on 3rd August, 2016, be approved as a correct record.

48. Human Rights Act Statement - To Note

The Human Rights Act Statement was noted.

49. Planning Applications

Details were tabled in the amendment sheet of alterations and amendments received since the agenda was circulated. The Committee adjourned at the commencement of the meeting to read the amendment sheet.

Resolved –That the decisions be taken in respect of the planning applications as set out in the minutes below, subject to the information, including conditions and informatives set out in the reports and the amendment sheet tabled at the meeting.

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50. P/02465/013 - 226 High Street, Slough, SL1 1JS

Application	Decision
Construction of four storey detached building to accommodate retail (Class A1) to the front end at ground floor level, and residential flats/ studio apartments above, (1 No. 2 bed flat; 6 No. One bed flats; 7 No Studio apartments). Bin store and cycle parking within the rear end of the ground floor.	Delegated to the Planning Manager for approval subject to consideration of any substantive objections or requirements from Transport and Highways, the Crime Prevention Design Advisor, completion of a Section 106 agreement, and finalising conditions.

51. P/00475/009 - Spring Cottages, Upton Park, Slough, SL1 2DH

Application	Decision
Construction of one detached dwellinghouse (4 no. bedroom) and 3 storey building to provide 9 no. flats (8 no. x 2 bedroom and 1 no. x 3 bedroom). Associated works including basement, car parking provision, amenity and access off Upton Park.	Refused.

52. P/00943/008 - 72-74 Stoke Road, Slough, SL1 5AP

Application	Decision
Demolition of existing buildings and construction of Part 4/ Part 5 storey building comprising 287sqm ground floor retail space and 24 no flats (18 no x 1bed and 6 no x 2 bed flats) together with parking provision for 17 no cars and 24 no cycles with access from an extended rear service road.	<p>Delegated to Planning Manager for approval, subject to resolution of outstanding transport/highway, air quality matters, minor design changes, resolve land ownership issues (amended red line plan), finalising conditions, satisfactory completion of a S106 Agreement and final determination. If the agent is unable to satisfactorily resolve landownership issues and transport/highway matters, the application should be refused on the following grounds:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><i>The development fails to provide adequate access to the site and this would compromise the scheme as a whole, whereby there would be no of access to the site, no provision of car parking spaces, no servicing of the retail and residential units. The development is contrary to Slough Borough Council's Core Strategy 2006-2026 Core Policy 7.</i><i>The proposed development does not provided</i>

	<p><i>adequate servicing arrangements for the retail units, this would be a conflict and unsafe environment within the car park area which would have a detrimental impact in conjunction with the residential development proposed and is therefore contrary to Slough Borough Council's Core Strategy 2006-2026 Core Policy 7.</i></p>
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53. Update on Slough's Housing Land Supply

The Planning Policy Lead Officer outlined a report to provide Members with an update on the supply of housing in Slough and the results of housing monitoring, including the amount of affordable housing built and the number of flats and houses completed during the period 2015/16.

The Committee was reminded that the National Planning Policy Framework required an assessment of the Council's 5 year housing land supply on an annual basis through an updated housing trajectory. Should a five year supply (plus a 5 % buffer) of deliverable sites not be identified then the Council would be open to planning by appeal.

In terms of housing supply, the housing target as set out in the Core Strategy (2008) was 315 per annum, increased in January 2016 to 550 per annum in line with the Slough Five Year Plan and reflecting the Council's aspiration to meet its housing needs. Members also noted details of the current housing trajectory which included updated information on completions, new housing permissions and estimated building rates on each site. In 2015/16, 789 net additional dwellings were completed, being the highest level of housing building reported since the peak of 849 completions in 2008/09. Lower levels of completions in the past were the result of the slump in the housing market rather than a shortage in the supply of sites.

The Officer advised that approximately 800 completions a year were projected over the next five years which was higher than the target of 550 a year and it was anticipated that the Council would be able to build the equivalent of 8.3 years supply over the next five years and all of the houses needed for the period of the plan (2006 – 2026) by 2022. Members were referred to the appendix which detailed the sites identified for the next 5 years. The Committee was advised that the high level of completions and large supply of housing resulted from a Prior Approvals system for the conversion of flats to residential without the need for planning permission. In addition, some large green field sites had been developed such as Castleview, and Kennedy Park and other initiatives had promoted housing such as the Garage Court schemes introduced by the Council. It was noted that in the long term the Council would be unlikely to achieve continued housing supply due to the

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shortage of land and a Housing Capacity Study would be undertaken to address housing supply issues beyond the current plan period.

Resolved- That the report be noted.

54. Review of the Local Plan for Slough-Update on Issues and Options

The Planning Policy Lead Officer outlined a report to provide the Committee with an update on the work that had been undertaken to develop the 'Issues and Options' report for the review of the Local Plan. Previous reports to the Committee had detailed how progress had been made in reviewing the local plan for slough and in engaging with other local authorities about the content of their plans under the duty to cooperate.

The Officer highlighted that Cabinet was responsible for the approval of the Slough Local Plan but it was important that the views of the Planning Committee were sought and a further two reports would also be submitted to the Committee for consideration. Members noted the outcome of the 'Call for Sites' exercise which was the subject of public consultation earlier in the year. Some technical work had been carried out on the 130 proposed sites, such as assessing whether they were affected by flooding and a further report would be submitted to the Committee in due course.

A Member Workshop held on 21st July had helped to identify some of the key issues facing the Local Plan and a draft Vision was created. A further Member Workshop would be held at a later date and a Member Task and Finish Group had also been appointed. Cabinet would consider approval of the "Issues and Options" at its meeting on 21st November and a public consultation would then be held. The views of the Planning Committee would be fed into the plan making process.

The Officer discussed future growth, around population and employment and it was noted that the shortage of development land could impact on this. It was emphasised that the Local Plan would need to find the right balance between social, economic and environmental needs to ensure that it was sustainable. In terms of housing, the Strategic Housing Market Assessment in February 2016, had identified that 927 houses a year were needed to meet objectively assessed housing needs, together with a significant amount of affordable housing to meet local needs. Clearly the failure to provide sufficient housing to meet overall needs would result in a combination of more overcrowding, homelessness, and forced outward migration. The Local Plan would have to work with the emerging Housing Strategy to ensure an appropriate mix of housing was provided.

The Committee also noted that the number of jobs in Slough would likely increase by 14,680 during the 23 years to 2036 and necessary economic development measures would need to be put in place. An Economic Development Needs Assessment had indicated that up to 180 hectares of new employment land would be needed to provide for these jobs, mainly through the redevelopment or re-use of existing sites.

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The Officer outlined future improvements and developments in the town centre which would become an increasingly important transport hub. It was acknowledged that the town centre had declined as a shopping and commercial centre because of structural changes in the economy and it did not have the attractions of competing centres.

High quality offices were being built near the station which would promote the centre of the town as a new business, transport and employment hub. Members noted the current position regarding Heathrow Airport and that a decision on the third runway which Slough supported was awaited. Since it would likely take some years before any planning permission could be granted, the Local Plan will have to try to find a way in which the uncertainty could be dealt with to ensure the best form of development which could also mitigate the adverse environmental effects. Should the third runway not go ahead then Heathrow would continue to grow and have an important relationship with the Borough.

The Officer discussed Neighbourhoods of the Borough and Transport. It was highlighted that one of the reasons for Slough's success as an employment centre was due its location and excellent transport links however local congestion would need to be addressed and options were set out. Major New Hubs were discussed and it was suggested that there was an opportunity to promote such a hub in the vicinity of Langley Railway Station.

In terms of the release of land from the Green Belt it was noted that a number of sites in the Green Belt were promoted in the Colnbrook and Poyle area through the Call for Sites exercise but these were constrained. The officer also discussed the Northern Expansion of Slough within South Bucks and representations had been made around the development of a new garden suburb.

Resolved- That the report be noted.

55. Duty to Co-operate-Consultation with Runnymede Borough Council

The Planning Policy Lead Officer outlined a report regarding a Duty to Co-operate request made by Runnymede Borough Council, that Slough Borough Council sign a Memorandum of Understanding relating to future engagement on cross-boundary strategic planning issues.

The Committee was reminded that Local Planning Authorities are required to produce Local Plans both to engage constructively and actively on planning matters that impact on more than one local planning area (the 'Duty to Cooperate') and to consider entering into agreements on joint approaches. It was noted that Runnymede BC did not adjoin Slough but had employment links with Heathrow and had kept Slough informed of the progress on their Local Plan.

The Runnymede Issues and Options Consultation concluded that Runnymede BC could not meet its own identified needs for housing, traveller

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pitches and B8 storage and distribution and would take measures to see if other authorities could meet their shortfall. They had therefore contacted Slough in order that both parties address this through a request to sign a Memorandum of Understanding about future co-operation on Cross Boundary Issues. Although Slough did not have cross boundary issues with Runnymede it was considered that a short Memorandum of Understanding would still be helpful. This would record that whilst at the current time, neither authority was able to assist the other in meeting its unmet needs for housing, traveller pitches or B8 storage and distribution needs, in the future this position could change as a result of a material change in circumstances or as a result of each Council's monitoring function. It would further confirm that Slough BC welcomed Runnymede's engagement in the Heathrow Strategic Planning Group and that it would work with the Authority on issues that may affect both Boroughs.

The Officer concluded that the proposed signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with Runnymede will ensure that both Authorities had met the Duty to Cooperate in the preparation of their Local plans.

Resolved-

- a) That Runnymede Borough Council be thanked for consulting the Council under the Duty to Cooperate;
- b) That Slough Borough Council agrees that neither party is able to assist the other in meeting unmet needs for housing, traveller pitches or B8 distribution needs;
- c) That delegated powers be granted to Officers to sign a Memorandum of Understanding in accordance with paragraphs 5.6 to 5.7 of the report.

56. Proposed Member Engagement in Pre-Application Submissions and Amendments to the Public Participation Scheme

The Planning Manager, outlined a report regarding proposed member engagement in pre-application submissions and amendments to the planning public participation scheme (PPS).

The Committee was advised that the Planning Service had undertaken a review of the planning application process, by engaging with customers of the planning service during extensive workshops. It was clear that customer needs had changed and a Consultee had expressed the view that there was a lack of early member involvement with Applicants in the planning process, in that an Applicant was only allowed to address the Planning Committee, if an objector had registered to speak against the proposal. It was highlighted that a Ward Councillor could speak under Rule 30, without any time restriction and the applicant was not permitted to respond. This approach appeared to be out of line with the procedures of most other Local Planning Authorities (LPA's).

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The National Planning Policy Framework recommended that early engagement had significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties and considered that the more issues that could be resolved at pre-application stage, the greater the benefits.

The Officer therefore recommended that the Council should bring the pre-application process in line with national guidance. The current Code of Conduct for Councillors and Officers in relation to Planning and Licensing matters advised that Committee members should not take part in pre-application discussions other than in cases of minor development. Officers had looked at models adopted by other LPA's and suggested that the Council adopt a process of formal pre-application presentation and interaction with Applicants, scheduled as an agenda item during monthly Planning Committee meetings. This would allow for a formal structure, which ensured good governance and public confidence whilst avoiding any accusations of bias towards developers.

The Committee noted the suggested pre-application discussion format which would require consideration and endorsement by the Member Panel on the Constitution. This would also allow for the presentation of confidential Part II items. Members were advised that the Authority received 40 to 50 major applications per year and it would not be necessary for all to be presented to the Planning Committee. It was acknowledged that Ward Members undertook an important role in representing the views of local constituents but in order to ensure that the meeting process did not become too lengthy it was suggested that Ward Councillors be time limited in their address.

The Council's PPS stated that the Chair would invite the Applicant or Agent to respond after an objector had spoken. It was often the case that some very large developments did not attract any objections from residents and the Applicant did not therefore have the opportunity to address the Planning Committee. It was felt that this approach was outdated and not consistent with current Government guidance. It was therefore recommended that Applicants should be given the opportunity to address the Planning Committee, even where no objectors had registered to speak against the proposed development, and this would require very minor amendments to the Ethical Framework - Part 5.2 of the Constitution.

The Committee was requested to endorse the necessary amendments to the current process prior to its consideration by the Member Panel on the Constitution.

In the ensuing debate, Members discussed a number of issues around the proposed changes including the length of time that a Ward Member would be allowed to speak. It was agreed that a draft version would be circulated to Members by email for comment/ consideration.

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Resolved-

- (a) That a report detailing the draft amendments to the Council's PPS and Constitution be emailed to Planning Committee Members for comment.
- (b) That the Member Panel on the Constitution be recommended to endorse the amendment of the Council's Constitution to enable Member involvement during formal pre-application submissions to the Local Planning Authority (LPA).
- (c) The Member Panel on the Constitution be recommended to endorse the amendment of the Council's Constitution and PPS to enable applicants to address the Planning Committee, regardless of whether or not an objector has registered to address the Planning Committee.

57. Planning Appeal Decisions

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

58. Members Attendance Record

The Members Attendance Record was noted.

59. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 5th October, 2016.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.50 pm)