

Planning Committee – Meeting held on Thursday, 29th November, 2012.

Present:- Councillors Carter (Chair), Dar, Hussain, O'Connor, Plenty, Rasib (Vice-Chair), Sharif (arrived 6.54pm) and Smith

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor Swindlehurst

PART I

43. Declaration of Interest

None.

44. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 17 October 2012

Resolved – That the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 17th October 2012 be approved as a correct record.

45. Human Rights Act Statement

Noted.

46. S-00694-000 Baylis Court Nursery School, Oatlands Drive, Slough

Application	Decision
Erection of a 60 sqm flat roofed modular building to provide teaching facilities for 4 no. Special Educational Needs (SEN) students.	Approved, subject to the conditions set out in the report, for up to 6 no. SEN students.

47. Tree Preservation Order (TPO) 3 of 2012 - Land at 87-121 Laburnum Grove, Slough

The Development Control Manager, Mr McCarthy, informed members that the Planning Department had been made aware of plans to remove a maturing horse chestnut tree from within the grounds of flats in Laburnum Grove. The tree had since been assessed by the tree management officer and local residents had been consulted on the TPO. Members were informed that 4 letters of objection and 8 letters of support to the order had been received.

It was recommended that a tree preservation order be issued and served. Members were requested to confirm the tree preservation order.

Resolved – That Tree Preservation Order Number Three of 2012 be confirmed.

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48. Consolidated Local Plan - Self Assessment of Policies compared to the National Planning Policy Framework

The Head of Planning Policy & Projects, Mr Stimpson, introduced a report which set out the next steps in the process to produce a 'consolidated' Local Plan for Slough which was compliant with the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

(Councillor Sharif joined the meeting)

Members noted that the Committee had previously agreed that it was not necessary to carry out a full scale review of existing plans but that they should be republished in a single 'consolidated' Local Plan for Slough. The first step had been to establish that the existing plans complied with the NPPF because in future plans would only be given due weight according to their consistency with the new Framework. A self-assessment had therefore been carried out and the initial conclusions was that the policies in the Slough Plans generally performed well when compared to the NPPF. Members were informed of possible steps to address a small number of policies which did not currently fully comply. Mr Stimpson stated that the report and 'self-assessment' detailed the extent which Slough's existing policies were compliant in relation to the new 'presumption in favour of sustainable development', housing, retail & town centres, business & employment, Green Belt and minerals.

Members asked a number of questions regarding the future timescale for a full review of Slough's existing plans and the policies covering town centre development. The recommendation was that the self-assessment be circulated for comment. This exercise would not be a consultation on the policies themselves but was targeted at engaging with bodies such as the Environment Agency, Highways Agency etc to test compliance.

Resolved – That the 'self-assessment' of Slough's planning policies in terms of their compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework be published for public comment.

49. Consultation on Extending Permitted Development Rights for Homeowners and Businesses

The Development Control Manager, Mr McCarthy, introduced a report regarding the Government consultation on extending permitted development rights for homeowners and businesses.

Members were informed that the Department for Communities and Local Government consultation was being held between 12 November and 24 December 2012 and it was proposed that Slough Borough Council respond to the consultation. The Officer explained the scope of the proposed changes which included significant increases in permitted development for both residential and commercial premises.

Members agreed with the proposal to respond to the consultation and raised the following issues:

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- It had not been made clear from press reports whether local authorities could decide whether to implement the proposals in their area. The Officer stated that planning authorities could apply Article 4 Direction but it would not be practical to do so because of the time frame and potential compensation liabilities.
- A Member asked whether it was true, as a Government spokesperson had asserted, that most applications up to the extended permitted development rights were currently being approved. The Officer stated that a number of such applications were approved if applicants felt their plans would satisfy the planning authority. However, it was anticipated that an extension to permitted rights would open the door for more cases that probably would not apply under the current arrangements.
- A number of Members expressed significant concern about the impact of the proposals on Slough in terms of the loss of green space and potential flood risk. Members asked that the response expressed concern about the extension for residential premises in the strongest possible terms and that the authority liaise with other authorities who shared similar concerns to ensure a strong and co-ordinated response.

Members anticipated that the 3-year time frame under which these new rights would exist would present the authority with a number of problems including the setting of planning precedent, a development 'rush' and potential enforcement issues at the end of the 3-year period. The Officer also believed that the proposals were likely to increase the workload of planning departments as residents sought 'certificates of lawful development'.

Members agreed to proceed with a response to the consultation in line with the recommendations set out in the report and noting the comments above.

Resolved –

- (a) That the Head of Planning Policy and Projects proceed to respond to the consultation document, by objecting to the changes to the General Permitted Development Order relating to residential extensions and the fact that it will only apply for a three year period.
- (b) That the Head of Planning Policy and Projects proceed to respond to the consultation document, by responding positively to the changes to the General Permitted Development Order relating to commercial extensions (shops/financial services/offices/industrial) and broadband.

50. Planning Appeal Decisions

Noted.

51. Members Attendance Record

Noted.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.46 pm)