
PLANNING WORKING GROUP

MINUTES of the Meeting held at the location listed below on Monday, 14 June 2021 from 10.03 am - 10.43 am.

PRESENT: Councillors Richard Darby, Tim Gibson (Chairman), James Hall, Elliott Jayes (Vice-Chairman), Ben J Martin and Paul Stephen.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Andrew Jeffers, Clare Lydon, Kellie MacKenzie, Alun Millard and Jim Wilson.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Cameron Beart, Monique Bonney, Roger Clark, Simon Clark, Mike Dendor, James Hunt, Carole Jackson and Tony Winckless.

70 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No interests were declared.

71 **20/503325/FULL LAND EAST OF CROWN QUAY LANE, SITTINGBOURNE, KENT, ME10 3ST**

The Chairman welcomed Members, the Agent, Applicant, officers and members of the public to the meeting.

The Development Manager explained the safety procedures put in place as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. He asked those in attendance to adhere to Government guidance by wearing face coverings and keeping their distance from each other.

The Major Projects Officer gave an overview of the application. He explained that the application was for 107 residential dwellings together with associated access, infrastructure, drainage, open space and landscaping at Land East of Crown Quay Lane, Sittingbourne. The proposals included 1, 2, 3 and 4 bedroom flats and houses and he considered they were of a high quality and design. The proposal also included 11 affordable dwellings and 156 parking spaces and 17 visitor spaces. The site was 2.1 hectares in size and that the site was 500 metres from Sittingbourne town centre, and 600 metres from the railway station. The latter distance was queried by a Member, and the Major Projects officer agreed to check this and update at the Planning Committee meeting.

The Major Projects Officer reported that 3 letters of objection had been received and there had been no objections from statutory consultees. The application was supported by policies in the National Planning Policy Framework and the Swale Borough Local Plan (Bearing Fruits 2031). It was also delivering a 15 to 23% biodiversity net gain and a 20% reduction in CO2 emissions compared to the level in the current Building Regulations, and considered the application should be supported subject to the conditions outlined in the report and an appropriate Section 106 Agreement.

A representative of Supreme Concrete, and adjoining business, raised concern about the impact of noise and lighting from their business on proposed residents resulting in complaints against their business. He considered that the applicant could improve the current arrangement of flats on the site and further improvements to the highway aspects of the proposals.

The Major Projects Officer reported that following concerns raised about lighting at the Planning Committee on 27 May 2021, the case officer had liaised with the applicant's agent about Members' concerns.

The applicant was invited to speak. He made the following points:

- Some of the proposed flats would overlook the Creekside;
- a walkway/trail was being provided along the Creekside;
- the required level of affordable housing would be provided;
- the application would provide improvements to Crown Quay Lane;
- was in a sustainable location;
- was a brownfield site and earmarked for housing by the Council;
- if the site could not be developed for housing then the only other option would be to put it forward for industrial use; and
- it was the right time to develop the site.

The Ward Member was invited to speak. The Ward Member, also a Member of Planning Committee, raised concern that the smell from the creek could be an issue for occupiers of the dwellings. The Major Projects Officer explained that the odour from the creek at low tide was a natural process, and not a material planning issue. Potential occupiers of the dwellings would ultimately decide to buy or not. It was not a reason to refuse the application.

The Council's Senior Scientific Officer advised that concerns about waste from local businesses getting into the creek and causing the smell was a matter for the Environment Agency.

The Ward Member raised concern about noise and dust from businesses adjoining the site. The applicant reported that a two metre high acoustic fence would be erected alongside the site to mitigate noise.

The Major Projects Officer drew attention to condition (4) on page 107 of the report which gave the Council full control of precise details of proposed noise mitigation measures, including the specification of a potential acoustic fence.

The Ward Member raised concern that the application would lead to a further 200/300 vehicle movements onto an already busy road network. The Major Projects Officer reported that the site had been identified for housing in the Local Plan because it was in a sustainable location within walking/cycling distance of the centre of the town. It was also considered that residential units at the location would improve the character of the area and associated improvements to the character and appearance of Crown Quay Lane would enhance it as an environment for walking and cycling.

The Kent County Council (KCC) Highways and Transportation Officer explained that there would be approximately 45 vehicle movements generated in the morning peak hour with around 30 vehicles leaving the site and the remainder being arrivals. He confirmed that the number of vehicle movements had been calculated using the industry recognised TRICS database, which is interrogated to select survey data from sites with similar characteristics. When questioned about how much traffic uses Crown Quay Lane he referred to the Transport Assessment that indicated there would be around 250 other vehicle movements along Crown Quay Lane during the morning peak hour in the 2025 scenario with permitted development.

The KCC Highways and Transportation Officer stated that there were two pedestrian crossings on Eurolink Way being provided shortly as part of the Redrow Homes development. In response to a query, he advised that a road safety audit for the pedestrian crossings had been undertaken and the impact from traffic queuing to visit the scrap yard in Eurolink Way would have been considered. The KCC Highways and Transportation Officer stated that changes to the traffic signalling in Crown Quay Lane were also proposed to increase capacity.

The Major Projects Officer drew attention to condition (12) on page 109 of the report which stated that no dwellings on the application site could be occupied until the opening of the M2 junction 5 major highway improvement scheme, and that this would be likely to take a number of years to build.

There was some discussion about the nearest school and the Major Projects Officer agreed to clarify this at the Planning Committee meeting.

A Member asked that if the development was not approved would it mean the Council had not reached its 5-year housing supply? The Major Projects Officer reported that it would not as housing delivery was phased and often with brownfield sites there were issues that needed to be factored in, and that the Council's housing trajectories would allow for potential delays associated with resolving any issues connected to delivering the housing on the site.

In response to questions from a Member, the applicant stated that the mix of affordable housing had not been considered yet. The affordable housing would not be on the side of the site where the acoustic fencing would be erected.

A Member asked whether the owner of Odds Timber had withdrawn their objection? The Major Projects Officer stated that he was unsure and had not been informed in writing to that effect.

Members toured the site with officers.

Chairman

Copies of this document are available on the Council website <http://www.swale.gov.uk/dso/>. If you would like hard copies or alternative versions (i.e. large print, audio, different language) we will do our best to accommodate your request please contact Swale Borough Council at Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT or telephone the Customer Service Centre 01795 417850.

All Minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel