

## **SPECIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2012 at 5.30 p.m.**

**In the Council Chamber at the Council House, Walsall**

### **Present**

Councillor Bird (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillor Azam  
Councillor Carpenter  
Councillor Creaney  
Councillor Cook  
Councillor Ditta  
Councillor Douglas-Maul  
Councillor S. Fitzpatrick  
Councillor Harris  
Councillor James  
Councillor Jeavons  
Councillor Madeley  
Councillor Rochelle  
Councillor Thomas  
Councillor Turner  
Councillor Westley

3056/12

### **Apologies**

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillors Perry, Ali, Sarohi and Woodruff.

3057/12

### **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

3058/12

### **Deputations and Petitions**

There were no deputations introduced or petitions submitted.

3059/12

### **Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)**

There were no items to be considered in private session.

**Application for Permission to Develop****Item No. 1 - 12/0036/OL - Goscote Lane Regeneration Corridor incorporating sites off Goscote Lane, Shakespeare Crescent, Goscote Lodge Crescent and Dolphin Close**

The report of the Head of Planning and Building Control was submitted:-

(see annexed)

The Planning Officer advised the Committee of the background to the report and drew Members' attention to the additional information contained within the supplementary paper now submitted.

The Planning Officer also drew Members' attention to an e-mail containing comments from Green Spaces that had been received immediately prior to the Committee meeting. The e-mail reported that during local consultation, there had been almost 100% support for the Option 2 Swannies Field and Goscote Valley development, and that the consultation had identified the following high priorities:-

- There was a lot of support for youth facilities, particularly the outdoor gym, skate park and MUGA as people felt there was a lack of quality green space in the area and nowhere for children and young people to go where they could play safely;
- Either a vandal proof children's play area or a natural play area with boulders, tree trunks and grass mounds (as opposed to a traditional play area) within a fence positioned at Swannies Field was seen as a priority;
- Site B was seen as a priority as residents felt the site had become a derelict, fly tipping area and it needed the planting, landscaping and mountain bike track delivered as soon as possible;
- Several people had suggested that the green space improvements should be delivered in advance of the new build development;
- It was felt that the Slacky Lane/Allens Lane entrance to the sewage works should be used instead of the current route of Goscote Lodge Crescent which should be sealed off to prevent motor vehicle access, and removed completely and landscaped;
- It had been suggested that traffic calming measures were needed along Goscote Lane, such as speed ramps or a zebra crossing;
- Unless the open space meets the needs of the existing and proposed new community, it will not be valued or achieve a sense of ownership, it will attract anti-social behaviour and do nothing to improve the environment or the values of the neighbouring properties.

The Committee then welcomed the first speaker on this application, Peter Smith, who spoke in objection to the application.

The Committee then welcomed the second speaker on this application, Ken Wall, who also spoke in objection to the application.

The Committee then welcomed the third speaker on this application, Carole Wildman, who spoke in support of the application.

The Committee then welcomed the fourth speaker on this application, Brian Hepburn, who also spoke in support of the application.

There then followed a period of questioning by Members to the speakers in relation to whether the residents felt the development would improve the housing choice and overall standards of housing within the area; why there was an obvious shortage of bungalows and affordable housing on the application; whether all the people who had been displaced had been rehomed, and why the relevant surveys had not been carried out beforehand.

In response, it was stated there was a need for rented accommodation and affordable housing but that in order to ensure the financial calculations were attractive enough for prospective developers in today's difficult economic circumstances, the quantity of affordable housing was reduced from 50% to 16%. With regards to the rehousing of previous residents, it was stated that all previous residents had been rehomed within areas of their choice and with regards to the relevant surveys, it was stated that all surveys had been carried out two years previously and the applicant had, therefore, been advised to carry them out again.

There then followed a period of questioning by Members to the officers, including whether there would be a contribution from the developers for primary and secondary school education within the area. In response, it was stated that a £1.1 million recommendation would be incorporated into a legally binding agreement to provide investment for education and open space which would be collected through the re-investment of the residual land values as an alternative to Section 106 funding.

The Committee proceeded to discuss the application in detail, including:-

- The applicant's need to reduce the affordable housing numbers from 50% to 16% in order to attract developers due to current land cost depreciation;
- Need to look at increasing the number of bungalows on the plans;
- The development would be built over a five to ten year period but the sites would not be considered individually as the application is one complete package in order to attract development;
- An extension of time to allow Natural England to look at the issues it had raised;
- The need to improve the current Green Belt land and whether there would be very special circumstances to outweigh the harm the development would have on the Green Belt land known as The Lea.

Members considered the application and Councillor Harris **moved** and it was duly **seconded** by Councillor Jeavons:-

That application no. 12/0036/OL be deferred until June to allow the applicant to have the opportunity to conduct full ecology reports in response to issues raised by Natural England; to carry out a wider public consultation within the Ward; to consider a more varied mix of dwellings and to incorporate a multi-use games area (MUGA) into the plans.

The Motion having been put to the vote was declared **carried**, with sixteen Members voting in favour of deferral and none against.

**Resolved**

That application no. 12/0036/OL be deferred until June to allow the applicant to have the opportunity to conduct full ecology reports in response to issues raised by Natural England; to carry out a wider public consultation within the Ward; to consider a more varied mix of dwellings and to incorporate a multi-use games area (MUGA) into the plans.

**Termination of meeting**

There being no further business the meeting terminated at 7.00 p.m.

Signed: .....

Date: .....