

Minutes of the Planning Committee held in The Council Chamber, Walsall Council House

Thursday 30 November 2023 at 5:30pm

Committee Members present:

Councillor M. Bird (Chair)
Councillor M. Statham (Vice-Chair)
Councillor H. Bashir
Councillor P. Bott
Councillor M. Follows
Councillor N. Gandham
Councillor A. Garcha
Councillor I. Hussain
Councillor R. Larden
Councillor R. Martin
Councillor J. Murray
Councillor S. Nasreen
Councillor S. Samra
Councillor V. Waters

Officers Present:

D. Moore	Interim Director – Regeneration and Economy
P. Venables	Director – Regeneration and Economy
A. Ives	Head of Planning and Building Control
R. Allen	Senior Planning Policy Officer
N. Ball	Principal Planning Policy Officer
M. Brereton	Group Manager – Planning
K. Gannon	Development Control and Public Rights of Way Manager
S. Hollands	Principal Planning Officer
I. Jarrett	Principal Environmental Protection Officer
K. Knight	Senior Transport Planner
G. Meaton	Team Leader Development Management
J. Penfold	Senior Planning Officer
D. Smith	Senior Legal Executive
C. van de Wydeven	Senior Planning Officer
N. Picken	Principal Democratic Services Officer
E. Cook	Democratic Services Officer
L. Cook	Assistant Democratic Services Officer

52 Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Bains, Harris, A. Hussain, K. Hussain and Nawaz.

53 **Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**

There were no declarations of interest or party whip.

54 **Deputations and Petitions**

There were no deputations or petitions submitted.

55 **Minutes**

A copy of the Minutes of the meeting held on the 30 October 2023 were submitted.

[annexed]

When considering the Minutes of the previous meeting a Member commented that, in their view, there had been insufficient debate on minute number 50 (25 and 27 Little Aston Road, Walsall). The Chair noted the comment and clarified that Members were considering the accuracy of the minutes as a record of the previous meeting only.

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 30 October 2023, a copy having previously been circulated to each member of the Committee, be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

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

Exclusion of the Public

There were no items on the agenda to be considered in private session.

57 **Response to local plans consultation – Telford, Sandwell and Dudley**

The Principal Planning Policy Officer introduced the report of the Head of Planning and Building Control which set out proposed responses to local plan consultations from three neighbouring local authorities under duty to cooperate.

[annexed]

The Principal Planning Policy Officer provided an overview of the draft local plans submitted to Walsall for consultation by Telford, Sandwell and Dudley and the proposed responses.

Responding to a question regarding how housing allocations would be distributed amongst neighbouring authorities should an authority's provision exceed its own needs, the Principal Planning Policy Officer explained that this was done through several methods including negotiation and consideration of migration patterns. The Principal Planning Policy Officer added that the

upcoming Walsall Borough Local Plan would be a 15-year plan and that not having an adopted plan could leave any land vulnerable to development. Regarding the Walsall Borough Local Plan, it was explained that if sites had not been considered in the formulation of the plan, the planning inspector could enforce their allocation. It was therefore better for sites to be included in the process and then proved to be inappropriate, than to not be considered initially. The Head of Planning and Building Control explained that duty to cooperate was to be replaced with an alignment policy under upcoming Government legislation but there would still be a need to cooperate with neighbouring authorities. Upon being put to the vote it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

- 1. That Planning Committee agree with the responses as set out in the appendices and authorise the Executive Director for Economy, Environment & Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, to submit the responses to the three respective authorities.**
- 2. That Planning Committee authorise the Head of Planning and Building Control to amend the responses as necessary.**

58 Application List for Permission to Develop

The application list for permission to develop (the plans list) was submitted, together with a supplementary report which provided additional information on items already on the plans list.

(annexed)

The Committee agreed to deal with the items on the agenda where members of the public had previously indicated that they wished to address the Committee first. The Chair, at the beginning of each item for which there were speakers, confirmed they had been advised of the procedure whereby each speaker would have two minutes to speak.

59 Plans List 4 - Sodexo Government Services, 85 Stonnall Road, Aldridge, Walsall, WS9 8JZ

The Senior Planning Officer introduced the report of the Head of Planning and Building Control and the information in the supplementary paper, providing an overview of the site, application and planning history.

[annexed]

There was one speaker on the item, Miss Ugne Staskauskaite, attending in person. Miss Staskauskaite explained she did not wish to speak on the item but could answer any questions Members had. Responding to questions, Miss

Staskauskaite explained she was unable to clarify which 'categories' of people leaving prison would be housed on the site, but it was explained that magistrates were responsible for determining if accommodation was suitable for individuals.

There were no questions to Officers and the Committee moved to debate. Members discussed that no material evidence had been submitted to substantiate concerns that the development would lead to increased risk of crime and no objections had been received from West Midlands Police. It was **moved** by Councillor Bird and **seconded** by Councillor Statham and upon being put to the vote it was;

Resolved (13 in favour, 1 against)

That Planning Committee delegate to the Head of Planning & Building Control to grant planning permission for application 22/1173 subject to conditions and subject to;

- **The amendment and finalising of conditions;**
- **The addressing of concerns regarding flood risk/drainage;**
- **No further objections from statutory consultees in response to the amended plans received.**

60 **Plans List 5 - Land Between 120a And 108 Coltham Road, Willenhall, WV12 5QD**

The Senior Planning Officer introduced the report of the Head of Planning and Building Control and the information in the supplementary paper.

[annexed]

There was one speaker on the item, Mr Mike Borgars, attending in person. Mr Borgars explained that the proposed development was on a brownfield site which currently provided no amenities, suffered from anti-social behaviour and the existing properties were of no architectural value. The proposal included sufficient car parking and retained existing rights of way, whilst offering modern and efficient dwellings which would enhance the street scene.

Responding to questions, Mr Borgars confirmed that removing the pedestrian side access gate onto the public right of way would be acceptable to the applicant. Two existing neighbouring properties would retain rights of access in perpetuity and had been advised of this. Responding to a question about why one-bedroom dwellings had been selected, Mr Borgars explained that in his view that it was more appropriate to think of them as apartments with amenity space, rather than houses. The Senior Planning Officer clarified that the dwellings had been changed into one-bedroom properties following an earlier design proposal, in order to meet national space standards.

In response to further questions, Mr Borgars explained that 1.5 parking spaces were provided per dwelling, providing spaces for guests. Mr Borgars and the applicant were unaware of objections raised by the fire officer. The

Senior Planning Officer clarified that the comments of the fire officer were regarding regulations and amounted to guidance and recommendations on best practice rather than objections.

Responding to questions to officers, the Development Control and Public Rights of Way Manager explained that parking provision was deemed acceptable as a significant proportion of properties in the local area did not have vehicles. There were no highways concerns regarding on-street parking as it was necessary in the area to have unrestricted parking due to many properties having no off-street provision. There was an outstanding concern regarding the location of the bin storage for which a condition had been included in the supplementary paper.

It was **moved** by Councillor Bird and **seconded** by Councillor Gandham and upon being put to the vote it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

That Planning Committee delegate to the Head of Planning & Building Control to grant planning permission for application 23/0104 subject to conditions and a legal agreement to secure contributions to the Cannock Chase SAC and subject to:

- **No new material considerations being received within the consultation period;**
- **The amendment and finalising of conditions;**
- **No further comments from a statutory consultee raising material planning considerations not previously addressed.**

61 **Plans List 1 – The Guildhall, 8 High Street, Walsall**

Prior to commencement of the item, the Chair clarified that the acquisition of the Guildhall and the proposed Creative Industries Enterprise Project had been determined by Cabinet on which he and Councillor Statham had sat and that those had correctly been Cabinet matters. The Chair affirmed that both he and Councillor Statham would consider the planning application before the Committee based solely on its merits and the professional planning officer's report and came to the meeting with an open mind.

A Member asked whether the application had been expedited to the detriment of others awaiting a determination in the planning system. The Chair acknowledged that it may appear that way to some residents but confirmed that there had been a significant reduction in the planning application backlog and clarified that the funding for the Guildhall project was from the Towns Fund. As funding was time restricted, a determination was required by the Planning Committee to ensure that funding was retained.

The Principal Planning Officer introduced the report of the Head of Planning and Building Control and the information contained within the supplementary paper, providing an overview of the application, vehicular access and the surrounding area.

[annexed]

The Principal Planning Officer explained that the building was located within the Church Hill conservation area which was deemed 'at risk' by Historic England. It was considered that the application would conserve the listed building by bringing it back into use and would enhance the surrounding area, including the conservation area.

Responding to questions, the Interim Director – Regeneration and Economy, confirmed that the project was being funded by the Towns Fund rather than the Council and as such there was a time-limit on using the funding available. In response to a question regarding the historic cells, the Head of Planning and Building Control explained that the incorporation of the cells into active use would likely have been a requirement requested by the Conservation Officer.

Debating the application, several Members expressed their hopes that the Council had made the correct decision investing in the building and that it would prove to be a financially sound venture.

It was **moved** by Councillor Bird and **seconded** by Councillor Martin and upon being put to the vote it was;

Resolved (Unanimously)

That Planning Committee delegate to the Head of Planning & Building Control to grant planning permission for application 23/0629 subject to conditions and subject to;

- **The amendment and finalising of conditions;**
- **No further objections from statutory consultees in response to the amended plans received.**

62 **Plans List 2 - The Guildhall, 8 High Street, Walsall**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning and Building Control and the information in the supplementary paper.

[annexed]

It was **moved** by Councillor Bird and **seconded** by Councillor Bott and upon being put to the vote it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

Planning Committee resolve to Delegate to the Head of Planning & Building Control to grant listed building consent for application 23/0630 subject to conditions and subject to;

- **The amendment and finalising of conditions;**
- **Addressing concerns regarding flood risk/drainage;**

63 **Plans List 3 - 55 Redhouse Street, Walsall, WS1 4BQ**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning and Building Control.

[annexed]

It was **moved** by Councillor Bird and **seconded** by Councillor Gandham and upon being put to the vote it was;

Resolved (13 in favour, 0 against, 1 abstention)

Planning Committee resolve to delegate to the Head of Planning & Building Control to grant planning permission for application 23/0719 subject to conditions and a legal agreement to secure contributions to the Cannock Chase SAC and subject to:

- **No new material considerations being received within the consultation period;**
- **The amendment and finalising of conditions;**
- **No further comments from a statutory consultee raising material planning considerations not previously addressed.**

64 **Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting would be 15 January 2024.

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 6:41pm.

Signed:

Date: