

Houghton Regis Town Council
Planning Committee
9th September 2019 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: D Dixon-Wilkinson Chairman
J Carroll
S Goodchild Substitute
M S Kennedy
R Morgan Substitute
S Thorne
T Welch

Officers: Debbie Marsh Corporate Services Manager
Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Public: 2

Apologies: Councillors: K Wattingham
D Jones

Also present: Councillors: T McMahon

10035 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Jones (Cllr Goodchild substituted) and Cllr Wattingham (Cllr Morgan substituted).

10036 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

10037 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Goodchild advised members that she had met with Optimus on two previous occasions during the previous term of office. Accordingly, she took no part in the discussion or vote.

Cllr Welch and Cllr Goodchild reminded members that they were on the Houghton Regis North Stakeholder Committee. Accordingly, they took no part in the discussion or vote.

10038 MINUTES

The Committee received the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 19th August 2019 for consideration.

Councillor McMahon advised that some comments raised in response to planning application CB/19/02130/FULL, The Gates Land East of Bedford Road Bidwell had not been included in the body of the objections to Central Bedfordshire Council and requested they be noted. In particular reference to be noted in respect of the additional impact to the environment, specifically; additional road usage, additional vehicle usage, the air quality, water consumption, wide-ranging strain on general resources and an overall adverse effect on the town.

Resolved To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 19th August 2019 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

10039 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

Non - Delegated

CB/18/04471/FULL 48 new residential units
Land at Oakwell Park, Thorn Road, LU5 6JH
For: Optimus Consulting Ltd
Members received a report from the Town Councils planning consultant in relation to this application.
Members were advised that the previous planning application was considered by the planning committee at the meeting held on the 7th January 2019 at which members objected to the application.

Comments: The Town Council objects to the revised proposals for the following reasons:
The revised layout makes a minor adjustment by reducing the overall number of houses by two, but this does not answer the major concerns over the setting of the heritage assets on the site.

- The scheme seeks to exploit the heritage asset and its setting rather than enhancing it.
- Overdevelopment.
- Out of keeping with the listed building and scheduled monument.
- Harmful to the setting of the listed building and scheduled monument.
- Contrary to the provisions of the NPPF regarding heritage.

The scheme requires radical reconsideration of the design approach, omitting the new housing to the north of Oakwell Park House, without this change the scheme should be refused.

Description

The application first submitted in November 2018, shows two groups of houses either side of Oakwell Park House. The site is off Thorn Road and currently contains Oakwell Park House, listed grade II and an area of woodland immediately to the east. Within the woodland is a scheduled ancient monument known as Thorn Spring and contains the remains of a medieval moated site. The scheme involves the retention of the main house as a residence, the demolition of some outbuildings, new vehicular access arrangements and the two groups of new dwellings served by a long cul-de-sac.

The initial submission was for a total of 50 dwellings, detached dwellings at the northern end, with a mix of detached, semi-detached and flats at the southern end.

The Town Council commented on the scheme as follows: Whilst the Town Council did not object to the layout, style of residential units or access it did object to this application on the following grounds:

The scheme seeks to exploit the heritage asset and its setting rather than enhancing it.

Overdevelopment.

Out of keeping with the listed building and scheduled monument.

Harmful to the setting of the listed building and scheduled monument.

Contrary to the provisions of the NPPF regarding heritage.

Requires radical reconsideration of the design approach. Councillors requested this application be called in.

A revised layout has been submitted for 48 dwellings, omitting the two proposed dwellings in the northern group, closest to Oakwell House Park, thereby increasing slightly the remaining 'grounds' of the House on this side.

Policy

The proposed Central Beds Local Plan is waiting to be progressed after the recent Examination of the submission version. The current adopted plan is the South Beds Plan 2009 which shows this area as green belt. However, the approval in 2012 of the Houghton Regis North Framework for extensive mixed development from the former A5 to the M1 effectively sets the policy position for this area.

In relation to the current proposal the Framework shows residential development on the southern part of the site only. The land to the north of Oakwell House is shown as part of the network of green spaces within the overall Framework.

National Planning Policy Framework: the NPPF is broadly supportive of residential development but places considerable weight on the preservation of heritage and related assets.

Conclusion: The combination of the listed Oakwell Park House and the ancient monument create one of the main heritage assets within the parish. The house and the grounds around it recall its status as a country house in a rural setting. The ancient monument although wooded, retains its medieval origins and layout. The new housing particularly to the north of the house will erode the

character of these heritage features and affect the setting particularly of the listed building. Unless the scheme can be further amended to leave the area north of the house un-developed, the scheme should be refused.

CB/19/02244/REG3 Single storey side extension
2 Manor Park, LU5 5BX
For: Central Bedfordshire Council

Comments: No objections

CB/19/01925/FULL Proposed extension to existing dwelling to have a mixed-use home by adding an ancillary use cattery in the garden.
The Orchard, Bedford Road, LU5 6JJ
For: A Kavanagh

Comments: Whilst the Town Council had no objection to the proposed development it does have major concerns in regard to highway safety. Although the description on the application states that entry times would be staggered to only allow one car in at a time, Members felt that this would not ensure highway safety in an area where the national speed limit applies. The Town Council respectfully requests that Central Bedfordshire Highways consider this application for the reasons outlined above.

(b) The following decision notices were noted:

Permissions / Approvals / Consents

Refusals:

None received.

Withdrawals:

CB/19/04616/FULL Garage conversion/extension
42 Westminster Gardens, LU5 5RT

10040 LOCAL PLAN

No substantive update to report.

Resolved: To note the information.

10041 PLANNING TRAINING

Members were informed that Central Bedfordshire Council had invited the Town Council to nominate 2 representatives to attend a training session about the planning system. Those nominated could attend separate sessions in order to suit their availability. The dates were:

Thursday 19th September – Priory House, Chicksands, Shefford 6-9pm
Wednesday 25th September - Priory House, Chicksands, Shefford 6-9pm
Monday 30th September - Priory House, Chicksands, Shefford 6-9pm

The objectives of the training were:

- To familiarise participants with the overall framework of the planning system and where development management fits into this
- To explain the basic components of the development management process and where Parish/Town Councils fit in
- To explain some key concepts of the development management decision-making process, to enable Town/Parish Councils to relate to these effectively
- To clarify the potential for, and the limitations of, Town/Parish Council input.
- To explain how CBC secures and administers S106 monies and where you could find information for your areas.

Cllr Carroll and Cllr Thorne requested to be put forward for this training.

Resolved: To nominate two members of the planning committee to attend planning training as arranged by Central Bedfordshire Council.

10042 LAND ADJACENT TO ST THOMAS MEETING HOUSE, WINDSOR DRIVE – CB/18/0464/REG3

Members were advised that the application for the proposed development on land adjacent to St Thomas Meeting House, Windsor Drive was due to be presented to the Development Management Committee on the 11th September 2019. Members were requested to propose a representative to address the committee. Members received The Town Councils objection for information.

Members were advised that there would be members of public in attendance and a representative of All Saints Parish Church would be in attendance to speak on behalf of the church. Cllr Carroll advised members that he would be available to attend.

Resolved: To confirm, to Central Bedfordshire Council, the name and contact details of the person prepared to address the Development Management Committee at its meeting to be held on the 11th September 2019, on the proposed planning application on land adjacent to St Thomas Meeting House, Windsor Drive.

10043 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Members were advised that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering group were scheduled to meet on the 4th September 2019. A verbal update would be provided at the meeting.

Members were informed that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group at their meeting held on the 4th September 2019 invited a representative from Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity to discuss with the group the ways in which BRCC could support the group in order to comply with the regulation 14 consultation. Although the draft neighbourhood plan along with the executive summary needed some fine tuning, the meeting was very positive with dates for the consultation being proposed. It was proposed that the neighbourhood plan consultation would start on the 4th November 2019 and end on the 16th December 2019. It was suggested that the drop in sessions take place between the 11th – 22nd November.

Resolved: To note the information

10044 HOUGHTON REGIS NORTH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

Members received minutes from the Houghton Regis North Stakeholder Group meeting held on the 28th August 2019.

It was requested that it be looked into to why an invitation to this meeting had not been received by the Houghton Regis Town Council Committee Member of the HRN1 Stakeholder Group Committee.

Resolved: To note the information

10045 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SITES/LOCAL PLAN– UPDATE/PROGRESS

Woodside Link – No substantive update to report.

A5 M1 Link – A safety audit from Central Bedfordshire Council was awaited. Members expressed their disappointment that the safety audit had not been completed within the original timeframe. It was requested that a letter be written to the South West Bedfordshire MP regarding safety concerns of this junction.

All Saints View – No substantive update to report.

Linnere - No substantive update to report.

Bidwell West – No substantive update to report.

Kingsland – No substantive update to report.

Windsor Drive – No substantive update to report.

Section 106 Monies – No substantive update to report.

Resolved: To note the information

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.04pm

Dated this 30th day of September 2019

Chairman