

***Houghton Regis Town Council***  
**Planning Committee**  
**11<sup>th</sup> November 2019 at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors: D Dixon-Wilkinson Chairman  
J Carroll  
D Jones  
M S Kennedy  
S Thorne  
K Wattingham

Officers: Debbie Marsh Corporate Services Manager

Public: 2

Also present: Councillors: Y Farrell  
S Goodchild Central Bedfordshire Council

**11027 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies were received from Councillor Welch.

**11028 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Sally Gray addressed the committee in regard to planning application CB/19/02870/RM Thorn Green, Bidwell West.

Concern was expressed in the lack of plans for planting of trees in this area, particularly in the area around the new junction on Bedford Road. There was no plan of what was intended. This was also referred to in the report from the Town Council's Planning Consultant.

Sally also addressed the committee in regard to planning application CB/19/03232/RM Parcels 5a & b, Bidwell West.

Members were advised that the original outline plan for HRN2 included a footpath linking from the existing footpath in Millers Way, this was now not shown. This path went around the edge of the Chalk Pit and was indicated as an informal cycle/footpath. This footpath would provide normal access to the Chalk Pit. Members were requested to consider the response from the Wildlife Trust Officer who had stated within her response, that part of the development could prejudice the cliff as it was felt the cliff was unstable and that technical advice was needed to ensure its stability. Members were informed that photographs taken periodically over the years had shown the cliff change shape due to its instability. The proposed development was too close the cliff and raised huge safety issues. The Wildlife Trust also requested there be a permanent solid boundary to the proposed development. In their opinion one whole road should be removed from the plans. Concern was expressed as to the layout of the design closest to the cliff. It was suggested that developers should adopt the same design principle as in Millers Way with back gardens, not roads, being cliff side.

Fly tipping still remained a worry as should the proposed design remain this could allow for illegal fly tipping strain into the Chalk Pit itself.

### **11029 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Kennedy declared an interest in planning application CB/19/03347/FULL 29 Dellmont Road as the applicant was known to him. Councillor Kennedy left the meeting whilst this application was discussed.

### **11030 MINUTES**

The Committee received the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019 for consideration.

Councillor Kennedy stated that he had given his apologies for the last meeting and that the minutes did not reflect this.

Councillor Jones stated that, on page 5, his comments on planning application CB/19/02056/FULL Greenside, 134 High Street were not correctly recorded. Comments were made in respect of the Planning Officer not the Conservation Officer.

**Resolved To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

### **11031 PLANNING MATTERS**

**(a) The following planning applications were considered:**

#### *Non - Delegated*

CB/19/02870/RM      Reserved Matters: Following Outline CB/15/00297/OUT (1850 dwellings and mixed class use) matters for access, landscaping, layout and scale for 160 dwellings on phase CA2  
Thorn Green, Bidwell West  
For: Abbey Development Ltd  
***Members received a report from the Town Councils Planning Consultant.***

**Comments:** The outline application, approved in November in 2015, was for up to 1,850 homes, roads, landscaping recreation and open space, two schools, employment and a local centre. The whole site extends westwards from Bedford Road, from the new A5 dual carriageway southwards to the edge of the Chalk Quarry Nature Reserve. The proposals (covered by the outline consent) for schools, employment, and local centre are not included in this reserved matter application. The housing is set within a green setting of grass and landscaping

### Recommendation

That the Town Council raises no overall objections but wishes to comment on the following issues:

- the Council would welcome details on how footpath and cycle routes in these housing blocks are connected to facilities such as schools in adjoining areas,
- the Council is concerned that there will be inadequate means for non-car transport users to have direct access routes into Houghton Regis town centre,
- the Council welcomes the range of affordable homes as part of this scheme but requires assurances that the 'affordable' housing is within the financial reach of those in need of homes locally, and how this could be supported to assist key workers, teachers, health workers and others important to support the community in this part of Houghton Regis,
- A weakness of the proposed layout is the lack of play area and equipment, the locations and ranges of play areas and equipment within the site needs to be clearer, especially provision for older children / young teenagers, or if the scheme is relying on off-site provision this needs to be detailed,
- The loss of existing trees is a matter of concern - there needs to be provision for monitoring new tree-planting and re-planting in the event of these new trees being damaged or dying,
- The tree species mix should be native species appropriate to the area and soil type. As well as the proposed grassed areas, native woodland flower species should be introduced so that when established, the landscaping reflects the habitat and ecosystems of the former copses and field edges.
- There are no details within the plans of features such as solar panels, electric car charging points.

The Reserved Matters application covers the four blocks of land here. The application relates to 160 dwellings, a mix of dwellings in varying sizes and flats. The application site itself is currently an arable field and trees.

Development Parcels were defined by the plans approved under the outline permission. Condition 1 of the outline permission required the approval of the following details for each Development Parcel – scale and appearance of the development, plus landscaping of the site (details of access arrangements were determined at the outline stage) to accord with the Bidwell West Design Code (approved June 2015).

The Design & Access statement describes a conventional urban design approach with building frontages onto the roads through the residential areas, particularly where Thorn Road is intersected by a new north-south road with a roundabout. The new homes comprise 12x 2 bedroom flats, 4x 2 bedroom houses, 37x 3 bedroom houses and 59x4 bedroom houses as 112 private dwellings, with 48 affordable homes (shared ownership and rental) as follows:

6x1 bedroom flats, 18x 2 bedroom flats, 7x2 bedroom houses, 11x 3 bedroom houses, and 6x4 bedroom houses.

The majority of new homes will be two-storey with some single storey and three storey flats positioned around the new roundabout. Most houses have drives and garages to one side with rear gardens. The layout appears to be dense – however this alleviated by the surrounding green / open space and landscaped areas. The scheme includes bicycle stores (where there are no garages) and bus stops along the Main Street.

A weakness of the proposed layout is the lack of play area and equipment shown as part of the scheme.

CB/19/03232/RM

Reserved matters: Appearance, scale and landscaping for residential development of 336 dwellings on Development Parcels 5a and 5b Bidwell West, Houghton Regis. Outline application (CB/15/0297/OUT) was supported by a full Environmental Statement (ES)

***Members received a report from the Town Councils Planning Consultant.***

**Comments:** The outline applicant approved in November in 2015 was for up to 1,850 homes, roads, landscaping recreation and open space, two schools, employment and a local centre. The whole site extends westwards from Bedford Road, from the new A5 dual carriageway southwards to the edge of the Chalk Quarry Nature Reserve.

NB the outline approval was granted 2 years after the Framework for the whole HRN proposal was agreed by Central Beds.

The site of the current application is the area adjoining the Chalk Pit Nature Reserve and the existing homes on Millers Way, Arnald Way and Rosslyn Way. The details show the proposed layout, landscaping, house types and materials, boundary treatment and parking. The homes are in two areas served by a main spine road feeding a series of cul-de-sacs (i.e. no road connections to existing roads). The main spine road connects northwards into the rest of the HRN network. (The proposals do not for instance connect the new road network with the end of Bidwell Hill and thus onto Bedford Road.)

The proposals (covered by the outline consent) for schools, employment, and local centre are not included in these reserved matters. The housing is set within a green setting of grass and landscaping – a key feature of HRN is the large expanse of open space including sports pitches which connects southwards with the Chalk Quarry Nature Reserve, however these are not included in this application.

### Recommendation

It is recommended that the Town Council raises no overall objections but wishes to comment on the following issues:

- the Council would welcome reserved matters details on the open space proposals to the west of sites 5a / 5b to show how these parts of HRN inter-relate,
- as these parcels occupy visually prominent land towards the top of the chalk scarp slope, the reserved matters should include details of the scheme's appearance in views from the north, to ensure that the new housing is screened where appropriate with landscaping, alternatively the design could include a 'landmark' building or structure suitable to this location,
- the Council is concerned that there will be inadequate means for non-car transport users to have direct access routes into Houghton Regis town centre, the details of access routes for pedestrians and cyclists, children, parents with pushchairs, etc to nearby facilities – schools, local centre, recreation areas etc. need to be clearer,
- the Council welcomes the range of affordable homes as part of this scheme but requires assurances that the 'affordable' housing is within the financial reach of those in need of homes locally, and how this could be supported to assist key workers, teachers, health workers and others important to support the community in this part of Houghton Regis,

- the locations and ranges of play areas and equipment within the site needs to be clearer, especially provision for older children / young teenagers.
- Tree- planting around the edges of the site appears to be very low density. It would be preferable to use a variety of tree sizes as part of the new landscaping, and denser planting patterns with provisions for later thinning. The tree species mix should be native species appropriate to the area and soil type. As well as the proposed grassed areas, native woodland flower species should be introduced so that when established, the landscaping reflects the habitat and ecosystems of the former copses and field edges.
- There are no details within the plans of features such as solar panels, electric car charging points.
- the Council would welcome reserved matters details on how the future development of the Wildlife Site can be linked to the proposed development of this site. The proposed development of these two sites are integral to each other.
- The Council would welcome plans, at this stage of application, on plans particularly that support green transport to and from the Wildlife site.

The Reserved Matters application covers Parcels 5A and 5B. The application relates to 366 dwellings, a mix of dwellings in varying sizes and flats. The application site itself is currently an arable field and is steeply undulating in certain areas, extending to some 9.6hectares.

#### Extracts from Applicants' Planning Statement

- Parcels 5a and 5bare separated from Parcels 4a and 4b to the north by a large block of existing woodland (Bluewaters Woodland) and existing arable land lying to the west is due to form public open space for countryside recreation, which abuts the Community Wildlife Site,
- The site will be accessed from the main spine road, which leads into the wider site from Thorn Road to the north. Parcels 5a and 5b will also be connected to Houghton Regis via the existing Public Rights of Way network; Public Footpath No.3 runs to the east of Parcel 5a and connects with FP4 to the north and with existing development in Houghton Regis to the south,
- As part of the proposed residential development of 336 residential dwellings, 101units will be affordable housing; equating to 30% and complying with the S106 agreement in this respect. Whilst the changes in levels across the site have meant that apartments are not included within this scheme there will be a mix of 2, 3 and 4 bedroom properties, and a mixture of affordable and open market dwellings, all of which

will help contribute to a mix of housing within the local area in order to meet housing requirements,

- The scheme will have a range of buildings across the site, with detached, semi-detached and terraced houses of 2 and 2.5 storey,
- the undulating landscape creates changes in levels throughout the site, has added interest to the development and street scenes demonstrating the design approach are included within the Design Compliance Statement. These include street scenes for the varying road hierarchy, as well as sections through the site itself to demonstrate how properties will relate to one another, whilst maintaining the requisite separation distances,
- The site access has been fixed by virtue of the outline permission, with the main access to the wider Bidwell West site being taken from Thorn Road,
- The proposed layout includes a swathe of on-street parking bays along the northern and southern edges of Main Street, to the north of the main area of Parcel 5b. No direct access to properties is proposed from Main Street, with direct access from either the tertiary routes or via private drives; once again in accordance with the provisions of the Design Code,
- All of the new houses will have access to their own private amenity area, and where changes in levels occur gardens have been stepped, so that these properties will have a patio area immediately to the rear of the house, and a lawned area at a lower level,
- There is an existing block of woodland separating Parcels 5a and 5b which is proposed to be retained, as are many of the trees on the boundaries of the site.

Development Parcels were defined by the plans approved under the outline permission, including Parcels 5a and 5b. Condition 1 of the outline permission required the approval of the following details for each Development Parcel – scale and appearance of the development, plus landscaping of the site (details of access arrangements were determined at the outline stage) to accord with the Bidwell West Design Code (approved June 2015).

CB/19/03470/FULL Single storey rear extension & garage conversion  
Householder developments  
14 Lake View, LU5 5GJ  
Mr & Mrs Mayling

**Comments: No objection**

CB/19/03347/FULL Single storey side extension  
Householder developments  
29 Dellmont Road, LU5 5HU  
Mr & Mrs Dye

**Comments: The Town Council makes no objection, but requests consideration be given to the following matter: The Town Council has concerns over access and the loss of amenity land in this area.**

**(b) The following decision notices were noted:**

*Permissions / Approvals / Consents*

CB/18/04641/REG3 The development of a 20 unit, 3-storey transitional housing scheme with associated access, parking and landscaping  
Land adjacent to St Thomas Meeting House, Windsor Drive

*Members requested that their disappointment be recorded on the outcome of this application. Members expressed concern that the Town Councils objections to this application had been ignored.*

CB/19/00883/RM Reserved matters of appearance, scale and landscaping for residential development of 255 dwellings following outline CB/15/0297/OUT  
Land to West of Houghton Regis, Watling Street

CB/19/00840/FULL Sub-division of barn into two dwellings  
4 Bidwell Farm Barns, Bedford Road, LU5 6JS

CB/19/01218/RM Erection of 625 dwellings in parcels 6A & 6B with associated public open spaces following outline planning permission CB/15/0297/OUT  
Parcels 6A & 6B Land West of Bidwell

CB/19/01112/FULL Extension of existing car showroom and workshop areas  
Grovebury Cars, Mayer Way, LU5 5BF

CB/19/01134/FULL Two storey rear extension and single storey front extension  
22 Drury Lane, LU5 5ED



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| CB/19/01657/FULL | Part single part two storey rear extension and extension to garage<br>42 Douglas Crescent, LU5 5AT |
| CB/19/01771/FULL | Rear single storey extension, replacement porch and internal alterations<br>39 Manor Park, LU5 5BU |
| CB/19/01480/FULL | Conversion of existing integral garage into additional living space<br>57 Yew Street, LU5 5PA      |
| CB/19/02214/FULL | Double storey side extension<br>1 Fareham Way, LU5 5RE   |
| CB/19/02165/FULL | Part first storey, part double storey side & single storey rear extension<br>2 Olma Road, LU5 5AF  |
| CB/19/02244/REG3 | Single storey side extension<br>2 Manor Park, LU5 5BX  |

***Refusals:***

None received.

***Withdrawals:***

None received.

Members discussed the merits for receiving the outcome of planning applications. Members agreed that in future and to save officer time, only those outcomes from applications that the committee have objected to will be included.

**11032 LOCAL PLAN**

Members received a copy of a letter from the Planning Inspectorate, dated 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019, which followed the public examination of the Local Plan.

Members received a copy of Central Bedfordshire Councils response, dated 14<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

Following this response Central Bedfordshire Council had issued a Frequently Asked Questions sheet for information.

Members were informed, by Councillor Goodchild, that more recent correspondence between the Planning Inspector and Central Bedfordshire Council was available and could be viewed on Central Bedfordshire Councils website.

**Resolved: To note the information.**

**11033 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

No substantive update to report.

**Resolved: To note the information.**

**11034 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SITES/LOCAL PLAN–  
UPDATE/PROGRESS**

**Woodside Link** – No substantive update to report.

**A5 M1 Link** – No substantive update to report.

**All Saints View** – No substantive update to report.

**Linnere** - In advance of an impending Reserved Matters Planning application that will be submitted by CBC Assets, the Town Council had been advised of the following:

**Background**

Up to 43,000 new homes were expected in Central Bedfordshire by 2035. The Council's Schools for the Future programme had been established to ensure that CBC plan for the estimated 9,700 new school places that would be needed and ensure that they were in the right places, delivering the best education. In the Houghton Regis North development 'HRN1' (known as Linnere) 7,055 homes were planned. The planned housing development created a need for additional primary school places within Houghton Regis. The exact timing of the requirement for the new primary places was dependent on the actual rate at which the new housing was built and was forecast to be needed by 2021. Thornhill Primary School was the closest school to the proposed area of development and will benefit additional land secured under the s106 for the proposed expansion. The governing body of Thornhill Primary was supportive of the expansion and understood the need to provide additional primary school places to meet the forecast demand from the Linnere area development. The school was also rated as 'good' by Ofsted (April 2016).

The expansion would allow the school to admit an additional 2 forms of entry from September 2021, to accommodate both local children plus additional children from the Linnere area development. This equated to an additional 60 school places in each year group (420 pupils), plus 60 additional full-time early years (nursery) places. The total outcome would be a 3FE Primary School (630 pupils) plus a 90-place full time nursery

Members were informed that the figure quoted by CBC of 7,055 homes in HRN1 was incorrect. The figure stated was actually the combined figure of both sites, HRN1 & HRN2.

Members went on to discuss the wards within the parish, in light of the expansion to Houghton Hall Ward. Members agreed that any changes would be a decision made by Central Bedfordshire Council.

**Bidwell West** – No substantive update to report.

**Kingsland** – No substantive update to report.

**Windsor Drive** – No substantive update to report.

**Section 106 Monies - HRTC applied for s106 funding for the following and had been awarded the following amounts. Payment would be made retrospectively on project completion.**

- Energy efficiency in community pavilions £6,651
- Flag pole illumination £5,900
- Community Defibrillators £6,800

**Resolved: To note the information**

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.06pm**

**Dated this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of December 2019**

**Chairman**