

Houghton Regis Town Council
Planning Committee
7th September 2020 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
Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services
Sarah Gelsthorp Civic and Events Officer

Public: 10

Also present: Councillors: S Goodchild CBC Councillor
Y Farrell CBC Councillor
T McMahan HRTC

11315 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

None.

11316 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Members of the public addressed the committee and raised their concerns regarding planning applications: CB/20/02412FULL and CB/20/02413/LB Sewell Manor, Manor Farm, Sewell Lane, Sewell.

The concerns raised centred around:

- Inappropriate development on greenbelt land causing harm
- Effect on listed building in Sewel conservation area
- Demolition of listed building
- Would cause significant highway issues
- Traffic flow data, presented, was incorrect.

Members of the public were thanked for attending the meeting.

11317 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

11318 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 17th August 2020

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 17th August 2020 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

11319 PLANNING MATTERS**(a) The following planning applications were considered:**

CB/20/02783/FULL Single Storey Rear Extension
9 Douglas Crescent, LU5 5AS
For: Mr J Watts

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council had no objections to this application.

CB/20/02412/FULL Demolition of existing workshop and storage buildings and erection of seven dwellings with associated vehicle & cycle parking and access roadway.
Sewell Manor, Manor Farm, Sewell Lane, Sewell, LU6 1RP
For: A Buckland

Comments: The Town Council places great value on the setting and nature of the buildings in Sewell.

The scattered collection of homes and farm buildings was designated as a conservation area in the 1990s, within the green belt and adjoins the Chilterns AONB. The significant open spaces, trees and landscaping which separates the buildings are all part of the area's character.

The proposal represents significant damage to the openness of this part of the green belt, constitutes inappropriate development within the meanings of the National Planning Policy Framework, fails to demonstrate the very special circumstances required for development and does not match any of the exceptions set out in para. 145 of the NPPF.

The proposed development would have a detrimental impact on the historic character and setting of the hamlet of Sewell and its conservation area.

The development if approved would represent a significant precedent, seeking to justify development damaging to the quality of the area on the basis of historical structures in the vicinity.

The access is a narrow, rural lane below modern standards and the proposed development represents unacceptable intensification of this access.

The vehicles required during construction, would have a significant detrimental impact on the access by virtue of its narrowness and junction onto Watling Street.

Councillors requested this application be called in.

CB/20/02413/LB

Listed Building: Demolition of existing workshop and storage buildings and erection of seven dwellings with associated vehicle & cycle parking and access roadway.

Sewell Manor, Manor Farm, Sewell Lane, Sewell, LU6 1RP

Comments: The Town Council places great value on the setting and nature of the buildings in Sewell.

The scattered collection of homes and farm buildings was designated as a conservation area in the 1990s, within the green belt and adjoins the Chilterns AONB. The significant open spaces, trees and landscaping which separates the buildings are all part of the area's character.

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The access is a narrow, rural lane below modern standards and the proposed development represents unacceptable intensification of this access.

The vehicles required during construction, would have a significant detrimental impact on the access by virtue of its narrowness and junction onto Watling Street.

Councillors requested this application be called in.

CB/20/02954/REG3

Widen the existing single lane access road to The Chiltern School by 2m to create 2 car lanes.

Regis Education Centre, Parkside Drive, LU5 5PX

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council had no objections to this application.

CB/20/01537/FULL
Members were advised that there were amendments to this application. Revisions included layout, landscaping and access details

Erection of a mixed-use Local Centre comprising 52 no. apartments, 1 no. day nursery (Use Class D1), 1 no. retail unit (Use Class A1) 5 no. retail units (Use Classes A1/A3/A5) and associated infrastructure works including a haul road, landscaping and public realm.
Land west of Bidwell, LU5 6JQ

Comments: Objection

The Town Council objects to the proposals for the inclusion of the 30-apartment block within the scheme (CB/20/01537/FULL) as being over-development of the site and a dominant visual feature. The inclusion of this additional block of apartments adds to the car parking requirements creating a very 'hard' urban landscape of buildings facing onto an area of vehicular access and car parking, the greater density pressures the ground level space reducing the opportunity for landscaping, open space, pedestrian features, public art, and other features which would add character to the local centre. The plan shows connectivity pushed around the edges of the sites, there appears to be a lack of fluidity between this and the adjacent sites.

Overall, the proposals need to show how they relate to the proposed bus stop arrangements, with a safe crossing and speed reduction measures between the local centre and school. As a local centre the pedestrian / cyclist access to the area from adjoining residential areas is very poor, the main access provisions as shown encourage car use.

The ground level space is predominantly access and car parking with little imagination or space given to features, art and sculptures, murals or similar features which would add visual interest, character and a sense of place. The local centre will be home to many people and visited by many more and requires greater design of the public realm to avoid it being just another functional car park.

CB/20/01545/FULL
Members were advised that there were amendments to this application. Revisions included layout, landscaping and access details

Erection of a mixed-use Local Centre comprising 22 no. apartments, 1 no. day nursery (Use Class D1), 1 no. retail unit (Use Class A1) 5 no. retail units (Use Classes A1/A3/A5) and associated infrastructure works.
Land West of Bidwell, LU5 6JQ

Comments: The Town Council would support this application should the additional proposed 30-apartment block, as detailed on planning application CB/20/01537, be removed.

Should this not be the case then Town Council objects to the proposals for the inclusion of the 30-apartment block within the scheme (CB/20/01537/FULL) as being over-development of the site and a dominant visual feature. The inclusion of this additional block of apartments adds to the car parking requirements creating a very 'hard' urban landscape of buildings facing onto an area of vehicular access and car parking, the greater density pressures the ground level space reducing the opportunity for landscaping, open space, pedestrian features, public art, and other features which would add character to the local centre.

Noted

- CB/20/02808/DOC Discharge of Condition 9 to Planning Permission CB/12/03613/OUT (Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial, and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans).
Houghton Regis North Site 1, Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis
- CB/20/02850/DOC Discharge of Conditions 1, 2, 3 and 4 from planning application CB/19/03158/FULL (1.8m high close boarded fence along approx. 3m line to Sundon Road boundary) Planting required to ensure an acceptable standard of landscaping
Treow House, Parkside Drive, LU5 5QL
- CB/20/02817/DOC Discharge of Conditions 1 and 3 against planning permission CB/19/03820/RM (Reserved Matters: New Primary School and amendments to the existing Thornhill Primary School site pursuant to outline permission CB/12/03613/OUT)
Thornhill Lower School, Grove Road, LU5 5PE

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- CB/20/02993/DOC Discharge of Conditions 6, 8, 9,11,12,14,15,19 & 20 to Planning Permission CB/15/04918/REG3 (Regulation 3 - Outline Application: Erection of up to 61,336m of B1, B2 and/or B8 employment development floorspace with associated infrastructure and ancillary works. All matters reserved except means of access from Thorn Road)
Land at Thorn Turn, Thorn Road, LU6 1RT
- CB/20/03013/DOC Discharge of Conditions 17 and 23 against planning permission CB/15/00297/OUT (Outline 'hybrid' planning application with details of main access routes, primary road network and associated drainage in detail only and layout in outline with details of landscaping, appearance and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: Up to 1,850 residential (C3) dwellings (including affordable housing), 2FE Primary School (D1), employment land (Use Classes B1 [a-c], B2 & B8), local centre comprising retail(A1, A2, A3, A4 & A5) and community/leisure uses (D1 & D2), layout of public open spaces including sports pitches and changing rooms, natural wildlife areas and all associated works and operations including engineering operations and earthworks)
Land West of Bidwell (Houghton Regis North Site 2)
Houghton Regis
- CB/20/02968/DOC Discharge of Condition 15 against Planning Permission CB/20/00348/RM (Reserved Matters: following Outline Application CB/15/00297/OUT 'hybrid' planning application with details of main access routes, primary road network and associated drainage in detail only and layout in outline with details of landscaping, appearance and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: Up to 1,850 residential (C3) dwellings (including affordable housing), 2FE Primary School (D1), employment land (Use Classes B1 [a-c], B2 & B8), local centre comprising retail (A1, A2, A3, A4 & A5) and community/leisure uses (D1 & D2), layout of public open spaces including sports pitches and changing rooms, natural wildlife areas and all associated works and operations including engineering operations and earthworks. Reserved Matters for access, appearance landscape, layout and scale for 160 dwelling on phase CA2 Upper Thorn Green)
- CB/20/02825/NMA Non Material Amendment to Condition 2 of Planning Permission 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): Proposed changes to road surface finishes on development layout and kerb details to meet adoptable standards as required by CBC Highways Department.
Land adjoining to Thorn Road/Bedford Road, Bidwell West

(b) The following decision notices were noted:***Permissions / Approvals / Consents***

None.

Refusals:

None received.

Withdrawals:

None received.

11320 BUDGET

Members received an income and expenditure report on the Planning Committees budget.

Resolved: To note the report.

11321 MINISTRY OF HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT PLANNING CONSULTATIONS

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government issued three consultations on reform of the planning system:

1. Changes to the current planning system (NALC deadline for responses 17.9.20 (MHCLG deadline 1.10.20)
2. Planning for the future - the planning white paper (NALC deadline for responses 15.10.20) (MHCLG deadline 29.10.20)
3. Transparency and competition: a call for evidence on data on land control (NALC deadline for responses 16th October) (MHCLG deadline 29.10.20)

Members had previously been provided with briefings corresponding to each consultation and the individual deadlines for each consultation. The Town Council were asked to respond to NALC by the individual deadlines given. The NALC deadlines were earlier than MHCLG's, so that the Town Councils views could inform NALC's three response to MHCLG on behalf of the sector.

Members were reminded that this item was deferred from the last meeting.

Members received a summary from the Town Councils Planning Consultant. In addition to this a further update was provided below:

Members may also wish to know about changes to various aspects of the planning system contained in the Business & Planning Act 2020. This included:

- *extending planning permissions which were due to expire before Dec 2020 to May 2021,*
- *use class reforms which made it easier to switch some high street uses,*
- *new permitted development rights allowing 3 storey flats to be extended to 5 storey structures not exceeding 30m in height,*
- *and the demolition of free-standing commercial buildings replaced with residential flats, again with 2 additional storeys.*

These seemed to be in response to Covid 19 (lots of people working from home making office blocks redundant, etc).

A major shift was public input focused on the local plan stage where zones for growth / regenerate / protection would be established. After that developers / housebuilders would only need confirmation from the Council that their plans meet national standards and design codes before going ahead.

Funding for infrastructure and affordable homes (and the costs of the planning system) would be channelled through a new levy replacing s.106 and CIL. New housing would have to meet nationally developed Design Codes. However, there was little in the white paper about the strategic context for each authority's plan-making and the duty to co-operate between authorities would be abolished.

Members requested that Houghton Regis Town Council's planning consultant be contacted regarding all three of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's consultations on reform of the planning system. The Town Councils response would be considered on receipt of the Town Council's Planning Consultant report. Feedback would be given at the next Planning meeting. The response for item 1 would be sent directly to the Ministry of Housing with NALC copied in due to the imminent deadline date.

Resolved: To defer consideration of the Town Councils response to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Planning Consultations until receipt of the Town Council's Planning Consultant report.

11322 STREET NAMING

Members were advised that there were 4 large sites still to address in the Thorn/Bidwell development areas. Whilst members had submitted proposed street names for this area, they were not adequate for all the road names that would be required. Therefore, members were being approached for further suggestions/themes that they would like used.

Members were advised that Central Bedfordshire Council would be unable to accept any names/themes that had already been agreed for use in the Northern expansion areas as these had been specifically allocated to these developments.

Members discussed various themes and their links to Houghton Regis. The suggested themes to submit were breed of dogs and Vauxhall cars. A War theme was to be investigated as an idea for future road names. Members were requested to supply a list of suggested names to the Corporate Services Manager by Friday (11th September 2020) so that they could also be included.

Members gave special thanks to the Civic and Events Officer for her hard work and efforts in compiling a list of suggestions for members consideration.

Resolved: To consider street names/themes for the Thorn/Bidwell development areas.

11323 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SITES/LOCAL PLAN– UPDATE/PROGRESS

Woodside Link – Members raised concerns regarding the safety of this road, as reports had been received of vehicles flouting traffic laws and misusing the road.

A5 M1 Link – Members were advised that Central Bedfordshire Council had been approached (18th & 25th August 2020) for an update. No further information was provided. For information this major road project opened on the 11th May 2017.

Members highlighted their concerns regarding the safety of road users.

Members requested that Central Bedfordshire Council be contacted further expressing members disappointment at not receiving a response to date.

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 – Members requested feedback on any meetings held pertaining to Windsor Drive.

Section 106 Monies – No substantive update to report.

Resolved: To note the information

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.52pm

Dated this 28th day of September 2020.

Chairman