

Minutes of a Meeting of the Planning Committee - South held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil BA20 2HT, on Tuesday, 27 June 2023 at 5.00 pm

Present:

Cllr Peter Seib (Chair)
Cllr Jason Baker (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Steve Ashton
Cllr Henry Hobhouse
Cllr Tim Kerley (to 8.30pm)
Cllr Oliver Patrick
Cllr Martin Wale

Cllr Mike Best
Cllr Jenny Kenton
Cllr Sue Osborne
Cllr Jeny Snell

In attendance:

Cllr Tony Lock
Cllr Adam Dance

Cllr Andy Soughton
Cllr Connor Payne

Other Members present remotely:

Cllr Andy Kendall (to 6.15pm)

10 Apologies for Absence - Agenda Item 1

Apologies were received from Councillor Evie Potts-Jones.

11 Minutes from the Previous Meeting - Agenda Item 2

Resolved that the minutes of the Planning Committee - South held on 23rd May 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

12 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 3

Councillors Jenny Kenton and Martin Wale declared a personal interest in Item 6 – Planning Application 21/03296/OUT as they were both previously District Ward members.

Councillor Sue Osborne declared a personal interest in Item 7 – Planning Application 22/03397/FUL as she is the Division member.

Councillor Jason Baker declared a personal interest in Item 6 – Planning Application 21/03296/OUT as he is the Division member.

13 Public Question Time - Agenda Item 4

There were no questions from members of the public.

14 Planning Application 20/03708/OUT - Land at Gold Well Farm, Yeovil Road, Crewkerne. - Agenda Item 5

The Principal Planner explained the reason why the application had been deferred from last month's committee to allow the Highways Authority to attend committee. For completeness she proceeded to present the application again in full. She highlighted a correction to the report regarding a property name, and updated on the parking provision and proposed access arrangements. She reminded members this was an outline application and referred to the key considerations. She detailed the reason for approval and various planning obligations required along with the conditions listed within the report.

Two members of the public addressed the committee in objection to the application, and some of their comments included:

- Safety concerns regarding the traffic and parking associated with the school.
- Reference to the high number of local objections including the Parish and Town councils.
- Concern about building in the open countryside and reference to Policy SS2 and direction of growth.
- Disagree the site is acceptable in landscape terms and reference made to an appeal decision regarding a previous application at the site.

One member of the public spoke in support of the application, and some of their comments included:

- As the highway consultant for the applicant he clarified they had not used traffic survey in the school holidays, and noted comments raised regarding

car parking would be considered at the reserved matters stage.

- Noted that the Highways Authority had raised no objection.
- Felt a refusal for reason on transport issues would not be justified.

A representative from Crewkerne Town Council addressed the committee and spoke in objection to the application, and some of their comments included:

- Safety concerns regarding the proposed junction and parking associated with the school.
- The detrimental and cumulative impact on the town from other applications already being built.
- Strongly opposed the application.

Division member Councillor Adam Dance raised his concern in objection to the application. Some of his comments included:

- Reference to the previously dismissed appeal on the site and felt several issues had still not been addressed in this current application. He queried what had changed since the last refusal.
- Safety concerns regarding the traffic and query the reality of parking enforcement.
- Little in the application to deliver pavements or cycle routes.
- Impact on the local services some of which are already at breaking point.

The Agent addressed the committee. Some of her comments included:

- There had been a reduction in dwellings following consultation.
- Believed it to be a sustainable location.
- Reminded members this was an outline application and why it had been deferred at the last meeting, however noted no objection on highway safety.

During discussion the Planning and Highways Officers responded on the points raised by the public speakers and later also on points of detail and technical questions raised by members including:

- Current housing land supply and delays in build.
- Context for this application regarding building happening elsewhere in the area and the cumulative impact.
- Direction of growth.
- Landscape impact.
- Both the Council's Highways officer and an independent Highways consultant had indicated they did not feel the application could be refused on traffic and highways grounds as an appeal could not be defended on these grounds.
- Explained the highway safety aspects and what is taken into account when

the Highway Authority consider their response as a statutory consultee, including information regarding the future signalled junction on the A30 and the trigger points for delivery as part of the CLR site.

- A brief overview of the reasons for the appeal dismissal from 2014 and noted the CLR site would deliver some of the walking routes into the town along the A30.
- Members were advised if minded to refuse the application they would need robust reasons in the absence of a five year housing land supply.

At the end of initial discussion, the Chairman proposed to approve the application as per the officer recommendation, which was seconded by Councillor Oliver Patrick. On being put to the vote this was lost by 2 votes in favour, 3 against and 6 abstentions.

As several members appeared minded to refuse the application there was a short adjournment for the members to formulate their reasons for refusal. On reconvening the meeting Councillor Steve Ashton proposed, seconded by Councillor Mike Best, to refuse the application for the following reasons:

1. Unacceptable impact on landscape character.
2. Failure to demonstrate on choices of travel.

Following a short discussion and advice from the Lead Specialist the proposal for refusal was withdrawn.

The Lead Specialist acknowledged the comments made during discussion raising concerns about parking and advised that an additional clause could be included within a S106 agreement regarding provision for visitor parking off the adopted highway.

The Chairman then proposed to approve the application as per the officer recommendation and subject to the suggested additional clause in the S106 for visitor parking, this was seconded by Councillor Henry Hobhouse. On being put to the vote this was carried by 8 in favour, 1 against and 2 abstentions.

RESOLVED:

That application 20/03708/OUT be approved as per the officer recommendation subject to an additional clause in the S106 agreement regarding provision for visitor parking.

(Voting: 8 in favour, 1 against and 2 abstentions)

15 Planning Application 21/03296/OUT - Land South of Southmead, Perry Street, South Chard, Chard. - Agenda Item 6

The Principal Planner presented the application and explained this was an outline application. She highlighted the access and visibility splay of the site, updated members on further representations received, and explained the key considerations. She explained the recommendation for approval subject to planning obligations and an amendment to condition 2 to include a parameter plan.

Five members of the public addressed the committee in objection to the application. Some of their comments included:

- Increased use of cars and traffic, with minimal availability of public transport.
- Access to the site would be hazardous for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Highway safety concerns.
- Tatworth is not a town, residents will have to travel to facilities and access health provision.
- Building on this site will have consequences on the three natural springs which are a source of water to local businesses – concern regarding contamination of the water supply,
- Impact on the character and appearance of the landscape and nearby AONB.
- Unallocated site that does not comply with policy SS2 and EQ2 and will substantially increase the population of Tatworth.
- Erosion of the gaps between settlements.
- Concerns regarding the impact of pollution to the river Axe and ecology.
- Concerns around the adequacy of the attenuation and sewage treatment proposed.
- Urban design in a rural area, which is not appropriate.
- Tatworth is not identified as a rural centre and the proposal is not supported by the local community.

One person then spoke in support of the application. Some of his comments included:

- Tatworth has seen little housing growth for many years.
- As the applicant he explained why the access location had been selected.
- Energy strategy is in place to make the housing development sustainable in energy terms.

A representative of Tatworth and Forton Parish Council addressed the committee in objection to the application. Some of their comments included:

- Not an allocated site and on the wrong side of the road to the main part of the village.

- Density and layout is inappropriate for the location.
- Many local objections have been submitted.
- Consider the officer report to be misleading, and reference made to policy SS2.

Division member Councillor Connor Payne addressed the committee and concurred with many of the comments in objection already made. He noted there was a need to consider the local community in the long term. Various concerns had been raised locally and he was of the opinion there were a number of reasons to consider refusing the application.

The Agent then addressed the committee and noted it was one of the largest rural settlements in the area but had seen little housing growth in the last twenty years. There would be a biodiversity gain and significant S106 obligation funding to support local facilities and infrastructure. It was a high quality proposal that met the needs of local people.

The Planning Officers and Highway Officer responded on the points raised by the public speakers and later also on points of detail and technical questions raised by members including:

- Both AONBs had been consulted and not raised an objection.
- Statutory consultees had not raised concerns about the river quality, and there was a need to consider their responses regarding the quality and potential impact to the private water supplies.
- Necessary permits and building regulations would be required regarding proposed sewage treatment and surface water attenuation on the site.
- Cumulative impact on other approved schemes considered by Highway Authority.
- Breakdown of monies for local infrastructure.
- The transport assessment had looked at the impact on the wider road network and junctions and not just the immediate site.

During discussion reference was made to the location of the proposed development and concern that it would connect Tatworth with the hamlets in the south. Reasons to refuse were suggested which included the application was not in the local plan, not supported by local people, impact on the local character and landscape.

Following further discussion other reasons for refusal were suggested to include incomplete path network, erosion between settlements and flooding and impact on the river associated with this site.

In response the Lead Specialist provided advice regarding the suggested reasons

for refusal. He further explained that if members were minded to refuse, an additional administrative reason regarding the S106 obligations would also be required.

At the end of discussion Councillor Jenny Kenton proposed refusal of the application on the grounds that it is not in keeping with the local character, and would harm the area. She felt the application would unacceptably alter the character of this part of Tatworth and lead to a coalescence with separate hamlets to the south of the village. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Jason Baker. The Chairman reminded members that the additional administrative reason as advised by the Lead Specialist would also be required. On being put to the vote this was carried by 8 in favour, 1 against and 1 abstention. Members agreed that the precise wording of the reasons be delegated to the officers.

RESOLVED:

That application **21/03296/OUT** be refused for the following reasons:

01. Notwithstanding the acknowledged benefits deriving from the delivery of housing including policy compliant affordable housing, the proposed development would substantially extend the built form of the rural settlement of Tatworth beyond the naturally defined edge of the settlement, which is formed by Perry Street. This would result in the built-up area of Tatworth extending considerably south of the main settlement into an area of open countryside and would result in the erosion of the separation between Tatworth and the hamlet of Chilson Common, which is important in maintaining the unique quality of this part of the Authority, and as a result this would result in very significant harm to the character and setting of both Tatworth and Chilson Common within the River Axe Valley. These adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh any benefits of the scheme. The proposed development is contrary to Adopted South Somerset Local Plan 2006 - 2028 policies EQ2 and SS2 and advice contained within the NPPF.
02. At the point of determination the application does not satisfactorily deliver social and community infrastructure and necessary nutrient neutrality mitigation required by developments within the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar site, and is therefore contrary to the provisions of policies SS6, HG3, HW1 and EQ4 of the Adopted South Somerset Local Plan 2006 - 2028

(Voting: 8 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention)

16 Planning Application 22/03397/FUL - Land at Owl Street, Stocklinch, Ilminster. - Agenda Item 7

This application was not presented or discussed due to lack of time – deferred to the July meeting.

17 Planning Committee South - Future Meeting Arrangements - Agenda Item 8

The Chairman introduced the item and noted there was a backlog of applications to consider in addition to the normal business coming forward. It was suggested there may be a need for more frequent meetings and he asked if members supported the principle to ask officers and the Monitoring Officer to look at provisional additional meeting dates for Planning Committee - South. He was aware the existing time was not always convenient and an alternate date between the current monthly meetings would allow more flexible timing and enable more decisions to be made.

A member requested that the date and time of the existing and proposed additional meetings be reviewed. The Chairman noted the possibility to hold the additional meetings on the second Monday of each month in the afternoon. Members were asked to indicate their support and this was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That Planning Committee – South request that officers and the Monitoring Officer look at provisional additional meeting dates for the Committee. The following suggestions are asked to be considered:

- A member requested that the date and time of the existing meetings be reviewed.
- It was noted by the Chairman additional meetings on the second Monday of each month in the afternoon may be a suitable day and time for the additional meetings.

(Voting: Unanimous)

(The meeting ended at 8.52 pm)

.....
CHAIR