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MINUTES

PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Date: **Monday, 1st November 2021**

Place: **Council Chamber, Town Hall, 61 Newland Street, Witham, CM8 2FE**

Present: Councillors

J.	Goodman	(Chairman)
A.	Kilmartin	(Vice Chairman)
P.	Barlow	
S.	Hicks	(arrived 6.30 p.m.)
M.	Lager	

Also in attendance:

W.	Chambers	(Perseus Land & Developments)
R.	McCartney	(Harris Irwin)
H.	Pearce	(Gillings Planning)
M.	Whatley	(CMI)
N.	Smith	(Deputy Town Clerk)
G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)

141. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Atwill who was travelling abroad, Councillors Jay and Rajeev who had previous engagements, and C. Lager and Livermore who were unwell.

RESOLVED That the apologies be received and accepted.

142. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning and Transport Committee held 18th October 2021 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

143. **INTERESTS**

Councillor M. Lager declared a non-pecuniary interest in application 21/03089/HH – 39 Chipping Hill, Witham, as he lives in the vicinity.

Later in the Meeting at Minute 145 – Gershwin Park, Councillor Barlow declared a non-pecuniary interest as he has dealings, as part of his employment, with the Barchester Group who would run the Care Home.

144. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There was no member of the press or public present.

145. GERSHWIN PARK

The Chairman welcomed Hannah Pearce and her colleagues to the Meeting.

Hannah thanked the Town Council for the opportunity to give an overview of the proposals at Gershwin Park and to gather feedback. She introduced her colleagues and explained that Gillings acts as a consultant and agent. She said that they had been working for the past two years with the District Council on pre-application advice to develop this land. She identified the ‘L’ shaped plot adjacent to Aldi food store measuring 1.76 hectares.

Will Chambers from Perseus explained that they were the facilitators for senior care for those with acute and emerging care needs. There would be a consortium of Barchester Health Care, Chelmer Housing Partnership and Churchmanor Estates. This would be a mixed use development. He then detailed the proposals which included -

- three retail outlets with parking offering flexible use within Class E appropriate for the area,
- a 70 bed care home which would have single occupancy en suite rooms, providing end of life, residential, dementia and nursing care with parking behind the retail premises,
- 44 dwellings to include 19 apartments and 25 two or three bedroom houses,
- public open space in the north east corner of the development.

Matt Whatley from CMI was the architect for the site and explained that they had been working closely with the District Council planners. He explained that the retail units would be of a modern design with large shop fronts and a canopy shelter. There would be 13 parking spaces, 3 disabled and cycle parking. There would be footpath access around the site and onto the existing estate. The residential buildings would be of a modern design with traditional massing. There would be four x 2 bed homes and 21 x 3 bed homes over two/two and a half storeys. The apartments would have private amenity space to national standards and the houses have air source heat pumps. He had been working with Perseus and Barchester Health Care on preferred lay outs taking into consideration operational needs. The Care Home would be of a contemporary design over three floors with rooms arranged to provide better care. The main entrance would be sited centrally and the rooms managed to avoid cross contamination.

Hannah then spoke about landscaping with trees highlighting focal points and defining pedestrian/cycle routes. She then referred to the emerging Local Plan and compliance with the Essex Design Guide and Parking Standards. She said that public consultation had resulted in 38 responses with 60% being supportive, with comments ranging from wider infrastructure, community facilities and concerns about parking. She said that the proposal would be of social/economic benefit providing homes, including 30% affordable housing, and employment opportunities.

Members thanked Hannah and her team for their informative presentation and then had an opportunity to provide feedback and ask questions.

Councillor Hicks arrived at the Meeting.

Members hoped that a contribution would be made as part of the Section 106 Agreement towards the proposed community facilities on the Maltings estate. Details would be needed in relation to the maintenance of shared spaces. In answer to a question Members were informed that cycle paths extend through the site and it was hoped that the development would receive a gold award through the Secure by Design scheme as lighting of the footpaths would be included as part of the planning applications. There would be designated points for refuse collection and bin storage in the apartments. Members welcomed the introduction of heat pumps and solar panels would be included on the apartment roofs. There would be two lifts in the Care Home and lifts in the apartments. Members were hopeful that a pharmacy would be part of the retail units. Every house would have two parking spaces and a total of 8 visitor spaces included. Apartments would have either one or two parking spaces dependent on the size of the flat. Members were concerned about security. Comment was made that older people would prefer to have bungalows. It was an aspiration for the bus service to be reinstated and comment was made about the need to ensure that homes are insulated and with renewable energy provision. The Care Home would have solar panels for hot water but there would be no bedroom available for relatives to stay overnight.

Helen explained that they are close to submitting plans to the District Council and would hope for determination by March/April 2022. It was hoped for delivery of the development within 18 to 24 months with the Care Home operational in March 2024.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their input.

Councillor Barlow declared a non-pecuniary interest as he has dealings with the Barchester Group as part of his employment.

146. PLANNING OFFICER'S REPORT

Members were informed that the District Council's Planning Committee would be considering application 19/01896/OUT – Land North of Woodend Farm on Tuesday 9th November 2021.

The Town Council had recommended the application for refusal on the grounds of -

- clarification regarding the layby for lorries on the slip road,
- assurance regarding the access to the farm at the bottom of the site,
- an assurance that there would be a footpath/cycleway, not as part of the current road system, linking up the development with the neighbouring Lodge Farm estate and
- a logical bus route going from one estate to the other.

Councillor Hicks undertook to make personal representation on behalf of the Town Council.

The Planning Officer explained that an email had just been received from Emma Goodings, Head of Planning and Economic Growth at the District Council, regarding Greater Anglia's concerns that the redevelopment of Witham Railway Station had ceased. The Planners have had detailed discussion with Greater Anglia and further information and clarification is required before a decision is made.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

147. PART 1 APPLICATIONS

21/03056/HH

2 Cressing Road, Witham

Demolition of two existing garages and the erection of a single double garage

NO OBJECTION

21/03104/HH

2 Rowan Way, Witham

Two storey side extension

NO OBJECTION

148. PART 2 APPLICATIONS

21/03065/TPOCON

12 The Avenue, Witham

Notice of intent to carry out works to tree in a Conservation Area – remove birch tree and treat stump

The Tree Warden had advised that the application should be refused as there was no justification for the work to be carried out.

RECOMMEND REFUSAL on the grounds that there was no justification for the tree to be felled and subject to the advice of the District Council's Landscape Officer.

21/03082/TPOCON

Witham Pavilion Club, Maldon Road, Witham

Notice of intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area – Carry out various works to trees

The Tree Warden had carried out a site visit and advised that whilst the felling of the diseased oak tree was justified, reducing the height of the lime tree by so much was excessive.

NO OBJECTION to the oak tree being felled but **RECOMMEND REFUSAL** to the proposed work to the lime tree as it was excessive and subject to the advice of the District Council's Landscape Officer.

21/03087/TPO

25 Windsor Close, Witham

Notice of intent to carry out works to tree protected by Tree Preservation Order 19a/02 – Remove 12ft off the top of the tree and any over-hanging branches.

The Tree Warden had advised that the proposed work was unnecessary, excessive and would damage the amenity of the area.

RECOMMEND REFUSAL on the grounds that the work is unnecessary, excessive and will damage the amenity of the area and subject to the advice of the District Council's Landscape Officer.

21/02972/FUL

Elm Cottage and land between Comingmak and Newton, Maldon Road, Witham

Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of 5 x three storey 4 bedroomed detached dwelling houses, with associated access and parking

Members considered that the three storey town houses would have an adverse impact on the street scene and the modern style would be unsympathetic to the neighbouring dwellings.

RECOMMEND REFUSAL on the grounds of adverse impact on the street scene and out of keeping with neighbouring dwellings contrary to RLP10 and LPP28 of the emerging Local Plan.

21/03089/HH

39 Chipping Hill, Witham

Alterations to front dormer and introduction of additional pitched roof dormer

Councillor M. Lager had declared an interest.

Members considered that the proposal would be an enhancement to the front elevation.

NO OBJECTION subject to advice from the Historic Buildings Officer in relation to materials.

21/03134/HH

4 Seaborn Drive, Witham

Conversion of loft with erection of dormer roof extensions to front and rear roof slopes

Members noted the imposing nature of the rear dormer but recognised that this would not be visible from the street.

NO OBJECTION subject to compliance with any covenants.

CC/BTE/87/21/LB

Witham Library, 18 Newland Street, Witham

Repair and refurbishment of existing windows and doors

NO OBJECTION subject to the advice of the Historic Buildings Officer.

21/03030/FUL

16 -18 Freebournes Road, Witham

Change of Use from Class B2 (General Industry) to a flexible Class B2 (General Industry) and Class B8 (Storage and Distribution) Use

NO OBJECTION

21/03147/FUL

5 Wheaton Road, Witham

Partial demolition of existing two storey workshop bay incorporating ground and first floor admin and office suites and erection of two storey side extension to create new office and administrative support areas. Removal of single storey later addition to existing workshop and service bay building. Associated landscaping reinstatement and operation development

RECOMMEND APPROVAL

21/03029/FUL

3 Freebournes Road, Witham

Change of Use from Class B2 (General Industry) to a flexible Class B2 (General Industry) and Class B8 (Storage and Distribution) Use

NO OBJECTION

21/03139/HH

70 Baker Way, Witham

Installation of 2 x double doors and Juliet balconies at first floor to front elevation

Members recognised that this proposal would change the street scene and set a precedent but considered that the changes were merited.

NO OBJECTION

21/03173/HH

Mill House, 1 Powers Hall End, Witham

Single storey rear extension

Members expressed concern that this house was at risk of flooding.

NO OBJECTION subject to the District Council being satisfied that the proposal would not increase the flood risk.

In view of the time it was agreed to hold in abeyance 21/03207/TPOCON - 19 The Paddocks, Witham and 21/03208/TPO - 10 Hollybank, Witham, to the next Meeting.

149. REVISED PLANS

21/03013/HH

4 Elgar Drive, Witham

Members were informed that the first floor extension would be slightly larger creating an overhang.

NO OBJECTION

In view of the time it was agreed to receive the decisions at the next Meeting.

The Chairman closed the Meeting at 7.29 p.m.

Councillor J. Goodman
Chairman

GK/2.11.2021