

Agenda item: LD 44/20

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Planning, Licencing & Development Committee

Monday 19th October 2020

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To inform the committee of 20/02389/FULMMA
Proposal: Variation of condition 1 (existing proposed site plans, elevations plans)
attached to planning application 20/00344/FUL.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That the committee notes the report.**
- 2. That the committee decides on any feedback to the planning office.**
- 3. That the council manager responds accordingly by 27th October 2020.**

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

This is an application from Chadwick Lodge, one of the private hospital units on Eaglestone.

It is a variation to a previous application, requesting some minor changes.

The change relates to the addition of a dormer window to allow the replacement of an MRI scanner more easily. These apparently need to be replaced every 10 years or so and this change will make that process easier.

There is nothing within this application that appears to cause any concern.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

None.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

None.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

All papers are available on the MKC Planning Portal - https://npaedms.milton-keynes.gov.uk/PublicAccess_Corplive/SearchResult/RunThirdPartySearch?FileSystemId=DC&FOLDER1_REF=20/02389/FULMMA

AUTHOR

Steve McNay – Council Manager

Agenda item: LD 45 a)

Milton Keynes Council Planning Department

Civic Offices
Central Milton Keynes

Sent via email

22nd September 2020

Ref: Application Ref 20/01597/FUL - Proposed the new dwelling and double garage, land adjoining 4 Holmfield Close, Tinkers Bridge, MK6 3AB.

Following a meeting of the Planning, Licencing and Development Committee on the 21st September 2020, I am writing to object to the above application on behalf of Woughton Community Council. The reasons for the objection are:

Impact on wildlife, biodiversity and ecology.

The site is home to a wide variety of species, many of which are protected in law. The applicants Ecological Appraisal details these, with acknowledgement that this development will have a detrimental impact. This report also states that further appraisal work is needed to fully understand the current and potential wildlife within the area, whilst making assumptions about what may or may not be present.

The report also states that:

if development is undertaken in the future, potential impacts are likely to include the following;

Bats - Loss of foraging/commuting habitat.

Badger - Loss of foraging/commuting habitat.

Hedgehog -Loss of habitat. Site clearance may directly harm individual hedgehogs.

Wolver - Loss of habitat.

Nesting Birds - Loss of nesting and foraging opportunities. Site clearance may directly harm nesting birds if carried out during the breeding season (March to August inclusive).

Reptiles - The site has potential to support reptiles. The sites redevelopment could result in the loss of foraging / commuting habitat. Site clearance may directly kill / injure reptiles. Whilst the further 'Reptile Survey' did not find any living within the vicinity, this does not preclude the potential for their presence or the value that such a site provides for potential future inhabitants.

Amphibians - Loss of habitat.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 places a duty on Ministers and Government Departments to have regard for the purpose of conserving biological diversity in accordance with the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 places the following biodiversity duty on all public bodies:

“Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity”

Schedule 5 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and amendments) prohibits deliberate damaging, destroying or obstructing any structure or place of refuge of listed fauna, such as bat species.

This development rides roughshod over these duties, placing development and financial gain over the established and essential environment that support this diversity and sits within the established ‘corridor’ that runs along the Grand Union Canal.

Impact on neighbouring properties

The proposed development is along an unadopted road that is insufficient to provide safe access and egress from the site, risking damage to neighbouring properties and causing significant additional demand on already stretched services, specifically drainage and sewerage. The site sits within an area that already houses a number of shared properties, whether registered as HMO’s or not, and this additional property will place significant additional pressures on the system. There is no record of any consultation or information regarding this issue within the application or supporting documents other than ‘connection to mains sewer’ within the application form.

Other issues

This application is to build on an established garden in a property that forms part of the history of the city, before designation as such. The properties that are in situ are older and the established gardens provide not only an essential element of biodiversity, but also a historical record of the evolution of the area. The house was previously owned by Fred Roche, one of the ‘founding fathers’ of Milton Keynes and would, arguably, be a ‘blue plaque’ building if celebrity was correctly valued. The loss of this unique, historically valuable site would be a shameful prioritization of money and unnecessary development over the protection and celebration of our local history.

Conclusion

The committee considers this application to be in breach of the fundamental underpinning duty to protect biodiversity. This duty sits at all levels of local government, including Town, Parish and Community Councils and supporting this development would be in breach of this duty. The impact on important and protected species is clear and the benefits of such a development are limited to such an extent as to make their value insignificant when compared to the negatives.

We recommend that this application is refused and that any future applications to develop on this land are treated similarly.

Yours sincerely,

Steve McNay
Council Manager
On behalf of Woughton Community Council

Agenda item: LD 45/20 b)

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Planning, Licencing & Development Committee

Monday 19th October 2020

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To inform the committee the outcome of discussions relating to the Cripps Lodge application.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the committee notes this report, the papers submitted to Full Council on 12th October and the outcome of the discussions.

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

At time of writing, this paper was waiting for oversight from Full Council, due to the 'cut off' date for feedback being prior to the Planning Committee.

At this time, it is unclear as to the Council view of this application, but worth noting that this application is one that has been discussed with WCC representatives throughout the process.

Further information will be provided verbally at this meeting.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

N/A.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

N/A.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

N/A.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Full Council paper – FC 200/20.

AUTHOR

Steve McNay – Council Manager

Agenda item: LD 47/20

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Planning, Licencing & Development Committee

Monday 21st September 2020

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To update the committee on proposed planning law changes and the White Paper; 'Planning for the Future'.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That the committee notes the report and attached papers.**
- 2. That the committee considers any response to the consultation.**
- 3. That the Council Manager provides that response by cut-off date of 29th October.**

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

There are significant changes proposed to the current planning system, with potential impacts on the parish and wider implications for the planning system and housing delivery across the country. The white paper, 'Planning for the Future', outlines these proposals and includes a linked, but separate document that contains the consultation questions (26 of them). The overview and questions can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-future/planning-for-the-future> where there is also context for the questions.

The consultation covers a number of areas:

- Overview, asking for views on what people want to see within planning departments and how they would like to be informed
- Simplifying local plans (e.g. Plan:MK) to enable easier planning decisions and applications, alongside timescales for production of local plans
- Automatic permission in certain circumstances, including 'Nationally significant' planning developments
- Increased use of digital technology and streamlined / faster decision making
- Standardised, map based, online local plans
- New design codes nationally, to speed up developments
- Focus on sustainability and ecology (although limited)
- Changes to s106 funding, including questions around affordable housing, use of any planning gains money (s106, Community Infrastructure Levy or similar)

This is a huge policy change and is complex and detailed. Given this, members are encouraged to look at the paper, the consultation and consider whether we, as a local council, should contribute to the discussion or feed into the principle authority consultation that is running alongside.

Please note that there are a number of online events to help support councillors understanding of the changes both locally and nationally – please see below for details of one happening in MK this month.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The changes may have an implication in terms of access to s106 monies or whatever comes next.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

None noted.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

None.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Summary of proposed changes to current planning system consultation V1 (1).

Planning for the Future – White Paper.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907647/MHCLG-Planning-Consultation.pdf

AUTHOR

Steve McNay – Council Manager

Agenda item: LD 48/20

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Planning, Licencing & Development Committee

Monday 19th October 2020

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To inform the committee of proposals to remove the phone box on Jamaica on Coffee Hall.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That the committee notes the report.**
- 2. That the committee considers any response to BT via MKC Planning.**
- 3. That the Council Manager provides the response to MKC by 19th October 2020.**

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

As part of a wider programme, BT are proposing to remove the payphone on Jamaica on Coffee Hall.

This call box has an average of 13 calls per month.

This is one of 11 boxes that have been highlighted for closure, varying from as few as 3 calls per month, right through to 42 calls per month – the one in question is mid-range on this scale.

With mobile phones being owned by 95% of the population (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/289167/mobile-phone-penetration-in-the-uk>) these proposals represent the lack of usage of phone boxes and reflect the increasing unaffordability of maintaining boxes which don't get sufficient use.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

No impact on WCC budgets, but potential for local people to be impacted and need to have access to alternatives. This is, to some extent, mediated by access to a phone at the Hub offices.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

None.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

As above.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None.

AUTHOR

Steve McNay – Council Manager

Agenda item: LD 49/20

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Planning, Licencing & Planning Committee

Monday 19th October 2020

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To provide an overview of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2020/2021 – 2049/2050 and to decide on any contribution to the consultation.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That the committee notes the report and attached HRA Business Plan.**
- 2. That the committee agrees to provide feedback to the consultation.**
- 3. That the Council Manager's feedback report (attached) is used to base this response, altered to include / exclude any issues that the Committee feels appropriate.**

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

Overview of the Housing Revenue Account and associated Business Plan.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is a 'ringfenced' account that sits within the Milton Keynes Council (MKC) accounting systems and includes revenue that comes from rents, leaseholders and other parts of the landlord service controlled by MKC. It is intended to record expenditure and income on running a council's own housing stock and closely related services or facilities, which are provided primarily for the benefit of the council's own tenants.

The main features of the HRA are:

- it is a landlord account, recording expenditure and income arising from the provision of housing accommodation by local housing authorities (under the powers and duties conferred on them in Part II of the Housing Act 1985 and certain provisions of earlier legislation)
- it is not a separate fund but a ring-fenced account of certain defined transactions, relating to local authority housing, within the General Fund
- the main items of expenditure included in the account are management and maintenance costs, major repairs, loan charges, and depreciation costs
- the main sources of income are from tenants in the form of rents and service charges
- the HRA should be based on accruals in accordance with proper accounting practices, rather than cash accounting

Legislative features are:

- ring-fenced account within the General Fund

- Credits and Debits are prescribed by statute
- no general discretion to breach the ring-fence
- cannot budget for a deficit
- all borrowing within the HRA is in line with the CIPFA Prudential Code

The HRA Business Plan 2021/21 – 2049/50 (simply noted as the Business Plan within this paper) details the strategic plans for use of this fund over the coming 30 years, covering a significant amount of investment, improvement and management of the entirety of the MKC Landlord function.

There are a number of elements of note and councillors are encouraged to review the whole document, specifically the appendices at the rear that detail specific actions and the element relating to renewal of estates and changes relating to the now defunct Regeneration Strategy.

There are a total of 11,118 council properties within the city, and an additional 1,618 leasehold properties, all of which are managed via MKC as a landlord (as of July 2020). Approximately 18% of the MK Housing Stock as a whole is 'social' housing, either via MKC or other registered social landlords.

Population is estimated to be 265,000, which is expected to grow by 10% (a further 26,500) by 2031.

Overview of document:

Where possible, this paper links to page numbers within the Business Plan document, for ease of reference.

This is a significant document at 49 pages. It covers a wide range of things, including investment in new council housing, repairs and maintenance, Regeneration, finances and governance. This paper does not detail all aspects of the Business Plan but highlights the elements that the Council Manager considers to be pertinent to WCC and the residents of the parish. As noted previously, committee members are encouraged to read the document in full to ensure that all aspects are considered by this committee, as the elected representatives.

It links to a variety of other policies and plans (pages 8 – 11), including PlanMK, Housing Strategy and similar and includes links to a number of national policies that influence or directly impact upon local services and delivery. This includes the removal of the 'borrowing cap' for local authorities, allowing them to borrow significantly more to build new homes.

There are four 'guiding principles' (page 13) that underpin the business plan (although the document states three), which are:

- Engagement
- Value for money
- Equality and diversity
- Environmental sustainability (this one was added in a later draft)

The document then gives additional aims that sit within each of these four areas, with specific things that the council intends to do to see these succeed (pages 13 – 15).

To help define the priorities of the Landlord service, the Business Plan links to previous tenant consultations (page 16). Noteworthy are:

The consultation that was undertaken in 2018 saw a total of 86 residents consulted face to face with a further 594 written responses. This equals a total of 680 responses (some of which may be people who attended in person and provided written responses). With a total of almost 13,000 properties within the landlord service, this equates to a response rate of around 5%. The intention is to undertake a similar exercise again, but with the restrictions of Covid-19 in place, this will be even more difficult. However, based upon the 2018 consultation, the priorities from residents were:

1. Repairing existing homes
2. New homes (emphasis on larger family homes)
3. Upkeep of estates and communal areas*
4. Improved energy efficiency
5. New kitchens and bathrooms
6. Pavements, paths, fences and gates
7. Pest control
8. Improved security for communal and sheltered accommodation.

*this is the only are that WCC have direct impact on, via the Landscaping service.

Pages 18 – 30 look at what is defined as ‘asset management’ – this details current stock levels, conditions, decent homes standards, investment levels and spending over the previous and coming years, energy efficiency and similar.

Noteworthy elements are:

Stock numbers (interesting to see the composition of MKC housing stock).

A comment about the challenges of ‘non traditional’ building methods and impact on repairs and maintenance – more costly to maintain.

Acceptance in writing that there has been an underinvestment in council housing.

High levels of homes that don’t meet decent homes standards, whilst noting significant improvements over recent years.

Energy performance that is predominantly mid range (C / D for 95%+).

Some plans to reduce carbon emissions at certain developments, including Everglades (on parish).

The biggest highlight is the 5 year capital investment plan, which details how much money is being allocated to a range of repairs and maintenance (pages 21 – 32). This includes an increase of 300% on wiring (up from £538k to almost £2million), over £8.5million on kitchen upgrades, with a similar amount of roofing, and over £1million allocated to Harrier Court (on parish). Fire safety reduces from £1.5million to £310k.

All these figures look at 2023/24 spending, with the exception of Harrier Court which is noted for this year / next year.

Page 26 suggests that there is the potential for the repairs and maintenance service to be moved 'in house' in 2024, by creating a Direct Labour Organisation – essentially, a council owned company.

Pages 31 – 32 discuss 'Regeneration and estate renewal', which includes statements about this being more than bricks and mortar, including education, health and jobs. It also states that £165 million will be invested in improving housing stock between now and 2024. Also notes that the

previously highlighted 'Regen Estates' (now 'priority areas') are likely to see work starting over the course of the next few years, with Netherfield noted as somewhere this process has commenced.

Pages 33- 34 look at the supply of council housing with what is described as an 'ambitious' target of 1200 new council houses over the next 10 years, covering both the additional need and replacement of those homes lost under right to buy. Also covers plans to invest in additional homes, by buying on the open market, with 35 over this financial year, increasing to 50 in future years.

Pages 35 and 36 look at housing operations, supporting tenants to maintain tenancies, maintaining council estates and enabling tenants to hold the Landlord service to account. This includes 'robust' management of ASB (also highlighted in the introduction to the document as a whole, suggesting that this is an area that needs focus), providing neighbourhood officers with a direct budget, investing in public realm, pest control and reviewing parking issues. In addition, new ways of engaging with residents will be implemented.

Pages 37 – 39 look at finances, including rents, service charges, right to buy money and accounting.

Pages 40 - 42 look at governance, risk management, customer satisfaction and similar.

Pages 43 – 49 are the Delivery Plan – similar to our service plan, detailing what will happen, who will be responsible, when it will happen by and then additional comments. **It is suggested that this area is one that should be looked at in more detail by committee members for comments.**

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There is no direct impact on finances for WCC.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

There are no direct impacts on staffing within WCC

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Woughton has a high number of council properties and as such, the use of the HRA money is an important part of helping to build strong, safe and desirable communities. As such, a response to this strategy should focus on what is important to Woughton – investment in council properties, estates, public realm and similar, alongside the need to look at the impact of consistent and historic under investment within our communities. Estate renewal allows us to be ambitious on behalf of our residents and provide a strong, clear voice to recommend things that will make positive changes.

The Council Manager considers this Business Plan to be a useful document with some real positives for local residents after many years of neglect and under-investment in assets and communities. Whilst the evidence of benefit will perhaps not be seen for a number of years, the commitments made within this document suggest a new focus on engagement, a council that is investing to support these ambitions (£165 million over the next 4 years) and where there is at least some commitment to the environmental impact of its assets.

1200 homes over 10 years does not feel especially ambitious, but this must be seen against a backdrop of next to no council housing being built for many years.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2020/2021 – 2049/2050.

AUTHOR

Steve McNay – Council Manager

Agenda item: LD 50/20

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Planning, Licencing & Planning Committee

Monday 19th October 2020

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To inform the committee of a consultation regarding the installation of electric charging bays at the Woughton Leisure Centre.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That the committee notes the report and attached papers.**
- 2. That the committee considers any response to the consultation.**
- 3. That the Council Manager responds with any feedback by 22nd October 2020.**

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

As part of MKC's drive to a low carbon city, they are intending to instal electric charging points at key locations around the city. This includes eight (8) spaces at the Woughton Leisure Centre parking site, but also includes one outside the Hub offices (NOT included within this consultation).

This proposal will enable vehicles to charge and provides a significant increase in the number of charging points within the parish (currently only one, on Netherfield).

It is likely that these charging points will provide opportunities for local residents to charge vehicles, alongside (and the Council Manager considers this to be more likely, especially during the day) employees of local schools, colleges and similar.

This is land that is owned by MKC.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None noted.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

None noted.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Map for order.

Statement of reasons.

Proposed order.

AUTHOR

Steve McNay – Council Manager