

## DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

*At a meeting of the Development Management Committee on Monday, 15 May 2023 at the Civic Suite - Town Hall, Runcorn*

Present: Councillors S. Hill (Chair), Leck (Vice-Chair), Abbott, Carlin, Hutchinson, A. Lowe, Polhill and Woolfall

Apologies for Absence: Councillors J. Bradshaw and Philbin

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: A. Jones, T. Gibbs, A. Plant, A. Evans, G. Henry, L. Wilson-Lagan, I. Dignall and J. Farmer

Also in attendance: 27 members of the public and one member of the press

### ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE COMMITTEE

*Action*

#### DEV34 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2023, having been circulated, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

#### DEV35 PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO BE DETERMINED BY THE COMMITTEE

The Committee considered the following applications for planning permission and, in accordance with its powers and duties, made the decisions described below.

#### DEV36 22/00178/FUL & 22/00179/FUL - PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE, PUBLIC OPEN SPACE, LANDSCAPING, SUSTAINABLE URBAN DRAINAGE AND CAR PARKING ON LAND SOUTH OF MILL GREEN FARM, MILL GREEN LANE, WIDNES (22/00178/FUL) AND LAND TO THE SOUTH OF SOUTH LANE AND EAST OF BARROWS GREEN LANE, WIDNES (22/00179/FUL)

The consultation procedure undertaken was outlined in the report together with background information in respect of the site.

The Chair reminded the Committee that although the applications tonight may be discussed together, they are separate applications and must be determined individually.

The case officer presented the applications and advised of the following clarifications to the report:

- Page 5 – The location of planning application 22/00179/FUL should read '*land to the south of South Lane and east of Barrows Green Lane*'; and
- Page 40 – The S106 Chapter concludes with a total value of Infrastructure spend; the bus subsidy of a 12 month travel plan is in addition to this total.

Since the publication of the report the following updates were provided:

- Two further objections had been received – one raising issues already covered in the report and the other concerning the siting of a substation. Redrow has responded to say that the location of the substation was requested by the service provider, as it needs to be located as near to the grid connection as possible;
- Natural England has stated it has no objection to application 22/00178/FUL; however a response relating to application 22/00179/FUL remained outstanding; and
- An additional condition is recommended for each application concerning the numbers of residential units approved.

The Highways Officer outlined the highways impacts of the development on local junctions. This included further work carried out by the Applicant since the submission of the original Transport Assessment; details of a sensitivity test; details of a scheme of interventions including new cycle and pedestrian routes; and off site interventions.

The Committee was addressed by Chief Inspector Pyke, objecting to the applications on behalf of Cheshire Constabulary. He argued that both applications failed to provide mitigation for the impacts on policing in the area. He stated, *inter alia* that:

- The concerns of the Constabulary had been disregarded by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and the reason given for the dismissal of the objections made by the Police was weak;
- The resulting increase in population of circa 1,200

residents from both developments would cause additional demands on the Police service;

- The Local Plan did not account for any additional policing that would be required;
- The Police precept applied did not cover the additional resources (infrastructure and staff costs) that would be needed, so there is no funding;
- Policy CS(R)7 requires where deficiencies in infrastructure occur, they are adequately mitigated;
- The infrastructure requirements of the sites must be identified before approval can be given;
- The requests made by Cheshire Police met the legal tests;
- No evidence or information was requested from the Force by the LPA;
- The ongoing demands being made on the Force is unacceptable; and
- The Committee was requested to show its support for the Police for the reasons stated by either deferring the decisions or refusing the applications.

Mr Harper then addressed the Committee objecting to the proposals. He spoke about the following issues, *inter alia*:

- Green Belt compensatory measures – the NPPF requires quality improvements and these applications do not meet the NPPF;
- The profits being made by Redrow from the developments;
- Concern that the Council is exceeding its rate of housing trajectory delivery that would put pressure on green field sites;
- The numbers of dwellings per annum being built in Halton – 7 year plan not being followed;
- The lack of consideration to the capacity of the area in relation to schools, GP's etc; and
- The travel needs of pupils going to schools was not being addressed.

A second objector, Mr Farrell, then addressed the Committee citing the following *inter alia*:

- The community has not been engaged at any time during the whole planning process; efforts have been mere gestures of public consultation;
- Infrastructure does not exist to support the proposals (GP's, Schools etc) information on school provision is not accurate;

- The reports were out of touch and biased and the use of phrases such as 'acceptable' and 'tolerant' were questionable;
- The proposals would exacerbate traffic issues such as emissions, parking and electrification;
- The Section 106 monies; the viability of property prices and Redrow profits were queried;
- A viability report of the sites was not requested by the Council;
- Farnworth will have no identity other than to be a showroom for Redrow – should be renamed 'Little Redrow';
- Vehicle movements will increase;
- Noise and disturbance would impact on residents for 4 to 5 years during development – no consideration has been given to them; and
- There is no green belt land remaining.

The Committee was then addressed by Mr Gilbert, the Agent for the applicant. He thanked the planning officers for their support over what has been an 18-month process to bring the applications forward. He stated the following, *inter alia*:

- Redrow has an excellent track record of building high quality housing in Halton and these applications were no exception. The agenda report concerned two high quality schemes that were both allocated sites, Part of SRL7 in North Widnes, and that the development was proportionately in line with this allocation;
- The proposed development will include 20% affordable homes, including the first homes being available to first time buyers at 30% below market value;
- The sites would benefit from high quality landscaping, bespoke play areas and have other local enhancements such as semi natural green spaces and a linear park that will link to new and existing cycle routes;
- The Applicant has agreed to a S106 package that would result in local enhancements, off site green space, highway improvements, active travel and free bus passes for new site residents; and
- The Applicant acknowledged the remarks made by Cheshire Police at the meeting. However they supported the Council's view with regard to their request for S106 contributions as set out in the Officer's report.

One Member's concern regarding the request from

Cheshire Constabulary for Section 106 money was noted. In response to Members' queries, the following information was provided:

- Compensation for loss of Green Belt (page 16) – the inspectors note on this was read out to Members;
- Cheshire Police – pages 40-44 sets out why the request for Section 106 money was declined;
- Education Authority – no additional monies were requested; they had stated that there was sufficient capacity within Halton for primary and secondary school provision;
- Three exits from application proposal 22/00179/FUL that lead out to the A57 – the Council has applied to Cheshire Police to drop the speed limit to 30mph on this road; and
- Legal advice was given with regards to the principle of the development and the requirement on the Committee to establish whether the proposals accord with the development plan as a whole.

After listening to the speakers, responses to concerns and queries, and consideration of the information before them, both applications were moved and seconded and the Committee voted to approve both applications.

RESOLVED: That authority be delegated to the Operational Director – Policy, Planning and Transportation, to determine the application in consultation with the Chair or Vice Chair of the Committee, following the satisfactory resolution of the outstanding issues relating to Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) compliance for both applications and subject to the following:

- a) S106 Agreement that secures the terms set out in the Legal Agreement section of the report;
- b) the schedule of conditions set out below; and
- c) that if the S106 Agreement is not signed within a reasonable period of time, authority is given to refuse the application.

Recommended conditions as follows with any additional conditions recommended through the resolution of the HRA compliance issue to be added to the list below:

22/00178/FUL

1. Standard 3 year permission;
2. Condition specifying plans;

3. Bird nesting boxes scheme;
4. Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and additional reasonable avoidance measures;
5. Lighting scheme;
6. Vehicle access and parking to be constructed prior to commencement of use;
7. External materials;
8. Drainage condition(s) to include culvert survey, ownership details, drainage calculations, verification of SuDS implementation, maintenance and management;
9. Levels;
10. Hard and soft landscaping;
11. Public Open Space (POS) implementation and management;
12. Grampian style condition securing off site highways works;
13. Submission and agreement of traffic calming works;
14. Waste audit;
15. Site investigation, remediation and mitigation;
16. Relating to unidentified contamination;
17. Protection of water infrastructure;
18. Landscape and ecological / habitat management plan;
19. Removal of permitted development rights HS/fencing;
20. Hard and soft landscaping;
21. Submission and agreement of ecological enhancement features;
22. Submission and agreement of boundary treatments;
23. Securing ecological and habitat protection through a CEMP;
24. Restriction construction and delivery hours;
25. Requiring implementation of scheme of noise mitigation;
26. Submission and agreement of play facilities; and
27. Submission, agreement and implementation of measures for reducing carbon emissions and adapting to climatic conditions.

22/00179/FUL

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  27. Securing a scheme of archaeological works; and
  28. Submission, agreement and implementation of measures for reducing carbon emissions and adapting to climatic conditions.

*Meeting ended at 7.25 p.m.*