

APPENDIX 'A'

Runnymede Borough Council

PLANNING COMMITTEE

19 January 2022 at 6.30 pm

Members of Committee present: Councillors M Willingale (Chairman), P Snow (Vice-Chairman), D Anderson-Bassey, J Broadhead, D Cotty, M Harnden, J Hulley, M Kusneraitis, M Maddox, I Mullens, M Nuti, J Sohi and S Whyte

Members of the Committee absent: Councillors C Mann and J Wilson

Councillors D Coen and C Howorth attended as non-members of the Committee

382 Notification of Changes to Committee Membership

The Groups mentioned below had notified the Chief Executive of their wish that the changes listed below be made to the membership of the Committee. The changes were for a fixed period ending on the day after the meeting and thereafter the Councillors removed would be reappointed.

<u>Group</u>	<u>Remove</u>	<u>Appoint instead</u>
RIRG	Cllr Gillham	Cllr Harnden
Conservative	Cllr Edis	Cllr Hulley

The Chief Executive had given effect to the changes to Committee membership in accordance with section 16(2) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989

383 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 November were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

384 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Mann

385 Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were made.

386 Planning Application

The planning applications listed below were considered by the Committee. All representations received on the applications were reported and copies had been made available for inspection by Members before the meeting. The Addendum had also been published on the Council's website on the day of the meeting. An objector and applicant's agent addressed the Committee on RU 21/0695.

RESOLVED that –

the following applications be determined as indicated: -

APP NO LOCATION, PROPOSAL AND DECISION

RU 21/0265 Land to west of Hardwick Lane, Lyne, Chertsey

Change of use from agricultural land to public open space (POS) for use as a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), together with associated development to include vehicular access from Hardwick Lane car parking, footpaths, landscaping and all other associated works.

Members commented on the security of the site against anti-social behaviour, lack of a footway along Hardwick Lane to the SANG, potential parking in Hardwick Lane as a result of the car park on site being full, and accessibility of the site for disabled persons and those with mobility problems.

Officers confirmed that the site entrance would be gated and a height restriction barrier to prevent larger vehicles accessing the site was proposed. If anti-social behaviour occurred at the site, the relevant agencies and Land Trust would consider appropriate action. The comment regarding lack of a footway along Hardwick Lane was noted, but the primary purpose of a SANG was to mitigate potential impacts which could arise from residential development generating additional use of the TBHSPA and many of those visiting the SANG would travel by car. The Committee asked that conditions be imposed requiring submission of a strategy to explore options to maximise as far as possible access to the SANG for disabled persons and those persons with limited mobility, and requiring submission of a scheme showing how additional overflow parking e.g. grasscrete could be provided on site to avoid overflow parking on Hardwick Lane.

RESOLVED that-

The CHDMBC be authorised to grant permission subject to the completion of the Section 106 legal agreement under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) to secure the following obligations:

- 1. Costs of initial set up works;**
- 2. Costs of maintenance and replacements in perpetuity;**
- 3. Secure management arrangements for the maintenance of the SANG in perpetuity.**

The final S106 planning obligation will also need to describe the split of payments in order that the issues to be resolved by the relevant obligations can be properly assigned to the elements of the development giving rise to them. All figures and contributions will also need to be finalised in negotiation with the applicant and relevant consultees and final authority be granted to the CHDMBC in these negotiations .

And reasons and informatives listed on agenda, and additional conditions requiring submission of a strategy to explore options to maximise as far as possible access for

disabled persons and persons with limited mobility, and submission of a scheme showing how additional overflow parking e.g. grasscrete may be provided to avoid overflow parking on Hardwick lane.

The CHDMBC be authorised to refuse planning permission should the S106 not progress to his satisfaction or if any significant material considerations arise prior to the issuing of the decision notice that in the opinion of the CHDMBC would warrant refusal of the application. Reasons for the refusal relating to any such matter be delegated to the CHDMBC.

RU 21/0695 **Padd Farm, Hurst Lane, Egham**

Demolition of existing buildings and structures, and removal of hardstanding; the decontamination of land; the erection of 38 affordable dwellings with associated access, parking, landscaping and infrastructure works and the change of use of land to paddocks.

As a preliminary matter a Member queried which Ward the development was in. The majority of the site is within Virginia Water Ward. It was noted that since the scheme was reduced in size and the SANG removed from the proposal, no new built form would be in Thorpe Ward. (Note in the interests of clarity: Part of the red line site is still located in Thorpe Ward including land stated as "pasture land" which is why it is referenced in the report).

There was significant debate around the factors weighing in favour of the development and those weighing against it .

Members acknowledged the relevant tests for the consideration of a very special circumstances case in the green belt. Officers informed the Committee that the weight applied to various material circumstances was a matter for the decision maker, in this case the Committee.

Members were aware that it did not need to be a single reason to clearly outweigh the harm and that this could be achieved by the cumulation of reasons that outweighed the harm to the green belt.

Members noted the table of possible benefits listed on pages 48&49 of the Committee agenda, as well as the substantial weight that needed to be afforded to harm in the Green Belt and other matters detailed in the report. Members thanked officers for the detailed report.

A minority of Members of the Committee considered that the very special circumstances put forward by the applicant and set out in the planning balance section of the report clearly outweighed the harm caused by reason of the development's inappropriateness and the physical harm to the openness of the Green Belt. In particular the 100% delivery of affordable housing was noted as a substantial benefit.

However the majority of Members considered that they had concerns over the quantum/volume of development, its location and its substantial harm to the Green Belt. These Members indicated that they also had concerns that the development was in an unsustainable location, that was highly dependent on private motor vehicles due to the absence of local facilities

near to the site. Some Members had concerns that slightly too much weight had been given in the officer recommendation to the benefits of clearing up the contamination of the land and that perhaps the weight attributed to this should be significant rather than substantial, however the primary concern was the poor sustainability of the site in locational and car dependency terms and harm to the green belt. Whilst these Members acknowledged the benefits of the scheme they were not convinced that very special circumstances (cumulative) had been demonstrated which clearly outweighed this previously mentioned green belt harm particularly when taking into account the poor sustainability of the location which would result in heavy reliance on use of private car to access local facilities.

Following this debate, a Motion to authorise the CHDMBC to grant permission as per the agenda report and updated by the Addendum was moved and seconded. Cllr Mullens requested a named vote on this Motion and the voting was as follows:

For: 5 (Councillors Broadhead, Cotty, Nuti, Snow and Willingale)

Against: 8 (Councillors Anderson -Bassey, Harnden, Hulley, Kusneraitis, Maddox, Mullens, Sohi and Whyte)

The Motion was duly lost.

Following some further discussion, a Motion was then moved and seconded to refuse the application on the basis of the above-mentioned concerns expressed by the majority of Members. This Motion was passed and it was:

RESOLVED that-

The CHDMBC be authorised to refuse permission on the basis of its unsustainable car dependent location and poor access to facilities and the significant harm caused to the Green Belt by virtue of the quantity and volume of development proposed and that no very special circumstances have been demonstrated which clearly outweighed this harm.

Any further technical reasons for refusal (e.g. failure to complete a legal agreement) to be determined by the CHDMBC.

(Dr Bates, an objector, and Mr Sommerville, agent for the applicant, addressed the Committee on the above application)

387 Runnymede Interim Policy Statement on First Homes

This Committee's approval was sought to publish the First Homes Interim Policy Statement.

First Homes was a new tenure of low-cost home ownership affordable housing which allowed first time buyers to get onto the housing ladder at a reduced price.

From the end of December 2021, it became mandatory for First Homes to be provided as a proportion of the affordable housing on market-led sites.

There were a number of ways in which the Council could shape and influence how First Homes were implemented in the Borough, including giving priority to people based upon local connection or their employment status.

Planning policy guidance on First Homes recommended that Councils should publish an Interim Policy Statement (IPS) to explain how First Homes would be implemented in their area. This would set out the Council's requirements for First Homes. The next iteration of the Local Plan would take account of this affordable housing tenure in its evidence base and integrate First Homes into the new policies of the Plan.

The Committee noted the details surrounding the introduction of First Homes as a mandatory new affordable housing tenure by the Government and Runnymede Borough Council's proposed interim planning policy position around the various aspects of First Homes.

The Committee fully supported the Interim Policy Statement.

Resolved that

the Interim Policy Statement be APPROVED for publication on the website with an implementation date of Wednesday 26 January 2022.

388 Revisions to Pre-Application Advice Service and Charging Schedule

The Committee considered the update of the Council's pre-application charging schedule and services.

The proposed schedule simplified the pre-application process, updated fees and charges and better reflected the requirements of different pre-application types and service levels.

The Council's pre-application schedule was last updated in 2017. Officers had conducted a review of the current pre-application fees and services offered, as well reviewing the fees and services offered by other Surrey Local Authorities and Authorities in neighbouring counties. A number had significantly higher fees than those charged or proposed to be charged at Runnymede which reflected the need to meet costs in these Boroughs. The CHDMBC considered however that fees should not be set at too high a rate so as not to disincentivise use of the service as it brought important benefits to development in the Borough and as such it was not proposed to match some of these higher rates elsewhere.

Officers had also reviewed the number and type of pre-application submissions in the Borough and considered the work and time that had been involved in dealing with these requests. Members noted that in recent years there had been a significant increase in the number of larger preapplication requests, partly as a result of the local plan. Customer expectations had increased and with many development proposals increasing in complexity, this required increased officer time to review, which the current charges did not reflect. These submissions had been beneficial as they had added quality and value to planning applications, however it was considered that the costs attached to processing these requests were generally not met and that the service provided by officers often went significantly beyond what was included in the schedule.

The revisions to the pre-application charges proposed reflect the associated costs of providing this service including officer time and multiple officer input for more complex and larger scale schemes.

The recommended updated service and charging schedule as reported provided refined options for applicants and better set out service levels and choices for customers. The revisions would enhance the service offered, better reflect the Borough's costs and also better meet our customers' needs.

The Committee fully endorsed the updated pre application schedule of services and charges.

Resolved that

**The updated pre-application schedule of services and charges, as reported,
be adopted with effect from 1st February 2022**

(The meeting ended at 8.25 pm)

Chairman