

## Runnymede Borough Council

### Planning Committee

Wednesday, 22 June 2022 at 6.30 pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors P Snow (Vice-Chairman), A Balkan, J Broadhead, R Bromley, V Cunningham, E Gill, C Howorth, C Mann, I Mullens, J Wilson, T Burton (Substitute in place of S Whyte), D Coen (Substitute in place of M Nuti), J Furey (Substitute in place of M Willingale), R King (Substitute in place of R Davies) and S Ringham (Substitute in place of A Berardi).

In attendance: Councillors S Jenkins, A King and M Heath.

#### 102 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 June,2022 were confirmed and signed as a correct record subject to the addition of the following wording in the preamble to the resolution in respect of RU 22/0086 (Fairmont Windsor Park Hotel, Wick Lane, Englefield Green):

*'A member of the committee queried if the fountain should or could be excluded from the advertisement consent, since they were of the opinion that it was a structure and may need full planning permission. The officer response was that this was a matter of fact and degree, the fountain appeared to be affixed to the main sign structure and made-up part of the branding for the hotel. As a matter of fact, and degree it was considered that on balance the fountain could reasonably form part of the advert, which is what had been applied for by the applicant. The term "advertisement" covers a wide range of advertisements and can include things as diverse as models, statues, LED screens, or large inflatables, and a theoretical example was given for example of the Universal Studios globe logo which could be a structure and an advert at the same time. In concluding that the fountain was a substantive part of the advert it would also have the same time limitations as main signage part of the advert (5 years).'*

#### 103 Apologies for Absence

No apologies received.

#### 104 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Gill declared a Non registrable Interest in planning application RU 21/2211 as she had received assistance from Fairmont Hotel for her charitable endeavours during her Mayoral term. Whilst Cllr Gill felt able to consider this application with an open and fair mind, she was concerned that as the assistance was very recent, members of the public might perceive a conflict of interest. To avoid such a perception, Cllr Gill withdrew from the chamber and took no part in determination of the application.

Cllr Howorth declared a Non registrable interest in planning application RU 21/2211 as he knew the applicant who had donated to political campaigns. Cllr Howorth withdrew from the chamber and took no part in determination of the application.

Cllrs Balkan and Howorth declared Disclosable Pecuniary interests in the item on Draft Parking Guidance SPD as they are employees of Royal Holloway University of London. Both Councillors withdrew from the chamber and took no part in determination of the matter.

#### 105 Planning Applications

The planning applications listed below were considered by the Committee. A 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. Objectors and applicants and/or their agents addressed the Committee on the applications specified.

**RESOLVED that –**

**the following applications be determined as indicated: -**

<b><u>APP NO</u></b>	<b><u>LOCATION, PROPOSAL AND DECISION</u></b>
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<b>RU 21/0893</b>	<b>Chilsey Green Farm, Pycroft Road, Chertsey</b>
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The erection of 170 dwellings and the provision of five permanent serviced pitches for gypsies /travellers including associated parking, landscaping, public open space and infrastructure following demolition of the existing outbuildings on site.

*Comments were made by Members regarding ownership and liability for maintenance of the Rutherwyk ditch and potential exacerbation of flooding from the watercourse, traffic generation, construction traffic entering the site around school opening and closing times, level of financial contribution to Demand Responsive Transport Service, restriction on use of garages to parking of vehicles, impact on surrounding property, and reptile mitigation.*

*In response to comments made, Officers commented that the site was an allocated site for housing development in the Local Plan and the principle of development had been established.*

*The ownership and liability for maintenance of the ditch was not a planning matter. The scheme had been designed to mitigate its own impact. There had been no objection from LLFA, EA and RBC Drainage Engineers and the drainage scheme was considered acceptable in flooding and drainage terms.*

*Surface water at the site would be provided with appropriate attenuation measures and would have a controlled release into the ditch and a management and maintenance plan of the surface water strategy would be required to be submitted by condition 9.*

*The developer had no obligation to maintain the ditch but was willing to mitigate the risk of significant debris from the development site entering or obstructing the Rutherwyk ditch in so far as was practicable and to facilitate access from the development site to the ditch for the EA or any other organisation who was formally responsible for management of the ditch for purposes of maintenance and condition 26 would be amended accordingly.*

*No objection had been received from CHA based on recent highway assessments and the amount of additional traffic was considered acceptable in highway terms. The developer had committed to introducing highway measures to improve highway safety around Pycroft School. The Development was also making a significant contribution to the A320*

*improvements. The Construction Management Plan would address access to the site by construction vehicles.*

*The level of financial contribution was appropriate for this development and there was no evidence to suggest it should be increased. In the condition for a Construction Management Plan reference would be made to encourage the developer to work in a considerate manner to minimise inconvenience. Condition 20 required a reptile mitigation method statement to be submitted prior to commencement of works.*

*Members requested that an extra condition be imposed requiring garages to be retained for the parking of vehicles and not converted to additional habitable accommodation without the benefit of planning permission in order to maintain an appropriate level of parking on the site.*

#### **Resolved that**

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

- 1)SAMM £134,280 and SANG £337,005 (TBH SPA – Financial Contribution);**
- 2)The provision of 5 Gypsy and Traveller Pitches including a clear phasing for their timely delivery;**
- 3)The provision and deliverability of 35% affordable Housing - 27 affordable rent, 5 social rent, 13 shared ownership, 13 First Time Homes;**
- 4)Secure Management Arrangements for the maintenance of the open space and equipped play spaces and public access;**
- 5)Delivery of the Community Orchard;**
- 6)To secure through a Section 278 Agreement with the Local Highways Authority vehicular access to Pycroft Road, and the provision of a school safety zone which would include additional parking restrictions and parking spaces, signage and raised tables on both approaches to the school to reduce speeds along this section of Pycroft Road;**
- 7)Transportation improvements and contributions including:**
  - A financial contribution of £2,836,736.76 towards mitigation measures on the A320**
  - A financial contribution to Demand Responsive Transport Service for £80,000 Index linked to RPIx from date of signing S106 for a period of 5 years**
  - Travel Plan auditing fee of £6,150.**

**All figures and contributions will also need to be finalised in negotiation with the applicant and relevant consultees and final authority in these negotiations is given to the CHDMBC;**

**And subject to conditions (conditions 12 and 26 amended as per addendum), reasons and informatives listed on the agenda with additional condition requiring garages to be retained for the parking of vehicles and not converted to additional habitable accommodation without the benefit of planning permission, and reference in the condition for a Construction**

**Management Plan to encourage the developer to work in a considerate manner to minimise inconvenience.**

**The CHDMBC be authorised to refuse planning permission should the s106 not progress to his satisfaction, or if any other material planning matters arise prior to the issuing of the decision that in the opinion of the CHDMBC would warrant the refusal of planning permission.**

(Ms Theil, an objector, and Mr Steele, agent for applicant, addressed the Committee on this application)

### **Dell Park House and Fairmont Hotel, Wick Lane, Englefield Green**

**RU 21/2211**

Application seeking retrospective planning permission for the proposed retention of 4 detached treehouse lodges ancillary to the existing hotel use at Fairmont Hotel with associated access and pathways and the proposed part change of use of existing land at Dell Park House for hotel use (Use Class C1)

*Key concerns raised early in the debate by some Members related to spatial impact of development on Green Belt and the harms caused to openness by virtue of its scale, volume, height, form and visual impact. Concerns were also raised on ecological and arboricultural grounds.*

*In presenting the scheme and answering Member questions, Officers commented that the most important characteristic of Green Belt was its openness and harm to the Green Belt should be given substantial weight. The report set out a finely balanced 'planning balance' that on balance led to a recommendation to approve the scheme. However, the weight attributable to individual harms or benefits was a matter for the decision maker (in this case the Committee).*

*Officers noted that the treehouse volume would be raised up and as such had the potential to have a greater spatial impact than the buildings to be demolished, which were single storey. For this reason it was noted that the developer had proposed significantly more floor space to be demolished than was proposed, with the aim of trying to offset and mitigate the increased height and volume of the proposed. It was noted that 700m<sup>2</sup> of curtilage buildings were to be demolished, and 500m<sup>2</sup> of new floor space was proposed.*

*In the view of officers the visual Green Belt impact of the development was lesser than the existing buildings as officers considered that there was visual mitigation by the substantial evergreen screening and the reduction in spread of development across the site. This combined with the reduction in floor space and the other factors in the report led to an 'on balance' recommendation in favour. This was a finely balanced recommendation. The CHDMBC however advised that ultimately the weight given to the very special circumstances was a matter for the Committee to determine in its role as decision maker.*

*In response to queries, the Committee was advised that retrospective applications were permitted in law and had to be treated like all other applications in decision making. The Council's Tree Officer considered that the loss of trees would be mitigated by the proposed extensive planting. Sufficient parking existed on site and noise should not be a*

*problem as the treehouses were a significant distance away from residential properties. No evidence existed that protected species had been affected by the development and condition 5 required biodiversity enhancements.*

*Significant discussion and debate occurred and a significant number of Members stated that having given due regard to the material considerations they had concerns over the impact upon the Green Belt and stated that they did not consider that very special circumstances existed to justify the development.*

*Some Members, however, felt that the harm to the Green Belt was overcome by the very special circumstances put forward by the applicant and a Motion to authorise the CHDMBC to grant planning permission was moved and seconded. The Motion was lost.*

*A recorded vote was taken on the Motion and the voting was as follows;*

*For approval: 4 (Cllrs Broadhead, Bromley, Furey and Snow)*

*Against :9 (Cllrs Balkan, Burton, Coen, Cunningham, King, Mann, Mullens, Ringham and Wilson)*

*Abstentions :0*

*Debate recommenced about the perceived harms of the development. A majority of Members indicated that they did not consider that the amount of development proposed to be demolished would offset the harm caused by the proposed development, particularly given the increased height and volume of the tree houses. Some Members also considered that the treehouses had the potential to have a greater visual impact in Green Belt terms. In the debate there was consensus amongst Members who had voted against the first Motion that the amount of weight attributed to the demolished structures in the recommendation was too great and should be reduced from very significant weight to moderate weight. The relatively unique offer of the tree houses and benefits to the brand and diversity of the hotel's offering was felt by many Members to only have limited weight rather than moderate weight as set out in the report.*

*As a result of this a significant number of Members considered that this affected the overall planning balance and that this meant that the factors in favour of the scheme did not in their view clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt. Thus Very Special Circumstances had not been demonstrated.*

*A Motion was moved and seconded that the application be refused on grounds that the development was inappropriate development in the Green Belt and the harms caused to openness by virtue of its scale, volume, height and form were not clearly outweighed by the Very Special Circumstances put forward by the applicant.*

*The Motion was passed.*

*A recorded vote was taken on the Motion and the voting was as follows:*

*For refusal: 9 (Cllrs Balkan, Burton, Coen, Cunningham, King, Mann, Mullens, Ringham and Wilson)*

*Against: 3 (Cllrs Broadhead, Bromley and Furey)*

*Abstention: 1(Cllr Snow)*

**Resolved that**

**The CHDMBC be authorised to refuse planning permission for the reason that the development is inappropriate development in the Green Belt and the harms caused to openness by virtue of its scale, volume, height and form are not clearly outweighed by the Very Special Circumstances put forward by the applicant.**

(Mr Gates, an objector, and Mr Arora, the applicant, addressed the Committee on this application)

**19 The Avenue, Egham**

Advertisement consent for 1 No 8m high internally illuminated sign

**RU 22/0435**

*Some Members raised concerns over the sign, in particular the harm to visual amenity and impact on environment, light pollution to adjoining properties, size of the sign and impact on the historic prominence of trees near the site. Other Members considered that the signage was appropriate in an urban area.*

*The CHDMBC commented that the site was an existing commercial premises where there were several other signs and adverts visible and located opposite a petrol station which also had signs visible. The proposed signage was also located close to the raised section of the M25 which removed most medium and long range views. The signage was considered to be visually acceptable and in keeping with the surrounding area and the host site and would not materially harm the visual amenities of the area. Given the context of the site and the separation to other properties, it was considered by officers that a reason for refusal on amenity grounds would be hard to justify at an appeal.*

*A Motion was moved and seconded to defer the application to allow Officers to request the applicant to consider some other less intrusive form of signage. The Motion was lost.*

*Following defeat of the Motion to defer, a Motion to authorise the CHDMBC to approve the application was moved and seconded and passed and it was*

**Resolved that**

**The CHDMBC be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the conditions, reasons and Informative listed on the agenda.**

**106 Draft Revised Parking Guidance Supplementary Planning Document**

The Committee received and considered the draft revised Parking Guidance SPD.

The draft revised parking guidance had been prepared to reflect the up-to-date guidance set out in the NPPF and to support the policies contained in the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan. The guidance had been prepared taking account of national planning guidance and the updated parking guidance published by Surrey County Council in November 2021. The additional consultancy work undertaken by Project Centre Limited also provided the Planning Committee with further detailed advice and alternative recommendations around parking standards for new office developments and PBSA schemes and the Committee agreed their preferred options in relation thereto as set out in the resolution below. The guidance sought to provide a degree of certainty for developers and communities in

respect of the levels of vehicular and cycle parking that would be required in association with new development but also provided flexibility to assess individual schemes where that might be more appropriate given the nature of development proposed. The draft revised guidance also sought to take account of the locational characteristics and the ability to travel by walking, cycling and use of public transport where those modes of travel were convenient options, the need to plan for greater use of electric vehicles in the future and the potential need to control on-street car parking in certain locations through the use of controlled parking zones (CPZs). In presenting the report the Local Plans Manager confirmed that there was no known negative equality implications.

The Committee was supportive of the draft SPD and confirmed their preferred options in relation to parking standards for new office developments and PBSA schemes. The words 'Car-free (Blue Badge parking only) encouraged' would be deleted from the proposed parking standard for sites within RHUL and Egham Station Sustainable Access Zones as it was felt this undermined the standard. The draft SPD would be subject to a 6-week period of public consultation to seek the views of local communities and other interested parties on the draft guidance. During that consultation Officers would ascertain if SCC was supportive of Priority Parking Areas. Furthermore as part of the public consultation on the SPD, Project Centre Limited and officers in the Planning Policy team would be arranging an evening presentation for any members of the public who would find it helpful to find out more about the parking standards contained in the SPD, particularly those related to PBSA and new office developments. This would include a question and answer session and Members would be informed of the dates when the consultation would run and the date of the presentation.

Once public consultation feedback had been considered, the SPD would be reported back to the Planning Committee for final consideration and potential adoption.

The Local Plans Manager was thanked for her work on the draft SPD.

#### **Resolved that:**

- 1. The draft revised Runnymede Borough Parking Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) including the standards shown in 2 and 3 below be approved for public consultation for a period of six weeks.**
- 2. The vehicular parking standard for inclusion in the draft Runnymede Parking Guidance SPD for new office development be:**

**1 car parking space per 200sqm in town centre locations (within 400m of a bus stop providing a minimum of 4 buses per hour and located within 800m of a train station) and 1 space per 30sqm in all other areas (Project Centre Limited recommended standard).**
- 3. The vehicular parking standard for inclusion in the draft Runnymede Parking Guidance SPD for new purpose built student accommodation be**

<b>Sustainable access zone</b>	<b>Proposed parking standard (maxi</b>
Sites ONLY within RHUL Sustainable Access Zone	Staff: 1 space per 2 staff Student: 1 space per 7 beds
Sites ONLY within Egham Station Sustainable Access Zone	Staff: 1 space per 2 staff Student: 1 space per 7 beds
Sites within RHUL AND Egham Station Sustainable Access Zones	Staff: 1 space per 2 staff Student: 1 space per 10 beds.
Sites OUTSIDE Sustainable Access Zones	Individual assessment, requiring

	justification of parking levels and sustainable access.
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(The meeting ended at 10.36 pm.)

Chairman