

Runnymede Borough Council

Planning Committee

Wednesday, 20 December 2023 at 6.30 pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors M Willingale (Chairman), P Snow (Vice-Chairman), A Balkan, T Burton, V Cunningham, T Gates, E Gill, C Howorth, A King, R King (In place of E Kettle), C Mann, I Mullens, M Nuti, S Whyte and J Wilson.

Members of the Committee absent: Councillors E Kettle.

In attendance: Councillors L Gillham.

41 **Notification of Changes to Committee Membership**

Cllr R King substituted for Cllr E Kettle.

42 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2023 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

43 **Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

44 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

45 **RU.23/1213 - Wentworth Golf Club, Wentworth Estate, Virginia Water, GU25 4NN**

Proposal: The erection of a building for golf performance training and practice with practice game area, landscaping and associated development following demolition of existing building

During the debate the size of the proposed building was mentioned, and the need for a café space was queried. Officers advised that the facility was of an ancillary nature and appropriate for the size of the development and proportionate to the use. The kitchenette and number of tables was relatively modest. Such performance centres have begun to be established at other high-end golf clubs and are often used for group teaching and so there is an expectation that refreshments and facilities would be available to support this.

Responding to concerns about the protection of Tree reference T76, officers confirmed that the tree protection plan included protection this tree as set out in condition six.

Officers confirmed that the removal of the existing building that stored sand and soil was unlikely to impact the operation of the golf club due to the high likelihood of multiple other maintenance sites across Wentworth used for the purposes of green keeping and course maintenance.

The net increase in trees was welcomed, along with the reclaiming of the scrub area. It was confirmed that review of the submitted ecological survey had been undertaken by Surrey Wildlife Trust, who had raised no concerns around the potential presence of

endangered species. The implementation of the condition around biodiversity net gains would be carried out in accordance with the agreed strategy this was appropriate to satisfy Surrey Wildlife Trust and officers.

Resolved that –

The Head of Planning was authorised to grant planning permission subject to:

- a) Conditions 1-10**
- b) Addendum notes**

46 RU.23/0726 - Woburn Park Farm, Addlestone Moor, KT15 2QF

Proposal: The erection of 2 x replacement warehouses/operational buildings following the demolition of buildings 6 and 7.

During the debate officers confirmed that a condition could not be applied requiring the need for sustainable heating due to not meeting the requirements around floor space, however it was agreed to add this as an informative.

A query was raised around the location of the replacement buildings and their proximity to neighbouring trees. It was believed that the presence of existing fencing and the hard-standing surface would negate the need to ensure these trees were protected, but the Development Manager would confirm this before issuing the decision notice.

Picking up on the Lead Local Flood Authority's requested condition for additional sustainable drainage, the Head of Planning advised that the footprints of the existing and proposed buildings were very similar there was no requirement for the applicant to provide betterment on existing arrangements, and there was nothing to suggest the new buildings would lead to additional flood run-off and as such a condition would not pass the relevant tests of the PPG.

A member asked whether it was possible for checks on the size of the buildings as they were constructed as there had been an enforcement history to the site. The Head of Planning advised that there was no requirement for applicants to notify the Council when construction commences or obtain building regs from the Council and so the planning team may not be aware of breaches if they were to occur. If the residents or the Council believed at a future date there was good reason that development was not occurring in accordance with the approved plans then an enforcement case could be raised and investigated by enforcement officers.

Resolved that –

The Head of Planning was authorised to grant planning permission subject to:

- a) Conditions 1-4**
- b) Additional informative around providing sustainable and efficient heating**
- c) Addendum notes**

47 Amendments to the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement

The Head of Planning advised that minor changes were proposed to the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement that were driven by GDPR requirements. It was

proposed that a public consultation took place early in the new year.

The proposed amendments would take place to paragraph 4.15, and existing links would be updated, mean that the council would accept representations using a standardised electronic form in place of email. This would mean that email addresses, names and addresses would be separated from submissions from the outset significantly reducing the risk of GDPR issues.

To enable more lengthy representations the form would accept an attachment. Images and other such information would need to be included in this attachment. The Head of Planning confirmed that the Council's Digital Services were aware of the need to provide a generous file size allowance for the attachment. Clear warnings would be put in place to advise correspondents not to include personal data in the attachment, and whilst this would not completely eliminate the risk, or remove the need for manual checking it should significantly reduce risk and also make members of the public more mindful about personal data and take some responsibility for what is included in the attachment.

A Member was grateful that representations would still be accepted by letter for those who did not have internet or computer access.

Some local authorities had decided to not publish comments completely as there was no statutory duty to do so, however the committee were in agreement with officers' views that residents and members wanted to be aware of the local feeling around applications, therefore representations would continue to be published with personal data separated at an early stage.

The Head of Planning confirmed that a recent update in notification letters and on the website had provided additional background guidance around what residents can respond to and the planning reasons around it. The Council's website had also been updated to provide this information at the first point of contact and improve the comments landing page and put it in a more prominent position on the website. A member suggested using QR codes in the future, this may well occur in the future, though this was not a matter for this SCI review.

It was confirmed that the response of statutory consultees would remain labelled and on the website.

There was a debate about the potential redaction of residents' groups, with some residents keen to know that a group had submitted a representation but others having the potential to fear retribution meaning they would prefer to stay anonymous.

The Head of Planning confirmed there would be a mechanism to keep personal details separate whilst still having the option to specify who the representation had been made on behalf of. This could be achieved by the attachment or the body or body of the text clearly stating it was on behalf of the group, whilst not including the authors name in the attachment or body of the text (that would only be included in the non-published fields).

Members were supportive of this proposal and the need to comply with GDPR and as a result the proposal was unanimously supported.

Resolved that –

Committee agreed that the proposed amendments to the Statement of Community Involvement could be published for public consultation for a period of 4 weeks between 3 January and 31 January 2024.

(The meeting ended at 7.19 pm.)

Chairman