

EAST AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

Thursday 12 September 2013

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Darke (Chair), Clarkson, Coulter, Gotch, Rowley and Wilkinson.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Murray Hancock (City Development), Nick Worledge (City Development), Michael Crofton-Briggs (Head of City Development), Michael Morgan (Law and Governance) and Sarah Claridge (Trainee Democratic and Electoral Services Officer)

61. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Altaf-Khan (substitute Councillor Gotch), Councillor Curran (substitute Councillor Rowley), Councillor Rundle (substitute Councillor Wilkinson) and Councillors Hollick, Lloyd-Shogbesan and Paule,

62. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

63. PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

The Chair outlined that the meeting was so Councillors and members of the public could ask questions on the planning application: Land west of Barton, north of A40 and south of Bayswater Brook: 13/01383/FUL (West Barton) housing development.

The Planning Officer's report has been attached for information only.

The West Barton application will NOT be determined at this meeting, but will be decided at the East Area Planning Committee's meeting scheduled for **6pm Tuesday 24 September**.

64. LAND WEST OF BARTON, NORTH OF A40 AND SOUTH OF BAYSWATER BROOK: 13/ 01383/FUL

The Head of City Development submitted a report (previously circulated now appended) which detailed a planning application seeking means of access for the erection of:

- a maximum of 885 residential units (Class C3);
- a maximum of 2,500 sq m gross Class A1, A2, A3, A4 and A5 uses (with a maximum of 2,000 sq m gross food store Class A1);
- a maximum of 50 extra care housing units;
- a maximum of 7,350 sq m GEA hotel (Class C1);

- a maximum of 3,000 sq m GEA Class D1, D2 floorspace (community hub and primary school);

In development blocks ranging from 2 to 5 storeys with associated cycle and car parking, landscaping, public realm works, interim works and associated highway works.

The Planning Officer explained that the planning application is an outline proposal and that if permission is granted more detailed applications for different stages of the development will come to the Committee.

The outlined proposal is controlled by conditions, parameter plans and design code.

The parameter plans consists of 6 fixed frameworks for:

- general outline of land and future roading needs
- breakdown of residential and commercial areas
- open space and landscape
- movement and access
- residential density
- building and storey height.

The design code outlines the design principles to be adopted for the primary school, width of the streets, distance between buildings etc and general design of the development.

Traffic and Access The development will be accessed by a limited access junction on the A40 with a reduced speed limit of 50mph. Work will also be done to relieve traffic congestion in Marston on Headley Way, Marston Road, Marsh Road and Cherwell Drive where the mini roundabouts will be controlled by signals. A Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) will also be created in Marston to relieve parking.

Buses to West Barton will be subsidised at first but it is envisaged will become commercial services in the future. This new route will not affect bus services in other parts of the city.

Masterplan

The illustrative Masterplan indicates that the recreational grounds will be shared between the new primary school and the community. The school is proposed to be built next to the communal recreational grounds to accommodate this. The school buildings will also be available for the community to use in the evenings, weekends and during school holidays. Some facilities would also be available during the school day.

A commercial centre is planned. It will have a supermarket and up to 5 other units which could be shops, cafes etc.

Water resources

Foul Water: Thames Water has commissioned a foul water impact study on the network in the vicinity and is supportive of the proposal. They determined that an attenuation system which stores the foul water in storage tanks and releases it into the existing sewerage system during quieter periods was the best solution.

Surface Water: A storage system will be used to hold surface water and release it into balancing ponds and from there into the Bayswater Brook at a controlled rate.

Biodiversity: The proposed development will cause a loss of 11.5ha of lowland flood meadow, which contravenes the England Biodiversity Action Plan to not reduce lowland natural grassland any further. Compensation entailing improvement of similar flood meadow habitat off-site is proposed to mitigate this loss.

Changes in report:

Pg 5- Legal agreement:

6-financial contributions reduced to £519,000

13 could be provided directly to same costs 24-administration cost of £111,494 could change

Pg8 – additional comments submitted relating to cycling and urban design issues in particular

Pg12 the adult pitch would also be available during other times than stated in the report

Pg16 paragraph 32. Change to “A condition requiring the submission of an amended code to encompass the above concerns and other adjustments.. does not necessarily need to be completed before permission can be issued.

65. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Built, form, layout and residential development

The development doesn't meet the Council's 50% affordable housing policy - a hotel shouldn't be built at the expense of housing.

The affordable housing will be 40% socially rented council housing. This is less than the 50% requirement stated in the Council's housing policy because the development will have to fund additional facilities such as the primary school and shops. There are also extra costs for sewerage and junctions and highway improvements. Taking these factors into consideration it was agreed that 40% affordable housing would be acceptable.

The proposed hotel would have meant less housing, but the overall proportions of housing types would remain. The applicant explained that a hotel is now less likely.

The plans show only low density housing around the allotments, what's the rationale behind this?

The allotment area is part of the existing Barton which we wanted to keep, to connect West Barton to Barton. The established tree lined path through the allotment is to be retained and improved. Housing is proposed on the other side of the allotment so as to be best associated with existing Barton.

Better connections between communities are needed. What are the proposals for improving the links between Barton and Risinghurst and Northway?

No specific proposals for change between Barton and Risinghurst. There may be future work done to improve the link between Barton and Northway but they are not costed into this development. The agreed 50 mph speed limit on the A40 prohibits further links.

Consultation was done with BOBMK (collective design panel) who suggested a garden suburb approach. How much has this been considered?

The applicant met BOBMK twice to discuss the development of the site including once before any firm ideas had been suggested. We discussed the overall principle of the development, the centre of the scheme and how it connects with neighbouring communities ie access via bike, road and infrastructure.

A covenant was signed in 1957 prohibiting the land from being turned into a road and safeguarding the stockproof fence to protect animals. Why is Council breaking the covenant?

A covenant is not a material planning consideration.

Noise and pollution levels are going to increase if you remove the hedge. Have you taken this into account?

There is no evidence to suggest this will be the case. Traffic on the A40 will be travelling slower due to the junction and A40 speed limit.

Community Assets

How are the community assets going to be shared between the school and the community? Is this achieved through a condition?

A close working relationship between the community (Barton Community Association) and the school will be important so that the assets can be shared. The junior pitch is part of the community's recreation ground but it is proposed that during school hours it will be used by the school.

A joint use agreement between the school and the community will be signed outlining a mutual arrangement to allow the community access to the school's fields, buildings, halls and studio and vice versa.

How big will the MUGA be and who will be responsible for maintaining it and the other shared space?

The Multi use games area (MUGA) and an all-weather 3G pitch will be funded by the Barton Oxford LLP (applicants), the latter will be 39x26m. Users will be charged– so this will provide a future revenue stream. Details of how it is to be maintained have not yet been agreed.

How is cycling going to be promoted?

There will be cycle routes throughout the development and a cycle route parallel to the A40 to connect cyclist to the city. Streets will be designed to be cyclist friendly and the whole development will have a 20mph speed limit.

Highway Issues

As part of the Barton Action Area Plan the City Council wanted the speed limit of the A40 reduced to 40 mph. However the County Council argued for 50mph as the road is an important strategic route. The Barton AAP inspector agreed with the County Council. There is no current proposal to reduce that stretch of A40 to 40mph.

Why is there no pedestrian bridge over the A40? Has it been ruled out?

The Applicant (LLP) looked into building an over-bridge but the cost was too high. They also investigated building a subway under the A40 but there are several important gas and utility mains running under the road which make construction difficult (as the mains would have to be re-routed) and expensive (as parts of the A40 would have to close while the work was carried out.)

Once the development is completed, the City will look again at the crossing issue as the initial vision of the LLP was to maximise the connectivity of the new development.

Given the number of accidents caused by people crossing the A40, Why is the crossing at Northway? A flyover should be built instead.

Having a junction on the A40 to West Barton accompanied by the appropriate warning signs and a reduced speed limit helps improve the safety of the area. Motorists observe these signs, know they are entering a built up environment and are more alert. Barriers at junctions don't always tend to be used as intended and people get caught between them and put themselves in danger for longer.

There is a need for a fast bus service from Barton to the city centre. Have there been any negotiations with bus operators? Will other services in the city be adversely affected by a bus service to West Barton? Why the subsidy?

The applicants have spoken with bus operators to ensure good bus service(s) are provided for the new residents and they have not mentioned any changes to other services in Oxford. It is common to offer a subsidy on a new bus route and this will be withdrawn once use increases.

Will there be an increase in traffic on Fettiplace Road? Will parking adjustments be made? Although the development might cause a slight increase in traffic volume using Fettiplace, we do not consider this volume to require any change to the way parking is managed.

Have there been talks about extending the bike hire scheme to West Barton? No, but the idea of a bike scheme is a good one.

Water Resources and the Environment

Who's responsible for drainage provision and on-going maintenance?

Is a sewerage treatment plant needed and new pipes?

Thames Water undertook a study to assess the impact of a proposed development of around 1000 new homes at Barton on the existing foul water drainage sewer network. They conducted a flow monitor of the existing sewer and determined that the best result was to store the foul water in underground attenuation tanks and discharge it at controlled rates when there is capacity in the system. They believe this solution will not put any additional capacity problems on the current system.

Is there a ground water hazard from surface run off? Will this contribute to flooding?

It is believed that the development will not contribute to flooding as surface water storage tanks and other extensive sustainable urban drainage features are proposed to control the run off into the Bayswater Brook.

The proposal has reduced the storage capacity by a third since the initial plans, is this adequate?

Thames Water has done a thorough analysis and believes the proposed storage capacity tanks are adequate.

Is the Environment Agency concerned with flooding?

The Environment Agency is responsible nationwide for flood protection and for making sure that new developments don't cause flooding. They accept the strategy proposed to address surface water drainage and raised no objections to the planning application.

Why not have rainwater harvest tanks for all new builds?

We have chosen to incorporate other alternatives such as waterbutts, green roofs and permeable paving.

Who pays for the on-going maintenance of the surface water tanks and Bayswater Brook?

Responsibilities for on-going maintenance will be enshrined in the s106 agreement and conditions. A management company will be established and will be responsible for areas not owned by homeowners.

The current drainage network is at bursting point, why aren't you upgrading the existing drainage network?

The developer cannot be required to upgrade the existing network, only to ensure that there is no increased impact on the existing network. Parts of the network will be upgraded as individual developments come forward.

Schooling

Why does the report mention only Cheney and not Cherwell as a possible secondary school option?

The development does not propose a new secondary school and Cheney was mentioned as an option because it is the closest school. Education is a matter for the County Council and future academies. An appropriate financial contribution is required through the S106.

Please explain the design of the school?

The school has been designed on the following principles:

- Civic building located in a prominent location
- Visible from both Barton and West Barton
- Materials will work well with adjacent buildings.

General Questions

Will the full details of the plans be available at the meeting on 24 September?

No the meeting on the 24th is to determine the outline of the proposal only. There will be a second stage, known as Reserved Matters planning applications, for individual sections of the proposal to be considered. Each section will require its own planning application and will be determined by the East Area Planning Committee.

What is the security provision at the sub-station?

There will be a new acoustic safety fence and the current footpath will be diverted away from the sub-station.

Why are you not holding this meeting in Barton?

Residents of Northway and Barton have already had extensive opportunities to ask questions about the development during a wide range of earlier consultations.

In 2016 housing has to have a zero carbon footprint, will the development meet it?

Building Regulations are not yet in force to require this standard but developers will have to meet them once they are enacted.

Construction will require the removal of some of the trees along the A40, will trees be re-planted?

Some trees will need to be removed during the construction but re-planting along the A40 can be incorporated into the landscape scheme condition.

Will these houses be available to those residents on Band 5 of the Council's housing register who are not entitled to receive a housing allowance?

Council's policy is that people who are band 5 are not entitled to council housing. However 60% of the housing is open market housing for ownership or rent. Such is the scale of housing need in the City that this doesn't mean that they don't need housing. This site will only be able to make a contribution to meeting the overall needs of the city.

The site is currently used as a green space. Will the development offer enough green space for residents?

The recreational grounds and linear park ensure that the Policy requirement of 10% green space is provided. In all 30% of the development is open space.

66. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Committee NOTED that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 24 September 2013.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.30 pm