

Minutes of a Meeting of the Planning and Community Committee held at the Oakwood Centre on Tuesday 30 January 2024 at 7:45 pm

Present: *Councillors: B. Soane (Chairman); K. Baker; D. Bragg; L. Guttridge; R. Horskins; C. Jewell; V. Lewis; J. Sartorel; P. Singh; J. Taylor*

Officers present: *K. Murray, Town Clerk; M. Filmore, Deputy Town Clerk*

Also present: *1 member of the public*

162. **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence received from Members.

163. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

Councillor Baker advised Members that he, as Borough Ward Councillor, had worked on previous proposals relating to the land associated with planning application 240011.

164. **MINUTES OF THE PLANNING AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 9 JANUARY 2024**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That the minutes of the Planning and Community Committee meeting held on 9 January 2024 be approved and be signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record.

165. **ACTIONS / FOLLOW UPS**

Members noted the information provided in the Actions and Follow ups document, provided in the agenda.

25 July 2024 – Minute 44

Members noted that Wokingham Borough Council were likely to be publicising car park usage figures within the next 2-3 weeks, with figures likely to show no positive trends.

9 January 2024 – Minute 151

It was requested a follow up be added to remind Officers to invite Town Council Representatives on outside bodies to discuss grant applications if any of their applicable organisations apply in future.

9 January 2024 – Minutes 153

The Deputy Town Clerk read out the latest update from Wokingham Borough Council with regards to Earley Station Footbridge, which had been circulated to Members earlier in the day. It was noted that the plan was to undertake repair works of the footbridge, replacing the existing ramps like for like. It was noted this would not improve accessibility, but that Wokingham Borough Council had indicated a desire to do so in future, should funding become available.

166. **CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To forward comments to the planning authority as detailed in **Appendix A**.

167. **PLANNING DECISIONS**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note information on decision notices received from the planning authority since the last meeting, as given in the agenda.

168. **PLANNING APPEALS**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the following decision regarding an appeal against refusal of planning permission lodged with the Planning Inspectorate:

Application: 213106
Location: Land at, Headley Road East, Woodley RG5 4SN
Proposal: demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment of the site for commercial development for flexible light industrial, general industrial, and storage and distribution uses, with ancillary offices, associated car parking, and landscape planting.
(Woodley Town Council submitted objections to the proposal.)
Details: Appeal against refusal of planning permission.
Decision: The appeal was allowed.

169. **TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS**
Applications for works to trees

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the following application for tree works:

Application: 240027
Location: TPO 3/1951 WOODLENAD 3: 8 Dundela Clost, Woodley, Wokingham, RG5 3NN.
Proposal: T1, Conifer – Fell dead tree.
T2, Conifer – Fell.

170. **WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 4**

Members considered the consulting with regards to Wokingham Borough Council's draft Local Transport Plan.

Members noted that the plan had identified the highest uptake of active travel was in Wokingham and Winnersh. Members congratulated those areas on their success, noting that this was where the majority of investment had taken place, and suggested that, as an urban area, the Town Council should request that Woodley is next in line for investment.

It was suggested the plan would benefit from more explicit reference and consideration to disabled travellers. Members particularly noted that it was unclear if wheelchair and mobility scooter users are considered alongside pedestrians, or separately.

A concern was also raised that the document did not reference Woodley, and it was felt more attention should be given to the town in the document.

It was highlighted that there needs to be more prioritisation for getting Woodley residents to train stations without travelling by car. It was noted that the plan promotes modal shift, but that this would need better access to train stations for Woodley residents. It was suggested that a local journey planner for public transport system, similar to MyJourney's planner for cycling, would be beneficial.

Members noted reference to collisions on roads being high in Wokingham and Woodley, and requested statistics be sought from Wokingham Borough Council.

In the Public Transport section, it was commented that there was specific reference to providing a step free railway crossing at Tan House / Carnival Hub, and that this should also refer to Earley Station footbridge.

It was suggested the document would benefit from greater detail. One example given was in the create healthy and safe places section, where reference is made to increasing the network of quieter rural roads and residential streets; it was suggested more detail as to how this might be achieved needed to be included.

It was commented that the document should include reference to improved walking and cycling signage, as well as providing access across the bridge from the open space at Loddon Park to Hurst.

In the create healthy and safe places section, it was also noted that there was reference to introducing 20mph speed limits in urban centre, where supported. It was commented that this should be clearer as to supported by whom. In the same section, the consideration of introducing e-scooter hire schemes is suggested. Members felt that, as only pilot schemes were currently legal, this should either not be included so as to provide an unrealistic expectation, or be clarified to state when / if legalised.

It was requested that Councillor Taylor send her written up comments to the Deputy Town Clerk.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To reply to Wokingham Borough Council's consultation regarding the Local Transport Plan 4 with the comments which had been raised at the meeting.

171. **WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – ASHENBURY PARK PROPOSALS**

Members considered the Wokingham Borough Council's proposals for enhancing biodiversity at Ashenbury Park.

A comment was raised that, when looking into improvements at the park, better pedestrian access be considered, noting that the current access is via the entrance road.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To respond to Wokingham Borough Council's proposals for enhancing biodiversity at Ashenbury Park as follows:
 1. To what extent do you agree with creating a new woodland habitat link between the two local wildlife sites and their areas of ancient woodland? – Strongly agree
 2. To what extent do you agree with increasing the area of wildflower meadows at Ashenbury Park? – Strongly agree
 3. Would you like to see biodiversity improvements to [the indicated recreational space] in future? – I would like it to remain an open space
 4. Overall, do you agree with the biodiversity improvements we are proposing...? – Yes.

171. **PARLIAMENTARY & WARD BOUNDARIES**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the new Earley & Woodley parliamentary constituency boundary, created following the Boundary Commission for England review, which will be in use from the next general election.
- ◆ To note the new Borough and Town Council electoral ward areas, created following the Local Government Boundary Commission for England review; the Borough ward boundaries will be used for an all out election in May 2024, whilst the Town Council boundaries will be used during the next Town Council elections in May 2027.

172. **TRANSPORTATION & HIGHWAYS**

172.1 **Cycling & Walking task and finished working group.**

Members noted that Karen Roberston and Alex Cran (Reading Cycling Campaign) have agreed to be Members of the Cycling & Walking task and finish working group. The Deputy Town Clerk also advised that Steve Vale (Loddon Valley Ramblers) had also been approached and had agreed to take part. It was noted that the first meeting had been arranged for the 8 February.

Following a query the Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that, in line with the Terms of Reference, only the two Councillor members and representatives from Reading Cycling Campaign were official voting Members of the Committee. It was also confirmed that, in line with Standing Orders, only Councillors could be appointed as Chairman to committees unless otherwise stated in the Terms of Reference.

Councillor Horskins proposed, seconded by Councillor Baker, and following a vote it was:

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To update the Terms of Reference for the Cycling & Walking task and finish working group Terms of Reference to add of a member from the Loddon Valley Ramblers to the size of the group.

Voting: For: 10 Against: 0 Abstain: 0 No Vote: 0

Councillor Horskins proposed, seconded by Councillor Baker, and following a vote it was:

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To update the Terms of Reference for the Cycling & Walking task and finish working group Terms of Reference to allow the appointment of any Member as Chairman of the working group.

Voting: For: 7 Against: 3 Abstain: 0 No Vote: 0

172.2 **Community Speedwatch**

Members noted that Councillors Bragg and Taylor had met to discuss Speedwatch since the last meeting. They had been unable to test out the camera, as intended, as it was not charged up. They requested that the Speedwatch equipment be stored at the Council offices.

Councillor Bragg explained that a number of locations for potential Speedwatch activities had been identified by himself and Councillor Taylor, including locations on Colemans Moor Road and Church Road. He advised that the next step is to get suitable locations authorised by the Police, at which point activities could take place. It was hoped this would take place by mid-February.

A query was raised about the use of the Council's data logger, and it was suggested priority was to start using the speed camera, but that the data logger could be used to assess speeding data in future.

172.3 **Highways Issues**

A concern was raised about the safety of pupils walking from Waingels College towards Glendevon Road and Walmer Road at the end of the school day. It was noted traffic speeds were high, and parking along the road bad, with students often seen walking in the middle of the road, in danger of being in an accident.

Members discussed the wider issue of poor parking around schools in Woodley at drop off and pick up times, and discussed the merits of writing to both schools and the police to raise the issue. Members also noted that, around certain schools in Reading, roads are actually closed for a short period around the school start / end time.

Following further discussion, Members asked that a letter be written to schools highlighting concerns with the safety of children arriving at and leaving their premises, and that a future agenda item be included to discuss the issue of parking around schools at drop off / pick up time.

173. **COMMUNITY ISSUES**

Following a query, the Town Clerk confirmed that a review would take place regarding the suitable locations for the new Town Council noticeboards, and these would not necessarily simply just replace the old noticeboards. Members requested that the potential locations be brought back to the Committee at a future meeting for consideration.

Members noted a recent violent attack which had taken place in Ashenbury Park. Following the suggestion that the Town Council may consider restricting access to Woodford Park at nighttime, Members noted there were too many access points to the park for this to be achievable.

174. **PUBLICATIONS/INFORMATION**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note receipt of the following:
 - CCB eBulletin – January 2024
 - Wokingham Volunteer Centre Newsletter – January 2024

175. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Other than those raised earlier in the agenda, there were no further future agenda items raised by Members.

176. **PUBLICITY/WEBSITE**

There were no publicity and website items raised by Members.

The meeting closed at 9:35 pm

Woodley Town Council

Observations on the following Planning Applications made at the Planning & Community Committee meeting held on 30 January 2024

Application No. & Address	Proposal
232968 Magnolia Court, Headley Road East, Woodley, RG5 4SD	Full application for the proposed changes to fenestration to the existing conservatory.
Observations: No objections.	
233095 65 Nightingale Road, Woodley, RG5 3LU	Householder application for proposed single storey front extension and the creation of a porch, single storey side extension , single storey rear extension following the demolition of the garage.
Observations: No objections.	
240011 Grass Area Fronting 45-49 Enstone Road, Woodley, RG5 4QU	Full application for the proposed change of use of existing highway/adopted grassed areas for the proposed construction of hard standing to provide parking spaces within the garden areas of properties 45, 47 and 49 Enstone Road and the provision of an access.
Observations: No objections.	
240027 1 Comet Way, Woodley, RG5 4NZ	Householder application for proposed construction of a single storey rear extension.
Observations: The Planning & Community Committee have considered this application and had no objections, but noted the concerns of two neighbours regarding the works starting prior to planning permission being granted, and that works on the property are taking place at unsociable hours. The Committee have asked that the appropriate Wokingham Borough Council department look into these concerns.	
240072 33 Elm Drive, Woodley, RG5 4FD	Householder application for proposed loft conversion to create habitable accommodation plus insertion of 2no roof lights to the front elevations and 2no roof light to the rear elevations.
Observations: No objections.	
240091 24 Uppingham Drive, Woodley, RG5 4TH	Householder application for proposed single storey rear extension to also include roof lights.
Observations: No objections.	

<p>240115 2 Austin Road, Woodley, RG5 4EJ</p>	<p>Householder application for proposed part single part two storey side extension. To include changes to fenestration.</p>
<p>Observations: No objections.</p>	
<p>240128 99a Colemans Moor Road, Woodley, RG5 4DA</p>	<p>Householder application for proposed single storey rear extension.</p>
<p>Observations: No application details were available on the Wokingham Borough Council website in the lead up to the Planning & Community Committee considering this application at their meeting on 30 January. As such, no comments could be made.</p> <p>When the matter is resolved, the Committee will consider the application, and request the Wokingham Borough Council do not determine the application until such time as comments are submitted.</p>	

CYCLING & WALKING TASK & FINISH WORKING GROUP

VERSION	DATE	AMENDED?	COMMENTS
0.0	4.12.23	No	Draft Version
1.0	12.12.23	Yes	Approved by P&C Committee (12/12/23)
1.1	09.01.24	Yes	Change to Membership, and end date added – Approved by P&C (9/1/24)
1.2	30.01.24	Yes	Added a member of Loddon Valley Ramblers to group's size, and ability to appoint a non-Councillor as Chairman – Approved by P&C (30/01/24)

1. **TYPE OF COMMITTEE** => Task & Finish Working Group
2. **PARENT COMMITTEE** => Planning and Community Committee
3. **6 MONTH MEETING RULE VALID (see 6.1.k)**
 - a. YES
4. **SIZE** => 4 Members; to be made up of 1 Labour group and 1 Liberal Democrat group appointment, and 2 active cyclist representatives from either Reading Cycling Club, Reading Cycling Campaign, or a combination of both (disregarding Standing Order 2.2 – political proportionality).

Any member of the group may be appointed to the position of Chairman of this working group (disregarding Standing Order 3.6.1)

5. **END DATE** => 22 May 2024

6. DUTIES AND POWERS

6.1. OVERALL PURPOSE

- a. To identify, prioritise and optimise actions in order to achieve the following, approved, Strategy for Cycling:

The Town Council's strategy is to increase the number of cycling journeys in Woodley, both to support our commitment to climate change, and to promote health and wellbeing in the town.

We will do this by a programme of communication, collaboration and education in the local community aimed at improving conditions for cyclists, facilitating access to cycles, and encouraging more people to get on bikes.

And we'll provide a forum for experienced, new, and Woodley cyclists to have their say on what's needed to improve cycling in Woodley.

- b. To work with local authorities / cycling groups / experts to achieve the aims of the Strategy for Cycling.

- c. To consider ways in which improvements may also be made to walking infrastructure.

6.2. MEETINGS

- a. Meetings will take place as and when required in order to best achieve the stated purpose within the timescales prescribed by the working group.
- b. Officers will be in attendance at all meetings.

6.3. TERMS OF OPERATION

- a. To review and understand Wokingham Borough Council's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and where it impacts Woodley and the surrounding area.
- b. To review and understand Wokingham Borough Council's Transport Strategy in terms of its contribution to and effect on cycling and walking in Woodley.
- c. To determine and design a programme of communication, collaboration and education events in the local community with relevant stakeholders, targeted at promoting [Active Travel](#) by improving both walking and cycling conditions in Woodley.
- d. To consider the introduction of a Walkers & Cyclists Forum to further collaborate between the Town Council and residents, including identifying the purpose of such a forum, the likely stakeholders, and the level of involvement required from the Town Council.
- e. To identify issues with / improvements required to existing cycling infrastructure and signage, especially those which create poor cycling conditions and reduce safety, and which discourage the take up of cycling. To consider how to resolve these, working with Wokingham Borough Council as the Highways Agency where necessary, and taking into account the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan.
- f. To produce an action plan of recommended improvements and, where appropriate, progress them to completion, including making recommendations, via the Planning & Community Committee, to the Strategy & Resources Committee where it is identified that funding is required.