

Northern Area Planning Committee

MINUTES OF THE NORTHERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 22 JANUARY 2025 AT TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, CHIPPENHAM, SN15 3ER.

Present:

Cllr Chuck Berry (Chairman), Cllr Ashley O'Neil, Cllr Nic Puntis, Cllr Elizabeth Threlfall, Cllr Martin Smith, Cllr Clare Cape, Cllr Steve Bucknell, Cllr Nick Holder, Cllr David Bowler, Cllr Jacqui Lay
Cllr Ashley O'Neill

1 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from:

Cllr Howard Greenman
Cllr Liz Alstrom

2 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2024 were presented to the Committee.

It was raised that the minutes be amended to note the statement read out by Cllr Gavin Grant on behalf of Mrs Kim Power referencing application PL/2023/07797: Land Off Park Road, Malmesbury, Wilts.

Resolved:

To approve as a true and correct record and sign the minutes.

3 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

4 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

5 **Public Participation**

The Committee noted the rules on public participation.

6 **Planning Appeals and Updates**

The Committee noted the contents of the appeals update.

7 **PL/2022/05783: Land to West of Care Home (Former Divisional Police Headquarters), Wood Lane, Chippenham, SN15 3HS**

Public Participation

- Mrs Julie Wheeler spoke in objection to the application
- Andy Conroy, on behalf of Chippenham Town Council, spoke in objection to the application

Planning Officers introduced the report which recommended that the Committee approve planning permission, subject to conditions, for the Development of 17 No. dwellinghouses (Use Class C3), including 7 no. affordable units, associated works, and demolition of the existing car park structure.

Members of the Committee then had the opportunity to ask technical questions to the officer. The following was clarified:

That there would be boundary treatment to avoid overflow parking.

That it was within the S106 to request affordable housing to be offered to Chippenham residents first, but this was unable to be strictly guaranteed.

That an arboriculturist had completed the survey of trees and submitted a report.

That the biodiversity net gain would be +0.14. The application was submitted before the requirement to provide a minimum 10% net gain was introduced, and for this application only a gain of any amount is required.

In the Tree Comparison Plan, the old scheme proposed 16 new trees, whereas the new scheme proposes 29 new trees.

The application originally came in as 100% affordable houses which has changed to 7 affordable houses and 10 “regular” houses. Wiltshire’s housing enabling officers advised this change due to concerns over whether an affordable housing provider would want to develop the entire site.

The land was not designated at the time of application.

The local member Cllr Liz Alstrom had a written statement read to the Committee.

Councillors thanked Chippenham TC and the public for their statements.

Councillors debated that all applications should be approved unless there's good reason not to, which they believed was the case here because of the reasons set out in the proposal to refuse.

Councillors did not like the plans put forward and were not convinced that it was wholly right for the area.

The possibility for appeal was raised should the application be refused. Planning Officers advised there was a real possibility of losing the appeal and having costs awarded against the Council. Conditioning currently within the recommendation would also need to be argued and the inspector would need to agree to them.

The possibility for deferral was also considered.

Conditions around sustainability were also considered by the Committee.

The committee considered the condition of the current trees and the fact that they would be replaced with arguably more suitable trees in the application.

During debate, a motion to refuse was proposed by Cllr Clare Cape and seconded by Cllr Nic Puntis for the reasons that the application would have an adverse impact on trees and biodiversity, the design and layout which doesn't make best use of space, and that the application did not comply with the following:

- Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan Policies: H2, TC4, SCC1, SCC2,
- Wiltshire Core Strategy Policies: CP57, CP58, CP60, CP61,
- CP64,
- Wiltshire Design Guide SPD, National Design Guide, and NPPF (Section 12)

Resolved

To refuse the application for the following reasons:

The proposed site layout is considered cramped and contrived and does not promote active travel. Policy H2 of the Neighbourhood Plan requires all new residential development to be sustainably designed in accordance with the Chippenham Design Guide and to avoid any 'red lights' under the Building for a Healthy Life (BfHL) design tool. The proposed layout includes numerous examples of 'red lights', indicating a cramped and contrived arrangement due to the quantum of development sought, including:

- **Allocated parking spaces not located close to the dwellings they serve, tandem parking, and impractical access (BfHL p. 73, Chippenham Design Guide Para. G2)**

- Rear gardens that do not meet the required size or length (Wiltshire Design Guide Para. 9.2.2, Chippenham Design Guide Para. I3)
- Use of single aspect FOGs (Flats Over Garages) creating inactive street edges (BfHL p. 31, 49, 55, Chippenham Design Guide Para. K8)
- Leftover green spaces that are impractical to maintain (BfHL p. 79, 85)
- Large expanses of hardstanding with inadequate landscaping, leading to bleak streetscenes (BfHL p. 73, Chippenham Design Guide Paras. G2, K9, Wiltshire Design Guide Para. 5.4.6)
- Lack of external amenity areas for FOGs (Chippenham Design Guide Paras. I6-I7, Wiltshire Design Guide Para. 9.2.6)
- Isolated bin store locations far from dwellings
- Front doors of Plots 1-4 opening directly onto the public highway without defensible space (Wiltshire Design Guide Para. 9.3.2)
- Cul-de-sac-based street pattern (BfHL p. 61)

The proposal is therefore contrary to Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan Policies: H2, TC4, SCC1, SCC2, Wiltshire Core Strategy Policies: CP57, CP58, CP60, CP61, CP64, Wiltshire Design Guide SPD, National Design Guide, and NPPF (Section 12)

Paragraphs I1-I3 of the Chippenham Design Guide require sustainability measures such as renewable energy installations (solar panels, air source heat pumps), rainwater reuse facilities, tree planting, green/brown roofs, SuDS, and high levels of insulation. The proposal lacks these features, demonstrating poor sustainability credentials and failing to meet Neighbourhood Plan Policy SCC2. No Energy Statement has been submitted the proposal is therefore contrary to Neighbourhood Plan Policy SCC1 Wiltshire Core Strategy Policy 41 and The NPPF (Section 14).

The proposed development would result in the loss of existing trees and negatively affect local biodiversity. The application fails to adequately demonstrate how it would protect or enhance the natural environment. The proposal is therefore contrary to Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan Policies: GI1, GI4, GI5, Wiltshire Core Strategy Policies: CP50, CP51, CP55, Wiltshire Design Guide SPD, National Design Guide, and NPPF (Section 15)

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 15:00 – 16:30pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Max Hirst of Democratic Services,
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