

Minutes of the Meeting of the PLANNING COMMITTEE held on 18 November 2020

PRESENT -

Councillor Clive Woodbridge (Chair); Councillor Monica Coleman (Vice-Chair); Councillors Alex Coley, Neil Dallen, David Gulland, Previn Jagutpal, Colin Keane, Jan Mason, Steven McCormick, Debbie Monksfield, Peter O'Donovan and Clive Smitheram

In Attendance: Councillor Liz Frost and Councillor Bernice Froud

Absent: Councillor Lucie McIntyre

Officers present: Damian Roberts (Chief Operating Officer), Amardip Healy (Chief Legal Officer), Viv Evans (Interim Head of Planning), Tom Bagshaw (Planner), Virginia Johnson (Planner), Steven Lewis (Planning Development Manager), Sarah Keeble (Democratic Services Officer) and Tim Richardson (Committee Administrator)

17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations were made in relation to items of business at the meeting:

Epsom General Hospital, Dorking Road, Epsom, Surrey, KT18 7EG

Councillor Clive Woodbridge: In the interests of openness and transparency, Councillor Clive Woodbridge declared on behalf of all Members of the Committee that all Members had received a number of emails and publications from the Applicant of this Item as well as from objectors (including individuals as well as associations such as the Woodcote Epsom Residents Society and Epsom Civic Society). Councillor Woodbridge stated that this correspondence had not affected Members' judgement and that all Members came to the meeting without any pre-determination.

Councillor Liz Frost MSc FCOptom: In the interests of openness and transparency, Councillor Liz Frost declared that she is a trustee of the Woodcote Millennium Green Trust. The Woodcote Millennium Green is situated opposite the site of the Application. Councillor Frost stated that she came to the meeting on behalf of Woodcote Ward residents.

Councillor Neil Dallen: In the interests of openness and transparency, Councillor Neil Dallen declared that he is a member of the Epsom Civic Society. He stated that he came to the meeting with a clear and open mind.

Councillor Previn Jagutpal: In the interests of openness and transparency, Councillor Previn Jagutpal declared that he is a Member of the Woodcote Epsom Residents Society. Councillor Jagutpal made a further declaration that he had received literature from the Applicant as well as correspondence from residents regarding this Item and that he came to the meeting with an open mind.

Councillor Steven McCormick: In the interests of openness and transparency, Councillor Steven McCormick declared that he is a Member of the Woodcote Epsom Residents Society and Epsom Civic Society, and that he came to the meeting with a clear and open mind.

Viv Evans: In the interest of openness and transparency, Mr. Viv Evans declared that he works in both public and private sectors as a Planning Consultant, and has advised and continues to provide advice for hospital-related care Applications. Mr. Evans also stated that he has never advised or acted for the Applicant for this Application.

18 EPSON GENERAL HOSPITAL, DORKING ROAD, EPSON, SURREY, KT18 7EG

Description

Demolition of the existing hospital buildings, accommodation block and associated structures and redevelopment of the site to provide a new care community for older people arranged in two buildings, comprising 302 to 308 care residences, 8 to 12 care apartments and 26 to 30 care suites providing transitional care, together with ancillary communal and support services Use Class C2, 24 key worker units Use Class C3, children's nursery Use Class D1 as well as associated back of house and service areas, car and cycle parking, altered vehicular and pedestrian access, landscaping, private amenity space and public open space.

Decision

The Committee was adjourned for 10 minutes to ensure all Members had sufficient time to read the Update Report which was published the afternoon of the Committee meeting.

The Committee noted a presentation from the Planning Officer.

The Committee heard from Ward Councillor, Liz Frost, who spoke in objection to the Application. Councillor Liz Frost made a declaration of interest in advance of addressing the Committee. This declaration noted that Councillor Liz Frost is a trustee of the Woodcote Grove Millennium Trust, but that she would be addressing the Committee on behalf of Woodcote Ward residents. The Committee also heard from two objectors to the Application; on behalf of the Woodcote Epsom Residents Society and Epsom Civic Society respectively. The Committee then heard from a local resident in support of the Application. Finally, the Committee heard from an Agent to the Applicant, and from the Developer.

The following points were raised by the Committee:

- a) **Design and materials:** Members noted concerns regarding the height, mass, bulk and design of the proposal. Members noted the size and scale of the proposal and its materials and spoke about whether it would adversely impact the character and appearance of with the surrounding area. It was noted that should the Application be approved, the Local Planning Authority would receive samples of materials to approve, as part of an Approval of Details application, to ensure the final material palette is appropriate..
- b) **Housing:** Members noted the shortage of delivery of housing land supply within the Borough and how the proposed development would be of substantial benefit in fulfilling need. However, concerns were expressed about the potential over-supply of C2 units and lack of C3 units. It was noted that it was of Officers opinion that the proposed development makes efficient use of the site.
- c) **Parking and highways:** Members noted the number of proposed parking spaces for the site and the possible shortfall in spaces for key workers. Members raised concerns regarding the number of proposed disabled parking spaces, and the arrangements for parking for the nursery staff. Members raised concerns regarding the impact this may have on the local area. It was noted that the Transport Assessment deemed the parking proposals as acceptable. It was noted that the site is situated within close proximity to bus routes and a short distance to Epsom train station.
- d) **Trees and landscaping:** Members raised concerns regarding the lack of landscaping buffer along the frontage of the site. Officers noted that this would create an open plaza with larger areas for residents and members of the public.
- e) **Privacy to neighbouring residents:** Members noted concerns regarding the size and scale of the proposed development and its adverse impact on neighbouring amenity.

A refusal was proposed by Councillor Steven McCormick, and seconded by Councillor Previn Jagutpal. The reason for this refusal was based on concerns raised by the Committee, including those regarding:

- Scale and design of buildings
- Landscaping and design
- Loss of amenity to neighbouring residents
- Affordable housing.

Following consideration, the Committee resolved with 7 Members voting for, 3 Members voting against, 1 abstention and the Chair not voting that:

The Application be **REFUSED** based on the concerns raised by the Committee. These reasons included:

- (1) The proposed development by reason of its height, mass, scale and design would adversely impact and harm the character and appearance of the area (including the built environment and landscape setting), failing to comply with Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy (2007), Policies DM9, DM10 and DM11 of the Development Management Policies Document (2015) and paragraphs 122 and 127 of the NPPF (2019).
- (2) The siting of the development leaves insufficient landscaping opportunities to the frontage of Woodcote Green Road and along the south-western boundary with neighbouring residential property to mitigate the impact of the proposed development, presenting an over-developed and hard edge to the appearance to the development, which would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. Causing harm to the character and appearance of the area fails to comply with Policy DM5 of the Development Management Policies Document (2015) and the NPPF (2019).
- (3) The proposed development by reason of its height, massing and design would adversely impact on the neighbouring amenities of the occupiers at 40 and 46 Woodcote Green Road, by means of overbearing, loss of privacy and loss of outlook, failing to comply with Policy DM10 of the Development Management Policies Document (2015).
- (4) In the absence of a completed legal obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), to secure an affordable housing contribution, the applicant has failed to comply with Policy CS9 (Affordable Housing and meeting Housing Needs) of the Core Strategy (2007) and the NPPF (2019).

The meeting began at 7.35 pm and ended at 10.46 pm

COUNCILLOR CLIVE WOODBRIDGE (CHAIR)