

Cheltenham Borough Council Planning Committee Minutes

Meeting date: 23 March 2023

Meeting time: 6.00 pm - 7.30 pm

In attendance:

Councillors:

Paul Baker (Chair), Garth Barnes (Vice-Chair), Glenn Andrews, Adrian Bamford, Bernard Fisher, Paul McCloskey, Emma Nelson, Tony Oliver, John Payne, Diggory Seacome and Simon Wheeler

Also in attendance:

Michael Ronan, Lucy White (Senior Planning Officer) and Liam Jones (Head of Planning)

1 Apologies

There were none.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

3 Declarations of independent site visits

Those Members who attended planning view visited the site.

4 Minutes of the last meeting

Were approved with several amendments brought to the committees attention by Councillor Nelson.

5 Planning Applications

6 20/00759/FUL Elms Park, Tewkesbury Road, Cheltenham

The Planning Officer introduced the report as published.

The agent on behalf of the applicant was then asked to address the committee and made the following points:

- He thanked the officers for their support and assistance throughout the application process.
- Persimmon homes is a five star home builder.
- This is the first phase of the new Cheltenham development.
- One of the key priorities in the Corporate Plan is 93 new homes , this site will have apartments and houses many for specifically first time buyers.
- The properties will be energy efficient, there will be no gas supply to the estate and there will be solar panels on most of the properties.
- There will be the incorporation of drainage systems to emulate farmland.
- There will also be public footpaths incorporated into the estate.
- There will be approximately 80 new jobs and 5 apprenticeships created during construction.

The matter then went to Member questions. The responses to them were as follows:

- First time buyers wishing to purchase one of the homes will be vetted to ensure that they are first time buyers and if the house is resold it will be to a first time buyer.
- There will be solar panels on the roofs of all the properties. The suggested condition states that the dwellings shall not be occupied until the solar panels are installed for each dwelling and subject to details which will have first been approved in writing by the local planning authority.. At this point the agent clarified that each building will have the solar panels but not each dwelling as this is not possible for the blocks of flats.
- The 20mph speed limit on the estate roads will be subject to a 106 obligation not a condition.
- The Highways Officer confirmed that there is no formula when determining whether a road will be a primary entrance or exit. In the past the material factors considered would be things like highway maintenance and emergency access. Tewkesbury Road will be the main access serving the wider Elms Park development and Manor Road is proposed to be the secondary access for Elms Park. The developers may bring in more access via Tewkesbury Road.
- Gloucestershire County Council have requested funding to assist with secondary school places and have made assurances that there is capacity in catchment area primary schools.
- The proposal is close to local services and bus routes.
- There will be no gas supply serving the site, it will all be electric with air source heat pumps and electric vehicle charging points for all dwellings/buildings.

- The timeline for the new school being built will depend on the timeframe for the Elms Park planning application being approved and built out but the Swindon Farm proposal is not reliant on the new school being provided, since required school places are being funded through this application.
- With reference to wheelchair accessible properties the agent confirmed that aside from the flats the houses will all be wheelchair accessible/compatible. The Council's housing enabling officer is happy with the proposal and the affordable housing will be secured and delivered via Section 106 obligations.
- The highways officer confirmed that Junction 10 is not fully funded as the total package has a funding shortfall. Members will be consulted with regard to the funding shortfall.
- There has been some discussions with regards to whether there will be a bus gate. There will be a lot of bus routes rather than sitting in traffic on the Tewkesbury Road.
- Gloucestershire Highways confirmed that the proposed block paving on the proposed estate roads will be of adoptable standard.
- There are allowances made for pedestrian crossings which would be included in a revised condition 21.
- With regard to the solar panels all properties would share the benefits of them and any excess energy will go to power the communal areas.

The matter then went to debate where the following points were raised

- Whereas the Member had no issue with the proposal the main use is with the problem with local school places and over loading the schools. Phase One of Elms Park states that there will be a secondary and a primary school.
- The Legal Officer reminded Members that they were there just to consider the Swindon Farm application and the officer report and nothing further.
- It was discussed that there is already a condition in place to change the speed limit on Manor Road to 30mph.
- This application is a test bed for the bigger Elms Park development, although not entirely happy with the design of the development, it is accepted that the pylons have to be part of the development. Had the pylons not been there then the design would be better. There are still concerns with regard to the traffic on both Manor and Runnings Roads and this development will not help with the traffic.
- With regards to the traffic it will slow down and it might not be so much of a rat run. This proposal ticks a lot of the boxes with regards to what the Council should be doing. Affordable housing is desperately needed and 35% of the development is a lot of affordable housing. The officers have done an excellent job and the developer has listened and put forward the best possible scheme to make it carbon neutral. This seems a really good scheme that deserves support. and the Education Department should be listed to with regards to schools places as they are the experts in the field.
- There was acknowledgement that it was a shame about the pylons but this is a good and solid application.

- Even as a standalone application it makes sense and a matter of social justice to support the application.
- There is a need for housing and there are a lot of good things about the application, including 35% affordable housing. Is there a lesson to be learnt in respect of the Climate Change SPD and to make sure that there are affordable properties included in large applications.
- Concern that all the traffic will go down Princess Elizabeth Way and traffic will increase until Junction 10 is completed and there is currently no time scale for this. The whole town will be affected by the traffic flow. Members of the committee do not seem to care about there being not enough places in the schools.

The matter then went to the vote on the officer recommendation to permit (subject to a revised Condition 21 and completion of the EIA Screening request and s106 Agreement):

FOR: 10
AGAINST: 1

PERMIT

7 Appeal Update

Noted for information.

8 Any other items the Chairman determines urgent and requires a decision

There were none.