

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Monday 17 February 2025

Present:-

Councillor Knott (Chair)

Councillors Patrick, Asvachin, Atkinson, Banyard, Hughes, Jobson, Miller-Boam, Mitchell, M, Pole and Rolstone

Apologies

Councillors Bennett, Hussain and Ketchin

Also Present

Strategic Director for Place, Assistant Service Lead – Development Management (Major Projects), Planning Solicitor, Principal Project Manager, City Development and Democratic Services Manager

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MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2025 were taken as read, approved, and signed by the Chair as correct.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members declared the following interests:

- Councillor Asvachin – Minute No. 16.

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PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 25/0022/VOC - LAND SOUTH WEST OF BLAKESLEE DRIVE

The Principal Project Manager, City Development presented the application for a variation of condition 1 to supersede the affordable housing layout of approval 24/0317/RES (Approval of access, layout, scale, appearance and landscaping reserved matters pursuant to planning permission ref. 23/0584/OUT and additional details including lighting, drainage, and bat/bird boxes).

Members received a presentation which included:-

- site location plan;
- aerial view;
- approved tenure layout;
- proposed tenure layout;
- key issues; and
- officer recommendation.

Particular reference was made to the application proposed changing the approved 40 dwelling scheme from 35% affordable housing to 100% affordable housing, which would require a change to the Section 106 agreement. There was significant demand for affordable housing and the proposed tenure split of 55% social rent and 45% intermediate housing, was considered acceptable.

The Principal Project Manager, City Development responded to questions from

Members as follows:-

- the 100% affordable housing related only to this site and could not be carried forward to other sites;
- the selection of residents would be controlled through a choice system;
- the number of houses had remained the same;
- there were no changes to the layout of the site, but a change to the tenure of housing now being affordable housing;
- applicants would come through the Devon Home Choice scheme, but clarification would be provided by the speaker from Live West;
- Live West proposed managing public open space in house to prevent paying another company to manage it; and
- the original conditioned landscape management plan was still in place.

Mr GJ, speaking in favour of the application, made particular reference to:-

- Live West supported the revised application to deliver 40 additional affordable homes at the site;
- the revisions removed the requirement for first homes, removing the lower limits for the delivery of affordable homes, and amending the mortgage and possession clause within the Section 106 agreement;
- there were changes to the landscape management and a new layout plan;
- the changes aligned with recent national policy changes and were necessary for the funding and delivery of social rent homes;
- the application sought to vary the Section 106 to enable the delivery of affordable homes by Live West; and
- the Mortgage Possession Clause, sought to replace the clause to an industry standard and aid loan funding secured against homes.

Mr GJ responded to Members' questions as follows:-

- Live West worked proactively with Devon Home Choice to prioritise homes for those with priority housing needs to offer suitable accommodation;
- Live West was a strategic funding partner with Homes England, and had secured funds to deliver the homes;
- the proposal was to deliver 22 homes for social rent and 18 for shared ownership;
- social rent was normally 60% of the market rent, which was more affordable than affordable rent (80% of the market rent); and
- the mortgage clause changes related to securing funding from banks but were not directly related to shared ownership.

During the debate, Members welcomed the proposal and highlighted Live West as an excellent partner for housing provision.

The recommendation was for a variation of condition 1 to supersede the affordable housing layout of approval 24/0317/RES (Approval of access, layout, scale, appearance and landscaping reserved matters pursuant to planning permission ref. 23/0584/OUT and additional details including lighting, drainage, and bat/bird boxes) as set out in the report.

The Chair moved and Councillor Mitchell seconded the recommendation, which was voted upon and CARRIED.

RESOLVED to

a) delegate to the Head of City Development to grant subject to the conditions listed in the report and the completion of a Deed of Variation to the S106 agreement relating to planning permissions 23/0584/OUT to increase affordable housing levels, remove reference to First Homes, adjust mortgagee in possession clause and modify public open space maintenance responsibilities as set out in this report. / and as amended during the meeting; and

b) refuse permission for the reasons set out below if the legal agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) is not completed by 17 August 2025 or such extended time as agreed in writing by the Head of City Development.

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PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 24/1396/ECC - WONFORD COMMUNITY AND LEARNING CENTRE, BURNTHOUSE LANE

Councillor Asvachin declared a non-pecuniary interest and left the meeting as a Committee Member during consideration of the item. Councillor Asvachin, having registered to speak under Standing Order No. 44 and returned to speak during the Member and public speaking section of the item and left the meeting after speaking.

The Assistant Service Lead – Development Management (Major Projects) presented the application for the redevelopment of the existing Wonford Sports Centre and Community and Learning Centre, including the demolition of the existing gym, Phoenix Centre and Outdoor changing rooms and construction of a new hub and FA changing facilities. The new Hub would also accommodate a cafe area, changing facilities, studio, and gym.

Members received a presentation which included:-

- the site location and context;
- location plan;
- an aerial view;
- photos of the existing building and view;
- the proposed ground floor and mezzanine;
- the proposed north, east, south, and west elevations;
- the proposed landscape plan;
- axonometric and illustrative views;
- the planning balance; and
- the recommendation.

The Assistant Service Lead – Development Management (Major Projects), responded to questions from Members as follows:-

- this was a full application and existing solar panels would be retained, with additional panels also being added;
- existing gas boilers would also be retained due to their age, and improvements to the building's thermal dynamics would be made. The design also allowed for future connection to the local energy network;
- although the image was illustrative, the submitted layout plan showed the actual number of disabled parking spaces;
- the Police Designing Out Crime Officer recommendations included CCTV, square drain pipes, and flush doors and there would be no issue in including a condition for these details;
- sports pitches were not included in the application;
- changing the material from red brick to another type could have visual

benefits, however if Members were minded to condition the Police Designing Out Crime Officer recommendations, antisocial behaviour issues would be covered;

- policies did not specify a number for EV charging points, but there were two spaces available in the scheme with a condition for their provision;
- confirmation was needed on whether there were accessible changing rooms;
- the boundary treatment provided a guardrail to indicate public and private spaces;
- the impact of the cafe viability and removing seating was expected to be minor;
- the car park footprint and number of spaces remained unchanged; and
- no additional information was available on proposals to encourage inclusiveness as part of the scheme.

Speaking under Standing Order 44, Councillor Asvachin made reference to:-

- after many years and consultations, the final plan application was welcomed;
- the Wonford Community Centre, operated a wide variety of clubs and activities, a friendly café providing a social lifestyle for Wonford residents;
- the building was in urgent need of updating, notably the heating and leaks;
- if approved the updates would commence as soon as funding was provided; and
- a lot of work had been undertaken between, the planning team, the trustees, and the community to move this forward and it was hoped Members would support the application.

In responses to questions from Members, Councillor Asvachin made the following further comments:-

- several consultations had been held, starting before the COVID Pandemic, which included resident sounding boards, open days, and social media to gather community input; and
- funding was the primary concern for residents and Trustees. A full-sized football pitch would be welcomed but was not feasible due to space constraints.

During the debate, Members expressed the following views:-

- there was concern about crime and antisocial behaviour in the area and the need to include the recommendations from the Police Designing Out Crime Officer as a condition to address these concerns;
- concerns about funding availability;
- was there a potential for a phased development approach with funding and delivery?
- there appeared to be insufficient accessible parking and electric vehicle charging points, with the recommendation only including one double electric charging point for two cars;
- the improvements to biodiversity were welcomed;
- recessed doorways and access control were raised were potential issues relating to the crime measures on the design; and
- the Planning Committee needed to consider all aspects of the application, rather focus solely on anti-social behaviour.

The Strategic Director for Place made the following concluding points:

- there was a further design stage (RIBA stage 4) which would be fully funded to

- provide detailed engineering plans before going to tender; and
- the comments from the Police Designing Out Crime Officer were advisory and could be considered as planning condition to ensure safety and security in building design stage.

Councillor Hughes proposed and Councillor Pole seconded that a condition be added to include additional security measures as recommended by the Police Designing Out Crime Officer.

The Strategic Director for Place advised that the exact wording of this additional condition could be delegated to Planning Officers, in consultation with the Chair for inclusion in the decision notice, should Members be minded to grant planning permission. The reasoning of the condition would be in accordance with Members comments. It was noted that RIBA stage four, would be where the issues raised would be considered.

During the debate on the amendment Members expressed the following views:-

- there was concern about the potential financial implications later in the process and there needed to be an allowance for design variance for later in the process;
- the planning committee needed to ensure there was still room for sensible planning considerations going forward to incorporate the Police Designing Out Crime Officer recommendations without imposing restrictions;
- it was noted that the plan showed 12 out of 18 spaces were for disabled parking;
- it was suggested that wording of the amendment should be kept vague to allow for future design improvements; and
- full consideration should be given to police recommendations, but the amendment process could proceed if the proposer and seconder agree for the exact wording to be finalised by officers in consultation with the Chair.

Cllr Hughes advised that the additional security measures listed, were for public understanding, rather than a directive for inclusion in the amendment. Cllr Hughes emphasised trust in the Strategic Director for Place and the officers to appropriately word the planning conditions.

The Chair moved and Councillor Patrick seconded the recommendation and inclusion of the amendment, which was voted upon and CARRIED as amended.

RESOLVED that planning permission for the refurbishment of the existing Wonford Sports Centre and Community and Learning Centre, including the demolition of the existing gym, Phoenix Centre and Outdoor changing rooms and construction of a new hub and FA changing facilities. The new Hub would also accommodate a cafe area, changing facilities, studio and gym be approved subject to the conditions set out in the report update sheet and as amended during the meeting.

LIST OF DECISIONS MADE AND WITHDRAWN APPLICATIONS

Members received the report and following questions raised, the Strategic Director for Place and the Project Manager (Planning) advised:-

- a split decision in planning applications meant that one part of an application was approved and one part was refused;
- a certificate of lawfulness determined whether an HMO had lawful use and wasn't a planning judgment;
- the Article 4 direction required planning permission for the use of HMOs in

certain areas, to control their increased use.

The report of the Strategic Director for Place was noted.

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APPEALS REPORT

The report of the Strategic Director for Place was noted.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.50 pm)

Chair