

MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 16 February 2021
(6:00 - 7:06 pm)

Present: Cllr Muhammad Saleem (Chair), Cllr John Dulwich (Deputy Chair), Cllr Sanchia Alasia, Cllr Faruk Choudhury, Cllr Irma Freeborn, Cllr Cameron Geddes, Cllr Mohammed Khan, Cllr Olawale Martins, Cllr Foyzur Rahman and Cllr Dominic Twomey

Also Present: Cllr Princess Bright and Cllr Tony Ramsay

35. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

36. Minutes (21 December 2020)

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 December 2020 were confirmed as correct.

37. Fels Farm

The Development Management Officer (DMO), Be First Development Management Team, introduced a report on an application for the demolition of existing buildings and the erection of a new residential scheme comprising seven new dwellings made up of three x 4 bedroom and four x 3 bedroom, and utilisation of existing vehicular access at Fels Farm, Dagenham Road, Rush Green, Romford.

In addition to internal and external consultations, a total of 2,438 notification letters were sent to neighbouring properties together with the requisite statutory site and press notices. In total 13 objections were received including from the three Eastbrook ward councillors, the material planning considerations concerning which were set out in the planning assessment detailed in the report.

Two representations were made at the meeting by the ward councillors, who objected to the application for the following reasons:

- The proposed development would be an eye sore and would adversely affect the visual amenity of the surrounding Country Park.
- It would create increased traffic movements at a road junction/roundabout, near a blind bend, known for accidents.
- The belief that the existing outbuilding was a symbol of the Borough's agricultural heritage and consequently should be retained.
- Approval to this application in the Green Belt would set a dangerous precedent for future developments in the area.

Responding to the objections the planning agent representing the applicant briefly went through the history of the site including that there was an existing certificate of lawfulness for a storage and skip depot with a height limitation imposed of seven skips. The site was occupied by two permanent structures, with several smaller storage units and a large part of the site covered by a yard. Consequently, it would be highly unlikely for the area to be returned to the Green Belt, and it was the view of the planning agent that the proposed residential development was a far better use of the site in all aspects. There had been no objections from Highways on traffic and safety grounds, whilst given the site's present use and status, the proposed development would not create a precedent within a Green Belt setting.

A number of observations were made on the application both for and against, and questions were raised by the Committee, firstly why was it that the temporarily skip stacking had been considered to form a permanent structure on the site? Secondly it was noted that a previous submission had proposed nine residential dwellings and an office space. On that basis seeing the generous external spacing included in the current application, would it not have been possible with better planning to have achieved 10 units on the site; that being the threshold for providing an element of affordable housing?

The planning agent stated that the stacking of the skips was considered to have an impact on the openness of the Green Belt and was visually unattractive and was therefore regarded as a relevant consideration for the purposes of the application. He acknowledged that whilst the earlier application included more units, it had been subject to a number of objections based on over development, and this had resulted in the submission of the current application to create more openness in a Green Belt location.

Given the concerns expressed, and at the suggestion of the Deputy Chair, it was agreed to defer a decision pending a site visit by the constituted Planning Visiting Sub-Committee which would be convened, subject to any Covid restrictions. The purpose of the visit being to review the impact of the proposed development on the openness of the setting in the Green Belt, so as to enable the Committee to make an informed decision.

38. Unit A, Creek Road, Barking

The Development Management Officer (DMO), Be First Development Management Team introduced a report on an application for the construction of a four-storey building (including part ground mezzanine) to provide up to 11,363 sqm (GIA) of new flexible industrial floorspace (Class E (industrial and research development processes), Class B2 and B8 use); car parking; landscaping; plant and associated works at Unit A, Creek Road, Barking, the site formerly occupied by Reemploy.

Following the publication of the agenda an addendum report was published and presented and which outlined at the request of the applicant (Be First), the rewording of the Heads of Terms as part of the associated Section 106

Agreement, with regards to making the Employment and Skills obligation more deliverable.

In addition to internal and external consultations, a total of 448 were sent to neighbouring properties together with the requisite statutory site and press notices. No objections were received.

The DMO explained that the stacked intensification model being proposed on this site would be a flagship typology of industrial space in the Borough as well as the UK. The high-quality flexible industrial floorspace would contribute to the Borough's industrial and employment floorspace and was therefore acceptable in principle. The proposal would also provide approximately 243 jobs for highly skilled workers to meet an identified need in the Borough.

The scale, siting and design of the stacked industrial development was considered appropriate to the site's context and would result in a high-quality finish, whilst respecting the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

The proposed biodiversity and landscaping strategy would positively contribute to the appearance and wider placemaking improvements to the immediate area and enhance the arboricultural, biodiversity and environmental value of the site. The development adopted a sustainable approach to transport whilst ensuring an acceptable impact on local highways and infrastructure.

The proposal was also considered acceptable in terms of sustainability and air quality, with a financial contribution secured to mitigate any shortfall in carbon reduction, and therefore,

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Agree the reasons for approval as set out in the report,
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Inclusive Growth (or authorised Officer), in consultation with the Director of Law and Governance, to grant planning permission subject to the completion of a Unilateral Undertaking under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) based on the Heads of Terms identified at Appendix 6 of the report as amended in the addendum report, and the Conditions listed in Appendix 5 of the report, and
3. That, if by 16th August 2021 the Unilateral Undertaking was not completed, the Director of Inclusive Growth (or other authorised Officer), in consultation with the Director of Law and Governance, be delegated the authority to refuse planning permission, extend the timeframe to grant approval or refer the application back to the Planning Committee for determination.

39. Application for Prior Approval - 36 Curzon Crescent, Barking

An application was presented for prior approval for the construction of a single storey rear extension and installation of four roof lights at 36 Curzon Crescent, Barking.

Having assessed the proposed development,

The Committee **resolved**:

1. That prior approval was not required, and
2. Delegated authority to the Director of Inclusive Growth (or other authorised Officer) to issue the decision, subject to the Conditions and Informatives listed in Appendix 1 of the report.

40. BRL S96 Deed of Variation update

The Deputy Chief Planner, Be First Development Management Team updated the Committee regarding the Deed of Variation to a Section 106 Agreement relating to the Barking Riverside Development, and specifically the decision to no longer pursue changes to the East West Transit route.

The Committee **noted** the report.