

**Bristol City Council**  
**Minutes of the Development Control B Committee**

**19 July 2023 at 2.00 pm**



**Members Present:-**

**Councillors:** Ani Stafford-Townsend (Chair), Chris Windows (Vice-Chair), Fabian Breckels, Sarah Classick, Lorraine Francis, Katja Hornchen, Guy Poultney and Jonathan Hucker (substitute for Lesley Alexander)

**Officers in Attendance:-**

Jeremy Livitt, Philippa Howson, Peter Westbury, Simone Wilding and Jane Woodhouse

**14 Welcome, Introduction and Safety Information**

The Chair welcomed all parties to the meeting and reminded all attendees of the evacuation procedure in the event of an emergency.

**15 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Amal Ali and Councillor Lesley Alexander (Councillor Jonathan Hucker substituting).

**16 Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

**17 Minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 13th June 2023**

**RESOLVED – that the minutes of the above meeting be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.**

**18 Action Sheet**

The Action Sheet was noted.



## 19 Appeals

The Committee noted the report on appeals.

## 20 Enforcement

The Committee noted the report on enforcement action.

## 21 Public Forum

Members of the Committee received Public Forum Statements in advance of the meeting. The Statements were published online prior to the meeting. Each statement was heard before the application it related to and taken fully into consideration by the Committee prior to reaching a decision.

The following supplementary questions were asked by Tony Pitt in relation to the written responses he had received to his questions, with verbal answers given by officers as indicated:

### **Supplementary Question 1 – can the officers confirm that the report relates to dual allocation purposes?**

A: This is confirmed for use in relation to both housing and business purposes.

### **Supplementary Question 2 – in view of the situation relating to the Town and Village Green land bordering the site, won't this affect deliverability?**

A: Officers indicated that they would address this issue during the debate.

### **Supplementary Question 3 – Shouldn't there have been a formal reconsultation since much of the original consultation was carried out during COVID?**

A: It was standard practice for there to be wide consultation for any such application involving all parties at each stage including for all amendments.

### **Supplementary Question 4 – Does the plan accurately show the Site of Nature Conservation boundaries?**

A: Officers relied on the map with which they were provided to indicate the appropriate boundaries since they were not directly involved in drawing up the plan.



## 22 Planning and Development

The committee considered the following planning applications:

### a Planning Application Number 21/05164/F - Land on West Side of Novers Hill

Officers introduced this report and made the following comments during their presentation:

- The application was in relation to land to the west side of Novers Hill and was for 144 dwellings with 30% affordable housing, two access points and a public open space
- A slide underlined how steep the site is and the applicant had been required to address the issue of the design
- The site had been historically allocated for housing and business with a sliver of an SNCI (Site of Nature and Conservation Interest).
- The site had been allocated for a long time and was reaching the end of the current local plan period
- The law indicated that a Local Planning Authority should follow local plan allocations unless there was very good reason not to
- It was also noted that there was a strong need for housing within the city
- Officers noted the decision concerning Brislington Meadows and the comparatively low weight given by the Planning Inspector to ecological issues
- However, there remained outstanding ecological issues on this site which the applicant had failed to resolve
- The major cause of concern for officers was the steepness of the site
- The topography of the site indicated only one entrance with a very steep narrow hill with no provision for walking or cycling
- The new network needed to be built to adoptable standards and would require significant infrastructure which would affect viability and require approval
- It was important that a site of this size should be sustainable. However, the site only had indicative walkable and cycling routes which was not satisfactory
- Given the topology of the site, anyone using the site would be car dependent particularly if there were no regular bus connections to Hartcliffe. The further application had not addressed these issues
- The gradient was approximately the same as for Park Street with less space for movement and did not pass a safety audit.
- The proposed retaining wall would also cause difficulty with viability and implementing to an acceptable standard
- A slide indicated the steepness and that there was no safe connection to the public highway with no comfort walking or cycling facility
- In addition, the site would be unsafe for anyone who lived or worked below it or for the river below. The issue of road safety was a major concern



- Whilst this was a sensitive site which would require a great deal of work to deliver, the main concerns remained steepness and the safety for future residents
- The hedgerows were designated as a Town and Village Green and any impact of the housing on the site would also impact on this

In response to members' questions, officers made the following points:

- The developer would need to obtain approval from the infrastructure Team for the proposed retaining wall
- It would be very strenuous for anyone living on site and day to day living would be very difficult, particularly for those who were care dependent
- It was the responsibility for the applicant to ensure viability
- Officers explained the colour coding on the site to indicate the different levels of gradient - orange was the most steep with which the site was comparable and also narrower than Park Street, exceeding the recommended gradient
- Housing allocations needed to be taken very seriously since there was a legal requirement concerning the deliverability of the site for housing
- There had been regular attempts over the years to obtain planning permission on the site. It was noted that there had been attempts in 2002 and 2003 to obtain housing, both of which had failed
- Officers did not automatically include all paperwork in the report. There was an officers summary of the equalities impact assessment which still nevertheless required proper consideration by the committee
- The Committee was required to assess the application on its merits rather than whether or not they would lose at appeal

Committee members made the following comments:

- Officers had done a really good job in providing a balanced argument and in the issues involved. The application should be refused
- This was an extremely bad application – in addition to the serious transport concerns, there were also ecological concerns as well. It seemed very difficult to manoeuvre around the serious problems that would be caused by this application
- Whilst some additional reasons to those proposed by officers might be preferable, the Committee's views were important in any assessment of this for the decision
- The reasons for any refusal needed to be watertight and the officers recommendations were sound in this respect. The footpath was as steep as Park Street and also narrower. In addition, there was an issue with safety in terms of any infrastructure to be installed
- The officers' work on this should be thanked. Whilst there were strong transport and safety reasons for refusal, these did not negate the serious environmental concerns



- There was a lack of equity on site. Anyone who was completely car dependent due to mobility issues would be seriously affected
- The recommendations should be supported
- The officers' recommendations were very credible and should be supported. Tribute was needed to the Friends of the Western Slopes who had put in a lot of work on this issue.

Councillor Ani Stafford-Townsend moved, seconded by Councillor Fabian Breckels and upon being put to the vote, the application was

**REFUSED (unanimously) – that the application be refused for the following reasons:**

**Reason(s)**

**1. The proposed development fails to provide the following:**

- Adequate permeability within and to / from highway network
- Sufficient road safety measures
- Walking and cycling infrastructure
- Public Transport infrastructure
- Travel Planning provision
- Adequate waste storage and collection proposals
- An acceptable level of parking (by reason of overprovision)

It is therefore contrary to the requirements of the NPPF, policies BCS10, BCS13, BCS21 of the Bristol Core Strategy (2011) and policies DM23, DM27, DM28 of the Bristol Local Plan, Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (2014) and the Knowle West Regeneration Framework.

**2. The proposed development by reason of the internal gradients would not allow easy or safe walking and cycling. This is contrary to the requirements of the NPPF, policies BCS10, BCS13 of the Bristol Core Strategy (2011) and policies DM23, DM28 of the Bristol Local Plan, Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (2014).**

**3. The application proposal is not supported by a complete set of ecological surveys and reports to demonstrate mitigation on the ecology of the site and its biodiversity. The application proposal is therefore contrary to the requirements of the NPPF and to Policy DM19 of the Bristol Local Plan, Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (2014).**

**23 Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled to be held at 6pm on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2023 in the Council Chamber, City Hall, College Green, Bristol.

The meeting ended at 3.05 pm

**CHAIR** \_\_\_\_\_



