

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SONNING PARISH COUNCIL  
PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17 JANUARY 2018 AT  
6.00PM IN THE PEARSON HALL, PEARSON ROAD, SONNING.**

PRESENT: Mr I Runnalls (Chairman), Mr A E Farnese, Mr T Fisher, Mr P Morrison.  
Mrs L Bates (Clerk). By invitation Cllr David Lee (WBC) 1 visitor..

APOLOGIES: There were no apologies.

**AGENDA**

- a) Present.
- b) Apologies for Absence
- c) Declaration of Interest
- d) Minutes of 18 December 2017 to approve.
- e) Updates
- f) Cllr David Lee – Local Plan Update.
- g) Pavilion Sonning Recreation Ground (173578) Full planning application for the proposed erection of a replacement half storey sports pavilion and detached maintenance store following demolition of existing pavilion. To agree comments. Deadline 17/01/18
- h) The Atrium (173537). Full planning application for the proposed erection of replacement dwelling house, with basement and detached double garage and store following demolition of existing dwelling; construction of an external swimming pool and to incorporate a strip of curtilage land from Pool Court. To agree comments. Deadline
- i) Lawn Cottage Mustard Lane (173689). Householder application for the proposed single storey front extension following the demolition of existing uPVC conservatory and utility room. To agree comments. Deadline 01/02/18
- j) 7 Glebe Lane (173552). Householder application for the proposed erection of single storey rear extension to form shower room, brick infill of existing open sided rear canopy with new curved fascia and insertion of 2no roof-lights in existing roof, and change of roof on existing conservatory from a glazed roof to a tiled roof. Amendment to planning consent 170248. Retrospective. To agree comments. Deadline 05/02/18
- k) Any matters considered urgent by the Chairman.
- l) Date of the Next Meeting.

1903 DECLARATION OF INTEREST/DISPENSATIONS.

The Council's planning application was on the list for information only and the Council would not be making comments therefore there were no declarations of interest.

1904 MINUTES.

The Minutes having been circulated were taken as read and signed by the Chairman.

1905 UPDATES.

The Chairman said that the appeal at Pool Court had been dismissed, very thoroughly, and the impact the proposal would have on the character and appearance of the Sonning Conservation Area had been one of the main reasons for the decision. The Malthouse and the Butt's Hill Bridge plans had been approved. The wording on the application for the proposed changes to the canopy had been changed to indicate that the new structure was permanent.

Cllr Lee said that WBC were currently updating the Local Plan and asked who had attended the Local Plan – Site Assessment Engagement meeting. The Chairman and Mr Fisher confirmed that they had. Cllr Lee said that the government had changed the way that Local Authorities planned for development, particularly for new housing. Previously, numbers of new houses required were set at regional level (in a document called the South East Plan) for each authority to decide. However, now it was the responsibility of individual local authorities to assess how much development was needed in its area and how much should be provided. Wokingham had decided that the best way to achieve the number of houses required (800 per annum) was to build in four strategic locations. This was to stop the ad hoc development in rear gardens, where the developer made no contribution to the local infrastructure (under S106). The four locations were, Arborfield Garrison, South of the M4, North and South Wokingham. John Redwood and Cllr Lee had both supported the idea of 4 SDL's and the Inspector had agreed as well. It had been very difficult to implement as no one wanted development in their area. The amount of contributions from developers under the CIL were substantially more than under S106 and this had allowed more infrastructure to be built. By 2026 WBC would have built its housing allocation and they needed to plan for 2026 to 2036. The government's policy now called for local authorities to have a five year housing plan in place however the actual building was not under WBC's control but the developers. One developer, who had planning permission for his site, had leased it out to Disney Studios for eight years so the development would not be built for at least eight years. The government actually wanted 894 homes to be built per year and they believed that the more houses that were built the cheaper the selling price. With developers not building out the planning permissions the Borough would now need to build 1200 houses per annum rather than 894 as Planning Inspectors were using the wrong calculations on which to base the 5 year land supply.

WBC were now working on the Local Plan 2026 to 2036. The call for sites had resulted in 280 sites being put forward and these were now being considered. The University was a major landowner and would like to build on the Wokingham/Bracknell borders but this would result in little or no separation between the two communities, and little between Wokingham/Bracknell and the Greater London Authority. It was important to Wokingham Councillors to retain separation gaps between areas and the Green belt. Wokingham needed a master plan and were considering various options. A new town was a possibility (a joint venture between East Berks/Reading/Wokingham). The 5 year land supply was difficult to achieve with developers holding onto land and Wokingham had asked the Minister to explain how Wokingham could achieve a 5 year land supply in these circumstances. It was clear that Berkshire as a whole had too many houses, the roads were too busy, often leading to gridlock. Businesses' might look at locating in Berkshire but the traffic situation would make it unattractive for their employees etc. and this would dissuade any from setting up new business. Developers however were taking the opportunity of using the Inspectorate's calculations for a 5 year land supply to apply for planning permission on unsuitable sites in green belt/countryside locations and then going to appeal when WBC refused the applications. The Inspectors were upholding more and more appeals of this kind and currently there were 14 such appeals in the Wokingham Borough. WBC were wasting £5million on defending appeals. WBC had fought the Sheeplands appeals, because the owner had increased the use of the site to include uses not suitable in the green belt. The majority of parish council's had written to the Minister with their concerns about the calculations for the 5 year land supply as more and more development was likely to be imposed on them and Cllr Lee urged SPC to do the same, Wokingham should not be penalised for something that was out of their control. Even if WBC did allocate a site for 15000 homes it would be some years before the houses, would be built as the infrastructure had to be built first. Unfortunately Ministers did not understand and this failure, to understand what was happening, was the problem. All Authorities had the same problem and were asking the Government to rethink. Wokingham were prepared to build new homes but it was a matter of where. Of the 280 sites identified in the Call for Sites only 1200 homes

would result if planning was approved, there could be another 1800 homes on other sites totalling 3000 so it would need another 2000 to reach the 7000 needed. A Master Plan was required and if WBC didn't have one Reading would develop on their boundaries. The answer was for the Secretary of State to tell the Inspector's to change the current calculations they were using. The 6 Berkshire Unitary Authorities would have a lot going against them if Ministers didn't agree. Jacob Rees Mogg MP had stated the green belt should be built on to ease the housing crises and that planning permission was the problem and John Redwood MP had said that had said that Local Authorities needed to get things right. Cllr Lee agreed to take a question from the floor and Mr Bates asked how the government decided the number of houses allocated to each Authority. Cllr Lee said that it was based on the projection for commercial development. SERPLAN had been based on similar formula. Calculations included the number of people living in an area, based on a typical family of two adults and three children and projected housing needs for that family over a number of years, assuming that the children would move out of the family home and that the parents might then downsize. Wokingham had been allocated larger numbers than the neighbouring Authorities. House prices in Wokingham continued to rise, houses on sale for £250,000 a couple of years ago were now selling for £389,000. The CIL rate had been set at £38,000 per house and it had been suggested that this should rise by inflation and it certainly would rise. Mr Morrison asked if this would just increase the price of houses. Cllr Lee said that houses were not selling and it had been reported that 68% of people could not afford to buy. It had been suggested that the size of houses being built should be limited but developers had objected. Mr Bates asked if there was any way of getting the government to change their attitude. Cllr Lee said that the projected population growth was being projected and other considerations were then factored in but there would come a point when enough would be enough. Cllr Lee said that he would like Sonning to write to the Minister and agreed to send bullet points to the Clerk. Cllr Lee said that he had also written to Sarah Richards the Chief Executive of the Planning Inspectorate. In summing up Cllr Lee said that WBC would look at all the potential sites and the number of homes they would produce. If all parishes were prepared to take some housing it could then be decided what type of housing was required. A scheme for instance for 3-bed terraces that would normally sell for £350,000 could be offered to young people where they bought the house for £250,000. If they sold within a year they would then pay back the £100,000, or, after several years an agreed percentage of the £100,000 back. The Chairman thanked Cllr Lee but said that the green buffers around Sonning were very important. Cllr Lee said that the government policy was the common enemy.

1907 THE ATRIUM (173537).

Mr Fisher said that the applicant already had planning permission for a larger dwelling in a slightly different position on the site. In the circumstances it was agreed to treat this proposal as a fresh application. The proposal was to take a strip of land from the adjoining property, Pool Court, and to re-site the proposed dwelling 3 metres towards Pool Court, the garage would move 5 metres, using this additional piece of land which was now in the ownership of the applicant. The Design Statement said that the move was to accommodate the objections from Star Court. However Mr Fisher understood that the restrictive covenant had covered an area of land on the site and moving the proposed dwelling had now moved it outside this area. Overall the proposed dwelling was 4% less than the previous proposal but many of the previous objections applied to the new proposal. Several trees had already been removed but these had been approved in the previous approval. One neighbour had concerns about potential damage to their property from the numerous lorries accessing the site. Following discussion it was agreed to reuse the earlier comments where they still applied, to refer to the Inspectors views when dismissing the appeal on Pool Court and to mention the above observations.

1908 PAVILION RECREATION GROUND (173578).

This was on the agenda to note only as it was SPC's application, and to give the public the opportunity of providing their views.

1909 LAWN COTTAGE (173689).

The Chairman said that the drawings had not been on the WBC web site and there had been insufficient time to make a site visit and discuss this single storey extension prior to the meeting. Mr Farnese agreed to look at the plans and, as comments were required before the next meeting, if Mr Farnese found no reason to object, no comments would be made.

1910 7 GLEBE LANE (173552).

The Chairman said that there was planning permission for the extension but it had not been built entirely according to the plans and permission was now being sought for these changes. Following discussion it was agreed to say no reason to refuse.

1911. MATTERS CONSIDERED URGENT BY THE CHAIRMAN.

The Chairman said that a neighbour had brought an issue about the building being built at August Field, to his attention and he had sent the details to WBC who were looking into it. Mr Fisher said that Sweet Brian he cottage next to him was being sold. The Clerk said that she had been asked if the thatch could be changed to tiles and she had referred them to Giles Stephens.

1912. DATE OF THE OF THE NEXT MEETING. The next meeting would be held on Monday 5 February at 6.00pm in the Pavilion (since changed to Wednesday 21 February).

Signed.....Dated.....