



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

Northampton Local Area Planning Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Northampton Local Area Planning Committee held at The Guildhall, St Giles Street, Northampton, NN1 1DE on Tuesday 5 October 2021 at 5.00 pm.

Present Councillor Jamie Lane (Chair)
 Councillor Anna King (Vice-Chair)
 Councillor Imran Ahmed Chowdhury BEM
 Councillor Paul Clark
 Councillor Raymond Connolly
 Councillor Dennis Meredith
 Councillor Zoe Smith

Officers Nicky Scaife (Interim Development Manager)
 Theresa Boyd (Planning Solicitor)
 Ed Bostock (Democratic Services Officer)

40. **Apologies for Absence and Appointment of Substitute Members**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cali, Dyball and Russell.

41. **Declarations of Interest**

None.

42. **Minutes**

Councillor King advised that she emailed her apologies to the previous meeting and asked that it be recorded in the minutes.

With the addition that Councillor King sent her apologies, the minutes of the meeting held on 7th September 2021 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

43. **Chair's Announcements**

None.

44. **Deputations/Public Addresses**

RESOLVED:

That under the following items, the members of the public and Ward Councillors listed below were granted leave to address the Committee:

N/2021/0009

Councillor Stone
Matthew Pearce
Paul Scott
Gordon Beaton

N/2021/0031

Councillor Stone

45. **Proposed Pre-Committee Site Visits**

Site visits were currently under review; it was unlikely that the minibus, used to take Northampton Borough Council Committee members on site visits, would be used, however officers were open to requests to visit individual sites from Members.

46. **List of Current Appeals/Inquiries**

The Interim Development Manager submitted a List of Current Appeals and Inquiries. 3 decisions had been reached by the Planning Inspectorate, all of which had been refused under delegated powers. An application relating to 585-589 Harlestone Road was refused due to highway concerns; the Inspector agreed with the officer's findings and dismissed the appeal. An application relating to 24 Clare Street was refused due to the arrangement of windows providing a poor level of amenity; the Inspector agreed and dismissed the appeal. An application relating to 48 Abington Avenue was refused due to room sizes falling below the National Space Standards; the Inspector agreed and dismissed the appeal.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

47. **N/2021/0009**

**Demolition of existing building and redevelopment of site for purpose-built student accommodation and ground floor/basement retail unit with landscaping and associated works
Debenhams 33 - 39 Drapery Northampton**

The Interim Development Manager submitted a report to the Committee. Members' attention was drawn to the addendum which contained further neighbour representations, a proposed amendment to the recommendation and removal of Conditions 16 and 17. The Committee heard that the entire existing building would be demolished; the lack of windows and high ceilings made the building unsuitable for conversion. Waste storage would be provided to the rear of the development and cycle storage to the side, off Swan Lane. An outside communal terrace would be provided on the 5th floor. Conditions were included to agree to materials used for the external finish. It was advised that a retail unit to the front would provide an active frontage to The Drapery. The proposed development did represent a reduction in retail floor space, but the current market situation and existing large vacant stores in

the Town Centre had to be taken into account. It was advised that planning policy supported town centre student accommodation and any harm to the conservation area would be offset by the long-term use of the site. Contributions towards construction training would be made through a Section 106 Legal Agreement.

Councillor Stone, in her capacity as Ward Councillor, spoke against the application and voiced concern regarding the demolition of the building and construction of the development and potential empty space. She advised that she had contacted the University who would not be entering into any 3rd party arrangements and questioned the need for more student accommodation in the town centre.

Matthew Pearce, Solicitor on behalf of The Boston Public House, spoke against the application and commented that his clients welcomed the updated recommendation but requested that the application be deferred until sufficient noise mitigation measures were agreed; he advised that his client may challenge any decision reached by the Committee in court but his client was willing to work with the applicant in respect of a noise assessment.

Paul Scott, the agent on behalf of the applicant, spoke in favour of the application and commented that the proposed development would breathe new life back into the town centre; the development would be low-carbon and delivered on various policies within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Gordon Beaton, the architect on behalf of the applicant, spoke in favour of the application and commented that the building as it stood was unsuitable for conversion. He also noted that the Northampton Local Plan Part 2 identified the building as having low significance and that the proposed development would bring additional light and security by way of natural surveillance through having windows to habitable rooms facing Swan Yard.

In response to questions, the Committee heard that the balustrades on the top-floor balcony were proposed to be higher than the standard. Safety measures would be set out in the development's Safety Management Plan which was secured by a condition. Asbestos removal would be undertaken by a registered process and it was noted that the lease signed by students would prevent students from using their own vehicles. Several noise-mitigating measures would be put in place including double-glazed windows and acoustic trickle vents. It was further noted that Northampton were behind other towns in terms of this type of student accommodation.

Members discussed the report.

RESOLVED:

That the application be **APPROVED IN PRINCIPLE** subject to conditions and reasons as set out in the report, Removal of Conditions 16 & 17), the prior completion of a Section 106 Agreement to secure planning obligations as set out in the report, and the granting of delegated powers to Assistant Director of Place & Economy in consultation with the Chair to approve appropriate noise mitigation measures and conditions as necessary, following receipt of an updated noise impact assessment which shall include an assessment of the noise impact of any lockdown restrictions

due to the Covid – 19 pandemic and which shall include an assessment of the Boston Clipper Public House (26 College Street) and appropriate mitigation measures as considered necessary to mitigate impacts of the development in respect of proposed residential amenity and the operation of existing businesses in the locality.

48. **N/2021/0031**
Change of use from 4 occupants House in multiple occupation to a 5 occupants House in multiple occupation.
35 Hood Street

The Interim Development Manager submitted a report to the Committee which sought approval for a change of use from a HMO for 4 occupants to a HMO for 5 occupants. Since the property was an existing HMO, area concentration was not a material consideration. It was explained that the room sizes all complied with national space standards.

Councillor Stone, in her capacity as Ward Councillor, spoke against the application and voiced concern around parking, waste and antisocial behaviour. She commented that there were a number of illegal HMOs in the area and asked why developers continued to come back to Committee with proposed increases to the rooms in HMOs.

Councillor Chowdhury left the meeting at this juncture.

In response to questions, the Committee heard that the Council referred to guidance where no parking was proposed and that the application site was well served by local transport links and local facilities.

Members discussed the report.

RESOLVED:

That the application be **APPROVED** subject to the conditions and reasons as set out in the report.

49. **WNN/2021/0287 and WNN/2021/0288**
Change of Use from restaurant (Use Class E) to Mixed Use Drinking Establishment (Sui Generis) and Retail (Use Class E), to include placing of tables, chairs, parasols and planters within curtilage of site.
Mr Grants House, 10 St Giles Square

This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

50. **Urgent Business**

None.

The meeting closed at 6.37 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____