



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

Northampton Local Area Planning Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Northampton Local Area Planning Committee held at The Jeffrey Room - The Guildhall, Northampton, NN1 1DE on Tuesday 1 November 2022 at 5.00 pm.

Present Councillor Jamie Lane (Chair)
 Councillor Anna King (Vice-Chair)
 Councillor Nazim Choudary
 Councillor Paul Clark
 Councillor Raymond Connolly
 Councillor Paul Dyball
 Councillor Cathrine Russell
 Councillor Zoe Smith

Apologies Councillor Muna Cali
for
Absence:

Officers: Artemis Christophi (Head of Planning Delivery)
 Shaun Robson (Development Manager)
 Nicky Scaife (Development Management Team Leader)
 Chris Weston (Principal Planning Officer)
 Samantha Taylor (Principal Planning Officer)
 Simon Aley (Locum Planning Solicitor)
 Ed Bostock (Democratic Services Officer)

52. Apologies for Absence and Appointment of Substitute Members

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Cali.

53. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Z Smith advised of a per determination in respect of item 8b and would leave the room whilst the item was being determined.

54. Minutes

Officers were seeking legal clarification with regards to the minutes of the meeting held on 9th September; they would be brought to the following meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 4th October 2022 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

55. Chair's Announcements

In reference to item 7a, the Chair highlighted paragraph 4.2 of the report which stated that the application did not relate to the relocation of the market; this was subject to a separate application that would be determined at a future meeting.

56. **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:

WNN/2022/0454

Eamonn Fitzpatrick
Clive Surman
Jamie Chalmers

WNN/2022/0397 & WNN/2022/0398

Ian Catlin
Marc Sawyer

WNN/2022/0756

Councillor Purser

WNN/2022/0797

Councillor Haque

WNN/2022/0903

Councillor Roberts
Pat Dooley

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

No decisions had been reached by the Inspector at the time of publication. An update would be brought to the next meeting.

58. **WNN/2022/0454 - Public Realm Regeneration Scheme of the Market Square. The Market Square, Northampton**

The Principal Planning Officer presented the report which sought approval for improvement works to the Market Square, including the installation of a water feature, permanent above ground tiered seating, 18 permanent market stalls, tree planting, re-laying of cobbles, new paving and new lighting. There were no statutory objections, subject to conditions, and there were 7 letters of objection received, including from the Civic Society. 4 petitions had been submitted to the Council (not the LPA) in relation to the Market Square regeneration which were outlined in the report, these petitions had garnered approximately 10,000 signatures in total. Members' attention was drawn to the addendum which contained a further response from the Ecology Officer.

Eamonn Fitzpatrick, a market trader, addressed the Committee and spoke against the application. He advised he was representing 16,000 people that signed a petition. He believed that the Council saw the Market Square as an event space and suggested that public money was being wasted, noting that the proposed water feature would cost £700,000. He stated that traders had been consulted but not listened to. Mr Fitzpatrick further stated that existing antisocial behaviour issues would be exacerbated with the additional seating proposed.

In response to a question, Mr Fitzpatrick advised that the current water feature was a magnet for antisocial behaviour; it was subject to frequent vandalism and was not operational much of the time.

Clive Surman, on behalf of the Civic Society for Northampton, addressed the Committee and spoke against the application. He commented that the proposed layout was not appropriate given the key features of the Market Square. He believed that the proposed design, including the lighting, was too contemporary and would become dated in a relatively short time; a design such as the All Saints' Church portico would better suit the Market Square. Mr Surman also believed that the proposed trees would create shade in unwelcome areas and that the permanent stalls would reduce the overall flexibility of the Market Square.

In response to a question, Mr Surman advised that the Civic Society had also submitted comments to the plans for Market Walk. He stated that the 2 proposals should be looked at together.

Jamie Chalmers, the Project Manager for the Market Square redevelopment, addressed the Committee and spoke in favour of the application. He commented that extensive consultation had taken place to secure funding; the consultation had formed the design of the proposed development. Tree planting and green roofs on the fixed market stalls were a key feature of the proposal, and the hard surfacing had been carefully selected to match the surrounding buildings. The fixed market stalls would provide space for storage, and the pop-up stalls would be taken down each night. The proposed lighting would provide more uniform light across the entire Market Square.

In response to questions, Mr Chalmers advised that the water feature designer had delivered several other water features across the country. Regular safety checks would be undertaken, and spare parts would be readily available if they were needed; the plant room would be above ground for ease of access. The water would be recycled and regularly treated. He further advised that bi-monthly meetings had taken place with market traders, and the proposal incorporated as many of their suggestions and requirements as possible. The cleaning regime would be intensified following completion of the development. It was estimated that the water feature would cost approximately £20,000 per year to run. The Market Manager would be responsible for the storage of pop-up stalls; this would be tendered work, and anticipated management issues were currently being investigated. With regards to antisocial behaviour, Mr Chalmers advised that a lot of antisocial behaviour took place under the cover of the current market stalls; the removal of the new pop-up stalls each night would remove this issue. Additional CCTV was also proposed across the Market Square, and more people using the Market during the day would

provide passive surveillance. There were accessibility concerns regarding the use of the existing cobblestones; careful consideration was needed as to how best use these safely.

In response to questions, the Principal Planning Officer advised that a Category B tree to the south of the Market Square would be removed to allow the nearby Category A tree to flourish. He further noted that the Police had raised no objection to the application, subject to the addition of a condition relating to lighting.

Members discussed the report and made the following comments:

- The design was too modern and would suit somewhere like Milton Keynes better; the application did not make the most of Northampton's history.
- The Market Square may look dated in a relatively short time.
- The funding received was specifically for the regeneration of the Market Square.
- The cobbles were dangerous and in need of changing.
- Antisocial behaviour would not improve without improvements to the Market Square.
- Local people should have had more say in the design.

Councillor Lane proposed and Councillor Choudary seconded that the officer recommendation be approved. The recommendation contained within the report was put to a vote and declared carried with 9 votes for and 1 against.

RESOLVED:

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

59. **WNN/2022/0397 & WNN/2022/0398 - Listed Building consent and full planning for Demolition of 21-23 Bridge Street (front facade to be retained and repaired where possible) to create 43no affordable Apartments, Offices and Commercial Spaces, complete with bin and cycle storage provisions. Rear of 21-23 Bridge Street**

The Principal Planning Officer presented the report which sought listed building consent and full planning consent for the demolition of 21-23 Bridge Street to create 43 affordable apartments, offices, and commercial spaces, including cycle and waste storage. The front façade would be retained and repaired where possible. An application to convert the building into a hotel in 2017 was approved, however this consent had since expired. Members' attention was drawn to the addendum which contained an additional neighbour representation, an amendment to the recommendation and amended wording of Condition 27. It was noted that the closure of Bridge Street would require separate consent from the Local Highway Authority. With regards to concerns around night-time noise, it was noted that Environmental Health had raised no objections subject to conditions relating to noise assessments and mitigation measures.

Ian Catlin, the Director of neighbouring NBs nightclub, addressed the Committee and spoke against the application. He voiced concern around the apartment windows and

questioned whether they would be fixed closed and advised that the club's fire exit opened onto Angel Street and that it took deliveries from there; he had concern around its closure.

The Principal Planning Officer confirmed that windows on the proposed development would be subject to noise mitigation measures. He also advised that the club owners would be consulted on the Highways application to close the road which would be separate matter from the planning application. A construction management plan would also form part of any approval granted and secured by condition.

In response to questions, the Committee were informed that studio apartments were not a predominant feature of the development, and it was noted that there were no apartments at the Bridge Street or Angel Street fronts of the ground floor of the proposed development. All of the units would meet or exceed national space standards.

Members discussed the report and made the following comments:

- It was important that this long-vacant building be brought back into use, however this was not the most appropriate housing; better single-person accommodation was needed.
- Prospective residents would be aware that they would be living in close proximity to numerous bars and nightclubs.
- Generally, the positive aspects of the proposed development outweighed the negatives.

Councillor Clark proposed and Councillor King seconded that the officer recommendation in respect of application WNN/2022/0397 be agreed. The recommendation was put to a vote and declared carried with 9 votes for and 1 abstention.

Councillor Connolly proposed and Councillor Clark seconded that the officer recommendation in respect of application WNN/2022/0398 be agreed. The recommendation was put to a vote and declared carried with 9 votes for and 1 abstention.

RESOLVED:

WNN/2022/0397

That the application be **APPROVED IN PRINCIPLE** as per the Officer recommendation subject to completion of a S106 Agreement to secure the obligations as set out in the report and with an **amendment to Condition 27** as detailed in the Addendum.

WNN/2022/0398

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

Amended Condition 27

No development shall commence until a detailed and updated ecological report incorporating a detailed Bat survey shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Once approved, all mitigation measure within the report shall be implemented in full.

Reason: In the interests of wildlife and nature conservation in accordance with Policy BN2 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure timely submission of details.

Councillor Z Smith left the room at this juncture, having advised of a predetermination in the following item.

60. **WNN/2022/0756 - Change of Use from House in Multiple Occupation for 6 occupants (Use Class C4) into House in Multiple Occupation for 7 occupants (Use Class Sui Generis). 218 Abington Avenue**

The Principal Planning Officer presented the report which sought approval for a change of use from HMO for 6 occupants to HMO to 7 occupants. No external alterations were proposed as part of the development.

Councillor Purser addressed the Committee and spoke against the application. He voiced concern around the cumulative impact of additional rooms in existing HMOs and stated that shared houses with en-suite facilities were preferable. He stated that the Council's sustainable transport policy was not working and that the Council had no ability to control vehicle use.

In response to questions, the Committee were informed that the property had 3 bathrooms; this exceeded the requirement set out in the HMO Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). It was also explained that the only subject for consideration was the additional bedroom since the property was an existing HMO; as such, the concentration of HMOs in the area was also not a matter for the Committee.

Members discussed the report and made the following comments:

- Piecemeal HMO room increases were not appropriate.
- 6 occupants were adequate.
- It was better that the landlord apply for planning permission than adding the additional room without the Council's consent.

Councillor Lane proposed and Councillor King seconded that the officer recommendation be agreed. The recommendation was put to a vote and declared carried with 3 votes for, 3 against and 3 abstentions. Councillor Lane, as Chair, cast the deciding vote.

RESOLVED:

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

Councillor Z Smith re-joined the meeting.

61. **WNN/2022/0797 - Change of Use from Dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to House in Multiple Occupation (Use Class C4) for 8 occupants. 48 Hazelwood Road**

The Principal Planning Officer presented the report which sought approval for a change of use from dwellinghouse to HMO for 8 occupants. No external alterations were proposed as part of the development and should the application be approved, the concentration of HMOs in a 50m radius would be 8.6%.

Councillor Haque, on behalf of Councillor Stone, addressed the committee and spoke against the application. He stated that the application was an overdevelopment and voiced concern around overlooking, waste issues, and increased pressure on services. He also stated that the development would undermine the physical appearance of the street and felt that the application did not support the Council's aim to provide a balanced mix of housing. Councillor Haque stated that there were unlicensed HMOs in the area that had not been taken into account.

Thomas Luff addressed the Committee and spoke against the application. He voiced concern around loss of privacy and stated that the application was an overdevelopment. He advised that only 3 properties on the street remained single dwellings. He believed that the harm the proposed development would cause outweighed any benefits.

In response to questions, the Committee heard that the existing terrace overlooked the neighbouring property; any overlooking would not increase should the application be approved and there was no material increase in harm. It was explained that retrospective applications, whilst it is a risk for the applicant, were legal.

Members discussed the report.

Councillor Lane proposed that the officer recommendation be agreed. There was no seconder.

Councillor Beardsworth proposed and Councillor Russell seconded that the application be refused contrary to the officer recommendation on the grounds of the perceived impact on the Conservation Area, the perceived loss of privacy to neighbouring properties and the increased pressure on services. The proposal was put to a vote and declared carried with 10 votes for.

RESOLVED:

That the application be **REFUSED** contrary to the officer recommendation on the grounds of perceived impact on the Conservation Area, perceived loss of privacy to neighbouring properties and the increased pressure on services.

62. **WNN/2022/0903 - Change of use from Dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to House in Multiple Occupation (Use Class C4) for 5 occupants, including conversion of garage to habitable room. 12 Henry Bird Court**

The Principal Planning Officer presented the report which sought approval for a change of use from dwellinghouse to HMO for 5 occupants, including the conversion of the garage to a habitable room. A condition was included which related to matching materials to be used on the garage. Since the property sat within Flood Zone 2, no bedrooms were proposed on the ground floor. An additional representation had been received from the agent which highlighted the controlled parking situation in the area.

Councillor E Roberts addressed the Committee and spoke against the application. She commented that the property was not designed to be an HMO and noted that 3 suspected illegal HMOs nearby were currently under investigation, which would take the concentration to 6%, and suggested that the concentration figures in the report were inaccurate and that the proposal was overdevelopment. Councillor E Roberts voiced concern around waste disposal issues and noted that the report did not contain any conditions relating to waste disposal and further noted that a parking beat survey had not been undertaken by the applicant.

Pat Dooley, the applicant's agent, addressed the Committee and spoke in favour of the application. He commented that the concentration of HMO's fell below the 10% threshold and advised that the garage as it was currently, was too small to be used by modern cars, so its removal would not result in the loss of a parking space. He advised that a nearby application, which was approved under delegated powers, was identical to this application. Mr Dooley advised that as many bathrooms as possible had been fitted into the proposal.

In response to questions, the Committee heard that the proposed living/kitchen area was 24m² which exceeded the minimum requirements. Conditions relating to waste and cycle storage were included.

Members discussed the report and commented that the parking situation was an area of concern.

Councillor Lane proposed and Councillor King seconded that the officer recommendation be agreed. The recommendation was put to a vote and declared lost, with 3 votes for, 4 against and 3 abstentions.

Councillor Flavell proposed that the application be refused due to loss of parking.

RESOLVED:

That the application be **REFUSED** contrary to the officer recommendation on the grounds of the loss of parking and impact on amenity.

63. **Urgent Business**

None advised.

The meeting closed at 7.52 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____