

PLANS BOARD

Minutes of a meeting of the Plans Board held on Thursday, 15 October, 2009 at 6.00 p.m. in the Civic Offices, Telford

PRESENT: Councillors I.T.W. Fletcher (Chairman), R.G. Chaplin, E.A. Clare (substitute for Councillor F.R. Picken) N.A. Dugmore (Chairman for planning application W2009/0326), J.A. Francis, G.M. Green, H. Rhodes and C.F. Smith (substitute for Councillor M.J. Smith)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor A. Lawrence (for planning application W2009/0009)

PB-44 MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting of the Plans Board held on 23 September, 2009 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

PB-45 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors F.R. Picken and M.J. Smith

PB-46 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor I.T.W. Fletcher having declared a personal interest in planning application W2009/0326, as he had previously discussed the application as a member of Hollinswood & Randlay Parish Council, indicated that he would, therefore, vacate the Chair and leave the room during determination thereof.

PB-47 PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR DETERMINATION

(a) W2006/0608 – Land off Church Walk, Donnington, Telford, Shropshire

This requested the Board to agree to a variation of the Section 106 Agreement in respect of planning permission W2006/0608 for 18 dwellings, as approved by the Board on 9th August 2006. Planning permissions W2007/1441 and W2007/0968 had, subsequently, increased the overall number of units to 24 but with no change to the Section 106 Agreement, which still applied to only 18 units.

The majority of dwellings were now nearing completion but, with the downturn in the economy, the reduction in land values, a reduction in both open market and affordable housing values, the higher build costs of a modern high specification design development and unforeseen groundwork problems, the developer had advised that the scheme was no longer viable and work on the site had been halted earlier in the year. The developer had now requested assistance in the form of a reduction in the number of affordable housing units to enable the development to break even. The Section 106 Agreement had required 38% affordable housing, which equated to 6.8 affordable units, but the developer now wished to reduce this to 4 affordable units (22%). Cost sheets had been provided to show the financial position that would result from

reducing the affordable units to 4, 5 or 6. Officers wished to point out that none of the Section 106 monies owing to the Council had yet been paid, although the developer had advised that these would be paid upfront with indexation, but the Council could pursue these monies through legal means, if necessary.

Officers considered that completion of the site would help to secure the delivery of all the approved units and both local residents and the area as a whole would benefit from a finished development rather than a boarded up, unfinished site. Whilst, it could appear that the developer had benefited from the additional 6 units, which were not subject to affordable housing requirements, and from non-payment of the Section 106 monies, he had advised that, whilst the larger units would have commanded more money, their subdivision, the increased costs of fitting out and the down turn in the market had meant that the scheme was at risk of making a loss.

In view of these exceptional circumstances, it was recommended that a reduction in the number of affordable units from 6/7 to 4 would not be unreasonable. However, in order to restrict this situation, the reduction in the affordable housing provision would be time limited and only applied to reflect the current circumstances. If the economy improved before the development was finished, the affordable provision would then revert back to 38% and the Section 106 would reflect this by requiring the development to be completed by a specified time. The developer had advised that the Wrekin Housing Trust were interested in taking the affordable units and that practical completion of the site was likely to be the end of April, 2010.

Members regretted the proposed reduction in the affordable provision but agreed that it was necessary for the site to be completed. The Head of Planning & Environment emphasised that this was a situation currently facing many other councils and the developer had put forward a valid argument for the reduction. He confirmed that the units to be sold to the Wrekin Housing Trust would be at a lower price than the market price, which would be an additional cost to the developer. However, the time limit for completion would act as an incentive for the development to be finished.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application W2006/0608 the Section 106 Agreement be amended to allow the percentage of affordable housing to be reduced to 22% but, that if the development was not completed by 30th April 2010, then the affordable housing provision reverted back to 38%.

(b) W2007/1732 – Capewell Works, Sommerfeld Road, Trench, Telford, Shropshire

This was an outline planning application for the erection of up to 350 detached, semi detached, terraced houses and some blocks of flats on approximately 7.45ha of a 9.4ha site. Of the remainder 0.75ha would be open space and approximately 1.45ha retained woodland. The buildings would predominantly be of two storeys with some three storey units and the indicative layout suggested blocks of housing linked with estate roads, all from

the existing single access point off Sommerfeld Road. The residential density across the site, excluding the woodland area, would be approximately 43 per hectare.

Following submission of the application, the applicant had requested that the application be for “up to 350” dwellings due to a change in the housing market which had had a greater effect upon flats than other sectors and that flexibility in the application description would support the attractiveness of the site to house builders and encourage early implementation. In recognising officer concerns about a lower density development, a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare could be conditioned.

The site was vacant industrial land which had now been cleared of buildings. It was unallocated employment land and represented a large brownfield “windfall” housing development of over 1 hectare. The site had no local plan designations but the woodland part of the site, designated as Green Network on the Wrekin Local Plan proposals map, would be retained and not built over. The site was heavily contaminated from previous industrial uses, which would require considerable remediation and there were some unique drainage issues due to the maze of pipes and chambers beneath the site for the abstraction of mine water and to feed Middle Pool, including a serpentine chamber that removed iron ochre from the water.

With regard to highways, Section 106 requirements had been agreed as £80,500 for improvements to the mini-roundabout at Trench Lock, £30,000 towards improvements and/or provision of cycleway in the vicinity of the site, and £30,000 for improvement of the pedestrian routes to school. In addition, the applicant had agreed to provide an on-site LEAP and a financial contribution of £100,000 towards improvements of the existing off-site play facilities at Wombridge. However, a contribution towards the upgrading of Hartshill Park had not been agreed.

A contribution towards a new primary school had initially been requested but, following a review of the school expansion programme, this had been revised to £1.6million for an extension to the Teague’s Bridge Primary School. Education had agreed that a Section 106 contribution of £4,500 per dwelling rather than a fixed total sum in order to reflect the fact that the final numbers of dwellings on the site could be less than 350.

The applicant had originally proposed provision of 30% affordable housing but had now stated that, given the current recession and downturn in the economy, it would no longer be economically viable for this be provided. The report dealt with this issue in full, including the advice of the Homes & Communities Agency on the need for local planning authorities to take a flexible approach in these circumstances as well as ensuring a developer’s commitment to delivery to prevent land being “banked” for implementation once the market had recovered. The lack of affordable housing was to be regretted, as it reduced the scope for mixed communities, which both the government and the Council encouraged. But in light of the current down-turn in the economy, the assessment of the applicant’s financial appraisal, the wide spread contamination across the site and the cost of remediation, it was

considered that these were exceptional circumstances. Officers had recommended that the applicant's S106 package of contributions be supported but, in order to prevent the developer from benefiting from a 'flexed' planning permission without any affordable housing provision should the market improve, with a shorter permission with work commencing on the site within two years. In so doing, the site would be remediated within the first year of receiving planning permission and then, following submission of reserved matters, development would commence within a further year. However, if after four years from commencement, the site had not been completed 30% affordable housing provision would apply to the remainder of unbuilt units unless a revised financial appraisal was submitted that demonstrated the affordable housing position. In order to secure this, a revised recommendation was read out by the Chairman at the meeting.

The report set out in detail the information and issues relating to the suitability of the site's location, the loss of unemployment land, affordable housing, drainage and flooding, highways, and leisure/recreation/green network issues.

Development of this site would bring a vacant and derelict industrial site into active use in an area that was undergoing change. Whilst the proposal would result in the loss of employment land, the site had not been allocated and had been marketed for employment with no success, and required extensive remediation. In addition, there was currently no shortage of employment land within Telford and refusal on the grounds of loss of employment land would be difficult to sustain.

Whilst the nearest corner of the site was within 400m. of a regular bus route, the majority of the site and its entrance were further away and more than 800m. from a District Centre. However, a LIDL supermarket lay closer than the District Centre and would provide some convenience shopping opportunities. Teague's Bridge Primary School was within easy walking distance of the site, and a regular bus route lay less than a 12 minutes' walk from the majority of the site. In light of the exceptional economic condition and the applicant's commitment to develop the site quickly, officers considered that, whilst the site's location was not ideal, there were other material considerations that would make a refusal less tenable.

The scheme would also retain woodland Green Network and create new open spaces on site and provide new footpath links through to the adjacent amenity area around the nearby Middle Pool and other footpath/cycle way links, thereby enhancing and improving recreational and amenity opportunities and facilities, as well as increasing their accessibility to a wider range of people, in line with the Council's aims.

Two letters of objection had been received, as summarised in the report and further comments from the Town Clerk of Oakengates, including a reference to the omission from the S106 Agreement of a contribution towards Hartshill Park, together with the officers' response, were tabled at the meeting. The update also summarised the points made in a letter from the applicant, which endorsed his commitment to delivering the completed site quickly,

Members expressed considerable concern at the applicant's decision to provide no affordable housing, particularly in view of the level of homelessness in the Borough as identified by a Scrutiny Review, the size of site and the number of dwellings proposed. In addition, Councillor C.F. Smith was concerned at the level of contamination on the site, given its previous industrial uses, and the need to ensure that appropriate safeguards were in place to control drainage from the site to the Trench pools. This was vital as the Trench Pool was one of the few sites in Shropshire which supported white clawed crayfish. Councillor H. Rhodes expressed concern at the potential effect of the development upon the Hadley Road together with her disappointment that no contribution had been forthcoming for Hartshill Park.

The Head of Planning & Environment responded that, whilst he appreciated the concerns raised by Members regarding the lack of affordable housing, as the Local Planning Authority, it was necessary to recognise the current economic conditions. Local authorities which had attempted to insist on affordable housing on developments that were not economically viable had been criticised and had their decisions over-ruled. The condition of each site seeking planning permission had to be considered on an individual basis and, as this site was very contaminated and would require much remediation work, its cost structure was very different from that of a site with no previous development. The developer's case for non-provision of affordable housing had undergone independent assessment and been found to be valid. The Council also had to deliver houses and this had to be balanced against the other issues. The applicant had committed to a shortened planning permission to bring about a quick delivery. With regard to the Section 106 contributions that had been agreed, these were significant and the provision of additional educational facilities would have had to be made if the application was approved and it was preferable that the developer paid for this rather than the other leisure facilities which had been requested. In conclusion approval of the application on the basis sought by the applicant would be consistent with national guidance.

RESOLVED - that with respect to planning application W2007/1732 delegated authority be granted to the Head of Planning & Environment to grant outline planning permission subject to:

- (i) the signing of a S106 agreement for a) £4,500 per dwelling for extensions to Teague's Bridge Primary School; b) £100,000 for improvements to nearby Wombridge play facility; c) £230 per dwelling for improvements to Trench Lock mini roundabout, d) £30,000 for improvements to the local cycleway network in the vicinity of the site, e) £30,000 for improvement of pedestrian routes to school, but with clauses in the S106 that there was no initial requirement for affordable housing provided that the development commenced on site within 2 years of the grant of outline permission and that the development had been completed within 4 years of the date of commencement, but in the event of the timescales for commencement or completion not being met then the requirement of 30% affordable housing would apply, unless the applicants submitted a financial appraisal to the Council, in a form to be agreed**

between the developer and the Council, that the Council would then assess on the basis of the information provided to determine what proportion of affordable housing if any was appropriate in respect of the dwellings which were still to be constructed. All dwellings already constructed would be discounted for the purpose of the calculation;

(ii) the conditions as set out in the report.

(c) W2009/0009 – The Shropshire Golf Centre, Muxton Lane, Muxton, Telford, Shropshire

This planning application was in respect of the demolition of dilapidated and redundant agricultural buildings and the erection of extensions and alterations. The proposal would comprise, firstly, 50 bedrooms for overnight accommodation in a two storey wing, with the third floor in the roof space, located on the west side of the existing complex parallel to Muxton Lane with a lift tower that would protrude above the roofline with a hipped clay-tiled roof to match that of the remainder of the new wing. Secondly, a health and fitness suite, in a two storey wing on the east side of the complex with a gymnasium on the first floor and changing rooms on the ground floor. Thirdly, a 15-metre long swimming pool, in a single storey building, would adjoin the health and fitness suite and, lastly, an extended restaurant, accommodating 110 seats, would be sited in a single storey building located in the middle of the complex of buildings

The applicants had stated that, as their existing businesses were now well developed, they wished to enhance the services offered by offering a modest amount of overnight accommodation and health and fitness facilities. The bedroom accommodation would mainly cater for visiting golfers and wedding guests at the weekend and users of the conference facilities during the week, whilst also being attractive to tourists during periods when Town Centre facilities were busy. Members of the Golf Club would be able to use any of the proposed facilities, with associate membership being required to use the health and fitness suite and the swimming pool.

The principle of providing overnight accommodation on this site had already been established by previous planning permissions, although the hotel elements of the permissions had never been implemented. The overnight accommodation block would replace redundant farm buildings and the health and fitness suite would be built on cleared land. Therefore, no development would take place on 'greenfield' land, the Golf Centre itself, and none would extend the complex into the open countryside.

As the site lay outside the urban area, a District Centre or an identified settlement, and was not allocated for development in the Wrekin Local Plan, the applicants had been required to undertake a sequential test of alternative hotel sites in order to comply with PPS6. This had concluded that there was an identified demand for hotel development on this site, it was of an appropriate scale, there were no suitable sites available in any other centre,

including Telford Town Centre; and it would not have an unacceptable impact on existing hotels elsewhere in the Telford area.

Twenty-three letters had been received from local residents, and the Parish Council, as summarised in the report, mostly raising concerns regarding road safety issues arising from the potential for increased vehicle usage. Vehicular access to the site would be from Muxton Lane to the north and from Granville Road to the south. A total of 243 car parking spaces would be available for the whole complex, as the current provision of 223 spaces had been recognised by the Highways Engineer to be an over-provision.

The proposed development was likely to increase the volume of traffic along Muxton Lane, as set out in the report. It was well used by local residents for a variety of recreational activities and was one of the main accesses to the Granville Country Park. Therefore, any excessive increase in traffic flows along its length would have a detrimental impact on the day-to-day leisure activities of a large number of people. The results of the Transport Assessment commissioned by the applicants, as detailed in the report, together with the Council's own on-site surveys had shown that 30% of visitors came by way of Muxton Lane and 70% came along Granville Road. Therefore, it had been estimated that, as a worse case scenario, there would be, on average, an additional 46 two-way vehicle trips on Muxton Lane daily, but there would likely be linked trips that would reduce this. Such a relatively small increase in vehicle trips along Muxton Lane was considered to be acceptable by the Council's Highways Engineer. However, he wished to encourage more vehicular journeys to the Golf Centre along Granville Road rather than Muxton Lane but, unfortunately, parts of Granville Road were in a poor condition, which was a deterrent to some drivers. The road, therefore, needed to be upgraded and improved and a schedule of works, to which the applicants had agreed to contribute £30,000, had been drawn up. These works would be undertaken before any of the new facilities were brought into use and should encourage more drivers to use Granville Road, thereby alleviating traffic flows on Muxton Lane.

The design of the new extensions would respect and relate to the appearance of the existing buildings on the site and would be reinforced by the use of matching external materials. The overall layout and design of the scheme would safeguard, and even enhance, the character and appearance of the existing site, and the immediate surrounding area as the removal of the dilapidated farm buildings would substantially improve the visual amenities of the locality. In conclusion, it was considered that the proposed development was acceptable.

Councillor A. Lawrence, Ward Member, was invited to address the Board on this application. He said that he agreed in principle with the application, which would result in improved facilities and jobs but he did have concerns regarding the increased use of Muxton Lane for access to and from the Golf Club. He tabled an aerial photograph of the Club which showed the link between the two car park areas and suggested that this be closed at an appropriate point to prevent the additional traffic that would be encouraged to enter by Granville

Road passing through the site and leaving by Muxton Lane and possible closure to Muxton Lane where it split with Granville Road.

Members agreed with this suggestion but queried whether the £30,000 contribution towards highway improvements would be sufficient. They further requested that access to the site by contractors and delivery vehicles be restricted, while allowing for appropriate access by emergency vehicles. It was, therefore, agreed that determination of the application be deferred to allow for negotiations with the Golf Club to take place with regard to the possible closure of the top end of Muxton Lane and closure between the upper and lower car parks and the imposition of conditions to control access by contractors and delivery vehicles.

RESOLVED – that determination of planning application W2009/0009 be deferred to allow for negotiations to be undertaken with the applicant regarding a possible restriction on the access to the site from Muxton Lane and between the upper and lower car parks and the imposition of conditions to control access by contractor and delivery vehicles.

(d) W2009/0115 – Telford College of Art & Technology, Haybridge Road, Wellington, Telford, Shropshire

This application sought full planning permission for the redevelopment of the Telford College of Arts & Technology (TCAT) for the demolition of the existing teaching blocks that “fronted” both Haybridge Road and Bennett’s Bank and the existing fire station; creation of new site access to the north of the present access and car parks; modification of the existing teaching blocks E & F; erection of a new four storey teaching block, engineering workshops, social and dining facilities and administration accommodation. In addition, the proposal included the replacement of the Fire Station, which would be incorporated into the new teaching block, and a separate training tower and hardstanding; cycle parking racks and spaces, covered motor-cycle parking, a compound for mini-coaches; two replacement football/sports pitches and a 3rd generation all weather pitch with spectator terracing for 150 spectators; and single storey horticultural building and gardens.

The proposal would provide a new access and create a central heart space to the campus and the demolition of Blocks A, B and C, together with the Learning Resource Centre and the existing refectory, would remove the older buildings that were either in poor repair, expensive to operate/maintain or were spread over the site and/or over different levels.

The building design would generally be four storeys in height with the main element comprising three interlinking blocks clad with modern materials including reconstituted terracotta and stone with reconstituted stone/concrete panels in cream and polyester coated aluminium panelling. Substantial elements of the buildings would be glazed. The principal building would comprise a full height central atrium providing the link between the two wing buildings and existing Block E, which would be retained. The new Fire Station would be located off Watling Street/Bennett’s Bank adjoining one of the football pitches with access from an existing road from Bennett’s Bank. The

application also proposed to develop significant areas of playing field, as set out in the report.

A number of technical reports had accompanied the application and a summary of the issues raised was set out in the report. With regards to highway issues, the applicants had been advised to re-assess the trip rates used and these had been assessed by Council consultants.

This proposal represented an investment of £57.5 million, which would provide high quality facilities for this education sector. However, given the present funding difficulties at national level and Government expenditure cuts, the applicants wished to proceed with the application while other avenues of financial support were explored. A valid planning permission would, therefore, enable the College to react quickly to changing funding priorities at the national level.

The design of the building complex would allow a single phase solution which could be constructed with minimal disruption to the education provision. It had been assessed under the Building Research Establishment's BREEAM criteria as TCAT wished to achieve BREEAM "Excellent". In addition, ecology, flood risk, land stability and on-site drainage including SUDS provision, were considered to have been dealt in an appropriate manner.

The update sheet tabled at the meeting, informed the Board that, following consultation with the Council's Highways Section, a Travel Plan would be necessary together with a financial contribution towards off-site highway infrastructure, i.e. a Toucan crossing. TCAT had allocated £15,400 per annum for three years and a Section 106 Agreement would be necessary to ensure that this money was ring fenced and spent, when necessary, in the delivery of the Travel Plan. In addition, a £60,000 contribution would be made towards a new TOUCAN crossing on Whitchurch Drive adjacent to the Haybridge Roundabout. As a result, a revised recommendation was tabled in the update.

With regard to the proposed new Fire Station, the update sheet informed Members that the Shropshire Fire & Rescue Service was still not in a position to submit an application relating to the temporary site required whilst the new Station was being built.

Members welcomed the application, which would benefit both the College and Wellington. However, concerns were expressed that the location of the temporary site for the Fire Station had not yet been agreed. The Head of Planning & Environment agreed that certainty was required and the Council's solicitor advised that an appropriate agreement should be in place between the relevant bodies

RESOLVED - that with respect to planning application W2009/0115 the Head of Planning & Environment be granted delegated authority to grant planning permission subject to:

- (i) the applicant entering into a Section 106 Agreement requiring, before commencement of any development on site, (i) the submission and prior approval in writing by the Council of an Outcomes Travel Plan together with written evidence that a minimum total sum of £46,200 plus index inflation had been set aside to achieve modal share targets as shall be specified in the Travel Plan; (ii) a contribution of £60,000 plus index inflation towards the provision of a toucan crossing on Whitchurch Drive; and for the first three years following the bringing into use of any part of the development the £46,200 plus index inflation shall be used to promote and achieve the specified modal share targets, and to the conditions as set out in the report;**
- (ii) agreement on the location of the temporary site for the Fire Station;**
- (iii) the conditions as set out in the report.**

(Councillor I.T.W. Fletcher having previously declared an interest in the following application left the room during determination thereof and Councillor N.A. Dugmore took the Chair).

- (e) W2009/0326 – Randlay Centre, Randlay Community Centre, Randlay, Telford, Shropshire

This was a full application which had resulted from a Council initiative to redevelop the existing Centre, row of shops, and Community Centre as detailed below. The scheme also involved various associated highway works (to be undertaken by the Council rather than the developer) included blocking up of the underpass from the Randlay Centre to Whitworth Avenue under Randlay Avenue, installation of a new signalised pedestrian crossing to replace the underpass, and footpath widening along Randlay Avenue. The decision to redevelop Randlay Centre and provide new and improved shops and a Community Centre accorded with Council policies to focus development and investment on a local centre, to enhance facilities for the benefit of the wider community and aid social inclusion.

The proposal comprised a number of separate elements to produce an overall redevelopment scheme, as follows.

- a) Retail block with flats above

The existing retail block required repair and, according to the applicant's consultation, the traders wished them to have greater visual prominence while avoiding features that would encourage anti-social behaviour. It was proposed to erect a new repositioned parade of three shop units with six flats above. To enable the existing units to continue trading while the redevelopment proceeded and to accommodate the nursing home, the new retail complex would be built adjacent to the existing shops, taking them closer to the road. This would necessitate blocking up the underpass, which would be compensated for by the installation of a new signalised pedestrian crossing on Randlay Avenue. Service vehicles and parking for the flats and the shop staff, 12 spaces in total, would be accessed off the existing service

road at the back of the existing shops. This area would also lead on to the gated servicing area to the rear of the proposed adjacent nursing home.

The design of the two storey retail building would be a traditional brick and tile construction. At ground floor level there would be two retail units and a hot food takeaway with six flats above, accessed from the rear via a communal entrance lobby, two of which had a small balcony over the rear flat roof. The repositioning of the shops would make them more visible and prominent to both the road and on entering the car park. This relocation, a more attractive design, and the introduction of residential flats above the shops, would enhance the visual appearance of the Centre. It would also bring more life and natural surveillance to the area, particularly after the shops had shut, so helping to lessen the opportunities for anti-social behaviour. The two retail units would be conditioned to be retail Class A1, which would require planning permission to change to other uses in order to help retain the Centre's retail facilities and avoid a proliferation of hot food takeaways, which could encourage anti-social behaviour.

b) Community Centre

The proposed new Community Centre would be repositioned to the front of the site and prominently located alongside Randlay Avenue, which would necessitate the loss of a grassed and treed landscaped verge, the relocation of the footpath that ran from the existing pedestrian crossing to the Randlay Centre car park, and the loss of some car parking within the grounds of the adjacent primary school. The Parish Council and school had been consulted and it would, hopefully, increase usage by both the community and the school.

Amended design plans had been submitted to take account of the requirements of the Parish Council, which had contributed £75,000 to the project, and the facilities included three halls, two with adjacent kitchens, an external play area, toilets, stores and ancillary office accommodation. The Centre would be contemporary in design but, as there was no definitive design context to replicate and as much of the residential development in the area was set back from the road, it was considered that increasing the prominence of the local Centre and its community facilities was to be encouraged. There were some varying levels on site that would give the building different heights at ground level, but the main entrance would face Randlay Avenue.

The Nursing Home

This would be a large 'U' shaped, three storey, 72-bedroom facility built on the site of the existing shops and on the adjacent Green Network that met the "village green". It would have communal lounges, a dining room, treatment and therapy rooms, a manager's office, staff rest room, kitchen and laundry. The design, size and configuration had been dictated by the operational requirements of a Nursing Home and various standards. The elevations had some vertical alignment and gables in order to break up the scale and massing of the building and the hipped roofs would serve to reduce the bulk.

The building would be set back from the path that ran between the shops and the rear of the Farmhouse Public House with a residents' garden area to the front and rear, which would give the area by the shops and public house some visual relief from the hard built form and enhance the visual interest along the walkway that led to the "village green" and adjoining residential areas. Along the Nursing Home garden boundary with the "village green" would be a dwarf wall with railings. Most of the mature trees along the boundary of the Nursing Home with the "village green" would be retained to provide a landscaped setting and reduce the visual impact on the character, appearance and setting of the "village green", which was an important visual and recreational facility for local residents.

The Nursing Home would employ approximately 70 staff, the majority of whom would be full-time together with doctors, chiropodists and other carers who would visit mainly during the week. The plans showed 12 staff parking spaces and a covered cycle parking shed at the rear of the building and 10 designated visitor parking spaces within the main car park area. The applicant envisaged that, as most staff would live locally, they would cycle or walk to work or take advantage of the company mini-bus. There was also a regular bus service along Randlay Avenue, with bus stops conveniently located on Randlay Avenue close to the site.

The owners of the adjacent Farmhouse Public House had raised concerns that the two uses would not be compatible. However, it was considered that a public house was an integral and complementary part of the local centre which served a wide community and the design of the nursing home was such that most of the building would be set back from the public house and walkway.

Block of 12 flats

A three storey block of 12no. 2 bedroom flats was proposed at the rear of the public house and on the site of the existing Community Centre. Two of the ground floor flats would have their own access, while the others would be accessed via a central lobby. The design was relatively traditional with brick and render and a tiled ridged roof. A small amenity area for the ground floor flats would open onto the "village green" and be surrounded by a dwarf wall and railings with the other flats having immediate access to the communal "village green".

The repositioning of the new retail block and the Community Centre closer to Randlay Avenue would necessitate the loss of mature landscaping and roadside trees and the Nursing Home would require the removal of some of the grassed area behind the avenue of trees at the top of the "village green", all of which was Green Network. However, as set out in the report, Core Strategy Policy CS11 permitted development that had a "significant" community and environmental benefit.

All of the facilities at the Centre currently shared a communal car park in the centre of the complex accessed off Randlay Avenue. This which would be retained with some visibility improvements. However, highway engineers

considered that there was no need for each use to have its own parking quota as there would be sufficient staggered usage/demand throughout any day or week, such that on balance the existing parking provision was adequate for this redevelopment. However, Highway Engineers did have concerns regarding the ease and practicality of refuse and service vehicles accessing the servicing areas and discussions were currently being held with the applicant.

The erection of the new block of flats would necessitate the relocation of the existing ball court to ensure it was beyond the recommended distance from residential properties and the Council's Leisure Officer had advised on an acceptable new location towards the centre of the "village green" with the site of the existing ball court being made good and landscaped. In order not to delay development of the overall scheme, conditions would be imposed that allowed phasing of the development so that the ball court would only need to be relocated when work on the block of flats had started.

The report detailed the consultation responses and the conditions requested by relevant agencies/officers of the Council. Two letters of objection had been received from local residents, as summarised in the report.

In conclusion, the overall proposal accorded with Local Plan Policy S1 and Core Strategy policies CS5, CS9 and CS10 as it focuses upon development and investment of a local centre and enhanced facilities for the benefit of the wider community. Whilst, a loss of Green Network would be necessary, officers considered that the provision of new and improved community facilities were of such "significant" community benefit as to ensure that it was in accordance with Core Strategy policy CS11. It was, therefore, considered that there were material considerations of significant community benefit in the proposal which would justify such a development notwithstanding some policy conflict with Policy OL4 and the application had been advertised as a departure.

Members welcomed the application and the contribution from the Parish Council but expressed regret at the loss of the Green Network land.

RESOLVED - that with respect to planning application W2009/0326 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report and to any other that officers might consider necessary.

(Councillor I.T.W. Fletcher returned to the room and resumed as Chairman for the remainder of the meeting.)

(f) W2009/0610 – MFI Unit 3, Telford Bridge Retail Park, Colliers Way, Old Park, Telford, Shropshire

The applicant, who specialised in household goods and homewares, sought planning permission for an additional 1,236sq.m. of retail floor space at mezzanine level within this now vacant Unit, although up to 200sq.m. could be added without planning permission under permitted development rights. The mezzanine floor would be reached via internal stairways and customer lifts.

The Telford Bridge Retail Park was designated as an edge of centre location outside the designated Town Centre in the Draft Central Telford Area Action Plan (TCAAP) and the applicant's other stores countrywide were sited in such locations. The applicants had submitted a retail impact assessment although, according to PPS6, this was not necessary for developments under 2,500sq.m. and a Transport Assessment had also been lodged. Telford was identified as a Strategic Town Centre under the adopted Revised Regional Spatial Strategy 2008 and a Town Centre in the Core Strategy and the raised issues relating to planning policy, the need to protect the Town Centre as the primary focus for retail development, and the adequacy and mitigation of the existing highway infrastructure, as set out in the report.

The report detailed the work undertaken to establish quantitative need but, in conclusion, it was considered that the need for this development could be accepted. With regard to qualitative need, the introduction of this national retailer into Telford might result in a modest diversion of the trade currently being leaked to other centres. Given the data analysed, it was considered that the proposal represented a relatively minor and insignificant increase in the total floorspace of the Retail Park which would not materially alter the wider shopping patterns. The scale represented an acceptable increase for a Retail Park which had a complementary role to the Town Centre.

With regard to the sequential approach, as set out in the report, it was reasonable to conclude that there were no sites that could be described as readily available for this proposal and which would be sequentially preferable. The proposed use could occupy the former MFI Unit without the need for planning permission.

A health check had been carried out of the existing Town Centre Shopping Centre which had concluded that Telford remained a vital and viable town centre notwithstanding the current economic climate. The Bridge Retail Park and The Forge Retail Park provided a complementary role and function in providing large format store opportunities, including "bulky" goods. Whilst it was important to avoid trade diversion from the Town Centre, the Council's own evidence suggested that the turnover of the new mezzanine floor could be accommodated simply by growth in spending between 2009-2014. Accordingly, officers considered that the proposal was consistent with national, regional and local planning policy and would not result in harm to the Town Centre or undermine the principal strategy of TCAAP.

With regard to transport issues, as set out in the report, highway officers had requested additional survey work be undertaken and fed into the requirement for a Section 106 contribution to mitigate off-site highways and transportation infrastructure identified in CTAAP. The update sheet tabled at the meeting informed the Board that the applicants had been working with the Council's Highways Section to identify an appropriate level of financial contribution to secure this requirement by applying a formula that translated the broad objectives of CTAAP, based on the total anticipated capital expenditure of highway infrastructure improvements within the Plan area. This formula had not been tested and was considered to be a best estimate at this stage of the

Draft Plan but, as detailed in the update, equated to £28,813. The applicants had challenged the application of this formula but, in order to resolve this matter and facilitate the proposed retail floor space, they were prepared to agree to a contribution of £14,000.

Members found the application acceptable but raised some concerns over the possible need for additional parking. However, the Planning Officer assured them that the installation of a mezzanine floor would not generate the same number of additional trips as would the same amount of new floor space.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application W2009/0610 the Head of Planning & Environment be granted delegated authority to grant full permission subject to the applicant entering into a Section 106 Agreement requiring £14,000 to be used for Town Centre major highway infrastructure and subject to the condition set out in the report.

(g) W2009/0618 – Land adjacent to 81 Coronation Crescent, Madeley, Telford, Shropshire

This application requested permission for the erection of a single dwelling in the side garden of a property on an ex-local authority housing estate comprising of two storey semi-detached dwellings with hipped roofs. It was noted by the Board that, following an informal enquiry made in 2008, the Council's response had been that any development on this site would be unacceptable and any subsequent planning application was unlikely to be viewed favourably. Councillor D. Wright, the Ward Councillor, had requested that the application be determined by the Plans Board.

Six letters of objection had been received, as summarised in the report. The Council's Highway Engineer had raised objections to the proposal on the grounds that the traffic generated by the proposed development was likely to result in an increase in highway danger owing to the intensification in use of the vehicle access location which afforded restricted visibility splays for drivers exiting onto the highway approaching a main highway junction.

The proposed dwelling would be located within a highly sustainable location with a similar appearance to the existing dwellings. Two parking spaces would be provided for the proposed dwelling at the bottom of the rear garden with two for the existing dwelling being accessed via the proposed dwelling. .

However, it was considered that, due to the size of the plot, the proposal failed to respect and relate positively to its context and would result in over-development of the site, creating intensification of its use, both in built form and the nature of parking facilities for both residents of the proposed dwelling and the existing dwelling. The proposed detached dwelling would appear as an intrusive building due both to its detached nature and to the forward positioning and angle to the established building line creating a cramped form of development out of character with the spacious semi-detached built form of Coronation Crescent. This would ultimately create an incongruous form of development and, as such, would have an adverse impact upon the street scene. Moreover, given the level difference on the site, the Local Planning

Authority was concerned that the proposed dwelling would appear unduly prominent in the locality.

In addition, the amount of rear private amenity space for the proposed dwelling was deemed unacceptable when considering the close proximity of the access and parking for the existing dwelling, which would essentially be in the rear garden of the proposed dwelling.

In conclusion, for the reasons outlined above, it was considered that the proposed development was unacceptable, as it was deemed contrary to 'saved' policies UD2 and H6 of the Wrekin Local Plan 1995 – 2006, Policies CS1, CS5 and CS15 of the Core Strategy 2007 and national guidance in PPS1 and PPS3.

In discussing the application, it was noted that the ordnance survey map attached to the report was incorrect and it was, therefore, agreed that a Site Visit in this instance would be useful.

RESOLVED – that determination of planning application W2009/0618 be deferred to allow Members of the Plans Board to make a Site Visit prior to its meeting on 4 November, 2009.

(h) W2009/0683 – Land adjacent to 280 Wombridge Road, Trench, Telford, Shropshire

This was a planning application seeking change of use of a piece of public open space to private garden land on the corner of Wombridge Road and Trench Road. The land, which measured 19m. long by an average of 3m. wide, currently comprised a number of semi-mature silver birch trees and a dense collection of shrubs. The adjoining houses, 280 Wombridge Road and 100 Trench Road, both had boundary features that comprised brick walls and railings which extended up to the back of the pavements. Councillor C.F. Smith, the Ward Councillor, had requested that the application be determined by the Board.

The applicant, who lived to the south of the site, wished to purchase the land to increase the size of his garden and to overcome the serious anti-social problems that had occurred. Although he wished to remove the shrubs on the site, all of the silver birch trees would be retained. The first five metres of the site south of Trench Road would remain unenclosed and the remainder would be enclosed by a 1.5 metre high close boarded fence, which would be set back 5 metres from the rear of the Trench Road pavement.

The Council's Highways Engineer had no highway objections to the application as measurements indicated that any effect this application would have on the visibility splay at the mini-roundabout would be insignificant and would not compromise highway safety.

It was considered that the enclosure of this land would not have a detrimental impact on the visual amenities of the surrounding area, as the site lay behind another area of open space containing trees, shrubs, and grass, all of which

which would remain undisturbed. Therefore, the enclosure of the site with a 1.5 metre high close boarded fence, set back from the street, would not substantially affect the prevailing character and appearance of the locality. However, a condition would be imposed to ensure the retention of the existing trees within the boundaries of the application site.

Councillor C.F. Smith and Wrockwardine Wood & Trench Parish Council had both objected to the application, as set out in the report, and Councillor Smith reiterated his concerns at the meeting. In particular, he did not wish to see close boarded fencing used and requested that the shrubs, if not removed, were kept trimmed to a height of approximately one metre. The Head of Planning & Environment said that these requirements could be achieved by either conditions or a covenant as appropriate and undertook to discuss them with the Head of Property & Design.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application W2009/0683 planning permission be granted subject to an appropriate covenant/conditions to retain the fence and vegetation at a height which would not impede visibility and to the conditions as set out in the report.

- (i) W2009/0703 – Land to the south of Park Lane Centre, Park Lane, Woodside, Telford, Shropshire

This is an application by Telford & Wrekin Council for full planning permission for the realignment of the existing Park Lane, which would become a through route, and the provision of hard and soft landscaping together with a new parking area. The new section of highway would link the northern section of Park Lane with a section of highway outside the main entrance to the Woodlands Primary School. The proposal was part of the Woodside Regeneration Project managed by the Council in partnership with the Homes & Community Agency and Advantage West Midlands.

The site comprised the former Dolphin Public House, derelict/semi-derelict spaces in the vicinity of the Park Lane Centre, and a temporary panna court play facility. Park Lane had already been stopped up so that there was no through route with vehicular access serving the Park Lane Centre and Bennett House from the western side with the Medical Centre and Woodlands Primary School served from the eastern truncated section of Park Lane. The proposal would, therefore, provide a through route and open up areas for development. Traffic calming devices were proposed that would restrict access to one lane of traffic only across a 'raised table' and a zebra crossing would be located outside Woodlands Primary School.

In addition to providing a through route, the proposal would create a pedestrian square immediately in front of the Park Lane Centre, thereby enhancing the entrance into the Centre and improving connectivity. It would also provide an arc of 24 parking spaces that would serve the needs of the local centre and its facilities. Raised planters and bollards would prevent vehicular access beyond this car park whilst the area would be lit and CCTV installed. The existing car parking serving the Medical Centre and to the rear

of Park Lane Centre would not be affected and the existing cycleways and footways would be retained and the routing enhanced.

The road had been designed to visually integrate with the proposed square and open space and curve around existing buildings, thereby helping to reduce the formality of the road and encouraging pedestrian and cycle movement. The square would comprise light coloured blockwork with a good mix of trees and shrubs, which would be complimentary to the square and the Centre.

In presenting the report, the Planning Officer informed the Board that an additional letter had now been received from a local resident expressing concerns at the potential for increased traffic in the area.

Councillor G.M. Green welcomed the proposal which she considered would enhance the area and set off the Park Lane Centre. This was supported by Councillor E.A. Clare but she requested that measures were taken to ensure that the CCTV system was relocated, as stated on the plans.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application W2009/0703 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

(j) W2009/0724 – Lawley Primary School, Arleston Lane, Lawley, Telford, Shropshire

This was an application from Telford & Wrekin Council to enlarge the modern part of the school building with an extension comprising two new classrooms, a library and toilet facilities. In addition, a smaller extension at the front of the building would enlarge the lobby/reception and head teacher office.

The proposed main extension would be 24 metres in length and would extend into an existing hard-surfaced games area which adjoined that part of the school. It would be a single storey with appropriately pitched roofs and an overall design which would match the appearance of the existing school building. The site of the existing play area was adequately screened from the surrounding area. As it was on a slightly lower land level and there was maturing planting and trees adjoining the rear of the school site and the playing field, it was considered that the proposal would not have a significant detrimental impact on the amenities of the surrounding land uses.

The Council's Engineers had recommended a shallow mine working condition be imposed on any approval and the Highways Engineer had recommended the imposition of a revised School Travel Plan within three months for approval by the Local Planning Authority, as set out on the tabled update sheet.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application W2009/0274 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

PB-48 SITE VISITS

RESOLVED – that a Site Visit be made in respect of planning application W2009/0618, Land Adjacent to 81 Coronation Crescent, Madeley, at 3.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 4 November 2009.

PB-49 PLANNING APPLICATIONS DETERMINED UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

The Board received for information details of planning applications that had been determined under delegated powers.

The meeting ended at 8.05 p.m.

Chairman:

Date: