

11 January 2011 – At a meeting of the Committee held at County Hall, Chichester.

Present:

Mr Whittington (Chairman), Mr Blampied, Mrs Coleman, Mr Coomber, Mr Doyle, Mrs Field, Mr Hellawell, Mr McDougall, Mrs Mills*, Mrs Mockridge, Mr Quirk, Mr Rogers, Mr Waight.

- *Mrs Mills attended the meeting as a substitute in accordance with notice given by the Conservative Group.

Apologies:

Mrs Mockridge, Mr Montyn

Declarations of Interest

189. Mr McDougall declared a personal interest under agenda item 4b as a member of Arun District Council and a reserve member of the Arun Development Control Committee.

Minutes

190. Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2010 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

The Town and Country Planning General regulations 1992 – Regulation 3 – Application by the County Council for development it proposes to carry out itself

Chichester District Council

WSCC/082/10/MI/SDNP Submission of plans showing revisions to: (1) the design for the south-east elevation; and (2) to the layout of the car park and coach parking area – as required by condition 3 of planning permission reference WSCC/082/10/MI/SDNP (demolition of existing Midhurst Rother College and creation of a new 1500 pupil academy) at Midhurst Rother College, Lamberts Lane, Midhurst, West Sussex, GU29 9DT.

191. The Committee considered a report by the Divisional Manager for County Development (copy appended to the signed version of the minutes). The Divisional Manager for County Development introduced the report and informed the Committee of representations received after the despatch of the agenda from Midhurst Town Council and the South Downs National Park Authority.

192. Jacquetta Fewster, South Downs Society, spoke in opposition to the revised plans. It was acknowledged that the academy was in the right location but the design was not of a sufficiently high standard and the loss of the footpath was a concern. The revised plans for the academy were felt to be inappropriate for a National Park and the referral of the plans to an independent design panel was requested. At a meeting

of the National Park Authority on 13 December unhappiness was expressed that stated concerns had not been addressed by the applicant.

193. The Committee considered the revised designs and new car parking arrangements and felt that they were improvements on the original proposals. The quality of design of the development was a subjective judgement.

194. The Committee voted unanimously in favour of the recommendation.

195. Resolved – That the following plans are approved and become approved plans pursuant to Condition 2 of WSCC/082/10/MI/SDNP: Car Park and Coach Park (16418_GE_SK_639, 16418_GE_SK_640, and 16418_GE_SK_641); and South-East Elevation (2134_SKE_800144, 2134_SKE_800145 and 2134_GAD_440001_E).

Arun District Council

WSCC/085/10/LU

Development of new classroom facilities, main hall and studio, administration and community facilities and the demolition of the existing gym/hall to achieve the amalgamation of Connaught Junior School, Arun Vale Infant School and Elm Grove School to form River Beach Primary School, Connaught Road, Littlehampton, West Sussex, BN17 6ES.

196. The Committee considered a report by the Divisional Manager for County Development (copy appended to the signed version of the minutes).

197. The Divisional Manager for County Development introduced the report and referred to the location of the school, proposed changes to the catchment area and outlined the key issues concerning the application.

198. Ian Buckland, Arun District Council (ADC) and local resident spoke in opposition to the application. ADC, Littlehampton Town Councillors and the local MP had indicated their opposition on the basis of pedestrian safety and access concerns. Inadequate consultation with residents was inconsistent with planning guidance and WSCC's Statement of Community Involvement and it was felt that officers from WSCC were not aware of a number of factors of significance to the application. York Road was congested and dangerous and should not be considered as the main entrance. The absence of the School Travel Plan from the report was queried and the increase in staff spaces was unfair; everyone accessing the site should commit to alternative transport. It was felt that the calculation of pupil numbers was confused and it was likely that the number of children at the school would exceed the estimated increase.

199. Melanie McCallum, a local resident spoke in opposition to the application (a slide was displayed during Mrs McCallum's presentation, appended to the signed version of the minutes). The current entrance for the Arun Vale school, which had a small catchment area, experienced problems with traffic congestion due to narrow roads. The drop off point in York Road was dangerous to pedestrians with cars regularly mounting kerbs. The larger catchment area of the new school would increase car journeys and it was unlikely that parents would use the footpaths. The loss of a play area for Key Stage 1 pupils was unacceptable. Classroom sizes and compliance with statutory guidance was queried. Before the application was considered it was requested that: parking restrictions be enforced in the area; a larger Key Stage 1 playground be provided; a residents parking scheme be established; greater pedestrian protection be provided; and improvements made to the drop-off points.

200. Stuart Small, a local resident spoke in opposition to the application. The main entrance for the proposed school was in York Road which was a key element of the design brief for the new school. It was not felt that adequate consideration of alternative accesses had been undertaken and the application did not include a Health and Safety assessment of the proposed entrance, contrary to Planning Guidance requiring evidence based proposals. Before and after school clubs would extend congestion and disruption to local residents through the day and facilities at the school to be used in the evening and at weekends would cause further problems. The new main entrance was on the side of the school away from the new catchment area that would increase the number of parents driving to the school and the danger posed to pedestrians. A larger Key Stage 1 playground, an entrance on Connaught Road and a residential parking scheme should be funded by Section 106 developer contributions.

201. Peter Proudley, Capital Planning Manager WSCC, spoke in support of the application. The proposal was part of a programme to create all-through primary schools catering for pupils aged 4 - 11 across the whole of West Sussex. The principal benefit was to limit the transfer of pupils to different schools throughout schooling consistent with the WSCC policy. The Schools Adjudicator supported the investment for the new school and the application. The head teacher and the governors were committed to improving the traffic problems around the site. The number of pupils would stabilise as the existing pupils from the old catchment area progressed through the school and left.

202. Richard Davies, Chairman of the River Beach temporary Board of Governors spoke in support of the application. Mr Davies referred to the needs and concerns in Littlehampton regarding educational facilities. The temporary governing body, parents of children at the school and the pupils were unanimous in support of the proposals. The new school was in the best interest of the local community and the children of Littlehampton. The applications deferral for decision from the Planning Committee in November had already caused problems and any further delay would exacerbate these problems. Mr Davies shared the safety concerns of local residents and the Travel plan that was to be completed as part of the application would address any concerns raised.

203. Judy Grevett, Head Teacher Designate, River Beach Primary School spoke in support of the application. The school would be a centre of excellence in the town and the application was an opportunity for Littlehampton. It was essential that the new school opened in September 2011 and the safety of pupils and children accessing the school was of paramount importance. A committee consisting of local residents, the police and parents had been convened to compose the School Travel Plan, supported by WSCC officers. A number of actions were requested as part of the petition submitted by local residents which the school were working toward achieving: the introduction of a crossing in the area was being investigated by WSCC; the restriction of vehicles accessing the school site would be introduced; the extension of the scheme in the Anchor Springs car park would be pursued; a bike shed would be provided on site; and a walking bus scheme would be promoted.

204. The Committee raised those points set out below in the discussion that followed:

- The timescale within which a School Travel Plan (STP) should be completed was questioned. It was felt that the STP should be in place from the opening of the new school. As part of the STP it was suggested that warning signs should be

erected in the vicinity of the school informing motorists of the presence of the establishment. It was questioned whether the proposals in the STP would be enforceable.

- The loss of playing areas at the school was raised.
- It was noted that concerns regarding the access to the site had been in existence for a number of years and were the key concern with the application. Construction traffic to the site was also raised as an issue of concern.
- The increase of 18 spaces on site for staff was considered.
- It was acknowledged that all schools have problems with parking and congestion but River Beach was exceptional due to the danger posed by the narrowness of the roads around the proposed access. A health and safety report containing concerns with the entrance to the existing Arun Vale school was referred to and an alternative access from Cornwall Road was suggested.
- The proposed date of completion of the development was not material to the determination of the application.
- The location of the site did provide a number of opportunities to walk to the school particularly with the proposed pick up/drop off point.
- Questions about whether consultation fully involved the public were asked.
- The orientation of the central building on site to the West was queried. Locating the building to the East would allow for an alternative access point and retention of the existing Key Stage 1 playing areas.
- It was not felt that the development would significantly worsen the existing traffic congestion at the site.
- The educational need of the development was accepted.

205. The Divisional Manager, County Development and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services provided clarification to the Committee which included those points set out below:

- The STP was an evolving document. The completion of the STP after six months would allow the document to take account of the new catchment area and any unforeseen trends in travel to the site. The requirement to provide School warning signs could be included in the STP.
- In the North West of the site the new building would be placed on existing hard play areas however there remains an acceptable amount of hard play areas.
- Cornwall Road would be the access route for construction traffic from the A264.
- The increase of teacher car parking would help to move some parking from the local roads onto the site.
- Moving the proposed access for the school to Cornwall Road would only result in the movement of congestion to the East of the site. The health and safety report for the Arun Vale school entrance did not form part of the application.
- The consultation undertaken by the planners had been in accordance with statutory obligations. Pre-application consultation is the responsibility of the applicant.
- The orientation of the buildings on site had been to provide for a main access for all schools on site and to accommodate the new building.

206. It was proposed that the wording of Condition 21 in Appendix 1 of the report be amended to the following; *'Prior to occupation of the development hereby approved, a School Travel Plan shall be prepared in consultation with the Local Highway Authority. The Travel Plan shall then be submitted to the County Planning Authority for approval and once approved thereafter be implemented in full accordance with a timetable to be approved as part of the Plan.'* This proposal was seconded and agreed by the Committee.

207. The Committee voted 9 votes in favour and 3 votes against the recommendation.

208. Resolved – That planning permission be granted subject to the conditions and informatives set out in Appendix 1 of the report and the amendment to Condition 21 as set out in minute 206.

Applications Outstanding

209. The Committee received and noted a report by the Divisional Manager for County Development on applications outstanding (copy appended to the signed version of the minutes).

Report of Delegated Action

210. The Committee received and noted a report by the Divisional Manager for County Development (copy appended to the signed version of the minutes) advising of the uses of delegated powers to grant permission for development proposals under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 since the Planning Committee meeting on 30 November 2010.

211. The Committee was informed of the two provisional dates for site visits ahead of the next meeting: Monday 31 January and Friday 4 February 2011.

The meeting ended at 12.40 p.m.

Chairman