

**Minutes of the Planning Committee
5 January 2022**

Present:

Councillor T. Lagden (Chairman)
Councillor R.A. Smith-Ainsley (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

C. Bateson	M. Gibson	B.B. Spoor
A. Brar	H. Harvey	J. Vinson
J.T.F. Doran	R.J. Noble	
N.J. Gething	R.W. Sider BEM	

Apologies: Councillors N. Islam

In Attendance: Councillors M. Beecher

1/22 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 and 17 November 2021 were approved as a correct record.

2/22 Disclosures of Interest

a) Disclosures of interest under the Members' Code of Conduct

There were none.

b) Declarations of interest under the Council's Planning Code

Councillors C Bateson, A Brar, J Doran, N Gething, M Gibson, T Lagden, R Noble, R W Sider BEM, R A Smith Ainsley and J Vinson reported that they had received correspondence in relation to applications 21/01182/FUL and 21/01547/FUL but had maintained an impartial role, had not expressed any views and had kept an open mind.

Councillors C Bateson, R Noble, R W Sider BEM, R A Smith-Ainsley and J Vinson reported that they had attended a site visit to the application site.

3/22 Planning application 21/01182/FUL - Shepperton Studios, Studios Road, Shepperton, TW17 0QD

Description: Construction of a workshop (plot 1.4), utility building and security barriers, turnstile and guard shelter, with associated enabling works, access and parking at Shepperton North West.

Additional Information:

The applicant submitted a letter in support of the application which states that the footprint of the building is 1,722.7m² within the backlot site of over 24,250m², which represents 7% of the total area and that the impact on openness would be imperceptible visually and marginal practically.

It concludes that the proposed workshop building on an approved backlot would be minor in scale of area and insignificant to negligible in terms of Green Belt openness. The economic benefits of the Shepperton scheme are acknowledged in the Committee Report and very special circumstances are confirmed to exist to justify a grant of planning permission.

The LLFA has raised no objection to the application and has recommended conditions and informatives.

The conditions are already contained in the report.

The informative should be added as follows: "If proposed works result in infiltration of surface water to ground within a Source Protection Zone the Environment Agency will require proof of surface water treatment to achieve water quality standards".

Paragraph 7.25 is to read "...lost to the proposed scheme and therefore would be left with 6 acres (2.41 hectares)."

Public Speaking:

In accordance with the Council's procedure for speaking at meetings, Matthew Wright, Senior Development Manager spoke for the proposed development raising the following key points:

- This application was a refinement to the outline permission that had already been granted.
- The expansion would make Shepperton Studios the 2nd largest in the world and provide economic benefits to the Borough of Spelthorne, the County of Surrey and the UK as a whole.
- The new facilities would be ready for use in 2023 with half of the additional space already leased to Netflix.
- The location of the proposed workshop and car parking is on land permitted as a backlot.
- The new workshop floorspace is only 7% of the total approved backlot area.
- The application has no Green Belt implications as it will be a developed site under the existing permission.

- A commitment has been given by Shepperton Studios to plant over 30,000 new trees providing tree cover and new habitats.
- 15% on site renewable energy will be provided with the use of photovoltaic panels and 100% of all the energy required for the Studio will be from off-site renewable sources.
- 20% of parking spaces will have EV charging points,
- Sustainable travel measures such as cycle parking, shower facilities and free shuttle bus travel to and from local train stations are to be put in place.

Debate:

During the debate the following key issues were raised:

- The proposed design fits in with other buildings on the site
- The proposed floorspace would not take the site as a whole over the maximum amount previously approved
- The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that this would not increase traffic flow
- The Secretary of State agreed that the economic benefits for this site should be considered at special circumstances
- Concerns were raised over the encroachment onto Green Belt land but any harm was outweighed by the positives
- This application has no impact on the biodiversity of the site
- More EV charging spaces to be provided on this site
- Planting of the 30,000 trees is vital
- The proposed building is lower than the existing surrounding buildings

For – 10

Against – 1

Abstain - 1

Decision:

The application was **APPROVED** subject to an additional informative to read as follows:

With reference to condition 7 concerning EV charging points, the applicant is requested to give consideration to providing 100% EV charging points with this development.

4/22 Planning application 21/01547/FUL - Shepperton Studios, Studios Road, Shepperton, TW17 0QD

Description:

Use of 6 acres of land for backlot in association with Shepperton Studios, including the construction of utility buildings, security barriers and guard shelters, with associated enabling works, access, landscaping, surface parking and amended car park access at land north of Shepperton Studios.

Additional Information:

The applicant submitted a letter and plan in support of the application which clarifies that the area of extension is 4,450m² (0.45 ha), which represents 8% of the full application site and is about the size of half a football pitch. The applicant considers that this is not material and would be imperceptible in assessment of Green Belt openness, landscape or visual impact.

They also state that the impact of the additional land in landscape and biodiversity terms is negligible and is in any event mitigated by new landscape proposals and by the offer of a biodiversity net gain of 5% off site.

The letter concludes that the proposed backlot is a stand-alone planning application but an integral part of the Shepperton expansion project. Very special circumstances exist to clearly outweigh any Green Belt harms and all other aspects of the development are assessed as acceptable.

Laleham Residents Association has submitted an objection on the grounds of the connection between this application and 21/01548/RMA for a Multi Storey Car Park on land to the south of the River Ash, which they believe will direct additional traffic onto Shepperton Road and Laleham Road.

Paragraph 7.30 should refer to Queen Mary's Reservoir.

For clarity it is recommended that Condition 6 be revised to:

No part of the development, including hardstanding and fences, shall be carried out within the landscape buffer zone between the backlot and Studios Estate shown on Plan 3755-FBA-XX-XX-DR-X-0109003 Rev P2, without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Conditions 10 and 14 are duplicates and it is recommended that these are deleted that the conditions renumbered accordingly.

Public Speaking:

In accordance with the Council's procedure for speaking at meetings, Matthew Wright, Senior Development Manager spoke for the proposed development raising the following key points:

- This application is to relocate a backlot that had previously been permitted
- The application site already has planning permission for car parking
- Production companies require two backlots of a minimum of six acres
- The re-siting of the backlot has provided the opportunity to realign the internal access road away from Studios Estate
- The biodiversity net gain would be increased to a minimum of 20% beyond that required
- The Ward Councillors, Residents Associations and the residents of Studios Estate had been consulted on the proposed backlot with the majority agreeing that this was an improvement on the consented scheme
- Hours of operation to be controlled through conditions
- Removal of lighting that would have been part of the car park

- An extension to the landscape bund with established tree planting
- The entrance to the existing North Car Park would be moved west, removing cars from Studio Road at an earlier point and closer to the existing studio entrance
- Enhancements to the River Ash Corridor would take place
- The whole of the Shepperton site is in the Green Belt but the technical policy test of very special circumstances is met
- Local residents would be provided with a preferable use of neighbouring land compared with the approved car park

Debate:

During the debate the following key issues were raised:

- To run the studios two backlots are needed
- No objections have been received from neighbouring houses
- Shepperton Studios have reacted to concerns from the public
- The outline planning permission was for parking at the northern end of the site and not the southern end as now proposed
- Concerns were raised over the encroachment onto Green Belt land but any harm was outweighed by the positives
- Not happy that this proposal encroaches further into the green belt
- Work is undertaken regularly on the River Ash
- Approval will not continue if a Section 106 is not obtained or biodiversity measures are not met
- Concerns were raised over the affect the lighting would have on wildlife
- The Council's Biodiversity Officer would monitor the River Ash and surrounding land to ensure that it is kept litter free

For – 9

Against – 1

Abstain - 2

Decision:

The application was **APPROVED**.

5/22 Housing Delivery Test Action Plan 2021

The Committee considered a report from the Planning Development Manager, Esme Spinks and the Principal Planning Officer, Hannah Bridges that sought approval of the Housing Delivery Test Action Plan 2021 and agreement to publish it on the Council's website.

During the debate the Committee requested that training be provided for all Planning Committee members to ensure that there was a comprehensive understanding of Planning Law and the implications of not meeting the housing targets. The Planning Development Manager agreed to arrange this training at the earliest convenient date.

The Committee requested that the Housing Delivery Test Action Plan 2021 Report be issued to all Spelthorne councillors.

The Committee **resolved** to note the Housing Delivery Test Action Plan 2021 and agree that it be published on the Council's website.

6/22 Consultations on Emerging Planning Proposals

The Committee considered a report on the Consultation on Emerging Planning Proposals that was agreed by the Leader, Councillor L Nichols and the Deputy Leader, Councillor J Sexton.

During the debate the following points were raised:

- Additional work would be put on Ward Councillors
- Some Councillors would not have the knowledge or expertise to advise Developers on planning issues
- Councillors may over promise
- Planning Officers should be present at these meetings
- Ward Councillors would not always be able to meet the expectations of the public
- Positive to involve Councillors at an earlier stage in the planning process
- The public will feel that their views are being taken into consideration
- Do any other Local Authorities use this process?
- Is the Planning Committee the correct committee to agree this or should it go to the Corporate Policy & Resources Committee?

The Committee **resolved** that the Planning Development Manager relook at the proposals.

7/22 Major Planning Applications

The Planning Development Manager submitted a report outlining major applications that may be brought before the Planning Committee for determination.

Resolved that the report of the Planning Development Manager be received and noted.

8/22 Planning Appeals Report

The Chairman informed the Committee that if any Member had any detailed queries regarding the report on Appeals lodged and decisions received since the last meeting, they should contact the Planning Development Manager.

Resolved that the report of the Planning Development Manager be received and noted.