

**Minutes of the Planning Committee
3 April 2024**

Present:

Councillor M. Gibson (Chair)
Councillor D.L. Geraci (Vice-Chair)

Councillors:

C. Bateson	T. Burrell	M.J. Lee
S.N. Beatty	R. Chandler	K.E. Rutherford
M. Beecher	D.C. Clarke	H.R.D. Williams
M. Buck	S.A. Dunn	P.N. Woodward

Apologies: Apologies were received from Councillor A. Mathur and Councillor L. E. Nichols

Substitutes: K. Grant (In place of L. E. Nichols) and K. Howkins (In place of A. Mathur)

In Attendance:

Councillors who are not members of the Committee, but attended the meeting and spoke on an application in or affecting their ward, are set out below in relation to the relevant application.

8/24 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2024 were approved as a correct record.

9/24 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 Beatty, Beecher, Buck, Burrell, Chandler, Clarke, Dunn, Geraci, Grant, Howkins, Lee, Williams and Woodward reported that they had received correspondence in relation to application 23/01236/FUL but had maintained an impartial role, had not expressed any views and had kept an open mind.

Councillors Bateson, Gibson and Rutherford reported that they had received correspondence in relation to application 23/01236/FUL and had also made an informal visit to the site. In both cases they had maintained an impartial role, had not expressed any views and had kept an open mind.

10/24 Planning application - 23/01236/FUL, The Ash Tree Public House, Convent Road, Ashford, TW15 2HW

Description:

Change of use of existing public house (Sui Generis) to Class E(a) (retail) use, new lift-shaft to rear (east) of building, elevation changes including new sliding doors, louvres, removal of pub garden windows, installation of new level access ramp and ATM/bollards to north-west corner. The installation of AC condensers along with proposed timber hit and miss fence and gate (removal of existing garage).

Additional Information:

Vanya Popova, Planning Officer reported that two additional letters of objection were received which included similar concerns to those summarised in the Committee report.

Public Speaking:

In accordance with the Council's procedure for speaking at meetings, Marie Bone spoke against the proposed development raising the following key points:

- 206 letters expressed opposition to the proposal in this application
- There will be adverse impact on existing similar businesses within a ten-minute walking radius
- The promise of 14 jobs being created by Sainsbury's would be cancelled out by the loss of many more jobs by local businesses.
- There was inadequate parking at the site for customers
- There would be a two-way traffic flow at the entrance to the site shared by customers and delivery vehicles which may be dangerous
- There were existing shops in the vicinity which offered sufficient parking and product range

In accordance with the Council's procedure for speaking at meetings, Gary Morris spoke for the proposed development raising the following key points:

- The site had been vacant since January 2023, and did not contribute positively to the environment or economy
- Pub numbers had been falling consistently since 1990 and there was no realistic prospect of the building being reoccupied by a pub
- There were other pubs close by within easy walking distance
- The proposal will generate up to 25 jobs, improve business rates and rejuvenate the site
- Sainsbury's local will serve a local population that was currently underserved for high quality food and convenience goods to meet every-day needs
- The store will encourage more people to visit which will increase the level of footfall to the benefit of the parade as a whole
- The store will reduce reliance on use of private cars for visits to larger supermarkets for top-up shopping needs
- The site was highly accessible and convenient for customers arriving by foot from the local catchment area
- The proposal offered 11 car parking spaces with one charging point for electric vehicles
- The deliveries that will take place via small lorries at the site was deemed to be safe and appropriate from a highway's perspective
- The proposals had been reviewed by Planning Officers to offer the best possible scheme for the environment and community, with more landscaping, better and safer access, and improvements to facilities to encourage sustainable transport choices

In accordance with the Council's procedure for speaking at meetings, Councillor Rutherford spoke as Ward Councillor in relation to the proposed development raising the following key points:

- 207 letters of objection had been received on this application
- Another big supermarket chain in this area was not necessary as there were several stores nearby

- Locally owned independent shops cannot compete with the increasing number of chain stores
- There was limited customer parking
- Vehicles will likely park on the curb and along the service road
- There was not sufficient space for store delivery trucks and customer vehicles to move around
- This site could provide more to the community through an alternative use

Debate:

During the debate the following key issues were raised:

- There was no guarantee that job opportunities would only benefit the local community
- There was inadequate parking on site which added to on-street parking pressure
- This proposal helped to maintain an existing building in Ashford which was more environmentally sustainable than creating a new build (such as a block of flats)
- The proposal provided employment opportunities
- The previous use of this site involved deliveries and customer parking
- The site was positioned in a suitable location within walking distance
- There was no material basis to refuse this application
- There were no objections from statutory bodies
- All relevant Planning conditions had been applied

The Committee voted on the application as follows:

For: 15

Against: 1

Abstain: 0

Decision: The application was **approved**.

The Committee adjourned at 20:00 and readjourned at 20:05pm.

11/24 Tree Preservation Order- TPO293/2023, 35 The Avenue, Sunbury-on-Thames, TW16 5HY

Description: On 8th December 2023, Tree Preservation Order (TPO293/2023) was served with immediate effect to protect 1 x Oak tree in the rear garden of 35 The Avenue, Sunbury-on-Thames, TW16 5HY.

Additional Information:

Emily Archibald, Planning Officer reported that there was no additional information.

Debate:

During the debate the following key issues were raised:

-This was a mature tree which added to the street scene

-It was important to retain trees as they encouraged biodiversity

The Committee voted on the application as follows:

For: 16

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Decision: The Tree Preservation Order was confirmed without modification.

12/24 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.

13/24 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.