

Minutes of a Meeting of the Planning and Community Committee held at the Oakwood Centre on Tuesday 9 August 2022 at 7:45 pm

Present: *Councillors: P. Wicks (Chairman); K. Baker; D. Bragg; J. Cheng; C. Jewell; J. Sartorel;*

Officers present: *K. Murray, Deputy Town Clerk; M. Filmore, Committee Officer;*

Also present: *Councillors: K. Gilder; R. Horskins; A. Swaddle;
Councillor Paul Fishwick & Robert Curtis (Wokingham Borough Council)
Sam Goss (PJA Consultancy)
43 members of the public*

59. Prior to the meeting commencing, the Chairman asked those in attendance to observe a minute's silence following the death of a 32-year-old man who was found in Woodford Park on Tuesday 2 August 2022.

60. **APOLOGIES**
Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nagra and Skegg.

61. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
There were no declarations of interest.

62. **WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL ACTIVE TRAVEL ROUTE – WOODLEY TO READING**
The Chairman handed over to Councillor Paul Fishwick, Executive Member for Active Travel, Highways and Transport at Wokingham Borough Council (WBC), who summarised the background to the Active Travel Route proposals.

Councillor Fishwick then handed over to Sam Goss from Phil Jones Associates (PJA), the transport design consultancy employed by Wokingham Borough Council to design the current scheme proposal. Sam provided a presentation summarising and explaining the rationale behind the design against the backdrop of relevant national guidance LTN 1/20 regarding the provision of cycle routes. He explained that there were five key factors which needed to be considered when designing an Active Travel scheme, which include infrastructure design, pedestrian comfort, impact on vehicle movement and street parking, impact on public ground, and cost and buildability. He acknowledged that any scheme developed, including the current scheme, required compromise.

Councillor Baker spoke on the matter, noting that he was disappointed that views had been sought in a survey and not a consultation. He highlighted that Wokingham Borough Council had reinstated a requirement for those responding online had to set up an account which was likely to dissuade a number of individuals, a requirement which had previously been removed from the previous consultation. He also noted that the content of the survey was devoid of options, instead asking responders to advise on their location and travel habits rather than their opinion on the scheme or possible routes. Specifically, Councillor Baker identified that views had not been sought on a possible route along Beechwood Avenue and Howth Drive, rather than along the eastern end of Woodlands Avenue.

With regards to potentially routing the scheme along Beechwood Avenue and Howth Drive, Councillor Baker highlighted that this would not require the removal of the roundabout on Howth Drive, which if removed would likely exacerbate the issue of queueing traffic. Both Beechwood Avenue and Howth Drive are also wide enough to accommodate a cycle way, whereas using the eastern section of Woodlands Avenue would require the road to be reduced to the minimum width of 5m, with a 20-mph speed limit required and a ban on heavy goods vehicles. Councillor Baker noted that he had been reliably informed that currently delivery lorries travelling to both Iceland and Waitrose use the eastern end of Woodlands Avenue. He also noted that the option to route the scheme via the eastern end of Woodlands Avenue would directly impact 101 properties, whilst a route along Beechwood Avenue and Howth Drive would likely impact only 36 properties.

A large number of residents attended the meeting and a lengthy discussion took place regarding the proposed route which was open for consultation. One resident raised concerns about the timing of the consultation, highlighting that it was taking place school holidays in July and August which was likely to reduce the number of responses.

It was highlighted that the proposed 5m road width on the eastern section of Woodlands Avenue was a reduction from standard, with the Borough's own design guide suggesting through roads require a width of between 5.5m and 6.1m. A WBC traffic survey was cited as stating that the flow of traffic on the eastern section of Woodlands Avenue was 5,730 vehicles per day, and it was suggested this rate showed this should be considered a principal road. When previously questioned by a resident about the discrepancy with the Borough's design guide, WBC had apparently responded to state that this only applied to new roads.

It was highlighted that DfT guidance states that a 5m minimum road width allows cars to travel past cars, but does not refer to wider vehicles such as lorries, ambulances, or vans. A DfT traffic survey was cited as stating approximately 10,500 vehicles per day, including 71 HGVs, travel along the western side of Woodlands Avenue. However, it was stated that WBC data suggested only 4 HGVs travel along the eastern end of Woodlands Avenue. A query was raised about where the additional vehicles were then going.

Concerns were also raised that no statutory safety audit results were included in either this or the earlier consultations on this proposal.

Some residents presented concerns that the scheme would cause some disabled residents, especially those in wheelchairs, as well as pushchair users difficulty when trying to cross Woodlands Avenue. A concern was also raised that this proposal would route those cyclists wishing to head north through the shopping precinct, and it was noted that concerns regarding dangerous interactions between cyclists and residents in the precinct had been raised at a previous meeting of the Committee; a route via Beechwood Avenue and Howth Drive, it was stated, would not cause this.

A small number of residents felt that the proposed scheme was unnecessary, citing that the change would only be for the benefit of a very small number of cyclists they see each day along this route. However, other residents, especially cyclists in attendance, noted that the purpose of the scheme was to make cycling safer, and thus increase the number of cyclists on the road and reduce traffic.

Sam Goss noted that routing the scheme via Howth Drive would require the removal of a number of parking spaces.

A small number of attendees, including two who identified themselves as cyclists, supported the implementation of a cycle way along the route, stating there were positives in the scheme.

A community responder spoke to raise concerns regarding access to properties on the eastern section of Woodlands Avenue for emergency vehicles should the carriageway be reduced to 5m.

One attendee noted a concern with the Culver Lane section of the route, stating that Palmerstone Road is referred to as a quiet road when it is not. Members were very concerned that removing parking at the western end of Woodlands Avenue would cause significantly difficulty for those accessing Bulmershe open space, specifically creating further traffic problems on days when sporting events were taking place, with the likely alternative parking locations inconveniencing those living in neighbouring developments.

Councillor Baker conducted a straw poll in which only 2 attendees registered support for the existing proposal to route along the eastern section of Woodlands Avenue, whilst approximately 20 attendees suggested support for the scheme to route along Beechwood Avenue and Howth Drive. It was noted that there were no attendees from Beechwood Avenue, which was likely because the current proposal does not include this road. Comments were also made that it would be better to improve the existing cycling infrastructure than to try to retrofit a brand new scheme.

The majority consensus amongst attendees was that the scheme continues to consider the route along the eastern stretch of Woodlands Avenue without a strong reason why, and the option of routing along Beechwood Avenue and Howth Drive should be examined further and comments sought from the public.

Councillor Fishwick thanked everybody for their input, stating it was clear the route along the eastern section of Woodlands Avenue was not favoured. He confirmed that an Individual Executive Member Decision had been made in July 2021 to proceed with designing a scheme along this specific route, and it was this route that Active Travel England (ATE) had agreed to fund. He stated that they would need to await the full results of the consultation. However, if the route along Beechwood Avenue and Howth Drive is going to be investigated further, he confirmed that WBC would need to go back to ATE to confirm whether funding would still be available.

The Chairman reminded all those in attendance to make sure they submitted their comments to the survey officially to Wokingham Borough Council via the online survey. At this point, the Chairman called the discussion to a close and a number of public attendees left the meeting. The Chairman spoke to Members of the Committee and it was

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That, whilst the Council is fully supportive of making improvements to cycle routes within Woodley, the Town Council believes that the current proposed scheme is unacceptable, and that proper alternative options need to be investigated and put forward for full consultation by Wokingham Borough Council to members of the public, including a potential route along Beechwood Avenue / Howth Drive.

63. **MINUTES OF THE PLANNING AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12 JULY 2022**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That the minutes of the Planning and Community Committee meeting held on 12 July 2022 be approved and be signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record.

64. **CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

After discussing three of the nineteen planning applications due to be discussed it was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Councillor Jewell, and following a vote it was:

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That as the business would not be completed by 10pm, the meeting continue until 10:30pm in order to complete the business set out in the agenda.

Voting: For: 5 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote Registered: 1

Members then continued to discuss the remaining planning applications.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To forward comments to the planning authority as detailed in **Appendix A**.

65. Councillor Jewell proposed, seconded by Councillor Baker, and following a vote it was:

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the contents of agenda items:
 6. Planning Decisions
 7. Tree Preservations Orders
 8. Cycling in Woodley Sub Committee
 9. Wokingham Borough Council Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) Consultation

Voting: For: 5 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote Recorded: 1

66. **WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER SURVEY**

Councillor Jewell proposed, seconded by Councillor Baker, and following a vote it was:

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To write to Wokingham Borough Council to confirm the Town Council's support for the proposed Car Cruising Public Spaces Protection Order.

Voting: For: 6 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote Recorded: 0

67. **GOODS VEHICLE OPERATORS LICENCE APPLICATION**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the communication received from BDT Transport Ltd, as included in the agenda, in response to the Council's letter sent to them seeking details of how they planned to mitigate and / or offset the environmental impact of the increase in heavy goods vehicle traffic as a result of their application.

68. **COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH**

Councillor Bragg confirmed that an invitation to a meeting of the Woodley Speedwatch Group has now been sent out to those members of the public who have volunteered to take part.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note that Community Speedwatch signage has now been installed on highway entry points into the town.

69. **EARLEY STATION FOOTBRIDGE UPDATE**

Councillor Wicks confirmed that a further review of the bridge had been conducted by Wokingham Borough Council which had identified further deterioration, with additional netting placed under the bridge to catch any falling debris. Wokingham had not indicated how long the bridge might remain operational or that there was any progress on the potential replacement of the bridge.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To formally write to Wokingham Borough Council to register that the Town Council believe the current situation is unsatisfactory. The letter should highlight significant concerns surrounding the safety and potential for accidents with the existing bridge in its current state, and seek a firm answer as to whether the bridge will be replaced and, if so, when.

70. **COMMUNITY ISSUES**

Councillor Baker advised that he had been invited by Wokingham Borough Council to a meeting in September at which it is believed Wokingham will request Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding from Town and Parish Councils to help fund the redevelopment of California Country Park.

Members discussed the matter and unanimously agreed to refuse any request received to release Woodley CIL funding for this redevelopment.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ For Councillor Baker to represent the Town Council's views at the meeting in September.

71. **HIGHWAYS ISSUES**

There were no highways issues raised for discussion by Members.

72. **PUBLICATIONS/INFORMATION**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note receipt of the following:
 - Woodley Town Centre Partnership Newsletter – July 2022
 - Me2 Club Newsletter – July 2022

73. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

There were no future agenda items raised by Members.

74. **PUBLICITY/WEBSITE**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To post a balanced press release advising of the discussion which had taken place at the meeting regarding the proposed Active Travel Route.

75. **ENFORCEMENT ISSUES**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the information on enforcement issues received from the planning authority, as given in the agenda.

Councillor Baker advised Members that he had notified Wokingham Borough Council of an enforcement issue on Mannock Way where a wall appears to be being built which encompasses amenity land.

The meeting closed at 10:25 pm

Woodley Town Council

Observations on the following Planning Applications made at the Planning & Community Committee meeting held on 9 August 2022

Application No. & Address	Proposal
<p>221691 1 Burgess Close, Woodley, RG5 3LJ</p>	<p>Householder application for the proposed 1no. Juliet Balcony in replacement of existing window.</p>
<p>Observations: No objections.</p>	
<p>221876 Land to the rear of 16 Butts Hill Road, Woodley, RG5 4NH</p>	<p>Full application for the proposed erection of 1no. dwelling and detached garage.</p>
<p>Observations: The Planning & Community Committee noted the objections of a significant number of residents who wrote to the Council and also attended the Committee's meeting on Tuesday 9 August to present their objections to this application.</p> <p>Members have considered the application and recommend it be refused. The Committee supported the comments of Councillors Keith Baker and David Bragg, which have already been submitted. These are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The proposed access road (Maple Grove) is not appropriate for construction traffic due to its width, the sharp bend in the road, and the fact that existing residents, especially children, use the area for recreation. There would be no space for a large vehicle to turn around, so vehicles would either need to reverse into Maple Grove from Butts Hill Road, or reverse back out, which would cause significant traffic issues. - The proposed 6 bedroom property is larger than the existing 4 to 5 bedroom properties on Maple Grove, and so out of keeping. - The applicant's Planning, Design & Access Statement states "there will be little visibility of the new dwelling around the site", however this is inaccurate as the two storey property will be clearly visible over the hedge currently bordering onto Maple Grove. - The applicant's Planning, Design & Access Statement states "The arrangement of the development in the plot is consistent with surrounding development especially in regards to the built-up coverage. The building line is consistent with Maple Grove and the parking area and plot frontage is a continuation of this", however the Committee feel the design and layout of the plot differs from the existing street scene. - The proposal will require the removal of two visitor spaces at the end of Maple Grove which are currently in regular use. Removal of these parking spaces will also greatly interfere with the ability of carers or emergency vehicles to attend houses in the road. - The applicant's Planning, Design & Access Statement states "The access to the site from Maple Grove will follow the existing pattern of entrances along the road." This is not correct as existing entrances are immediately to the front of properties, whereas the proposed entrance for this development will be at the corner of the plot. - Paragraph 111 of the NPPF states that developments should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety. The Committee believe the single-track nature of the road, the road width, and the fact that the road is used by residents and children, mean that this would cause an unacceptable safety impact on the highway, especially with the additional traffic caused by a large, 6 bedroom property. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wokingham Borough's Planning Design Guide Section 4.7: Headed Privacy, Visual Impact and Amenity, Paragraph 7 states 'The Councils Minimum distance of 22m is a generally accepted guideline for there to be no overlooking for material loss of privacy between the rear of two buildings that directly face one another'. It is believed that the proposed development will be less than 22m from the rear of the property at 52 Rochester Avenue. - The arboricultural report provided with the application states that "Overall, proposals do not require unacceptable tree loss or removal of any high quality trees with significant public visual amenity value". However, Members noted that around two weeks prior to the application being submitted a number of mature trees at the property were felled, with evidence of this in the way of large, cut up trunks, still visible in the garden. Residents have highlighted an already, noticeable decline in wildlife, especially birds, within the area. - Policy TB06 of the MDD Local Plan relates to the development of private residential gardens. The policy states that the Council will resist inappropriate development of residential gardens where development would cause harm to the local area. The Committee believe this proposed development will cause harm to the local area and so should be refused. 	
221950 28 Fitzroy Crescent, Woodley, RG5 4EU	Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension with 1 no. roof lantern, following demolition of existing rear conservatory.
Observations: No objections.	
222015 38 Clivedale Road, Woodley, RG5 3RD	Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey front extension, single storey rear extension, part single storey, part two storey side extension, plus insertion of 1no. rear dormer to facilitate loft conversion, following demolition of existing garage.
Observations: No objections.	
222040 16 Austin Road, Woodley, RG5 4EJ	Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey front extension, following demolition of existing porch.
Observations: No objections.	
222073 33 Cottesmore Road, Woodley, RG5 3NX	Householder application for the proposed erection of a part single storey, part two storey rear extension, first floor side extension, plus garage conversion to create habitable accommodation. (Part Retrospective).
Observations: The Planning & Community Committee considered this application and had no objections, but noted the comments made by neighbours and ask that they be taken into account.	
222082 162 Reading Road, Woodley, RG5 3AA	Householder application for the erection of a front boundary wall and steel gates. (Part retrospective)
Observations: No objections.	
222097 21 Walmer Road, Woodley, RG5 4PN	Householder application for the proposed single storey rear extension.
Observations: No objections.	

<p>222105 The Waterside, Fairwater Drive, Woodley, RG5 3EZ</p>	<p>Full application for the installation of 7 no. lamp posts around the rear parking area. (Retrospective)</p>
<p>Observations: The Planning & Community Committee considered this application. Whilst they had no objections to the installation of lighting, they believe conditions should be included to ensure the lights are only operational during business hours, not during the night when the business is closed, and that lighting is directed to the car park and away from neighbouring properties, in line with the QN01/21 design standard. Members highlighted a concern regarding the impact on neighbours and local wildlife with the current spillage of light and operating hours.</p> <p>Councillor Jewell requested for it to be noted that she objected to the proposal at the meeting.</p>	
<p>222116 4 Dowding Close, Woodley, RG5 4NL</p>	<p>Householder application for the proposed conversion of existing garage to create habitable accommodation. Two storey rear extension with pitched roof. Changes to fenestration.</p>
<p>Observations: No objections.</p>	
<p>222125 30 Selsdon Avenue, Woodley, RG5 4PG</p>	<p>Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey front and part single part two storey side extension, following demolition of the existing garage.</p>
<p>Observations: No objections.</p>	
<p>222161 51 Beechwood Avenue, Woodley, RG5 3DF</p>	<p>Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey front and rear extension.</p>
<p>Observations: No objections.</p>	
<p>222176 9 Caldbeck Drive, Woodley, RG5 4LA</p>	<p>Householder application for the proposed two storey side extension, single storey front extension, two storey rear extension plus changes to fenestration following conversion of existing garage to create habitable accommodation.</p>
<p>Observations: The Planning & Community Committee considered this application and, whilst they had no specific objections, were concerned that the parking provision was convoluted and may not be sufficient. They also noted the comments made by neighbours and ask that they be taken into account.</p>	
<p>222215 39 Antrim Road, Woodley, RG5 3NU</p>	<p>Householder application for the proposed single storey rear extension.</p>
<p>Observations: The Planning & Community Committee considered this application and, whilst they had no objections, they noted the concerns of a resident who attended the meeting. The resident was concerned that the plans propose side windows on the extension, with no side windows currently existing on the property, and that these may affect the privacy of neighbouring properties.</p>	

222239 13 Keats Close, Woodley, RG5 3QF	Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey front extension, conversion of garage to habitable space and changes to fenestration.
Observations: No objections.	
222246 10 Dartington Avenue, Woodley, RG5 3PD	Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension.
Observations: No objections.	
222249 22 Kingfisher Drive, Woodley, RG5 3LG	Householder application for the proposed two storey side / rear extension. Installation of hardstanding to form parking spaces.
Observations: The Planning & Community Committee have considered this application and recommend that it be refused, believing that the size of the proposed extension and addition of the proposed parking spaces will exacerbate existing parking issues relating to the hammerhead in the road.	
222289 190 Fairwater Drive, Woodley, RG5 3JF	Householder application for the proposed erection of a two storey side extension and infill front extension with associated internal remodelling.
Observations: The Planning & Community Committee considered this application and had no objections, subject to the parking provision being deemed sufficient.	
222291 47 Antrim Road, Woodley, RG5 3NT	Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey front extension, two storey side extension, plus the insertion of a sun tunnel, following demolition of existing utility room.
Observations: No objections.	