

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

PLANNING AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Monday 6 February 2023 at 7.30pm at Loughton Town Council Chamber, 1 Buckingham Court

Committee Members:

Councillors: C Davies (in the Chair)
P Abraham W Kauffman K Rainbow
G Wiskin

Also present: Cllr D Wixley

Officers: Debra Paris (Planning Committee Clerk)
12 Members of the public

PL350 Apologies for Absence

The Planning Committee Clerk reported that apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Murphy and Riley. No substitutes had been nominated for this meeting.

PL351 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Wiskin declared a non-pecuniary interest in planning application EPF/2913/22 – Former Pyrles Lane Nursery, as he knew one of the residents present at this evening's meeting objecting to this matter.

Cllr Wixley declared a non-pecuniary and non-prejudicial interest in these proceedings as a dual-hatted councillor and member of Epping Forest District Council Area Planning Subcommittee South. He stated that any views he gave at this meeting would be considered afresh if the applications came before a District Council committee, in light of all the evidence available at the time.

He also declared a non-pecuniary interest in planning application EPF/2913/22 – Former Pyrles Lane Nursery, as he knew several of the residents present at this evening's meeting. Further, he had been involved in arranging with Loughton Town Council for the exhibition of the public consultation by Qualis to be held at Buckingham Court on 15 March 2022 (as an alternative location to that chosen by Qualis, which was deemed inappropriate). Cllr Wixley also declared an interest in having been consulted on various aspects of the proposed plans for the site by Qualis by virtue of being an EFDC councillor for Fairmead Ward.

The Committee declared a non-pecuniary interest in planning applications: EPF/2913/22 – Former Pyrles Lane Nursery; EPF/0017/23 – 70 Barrington Green; and EPF/0134/23 – 77 The Drive, owing to comments received from the LRAPG.

PL352 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Licensing Committee held on 23 January 2023 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Committee AGREED to bring forward in the agenda the following two planning applications, EPF/2503/22 - Land and garages, Whitehills Road and EPF/2913/22 – Former Pyrles Lane Nursery), as members of the public present had an interest in these proposals.

PL353 Planning Applications

The following planning applications were CONSIDERED, and the plans inspected.

353.1 Application No: EPF/2503/22

Officer: Ian Ansell

Location: Land and garages, Whitehills Road, Loughton, IG10 1TS

Proposal: Existing garages enlarged, extended and reduced from 27no. garages to 26no. garages.

The Committee NOTED the contents of a letter of objection.

A member of the public with an interest in this application addressed the meeting.

Members deplored the retrospective nature of this application, and requested that the matter be brought to the attention of the Enforcement Officer at Epping Forest District Council concerning the unconsented demolition of the existing garages at this site, which had been removed without regard to the asbestos present within those buildings. A Stop Notice should be issued immediately.

The Committee OBJECTED to this application stating the proposal was creating an industrial site. Members considered the height of the garages and surrounding wall to be excessive and out of keeping. This would have a negative impact on the amenity of the residents in neighbouring properties that border the site. Particularly 1 Elmores and those in Church Lane that backed directly on to the site.

Members also expressed concern for the established disabled access rights for the resident living behind at no 70 Church Lane.

Application No: EPF/2913/22

Officer: Kie Farrell

Location: Former Pyrles Lane Nursery, Pyrles Lane, Loughton IG10 2NL

Proposal: Residential Development of 48 dwellings with associated vehicular access point off Pyrles Lane, car parking, open space, landscaping, and associated infrastructure.

The Committee NOTED the contents of two letters of objection.

A member of the public with an interest in this application addressed the meeting.

The Committee OBJECTED to this application on the following grounds:

The proposed 48 dwellings on this site would place extra stress on the EF SAC. Natural England and Loughton Town Council have both advised in their main modifications responses to the Inspector (autumn 2021) that the LPSV cannot yet be considered justified, effective or consistent with national policy in relation to detriment to the SAC. Therefore, we **object to this application** because of the urbanisation effect, burden on recreational pressure, and damage to air quality in the SAC that the application, alone or with other projects, will engender.

The current proposed solution to bring in a Clean Air Zone (CAZ) in 2025 is not guaranteed to happen and in any event does not stop additional cars associated with new dwellings from polluting the SAC before the CAZ is brought into operation.

Overall, the Committee considered this was an overdevelopment of the site. The design was overbearing. As the application now included 48 dwellings, as opposed to 37 in the public consultation held last July. Members questioned if this would result in the proposed properties being smaller than those in the consultation or would they be packed more tightly into the site? With no drawings available from the consultation this could not be compared and was unacceptable. Members also noted that only 8% affordable housing was included in this proposal which was unacceptable. This being a council promoted site the affordable housing ratio should be policy compliant (40%). No viability report was provided to justify the lower rate.

The proposed 4-storeys for one of the blocks of flats was too high, too bulky, overbearing and out of character with the area. The design of the flats was considered ugly and obtrusive, contrary to the Government's build beautiful standards, particularly considering this was backland development and it would result in a negative impact on the area, in particular the idyllic nearby Hillyfields.

Concerns were also raised about the potential overlooking from the 3-storey block near the houses towards the junction of Pyrles Lane/Hillyfields and the negative impact this would have on the amenity of those residents.

The Committee objected to the number of trees being lost and the loss of open green space, stating the application amounted to urbanisation of this green area. Members commented that the Inspector had removed the development of Jessel Green from the Local Plan to protect that green space for local residents. A planning objective now encouraged by the Government to be made available to the whole populace to enhance mental health and well-being.

Members drew attention to Point 2.10 of the Planning Statement which they believed to be incorrect. It states that "there are 11 Local Nature Reserves", whereas they believed that there is just one, that being the Homestead Local Nature Reserve in Englands Lane. The same statement is repeated under "Ecology and Biodiversity" at 7.66 in the document. The inaccuracy of this statement raised questions as to the validity of other statements made within this report.

The Ecology & Biodiversity report showed that the application would have adverse implications for wildlife on the site e.g. bats, slow worms, toads, bees, and stag beetles.

The Grow Community Garden which borders the site, would also be very negatively impacted by this proposal. There would now be a sheer drop of several metres at its boundary, down to a car park below. This would be as a result of the vast amount of carving into the hillside, that would create a quarry effect, with a very large expanse of high cement walls. It would also create an extremely negative visual impact affecting the amenity and outlook for many surrounding properties and the street scene.

There were no provisions for supporting infrastructure by way of doctors' surgeries and education provision. Loughton is particularly prone to overstretched, under maintained water services, and experiences constant water pipe leaks and sewage problems.

Residents in Pyrles Lane/Hillyfields had existing concerns regarding water run-off from the site and flooding to their gardens which already occurred and could be worsened by this development.

There was concern for a redundant drain on the site, which originated in the nursery and runs down the gardens of 59, 61 & 63 Pyrles Lane, whose residents have in the past, along with the previous nursery site, had to contribute towards costs on several occasions when this drain was blocked. There was no clarification that the drain would be capped off, so that there would be no imposition for the residents of 59,61 & 63, or what the implications would be for those residents if the proposal were allowed to go ahead.

The additional housing would add to further pressure on local services. Rectory Lane was already over congested, with cars backing up from Debden Broadway right back to Church Hill at busy times. This would only be further exacerbated when the current developments on Borders Lane were completed. Pyrles Lane was an exceptionally busy through route to Theydon Bois, which had likely got busier since the opening of the Epping Forest Retail Park and the subsequent congestion this had brought to the area. It was noted that the Transport Report had been carried out during the school holidays, thus giving an inaccurate account of the true transport levels in this location. It should be noted that this is a main route to five local schools, New City College at Borders Lane and the Essex University Campus at E15. Also, it is a main route for local traffic, a cut through for Epping and beyond and those wishing to access the M11 and routes into London.

The Committee considered the access to this site to be most inappropriate. Even though the application included a proposal to demolish no 79 Pyrles Lane to increase the existing narrow entrance from a single width road to a double width road, it was the position of the access point on a very busy and dangerous bend which could not be overcome. This would remain a danger to both pedestrians and road users. The proposal to demolish no 79, which forms part of a semi was also questioned and it was believed would result in a detrimental impact on the amenity of the residents of no 77.

The statement of community involvement, which consulted on a considerably different and less dense development (of 37 dwellings) showed overwhelming opposition to the development. As the application was now significantly different, clearly a second public consultation should have taken place before submitting the planning application.

Members also strongly supported the comments of the LRA Plans Group.

The Committee AGREED to suspend standing order 3ff until 9.15pm

PL354 Matters for Report

354.1 Planning Re-consultations

**354.1.1 EPF/0563/22 – 95 Tycehurst Hill, Loughton, IG10 1BZ.
Proposal: First floor extension over existing garage
including second gable feature – Min no PL195.1**

The Committee considered the amended plans, but reiterated its original comments to this proposal which were:

“The Committee NOTED the contents of two letters of objection.

The Committee OBJECTED to this application on the grounds that the proposed extension by reason of its height, bulk and massing is too close to the boundary to number 97. As such it closes the gap with its neighbour and represents an overdevelopment of the site.”

**354.1.2 EPF/2333/22 – 31 Carroll Hill, Loughton, IG10 1NL.
Proposal: Addition of 4 new rooflights to provide light and ventilation to 1 spare room, 1 media room and new stair serving new loft floor – Min no PL301.1**

The Committee considered the amended plans, however it believed there were not sufficient changes to the application.

Members reiterated their original comments which were:

“The Committee NOTED the contents of a letter of objection. The Committee OBJECTED to this application for the four new roof lights stating they were not in proportion and would be out of keeping with the street scene.”

**354.1.3 EPF/0014/23 - 69 Church Hill, Loughton, IG10 1QP.
Proposal: Proposed Extension – Min no PL344.1**

The Committee considered the amended plans and reiterated its previous comments, which were:

“The Committee had NO OBJECTION to this application. Members commented that this proposal was much improved upon previous applications for this site. However, concern was expressed that the proposed basement conversion should not negatively impact the neighbours.”

354.2 Gardener’s Arms PH Licensing Appeal Update from Epping Forest District Council

The Committee NOTED the information received from the EFDC licensing officer regarding this matter.

354.3 Planning Applications for Works to Trees – EPF/2453/22 – 47 Hillcrest Road, Loughton – Min no PL301.1

The Tree Officer at EFDC had provided further information on this application and requested that the Committee waive its objection.

The Committee considered the update provided however, it was unwilling to waive its OBJECTION to this application, believing that everything possible to maintain and retain the oak tree should be done.

PL355 Planning Applications

The following planning applications were CONSIDERED, and the plans inspected.

355.1 Application No: EPF/2933/22

Officer: Caroline Brown

Location: 35 Lower Park Road, Loughton, IG10 4NB

Proposal: Ground & first floor rear & side extensions, loft conversion with a rear dormer & front porch extension.

The Committee OBJECTED to this application on the grounds that the proposal was incongruous and out of keeping with the existing extension and resulted in an overdevelopment of the site.

Application No: EPF/0017/23

Officer: Rhian Thorley

Location: 70 Barrington Green, Loughton, IG10 2BA

Proposal: Single storey front extension and rear dormer.

The Committee OBJECTED to this application on the grounds that it was forward of the building line and built out to the boundary, resulting in an overdevelopment of the site. The proposal would also be overbearing on the neighbour.

The wooden doors at the front would block out the light to the front study. Members considered the plans were misleading regarding the materials to be used for the side elevation.

Application No: EPF/0033/23

Officer: Mohinder Bagry

Location: 1 Champions, Loughton, IG10 2SG

Proposal: Formation of 3 small dormers to the front of the existing pitched roof to allow for access and natural light into the loft space.

The Committee OBJECTED to this application stating it was an overdevelopment. The proposal did not fit in with neighbouring properties. The dormers were too large and would create a negative impact on the street scene.

Application No: EPF/0040/23

Officer: Caroline Brown

Location: 55 Broadstrood, Loughton, IG10 2SB

Proposal: Erection of a ground and first floor rear extension, including two new windows to each side of the house.

The Committee OBJECTED to this application on the basis that the long side windows on the south elevation would cause overlooking and light pollution, resulting in a loss of amenity for the neighbours.

Members would be willing to waive their objection if these side windows were removed from the application.

If, however, the local planning authority was minded to approve this application, the Committee requested that a condition be imposed for the windows on the south and north elevations to be obscured glass to protect the privacy of the residents of the neighbouring properties on both sides.

Application No: EPF/0053/23

Officer: Rhian Thorley

Location: The Lindy House, Steeds Way, Loughton, IG10 1HX

Proposal: Addition of a single storey glass room located on the rear elevation of the property in the private garden.

The Committee OBJECTED to this application on the grounds that the proposal was onto the boundary and would create a negative impact on the Conservation Area, the large neighbouring garden and forest. It would also result in a detrimental impact on the habitats of native nocturnal animals caused by light pollution.

Application No: EPF/0082/23

Officer: Loredana Ciavucco

Location: 5 Grosvenor Path, Loughton, IG10 2LF

Proposal: Proposed ground floor rear extension, floor plan redesign and all associated works at 5 Grosvenor Path, IG10 2LF

The Committee had NO OBJECTION to this application.

Application No: EPF/0134/23

Officer: Kie Farrell

Location: 77 The Drive, Loughton, IG10 1HL

Proposal: Amendment to planning permission for single storey rear/side extension to include part 1st floor rear/side extension.

The Committee OBJECTED to this application stating it would create a large flank wall onto the boundary which would have a negative impact on the amenity of the neighbours at no 79.

Members also supported the comments of the LRA Plans Group regarding the validity of this application and the lack of clarity in the drawings.

The Committee AGREED to suspend standing order 3ff until 9.35pm.

355.2 Deemed Permission – provided for information only:

The Committee NOTED the following applications:

Application No: EPF/0027/23

Officer: Alastair Prince

Location: 41 The Lindens, Loughton, IG10 3HS

Proposal: Certificate of Lawful Development for proposed first floor rear extension.

Application No: EPF/0142/23

Officer: Alastair Prince

Location: 45 River Way, Loughton, IG10 3LJ

Proposal: Certificate of lawful development for a proposed rear dormer window in connection with a loft conversion and infill porch.

355.3 Others – provided for information only: EPF/0107/23 & EPF/0141/23

The Committee NOTED the information received from Epping Forest District Council.

PL356 Decisions

356.1 Decisions by Epping Forest District Council

No decisions had been received from Epping Forest District Council.

PL357 Licensing Applications

No licensing applications had come to the attention of officers.

PL358 Enforcement and Compliance

358.1 No reports had been received.

Signed:

Date: 20 February 2023