



Member Site Visit Meeting

30th June 2022 10am

Weather conditions: Warm, dry and sunny.

Planning Committee Member Attendance:

Councillors:			
AWFORD, Cllr Philip	Ap	MACKENZIE-CHARRINGTON, Cllr Mark*	P
BAKER, Cllr Paul	Ap	MCFARLING, Cllr Chris	P
BROWN, Cllr David	P	MILLER, Cllr Andrew	P
FISHER, Cllr Bernard	Ap	MORGAN, Cllr Graham	P
HALE, Cllr Terry**	P	MOSELEY, Cllr Gill	P
HARMAN, Cllr Tim	Ap	TRACEY, Cllr Pamela	Ab
HEGANBARTH, Cllr Alex	P	VINES, Cllr Robert	P
		Williams, Cllr Sue	Ap

Chairperson* Vice Chairperson **

Key: P=present, Ab=absent, Ap= Apologies

Officers in attendance:

Sarah Pearse, (SP) Principal Planning Officer, Kevin Phillips, (KP) Team Manager, and Denis Canney (DC), Senior Planning Officer (Case Officer).

Members were joined on site by Rob Bird, Borough Councillor with Tewkesbury Borough Council and Wendy Hopkins, David Lewis and Claire Smith Harriot representing Bishops Cleeve Parish Council.

Planning application 22/0003/TWR3MJ by Head of Property Services, Gloucestershire County Council, for the Construction of a 3-Form of Entry (3FE) Primary School, Nursery, new vehicular access and ancillary works on land to the south of Badham Pharmacy Head office, A435, Bishops Cleeve, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL52 8SA.

The case officer described the site and the surroundings, pointing to relevant features on a plan. He noted the site boundary, electricity pylons across the site, the orchard, the Pharmacy head office and neighbouring houses. The site is outside of the AONB, but within an area identified as a “gap of local importance”.

Member Questions:

Cllr McFarling asked about the capacity of the school. The case officer replied that there would initially be 40 pupils, increasing to between 580 to 630, plus a 52 place nursery.

Cllr McFarling observed that there would be no drop-off area. In relation to the orchard trees, he asked whether similar trees would be planted. The CO replied that grafts would be taken from existing trees. The Cllr asked whether a calculation has been made regarding net gain and a carbon off set calculation. The CO explained that a biodiversity calculation had been carried out.

Cllrs Miller, Heganbarth and Moseley asked how it is going to work if there is no drop off point for children? Will there be a drop off point for minibus and access for children with special needs? The CO replied that provision is made for disabled parking spaces.

Cllr MacKenzie-Charrington noted the provision for cycle and skateboard parking, but queried whether this was enough when more students will be walking to school. The CO pointed out that it was scooter parking rather than skateboards and that the County Highways Officer was satisfied.

Cllr Morgan noted that there would be three replacement ponds. He commented that it is adjacent to a very busy road, and that travel plans don't work.

Cllr MacKenzie-Charrington noted that highways have recommended consent but still had reservations .

Bishops Cleeve Parish Council Representative – Wendy Hopkins

The PC agree that a new school is required, serving and educating children in the village. They echo the concerns already expressed that the lack of parent drop off and pick up is ill conceived, almost laughable. The site is not in a sustainable location, it is within the strategic gap, and remote from the centre of the village. It is not a sustainable location. It is not secondary children who are able to walk to school. There would potentially be 660 cars at drop off at one particular time. They are not all going to find spaces but will use the bus stop and the main road. There are no rails along pedestrian walkways on the drawings to protect children. It is a very busy main road into Cheltenham, and just not safe. The proposal is unrealistic, the drop-off and pick-up needs to be re-thought. A school is needed but let's try and get it right. Everything is on the minimum standards, and it is located in the strategic gap. Planning is all about a balanced argument.

The CO stated that it is a balanced decision, and a departure from the local plan which would need to be referred to the Secretary of State if members are minded to approve the application.

There was no District representative in attendance.

David Lewis (BCPC) stated that there is no footpath along the road at the moment and GCC don't own enough land to build it. As this was a question for Highways it will be answered by the Highways representative at Planning Committee.

The CO explained that all works proposed are within the highway boundary.

Claire Smith-Harriot (BCPC) pointed out that the new ponds are ecological ponds and not to alleviate the flood risk.

The CO explained that the LLFA had been consulted and satisfied that the proposal does not represent a flood risk.

Cllr McFarling asked about the Dean Brook overflow. The Parish representative stated that the road is often flooded and it compromises the small development of houses on the opposite side of the road. The TBC drainage officer objected to that development, but it was allowed against officer recommendation, and the development has subsequently flooded.

Local County Councillor – Councillor Alex Heganbarth.

He expressed his concern about joining the school up with the surrounding area, with cycle paths, protective barriers etc. These need to be in place at the start and not resolved afterwards.

Cllr McFarling stated that this was a strategic landscape designation for no building. The CO pointed out that there had been an application for housing and a school on the opposite side of the road, but this was undetermined and had been withdrawn.

The MSV walked through the orchard across the field to view the entrance points and the pond.

Cllr Heganbarth stated that there must be joined up transport issues, they need a school zone outside of the school and the road speed reduced to 40 mph. Safe footpaths to the site are needed.

The CO explained that there would be a shared access for cycles and pedestrians with a separate vehicular access.

Cllr Hale asked if the gate into the field demarked a PROW. The CO clarified that there were no PROW's crossing the site.

Cllr Heganbarth raised a question about the pond, and asked how the drainage was going to be addressed, for now and future proofing. The Principal Planning Officer suggested that a representative from the LLFA be present at Committee to answer such questions.

Wendy Hopkins drew attention to the noisy road and asked how the children would hear the teacher when the classroom windows are open.

Cllr Moseley asked if the capacity of the pond was known, or could be found out. Is the capacity of the pond compensated for including the overspill of the brook in addition to runoff. The CO explained that this question would be answered at the Committee meeting.

Meeting ended at 11.40.