

EXTRACT MINUTES of a MEETING of the PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE held in the MILLENNIUM CHAMBER, MANOR HOUSE, CHURCH STREET, LITTLEHAMPTON on MONDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2019 at 6.30PM

Present: Cllrs C Blanchard-Cooper
(Chair), Ayres, Buckland,
Chester, Tandy, Warren
QVRM. The Mayor
attended Ex-Officio.

2018/2019

**153.2 Planning Application LU/3/19/PL - Empty Supermarket Premises
Avon Road, Littlehampton BN17 6AT**

153.2.1The Committee received and considered a planning application (previously circulated) which proposed the demolition of the existing empty supermarket building and redevelopment of the site including the car park opposite. The plans envisaged two blocks of flats, comprising 83 one and two bedroomed apartments, flexible retail space, 41 car parking spaces and cycle parking. This was a prominent site in the Town which had been unoccupied for over three years since the Waitrose supermarket had vacated it in 2015.

153.2.2The Committee proceeded to consider the application in more detail and in the context of the policies defined within the Arun Local Plan (the Plan). It was considered that despite the pre-planning discussions that had taken place with the local planning authority, the redevelopment failed to meet the requirements of several Plan Policies and the Committee strongly objected to the plans on several grounds.

153.2.3Observing that the amount of retail space at the site had been severely scaled back, the proposals were not considered to be in conformity with Local Plan Policy RET SP1. Reducing such a prominent retail site failed to acknowledge the importance of shopping, together with a balance of other activities, to support the economic resilience of the Town Centre. They also failed to support Littlehampton's role as the main service, employment, retail and social centre as stated in Local Plan Policy SD SP1a or Local Plan Policy EMP SP2. It was also considered that the plans did nothing to improve the vitality of the town centre and reduced the level of town centre parking.

153.2.4The design, by virtue of the height of the two blocks of flats which were also adjacent to the East Street conservation area, would considerably change the character of the Town Centre. They were therefore also considered to have failed to meet Plan Policy RET DM1 as they were not judged to be of a sufficiently high standard of design and lacked due regard to the character of the site and its surroundings.

153.2.5Examining the housing tenure in more detail, it was considered that the proposals failed to accord with Local Plan Policy H DM1 because they did not provide a tenure mix appropriate to the needs of Arun as stated in the published Strategic Housing Market Assessment. This identified a need for 51% of housing developments in Arun to be three bedrooms or greater. Given the upsurge in the redevelopment of other retail sites in the Town into flats, this proposal was not considered to meet this policy as it was comprised entirely of flats of two bedrooms or fewer. Indeed, it was observed that an opportunity had been lost to transform the site and create more much needed family housing that could also be more in keeping with the nearby conservation area.

153.2.6Apart from the empty retail unit, the site currently contained public car parking which had recently been re-opened. This clearly demonstrated that there was a need for greater public car parking provision in the area, not less which is what would happen if the application was permitted. It was also observed that there was no provision for the delivery vehicles that would doubtless be required to support the commercial activity. In this respect, the proposal failed to conform to Local Plan Policy T DM2 as it did not demonstrate satisfactorily that the resultant loss of parking provision was acceptable. It also failed to conform to Local Plan Policy 22 in so far as the proposed number of parking spaces were deemed wholly inadequate. Not only would they fail to accommodate forecast requirements for both off and on street parking, nothing was proposed to effectively manage the consequence of under provision of car parking spaces in the Town Centre once the scheme was fully occupied. Members also questioned whether underground car parking had been considered.

153.2.7Finally, it was observed that the District Council's Statement of Community Involvement actively promoted pre-planning engagement with local communities as well as the local planning authority. Whilst acknowledging that the site was in urgent need of redevelopment, Members judged that an opportunity to create a more sustainable mixed-use and aesthetically sympathetic development had been lost by not engaging with the community at an early stage. The Committee therefore **RESOLVED** to:

Object to the planning application and that the representations of the Committee as set out in Minutes 153.2.2 to 153.2.7 above be forwarded to Arun District Council.