

SOUTH AND WEST PLANS PANEL

THURSDAY, 3RD AUGUST, 2023

PRESENT: Councillor C Gruen in the Chair

Councillors E Taylor, J Garvani, E Bromley,
N Manaka, A Rontree, P Wray, A Lamb
and B Anderson

ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor H Bithell submitted her apologies at the previous meeting and therefore a nomination was put forward for Councillor C Gruen to Chair the meeting in her absence. Panel Members unanimously agreed on this approach.

RESOLVED – That Councillor C Gruen be elected as Chair for the duration of the meeting.

SITE VISITS

Councillors C Gruen, C Campbell, J Garvani, E Bromley, N Manaka and A Rontree attended the site visits earlier in the day.

17 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals.

18 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There was no exempt information contained within the submitted agenda.

19 Late Items

There were no formal late items.

20 Declarations of Interests

An interest in relation to Agenda Item 7 – Former Weetwood Police Station, 300 Otley Road, Weetwood, Leeds, LS16 6RG was raised on behalf of Councillor B Anderson as he has submitted representations as part of the planning application process and therefore resolved to remove himself from the meeting room as he could not determine the application with an open mind.

21 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors H Bithell, L Buckley, C Campbell, T Smith, and R Finnigan.

Councillor A Lamb attended as a substitute on behalf of Councillor T Smith and Councillor B Anderson attended as a substitute on behalf of Councillor L Buckley.

22 Minutes - 6 July 23

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday, 6th July 2023 be approved as an accurate record.

23 22/03466/FU - Guiseley School, Fieldhead Road, Guiseley

The report of the Chief Planning Officer presented an application on new artificial grass pitch with floodlighting, new emergency access, storage container, relocation of existing long jumps and associated landscaping works at Guiseley School, Fieldhead Road, Guiseley.

Members of the Panel had attended a site visit earlier in the day.

Members were provided with an update since the writing of the submitted report. It was noted that a late objection has been received relating to the proposed use of the rubber crumb, and concerns regarding hazardous materials and air contamination and that it was the objectors belief that natural turf should be used. Officers confirmed that paragraph 74 touches on this issue, and materials used for the pitches are regulated under the REACH regulations and guidance should be followed in terms of its end of life, all of which falls outside the remit of planning controls and covered by separate legislation.

Photographs and slides were shown throughout the officer presentation, and Members were provided with the following information:

- The playing fields are located to the north-west of the main school campus and the site amounts to 1.3 ha of land. To the north of the site is adjacent to Green Meadows Academy and to the east, the site adjoins the rear of the residential properties fronting Aldersyde Road. There is a designated footpath that separates the wider school site that runs along its south-eastern boundary with Fieldhead Drive. The site is located adjacent to Tranmere Park Estate Conservation Area, which runs alongside Bradford Road.
- The application proposes the construction of an artificial grass pitch (AGP) with 6x15m high floodlighting columns around the site perimeter (in each corner and the half-way line), with a new emergency access and relocation of existing long jumps and associated works.
- There will be an existing line of poplar trees retained as part of the proposals. The trees are categorised as category U trees – declining health. Replacement planting will be required and where there are existing gaps in the landscaping, succession plants will be provided for effective screening.
- The pitch would be enclosed by a 4.5m high weld mesh fence with gated access. To the east of the pitch enclosure a 3.5m and to the south a 2.5m high acoustic fence is also proposed.

- There is a need for additional landscaping for those properties where the rear gardens face onto the pitch.
- A section of the hedging will need to be removed to accommodate for drainage purposes and it was confirmed that the drainage system will accommodate for severe climate events.
- The existing access is proposed to be widened for emergency vehicles and will be used for construction vehicles and access.
- There is a number of options in terms of the acoustic treatment if there is a particular preference members feel may be more suitable. i.e., timber fencing that can be painted or a quilt version.
- The location of the lights present low light spillage to nearby properties and an overview of separation distance was provided.

In summarising, the planning officer confirmed that the scheme has been modified substantially in terms of reducing the number of floodlights, improving noise attenuation, the proposed hours of use have been amended from 10pm to 9pm, artificial lighting restricted during periods of bat foraging seasons and noise mitigations in place to protect residents from the operation of the development. It was also confirmed that funding has been set aside for a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) should the development present issues in terms of on-street parking.

In attendance at the meeting speaking in objection to the proposals were:

- Mr Simon Branston
- Mr Stuart Garforth

The objectors informed the Panel of their concerns, which were:

- Local residents support the nearby school and its use of current playing pitches.
- The acoustic report states that the most affected NSA (Noise Sensitive Area) located on Aldersyde Road and nearest point to the development from this point is 15m. It was of the opinion of the objector that the baseline the developer used is not adequate and contradicts WHO and LCC criteria.
- Evidence in relation to disabled and autistic vulnerable residents with chronic diseases is omitted. Particularly relating to noise sensitivities and unpredictable loud noises, whistles and shouting and construction and operation which will cause extreme risk and the need for urgent medical attention. There is a substantial risk to life and bodily harm. All of which contradicts the NPPF noise table, DEFRA policy aims, and it is within the responsibility of Committee Members to avoid such adverse effects.
- Floodlighting spillage harming the environment.
- Amenity issues in terms of proximities between the pitch and surrounding properties.
- No bat surveys have taken place.
- PNG assessment overlooked in terms of trees and grassland.
- Evidence provided for construction and drainage, poses flood water risks.

- Non-compliant proposals with Section 14 of National Planning Policy Framework and LCCs EN5.
- It is considered that the applicant fails to provide a sustainable inclusive playing field that Guiseley school deserves.

In responding to questions from Panel Members, the objectors confirmed the following:

- The level of consultation was mixed, and the objectors felt that engagement with local residents has not been satisfactory, particularly with residents with disabilities. Further to this, the objector explained that the consultation process detrimentally impacts disabled residents, and they find it harder to engage in the process. Residents have felt isolated during this process.
- In terms of harm related to noise, the school has an agreed risk assessment plan based on medical conditions and the application breaches such plan and also a breach of the Equality Act (2010).
- There is local knowledge of the presence of bats.
- Guiseley is under pressure with car parking currently and it is massively congested particularly when Guiseley Football Club are playing. Additionally, it is considered that parking on Bradford Road is a significant issue and there are concerns that the pitch will exacerbate existing issues.
- The current activities at the school through the day and on a weekend present minimal noise. The school do not currently have floodlights that present an issue for disabled residents.

In attendance at the meeting speaking in support of the proposals were:

- Roger Gavin, Guiseley School Representative
- Mark Sitson, Guiseley Football Club Representative
- Coral Curtis, Planning Agent
- Alistair Moore, lead on the supply of artificial turf

Those in support provided the following information:

- The school, football foundation and football club have worked together to provide enhanced sporting provision for young people in Guiseley and the surrounding areas.
- The aim is to provide sustainable facilities and increased time on the curriculum and provide extra curriculum activities.
- Guiseley school is the only school in Aireborough without an AFP and requires children to travel to other schools to use their pitches, incurring travel costs and time.
- The pitches cannot be used during bad weather and the current pitch poses a detrimental impact on wellbeing.
- Guiseley Juniors plays an important role in the community and currently has 750 players signed up through memberships and they're in need of quality nearby football facilities, that will also benefit local primary schools and organisations.

- Guiseley Juniors are not in a financial position independently and the proposals provide an opportunity to provide exceptional sporting facilities for young people.

Responding to questions from Panel Members, the supporters in attendance confirmed the following:

- The school cannot currently confirm the cost to the school not having an all-weather pitch but explained that the impact in the winter of not having one, is the children's wellbeing, not being able to play sport outdoors. When the pitch is waterlogged, school activities are cancelled.
- The operation of the pitch and organisation between the school and football club is not for profit, and primarily for children being able to access sporting provision.
- It is the intention to increase provision for physical education and out of school activities for extra curriculum and enable more clubs to play on the pitch.
- There are new parking facilities on-site, with 145 spaces available. The school has submitted a framework on how the pitch will be managed. Users of the pitch will be advised on where to park, and on-street parking in nearby streets will be advised against. There will be somebody on-site to ensure that people can enter the parking facilities. It is also believed that the new fence around the perimeter will discourage people from parking on-street. Further to additional concerns regarding parents and families parking on pavements for drop-offs, it was confirmed there will be a booking system through the lettings office and trained staff to monitor parking on-street. People will ultimately be banned if breaching guidance.
- The main benefit of the pitch is for the school and curriculum. However, on an evening and weekend the pitch can be used by all age groups.
- There are not usually spectators who attend, but parents and their families.
- The school sent out a letter to surrounding residents advising them of the proposals and the planning process offered meaningful consultation, which resulted in receiving over 300 representations. The school have listened to concerns and tried to address where possible in terms of reducing columns and the hours of use. No other consultation methods were undertaken.
- Approximately 50 days of use of the pitch is lost during bad weather.
- The condition around not being able to use whistles after 7pm will be enforced by ensuring matches finish before 7pm.
- There are mechanisms in ensuring there is a 'sinking fund' for issues such as maintenance and end of life. The operation of the pitch does not need to generate a profit, but to ensure that it can generate a 'sinking fund'.
- Further to a concern regarding the environmental impact on disposing of the pitch at its end of life, it was confirmed that the pitch will go to a facility in Scotland where the pitch will be recycled. Additionally, it was confirmed that the sand and rubber crumb in the product will be rolled

up with the turf and taken to the recycling plant. The rubber crumb will be re-used in rubber based products such as children's play areas for cushioning effect areas. Products will not end up in landfill.

- It is proposed that there will be grids at the gateway in and out of the pitch to ensure that rubber crumb is not being carried off the pitch from players boots.

Members sought clarity on the weight that can be applied to public health related issues. Members were informed that it is the Committee's decision whether they feel that the report adequately deals with the matter that has been raised or whether further consideration needs to be taken and they have a duty to have regard to the information presented to them. Officers confirmed that a piece of exempt information was submitted by an objector on the impact of noise, but that piece of information remained restricted. Members felt that the health issues raised by that objector had not been addressed adequately and assurances were sought on the lengths officers have gone to. Officers confirmed they have done their utmost in the limited circumstances they were presented with, and a noise report concludes that LCC guidance is being adhered to.

Further to additional questions put forward to officers, the following was also confirmed:

- Health implications as a result of rubber crumb was sought, and officers referred to documentation from Sports England that sets out there are no specific health concerns for AGPs, however, a precautionary approach is to be taken. There are currently no alternative infill materials available on the market.
- It is considered that when all four 5-a-side football pitches are in use, there would be 64 participants at any one time as a worst-case scenario. The associated parking demand could be accommodated within the school's grounds with the availability of 145 parking spaces. It was also confirmed that the school have control over staggered bookings for use of the pitch.

At this stage of the meeting, members were asked to consider moving into private session as the discussion was likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information, particularly information that would disclose protected characteristics and circumstances of an individual. Those issues fell within the provisions of Access to Information Procedure Rules 10.4(1) and 10.4 (2).

RESOLVED – That the public be excluded from the following part of the meeting as discussion was likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information only, particularly information that could disclose information which could reveal the identity of an individual.

At the conclusion of discussions in private session, the Committee resumed in public. The Chair informed the public and those in attendance that such information disclosed during the private session did not touch upon the determination of the planning application and solely just on the exempt information presented by the individual.

In resuming the discussion, and further to questions to officers, the following was confirmed:

- LCC welcome community engagement between the applicant and the local community, however, this is not mandatory. There is a legal requirement to advertise the application as well as a press notices. Individual letters are not sent for large scale developments as a property may be missed and presents an opportunity for exposure on the local authority.
- It will be in the schools power to ensure they are complying with the conditions attached to the planning application.
- The pitch will not be in operation when the school is in operation, and for events such as parents evening. Condition 20 ensures the school comply.

Panel Members provided the following comments:

- Members felt that they needed more information on the health impacts as a result of the proposals and discharging the Council's public sector equality duty.
- To receive assurances that a conflict of other lettings, forms part of a condition.
- Consultation has not been adequate and whilst it is acknowledged that there is not a requirement to 'go the extra mile,' it was suggested that further means of consultation is conducted. It was queried whether ward member engagement has taken place.
- Further consideration around how the exempt information disclosed during the private session is considered and the impact the proposals have on protected characteristics of an individual and the health impacts associated with that.

Upon voting, an alternative motion to the officer recommendation was put forward, to defer the application to enable the Committee to receive further clarity on the information presented during the private session on protected characteristics and therefore, it was

RESOLVED – To defer the application.

24 22/06370/FU - Former Weetwood Police Station, 300 Otley Road, Weetwood, Leeds, LS16 6RG

The report of the Chief Planning Officer presented a report regarding the demotion of existing buildings and construction of a new building for residential use (Use Class C3), provision of internal roads for vehicular and pedestrian access and servicing, car parking, landscaping, a substation, new pedestrian infrastructure and modifications to existing vehicular and pedestrian access at the Former Weetwood Police Station, 300 Otley Road, Weetwood, Leeds, LS16 6RG.

The report is brought to Plans Panel as a Position Statement to present details in relation to the emerging scheme and provide Panel Members with the opportunity to provide comments to aid progression of the application.

Councillor B Anderson removed himself from the meeting and the room prior to the application commencing, due to his interest in the item.

Members of the Panel had attended a site visit earlier in the day.

Members were provided with an update since the writing of the submitted report in that the applicant has shown admirable ambitions to exceed targets EN1 and EN2, further work is required to ensure that they are achievable. Additionally, comments have been received from Councillors B Anderson and C Anderson complimenting the development and level of consultation that has taken place with Adel Neighbourhood Forum and the public consultation that took place. Some issues were raised regarding viability and the preference of providing affordable units onsite and concern that some flats may have more than 1 car.

Photographs and slides were shown throughout the officer presentation, and Members were provided with the following information:

- The application site is a 1.4 hectare brownfield site which originally encompassed Weetwood Police Station. The site is located to the north-east of Lawnswood Roundabout, to the east of Otley Road (A660), within the Main Urban Area of Leeds. The site is bounded by Bodington Hall Playing Fields (University of Leeds) to its north and east boundaries.
- The proposed new building will provide a total of 127 Build to Rent residential units (1-3 bed, which falls within the C3 use class).
- The proposed building incorporates an L-shaped format which ranges between 4 & 6 storey in height. The building has a flat roof design with roof terraces, green roofs, and Solar PV infrastructure. The building will be constructed of brick with bronze colour aluminium window openings and metal shade panels. Each property benefits from an external balcony or terrace.
- The proposals include the provision of on-site green space and includes the provision of a publicly accessible landscaped podium deck to the front of the building.
- Vehicular access to the site will be retained as per the existing situation. From Otley Road, the northern access will be retained as access only, with the southern access retained as egress only. From the Ring Road, the existing access will be retained and will continue to operate as two-way entry and exit. It is considered that the former police station has a high level of car association with it, and the level of trips associated with the proposed development will see a reduction in trips.
- The development incorporates low carbon and renewable technology including the provision of air source heat pumps and photovoltaic panels.
- There will be 140 spaces for cars and 139 cycling spaces.
- Members were provided with details of the floor plans for each of the floors and it was noted that there has been a challenge presented in the relationship with the neighbourhood land uses such as parking. It

was also noted that 3 of the units will include a sunken terrace below the landscape platform.

- There will be 5 separate roof terraces proposed.
- In terms of land levels, the site is sunken down and is set back from Otley Road to reduce the visual impact from the road and will be screened by mature tree canopies.
- Members were informed of the proposed landscape plan and 2 other key areas of greenspace. There will also be a proposed tree buffer down the western side of the site.

In summarising the planning officer confirmed that:

- There are viability issues in terms of affordable housing contribution. AS 700k contribution is proposed as a commuted sum.
- The height and scale of the building is not un-common in a suburban area, and the land-levels as well as trees hide the massing of the building.
- Muted colours have been used and fluctuating heights to ensure that a 'bulky' building has not been created.
- The proposals include good quality greenspace. The final design of the greenspace is yet to be confirmed, and it is expected that a greater quantum of soft land rather than hard dominating land is provided, as well as more seating. The greenspace provision has still not been met, and a commuted sum of 69k is proposed. The developers have confirmed they wish to explore options in terms of utilising the area of woodland and putting a path through there. Officers believe this may have an impact on biodiversity.
- The ground floor units do not have the best relationship with adjacent uses.
- All terraces have balconies and access to roof terraces, there is a good level of amenity provided across the site as a whole.

The applicants representative provided the following information:

- The applicant has worked with officers for over 2 years developing a scheme that fits well within its context.
- Design officers have raised no concern in regard to this scheme.
- The applicant is seeking to optimise use of a brownfield site therefore reducing the need to call upon greenfield sites.
- There is a pressure in the north Leeds area on the need for housing.
- The scheme delivers a range of units and mix.
- Build to rent is a relatively new concept in Leeds and the model helps with further needs of rental product.
- In terms of viability, the commuted sum is equivalent to providing 15% of the units at a discounted market rate.
- The applicant is keen to provide greenspace where possible on-site and if this is not possible, will provide the commuted sum. Trim trails are an option to provide additional greenspace.
- The scheme provides a sustainable development meeting the housing needs in this part of the city.

Further to questions from Panel Members, the applicants representative confirmed the following information:

- There are clear built-to-rent viability issues and when the council produced the policy on build to rent, it was based on city centre evidence and not suburban development. It was confirmed there is lesser value in suburban areas.
- Car parking provision is considered consistent with policy and the scheme is in a sustainable location, with the option for people to use a major public transport route into the city.
- No gas boilers will be provided onsite. It is noted that 90% onsite energy consumption can be provided.
- The structure is considered 'calm'.
- Green walls have been incorporated in the scheme.
- The applicant has considered materials that are contextual within the suburban area and alternative materials may over emphasise the contemporary nature of the development. Material samples can be provided at a future meeting.
- The balconies are 1.4m in depth.
- The trim tail does not impact upon biodiversity, but further to comments regarding this proposal not being an adequate use of greenspace, the applicant will re-consider such proposals.
- The site is designed to ensure that pedestrian safety is at the forefront and a priority where possible. Beyond the site is subject to some plans and Connecting Leeds on Lawnswood roundabout that will be delivered in due course. It is anticipated that delivery of the scheme will commence in 2024 with an 18-month development construction programme. By which point, works will have been completed in relation to Lawnswood roundabout.
- The applicant will work on comments received regarding the need for there to be children's play spaces and more greenspace offers onsite.
- Further to concerns raised by members regarding the provision of affordable units on site. It was confirmed that information is awaited from the District Valuer and such information will include a comparison to a market scheme, as well as the build-to-rent model.
- All of the modern contemporary blocks will be accommodated with located parcel lockers and will be externally accessible and fully locked to avoid issues with parcel theft.

Members comments in relation to the officers questions in the submitted report were relayed as follows:

Question 1 – Do Members support the principle of residential use on the site?

Yes.

Question 2 – Do Members support the proposed height/scale of the development at 4-6 storeys? Yes.

Question 3 – Do Members support the design of the development including the proposed palette of materials? In general, yes, although there could be better presentation with further opportunities.

Question 4 – Do Members support the proposed housing mix? Yes.

Question 5 – Do Members wish to provide any general comments in relation to affordable housing / viability issues within the proposed development? Whilst it was acknowledged that information is yet to be received from the District Valuer, Members felt that a greater percentage of affordable units should be provided onsite. Members commented on whether alternative schemes could meet the requirement.

Question 6 – What are Members opinions on the potential for the woodland area to be utilised as Green Space? Members did not agree that the woodland area provided a sufficient amount of Green Space for the residents and requested that alternative solutions be considered.

Question 7 – Do Members have any comments to make in respect of the general approach to green space provision / design across the development? Members felt that there should be less areas of hardstanding and more consideration towards children's play areas and creative solutions in terms of the provision of Green Space.

Question 8 – Do Members have any comments to make in respect of the amenity of neighbours to future residents? Mixed views were provided in relation to the sunken gardens but acknowledged that only a low level of such units is to be provided.

Question 9 – Do Members have any concerns or comments relating to ecology / nature / trees? Members touched upon the possibility to plant additional trees on the verge outside of the curtilage, but it was acknowledged that there may be long-term issues relating to this due to works to Lawnswood roundabout.

Question 10 – Do Members have any concerns or comments relating to highway issues? Members requested that sufficient space be provided for overflow parking and room for vehicles to manoeuvre such as delivery drivers and refuse vehicles.

Question 11 – Do Members have any comments in relation to the environmental impact of the proposed development? No.

Question 12 – Do Members support the proposed provision of accessible housing and access for all adaptations? To receive information on whether the units are wheelchair accessible and provide enough room for turning circles.

Question 13 – Any other comments. A member sought clarity on nearby infrastructure in terms of local surgeries and schools.

In general, and further to the comments as relayed above, Panel Members generally supported the scheme.

RESOLVED – To note the contents of the report on the proposals and to provide views in relation to the questions posed in the submitted report to aid the progression of the application.

25 Date and time of the next meeting

To note the date and time of the next meeting as Thursday, 28th September 2023 at 1.30 pm.

The meeting concluded at 18:10.