

PLANNING COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, 14 JANUARY 2020

PRESENT: - Councillors Timothy Swinyard (Chair), Alan Bishop, Malcolm Davies, Paul Dixon, Robert Jandy, Jenny Jefferies, Nick Martin, Stan Pajak, Carol Shelley, Vera Tomlinson and Peter Watts.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Ballman, Nick Burns-Howell, Steph Exell and James Robbins.

54. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Councillors to declare any known interests in any of the matters to be considered by the Committee. No such declarations were made.

55. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meetings held on 12th November and 2nd December 2019, be confirmed and signed.

56. Public Question Time

There were no public questions

57. **S/RES/18/0027/JABU Reserved matters application (following outline planning permission S/07/1365) for the demolition of existing stadium and construction of a new stadium, racing building, training kennels, new stands, acoustic barrier, car parking and associated development including minor access works to western access and laying out of open space/linear park. (Amended Proposals) (Modification to reserved matters approval reference S/RES/16/0036) (Ward St. Andrews) (HPRS&H)**

In respect of application numbered S/RES/18/0027/JABU – (Reserved matters application (following outline planning permission S/07/1365) for the demolition of existing stadium and construction of a new stadium, racing building, training kennels, new stands, acoustic barrier, car parking and associated development including minor access works to western access and laying out of open space/linear park. (Amended Proposals) (Modification to reserved matters approval reference S/RES/16/0036)) the Committee considered: -

- (a) An application for permission to construct a new road;
- (b) Recommendations of the Head of Planning, Regulatory Services and Heritage;
- (c) The views of interested persons set out in the report circulated with the Committee Agenda;
- (d) The comments at the meeting of the following interested persons:-

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address/Organisation</u>
Clarke Osbourne	Gaming International
Stephanie Poyntz	Resident

Rhiannon Ford	Resident
Adele Walker	Resident
Maggie Walton	Resident
Helen Gamblin	Resident
Councillor Vera Tomlinson	Ward Councillor

Councillors Stan Pajak, Vera Tomlinson and Peter Watts spoke in respect of this application.

The application can be broadly summarised as:

- The reserved matters application related to the redevelopment of Abbey Stadium and provide new facilities for speedway and greyhound racing to construct the layout of the open space.
- The reserved matters were the access, appearance, the landscaping and the scale of the development.
- The application was an alternative proposal to develop the existing site and was previously considered by the Committee in November 2018 where the Head of Planning, Heritage and Regulatory Services was authorised to approve the reserve matters subject to conditions and the completion of a Section 106 Agreement.
- A revised layout was submitted in 2019 which involved the construction of a replacement stadium building on the opposite side of the race track and to re-construct the speedway and greyhound racing tracks within the current stadium, changes to car parking and the acoustic barriers.
- The application had been brought back to Committee due to the proposed changes, set out within the report, and due to changes to the proposed Section 106 Agreement to ensure the facilities and infrastructure that should have been provided are delivered prior to further housing development at set milestones of housing development.
- If the Section 106 Agreement was not concluded the report recommended that the Head of Planning, Heritage and Regulatory Services be authorised to refuse the application.
- Officers had been working with the applicant to agree a new timetable for the delivery of the new application and to safeguard and retain existing facilities and travel plan.
- A further application for reserved matters submitted in 2018 for 127 homes to the east is currently out for consultation and is pending consideration.
- The Council's Landscaping Officer had raised concerns including the design of the acoustic barrier changes to the location of open space and landscaping; these were set out within paragraph 26 of the report.
- Studies had shown that it was not possible to maintain existing racing noise levels when moving the development to the east with the current sound retention proposals or with the models set out in paragraphs 71 and 72 of the report. There were currently no noise mitigation measures in place.
- In balance with the acoustic barriers and improvements to the stadium officers recommended that the Head of Planning, Heritage and Regulatory Services be authorised to approve the application subject to the conditions set out within the report and the successful conclusion of a Section 106 Agreement.

Submissions in support of the application can be broadly summarised as:

- The stadium had operated continually for over 60 years promoting speedway and greyhound racing.
- The application included the creation of improved facilities and provision of housing.
- In 2016 outline planning permission was granted for the demolition of the existing stadium and building of a new stadium to the east of the existing site in a manner permitting the continuation of existing activities and this had been the subject of a modified application.
- As the result of construction issues the application was revised to develop the new stadium on the existing site with a proposal to build 127 houses on the land to the east of the stadium originally designated for the new stadium.
- There were many advantages to this proposal including access, landscaping and car parking and use of the local amenity and after discussions with planning officers a revised application was submitted to the Planning Authority on 13th November 2018.
- Work had been undertaken with officers to timetable construction of the development whilst allowing access to current facilities whilst improvements were being made.
- The application was to build the stadium on the opposite side of the race track to the existing stadium facilities to allow uninterrupted access to existing facilities and to allow the development to be completed faster.
- The development included the construction of an acoustic barrier enclosing the racetrack and speedway pits (this would be constructed in two stages).
- The start and finish lines of the race track will be reversed and speedway pits would be moved to the northern side of the track closest to the A419 and move noise in this general direction where the general noise levels are higher.
- The public announcement sound system would be updated and would minimise overspill of sound.
- There would be a dedicated phone line for use during construction, communication would be maintained with local residents and liaison events with local residents would be held during the construction phase.
- There was a noise management plan which was a live document and as speedway events finished before 11:00pm there should be no issue in meeting the sound levels set out in paragraphs 45 and 46.
- The design implementation plan reduced the delivery period for the stadium work and set out milestones for construction of residential properties and with approval of the Committee remodelling work would commence immediately and the scheme would be completed by the end of 2020.
- The stadium had a good record of greyhound care.
- The history of the application before was both lengthy and complex and the developer had already made money from houses and other development which was envisaged as supporting the development of the stadium.
- Assurances from the developer that work could start immediately following the receipt of the necessary approvals.
- That the development of the stadium was necessary to support speedway racing in the town.
- That consideration of greyhound racing was not a material concern for the Committee.

Submissions opposing the application can be broadly summarised as:

- The Swindon Borough Local Plan stated that successful growth in the town were supported by a long term vision and plan, whereas greyhound racing was in a long term decline as a spectator sport across the country.
- A number of tracks across the United Kingdom and Ireland had closed over the previous year with at least one stadium being redeveloped as housing.
- It would be more sensible to replace the greyhound facilities with other more sustainable uses.
- Greyhound racing was banned in several countries and it was hoped by objectors that it would also be banned nationally in the near future making the facility redundant.
- Opponents had been to the track on 75 occasions that there was greyhound racing over the previous two years and the stadium was only at approximately 15% of capacity and attendances had been decreasing over the last year.
- An average of greyhounds are killed daily and distressing scenes at greyhound meetings had been shown on television.
- Cruelty to greyhounds involved in racing are regularly reported by social media and the public were moving away from the sport.
- The Council should request that the stadium is redeveloped in a way that would increase public participation and not for greyhound racing which would leave the stadium as a white elephant.
- The application should be refused because of the poor record of looking after dogs participating in the sport.
- Dog racing was financially dependent on betting and this could have an adverse effect on the mental health of those people participating, including on young children who had been taken to the track.
- Twitter feeds had shown young children with betting slips and children could be encouraged to bet with a minimum stake of 25 pence and research had shown the number of 11-16 year old children with betting problems had risen sharply over the last few years.
- Exposing children to gambling ran contrary to the Council's own policies and undermined health and wellbeing in the Borough as well as objective 6 of the Local Plan.
- Participants in speedway had made their own choice to take part and was a more family friendly sport.
- The proposal did not support jobs or the local economy.
- Dogs at the track were often mistreated and there was poor veterinary support available onsite.
- The development of a greyhound track would not enhance the town's reputation.

Resolved – (1) That the Head of Planning, Regulatory Services and Heritage be authorised to approve the Reserved Matters, subject to (i) the planning conditions set out in the report, together with any amended, omitted or additional conditions, and (ii) upon the completion of a Section 106 agreement to mitigate the impact of the development, including for acoustic mitigation and to ensure the satisfactory completion of the stadium development and the other strategic development including the open space and play areas and the construction of the necessary drainage infrastructure and securing a sum for the making of a Traffic Regulation Order in the vicinity of the site if visitor parking for events at the stadium results in an unacceptable impact on the nearby residential roads.

(2) That in the event that the applicant fails to enter into an agreement or fails to

agree to an extension of time for the determination of the application to enable the Council as Local Planning Authority to deal with these matters, then the Head of Planning, Regulatory Services and Heritage be authorised to refuse the approval of reserved matters.