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MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING - TUESDAY, 3 SEPTEMBER 2024

Present:

Councillor Flanagan (in the Chair)

Councillors

Campbell	Farrell	Roberts
Ellison	Jackson	

In Attendance:

Jenni Cook, Democratic Governance Senior Adviser
Ian Curtis, Legal Officer
Susan Parker, Head of Development Management

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 JULY 2024

Resolved:

To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2023 as a true and correct record.

3 PLANNING/ENFORCEMENT APPEALS LODGED AND DETERMINED

The Planning Committee considered a report on Planning/Enforcement Appeals lodged and determined since the last meeting held on 23 July 2024.

The Committee noted the details of the three appeals lodged and the eight appeals that had been determined, with two being allowed, five dismissed and one having no determination. Ms S Parker, Head of Development Management, advised that future reports would be submitted with an amended layout and would be in a more tabular format.

Resolved:

The Committee noted the update.

4 PLANNING ENFORCEMENT UPDATE REPORT - JULY 2024

The Committee considered an update on planning enforcement activity within Blackpool between 1 July and 31 July 2024.

In July 2024, 60 new cases had been registered for investigation and as at 31 July 2024 there had been 335 “live” complaints outstanding. Five cases had been closed without recourse to formal action and 44 cases had been closed. In addition, One Enforcement Notice had been authorised in July 2024 and two Enforcement Notices had been issued in July 2024.

MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING - TUESDAY, 3 SEPTEMBER 2024

Resolved:

The Committee noted the update.

5 PLANNING APPLICATION 24/0215 LAND TO THE NORTH OF BLACKPOOL NORTH TRAIN STATION CAR PARK, TALBOT ROAD, BLACKPOOL

The Planning Committee considered application number 24/0215 for the erection of a six-storey building for use within Use Class E(g) with associated landscaping and access at Land to north of Blackpool North Train Station car park, Talbot Road, Blackpool, FY1 3EZ.

Ms S Parker, Head of Development Management, outlined the report and advised that the application was for application for a six-storey office block on the site of the old Apollo 2000 electrical store which was directly adjacent to Blackpool North station with train lines running to the rear. Vehicular access would be provided by a vacant site prior to the Sainsbury's petrol station on the corner of that junction with pedestrian access from Talbot Road. The site fell within the defined Town Centre boundary, within the Central Business District, referred to as 'Talbot Gateway' and within flood zone one, the Airport Safeguarding Zone and an Air Quality Management Area.

The Committee was advised that the scheme would provide 7,630 square metres of floor space with the main body of the building being 25.4 metres high, the rooftop plant topping out at 30.1m and the building would accommodate 1,000 employees.

Ms Parker drew the Committee's attention to the Update Note which contained a number of proposed changes to the list of conditions within the committee report and also advised of a late representation that had been received after the deadline for submissions and public speaking. In relation to the late representation, Ms Parker advised that the scheme made reference to a different development and preferred alternative scheme for the application site, which was not a valid planning consideration. The representation did refer to increased congestion and parking concerns, which were addressed in the committee report. The Committee was reminded that the proposal was for an office block and identity of the occupant and nature of the business were not material planning considerations.

Ms Parker advised that the proposal was considered to be acceptable in principle, as it was for office use and the Talbot Gateway masterplan and original outline permission had identified the application area for office developments. An office development would bring new workers into the area which would enhance the local economy, increase the vibrancy of the area and could lead to further investment and regeneration in that area.

In relation to residential amenity, Ms Parker advised that some negative impact had been identified to the accommodation over the Ramsden Arms, however no other unacceptable impacts had been identified as arising from construction or operation of the building and therefore any negative impact should be balanced against the wider benefits of the scheme. Ms Parker acknowledged that the building would be a visually imposing feature on the skyline and within the setting of the Grade I Tower, Grade II Funny Girls Building, the locally listed Ramsden Arms and the Town Centre Conservation Area and therefore a Townscape Visual Impact Assessment had been carried out to ensure that the building was carefully designed.

MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING - TUESDAY, 3 SEPTEMBER 2024

The Committee was advised that the building would be taller than all other Talbot Gateway developments, except for the Department for Work and Pensions building, however it was not considered that the proposed building would have a negative impact on the skyline. The building had been designed to tone with other developments within the Talbot Gateway and to create visual depth and interest. The final selection of materials would be agreed by condition to ensure they were of an appropriate appearance and quality. In terms of the entrance to the development, Ms Parker advised that the lower level of the site was below Talbot Road and that further work was required to make the entrance point to the building the focal feature and appropriate design solutions could be secured thought condition, along with public art and landscaping.

In relation to parking, traffic and highways matters, the Committee was informed that an increase of up to 1,000 workers into this area would increase traffic levels and demand for parking. However no new parking was proposed as part of the application and any intention to use adjoining vacant land temporarily did not form part of the proposed development. The existing pedestrian access would require amendment and this would have an impact on the existing retaining wall that served Talbot Road. In addition a further condition could determine if a pedestrian crossing point was needed along with impact on traffic flows. Work would be carried out to develop a scheme off off-site highways works to be agreed and implemented.

The site was considered to be highly accessible as it was adjacent to Blackpool North train station, on multiple bus route and on the local tram network and the newly created Blackpool North tram stop. Ms Parker advised that it was hoped that the lack of parking would encourage workers to choose sustainable methods of transport and that a travel plan to include suitable cycle facilities would be secured by condition.

The Committee was reminded that future plans did include the potential for a large multi-storey car park on the former Syndicate site, however no weight could be given to that in terms of the application before them. The lack of car parking provision did weigh against the scheme, however this had to be balanced against the scheme's wider benefits.

No concerns had been identified in relation to flood risk or drainage and the Committee was advised that the scheme generated a requirement for the provision of 77 trees, which could not be accommodated onsite. Provision could be offset through other greening measures or the applicant could demonstrate that an equivalent financial contribution could render the scheme financially unviable and the Committee was reminded that financial viability was a material planning consideration and that officers would work with the application to resolve this matter prior to any decision being issued.

The Committee was asked to resolve the and to delegate approval to the Head of Development Management subject to conditions (and updated conditions within the Update Note) and resolution of the off-site tree planting requirements.

Mr E Harvey, Agent for the Applicant, spoke in favour of the application and advised that the application site was a vacant brownfield site situated within the highly sustainable Talbot Gateway area. He outlined the previous planning history of the site and advised that the development accorded with the Council's regeneration aims.

MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING - TUESDAY, 3 SEPTEMBER 2024

The proposed application would bring 1,000 jobs to the area and increase footfall within that part of the town centre, increasing customers in local shops and businesses. The design of the building had been carefully selected to ensure that it complemented the other new buildings in the area and the materials selected were of a high quality. Mr Harvey advised that sustainable drainage systems would be installed, the building would be energy efficient and raised flower beds would also be provided to enhance visual amenity. The Committee was asked to support the application.

The Committee discussed the application and noted the clear benefits of the scheme in terms of enhancing the Talbot Gateway and provision of up to 1,000 jobs in that area. The lack of on site and off street car parking would have been a concern had it not been balanced by the site being adjacent to Blackpool North Train Station, a new tram stop and close to several bus routes.

Resolved:

The Committee resolved to support the application and to delegate approval to the Head of Development Management subject to conditions and amended conditions within the Update Note and the resolution of the off-site tree planting requirements, with any changes to conditions to be agreed with the Chair or Vice Chair of the Planning Committee.

6 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved:

To note the date of the next meeting as 8 October 2024.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 6.16 pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:
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