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MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING - TUESDAY, 12 NOVEMBER 2024

## Present:

Councillor Flanagan (in the Chair)

Councillors

Baker	Ellison	Jackson
Campbell	Farrell	Marshall

## In Attendance:

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

## 1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Farrell declared a prejudicial interest in application number 24/0135 (Item 8 of the minutes) as she was the Chair of Blackpool Entertainment Company Limited.

Councillor Farrell left the meeting for the duration of this item and took no part in the decision.

## 2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 OCTOBER 2024

**Resolved:** To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2024 as a true and correct record.

## 3 PLANNING ENFORCEMENT UPDATE - SEPTEMBER 2024

The Committee considered a report on Planning Enforcement activity within Blackpool between 1 September 2024 and 30 September 2024.

During September 2024, 49 new cases had been registered for investigation and as at 30 September 2024, 358 complaints had been recorded as live, 12 cases had been resolved by negotiation without recourse to formal action and 41 cases had been closed. The Committee was also advised of the notices authorised and issued during September 2024.

**Resolved:** To note the update.

## 4 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT - APPEALS LODGED AND DETERMINED

The Committee considered an update on Development Management appeals lodged and determined since the last meeting.

One appeal had been lodged and two appeals had been determined. Of those appeals determined one had been allowed and one had been dismissed. The Committee confirmed that it was happy with the revised layout of this report.

## MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING - TUESDAY, 12 NOVEMBER 2024

**Resolved:** To note the update.

### 5 PLANNING ENFORCEMENT - APPEALS LODGED AND DETERMINED

The Committee considered an update on planning enforcement appeals lodged and determined since the last meeting.

One appeal had been lodged and no appeals had been determined.

**Resolved:** To note the update.

### 6 PLANNING APPLICATION 24/0379 - WHITEGATE MANOR, WHITEGATE DRIVE, BLACKPOOL

With the agreement of the Committee, the Chair agreed to hear this item first, due to the number of public in attendance.

The Committee considered planning application number 25/0379 for the erection of part three-storey, part two-storey building comprising of 25 sheltered accommodation flats with associated access, parking, cycle/scooter stores, refuse storage and landscaping works at Whitegate manor, Whitegate Drive, Blackpool.

Ms Susan Parker, Head of Development Management, provided the Committee with an overview of the planning history of the site and drew the Committee's attention to the amended plans that had been submitted since the agenda had been published, which had provided some updated information in relation to trees.

The Committee was advised that the site was designated as a Housing Site Allocation in the Local Plan Part 2 and the principle of developing dwellings on the site was considered to be acceptable. Ms Parker noted that the proposal was for 25 one-bedroom flats, which would conflict with Policy CS13, which required at least 70% of the flats to have two bedrooms or more, however there was an overwhelming need for the type of accommodation, with over 2,000 applications registered for this type of sheltered accommodation within Blackpool, the type and mix of properties proposed was considered to be acceptable. In addition to this, the Council had noted an increase in the number of applications requiring adaptations to current accommodation and under-utilisation of larger properties. The provision of additional sheltered accommodation could enable residents to downsize and release larger properties to those families in need of suitable accommodation.

The proposed flats had been designed to meet wheelchair accessibility space standards and met the relevant standards in terms of the definition of affordable housing. They would have the benefit of a warden call system and be let at social rent levels to be managed by Blackpool Coastal Housing.

In relation to the design of the building, the Committee was advised that the majority of the building proposed would be three storeys, dropping to two storeys along Ferguson Road next to the existing residential properties. Ms Parker noted that there the previous building on the site had been two-storeys, however there were a range of building heights along Whitegate Drive, and the proposed building would be viewed in the context

## MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING - TUESDAY, 12 NOVEMBER 2024

of these other buildings, meaning that the building was considered to be acceptable at the location. The building design would be traditional with dual pitched roofs fronting Whitegate Drive and Ferguson Road, broken up with design features and use of varied materials.

In relation to the impact on nearby residential properties, this was considered to be acceptable due to the orientation of the building in relation to them and/or the distance between them. Access to the site would continue to be from Whitegate Drive and the additional access from Ferguson Road used by the previous building would be removed. Ms Parker advised that in terms of traffic levels, no material change from the previous use was anticipated and that the proposed parking levels were in accordance with the Council's parking standards. In terms of parking, Ms Parker noted that due to concerns expressed about parking by surrounding residents, consideration had been given to the potential level of demand and levels of car ownership and the proposed scheme would be at the upper end of the sheltered accommodation scale in terms of its level of adaptation for those with accessibility issues. Therefore it was likely that the future residents would be representative in terms of car ownership at less than 50% and the Committee was reminded that the proposed level of parking proposed was considered to be acceptable.

In terms of trees and landscaping, the Committee was advised that the main trees along the site boundaries would be retained in the most part and that the proposal would also be enhanced by further landscaping, resulting in an overall Net Gain in Biodiversity of greater than 10%, (as was mandatory).

In respect of financial contributions required from the scheme towards public open space, local public health provision and any tree requirement that could not be provided on or off-site, Ms Parker advised that in normal circumstances these contributions would be secured through Section 106 agreements between the applicant, landowner and Council. However, as the Council was both the applicant and landowner, it was not possible for the Council to enter into an agreement with itself and the Council was exploring the legal options available to it, to ensure the financial contributions were secured.

The Committee was asked to support the application and delegate approval to the Head of Development Management subject to securing the necessary planning obligations and to be authorised to make any appropriate changes to the proposed conditions listed. In addition the revised plan received from the developer required a change to proposed condition number 2 in the Committee report.

Mr Tony Johnstone spoke in objection to the application and raised concerns particularly in relation to the building being three storeys tall in parts and also regarding the loss of light to five of the rooms in his properties that may be caused and requested that a sunlight assessment be carried out. Concerns were also raised regarding the loss of privacy and the ability of the residents to look directly into his family home and he requested that consideration be given to installing obscured glass on those windows that directly faced current residential properties.

Mr Johnstone advised the Committee that, in his view, the design of the building was not in keeping with the other buildings along Whitegate Drive and that the heritage value of the area would be threatened. In relation to road safety, Mr Johnstone raised concerns in relation to increased traffic and parking and also the risk to the proposed residents of the

## **MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING - TUESDAY, 12 NOVEMBER 2024**

over 55s sheltered accommodation, with Whitegate Drive being a very busy road.

Ms Claire Parker, Agent for the Applicant, spoke in favour of the application and advised that the proposal would provide 25 flats to be let at social rent levels for the over-55s and would be managed by Blackpool Coastal Housing. There was a high demand for this type of accommodation within Blackpool and the flats would be wheelchair accessible and add to the existing housing stock, releasing existing social housing to larger families. The proposal was an acceptable re-use of the site and fitted within the local urban context.

Ms Claire Parker noted the increase of part of the building to three storeys and that this had been minimised to prevent over scale and impact on nearby properties, with the separation distances being over the minimum standard of 30 metres. The Committee was advised that the proposed development would improve the current housing stock and re-use a vacant site that was allocated for housing.

The Committee discussed the application and in response to questions from the Committee, Ms Susan Parker provided clarification that in relation to residents' concerns about loss of light, the standard minimum separation distance was 30 metres and the proposed building was over 30 metres distance away and therefore no sunlight assessment was required. The Committee noted the concerns of the residents in relation to privacy, however the separation distances were above the minimum standards and the need for this type of sheltered and accessible accommodation for the over 55s in Blackpool was apparent.

### **Resolved:**

1. To note the amended plan and the changes to condition 2 in the Committee Report.
2. To support the application and delegate and delegate approval to the Head of Development Management subject to securing the necessary planning obligations and to be authorised to make any appropriate changes to the proposed conditions listed

### **7 PLANNING APPLICATION 24/0265 - 4 DALTON AVENUE, BLACKPOOL**

The Committee considered planning application 24/0265 for the erection of a single storey domestic store, 1.8 metre high perimeter fencing and associated landscaping and use of land to rear as part of domestic garden.

Ms Susan Parker, Head of Development Management, outlined the application and advised the Committee that the land was a back-land site surrounded by properties and fronted onto Abbey Road, Sawley Avenue and Dalton Avenue. The area was residential and was not safeguarded for any particular purpose and the residential use as part of a garden was considered acceptable in principle. The Committee was advised that a garage had initially been proposed, however the access to the side of the property was considered to be too narrow and visibility was too limited to be reasonably used by vehicular traffic.

Ms Parker noted that the access point was long standing, however due to modern traffic levels and vehicle sizes, it was no longer considered to be suitable. The Committee was advised that as a result of these concerns being put to the applicant, the proposed

## MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING - TUESDAY, 12 NOVEMBER 2024

building had been changed from a garage to a store. Ms Parker further advised that since publication of the agenda, it had been noted that no condition had been proposed to restrict use of the building and prevent its use for car parking. The building as proposed did not include a garage door, but one could be installed under permitted development rights. Ms Parker requested that if the Committee was minded to grant the application then a condition be included to preclude use of the building for the parking of a motor car.

In respect of amenity and impact, due to the small size of the building no unacceptable impacts on amenity arising from overlooking, overshadowing or an over-bearing impact were anticipated and the design was considered to be acceptable. Ms Parker noted that any use of the building as a separate dwelling would be subject to planning control and advised that a condition was proposed to remove general permitted development rights and clarified that this had been included to minimise the impact of any structure erected in the garden under permitted development right from having a disproportionate impact upon surrounding neighbours.

The Committee was advised that the application was considered to be acceptable the Committee was asked to approve the application subject to the conditions listed in the Committee Report and the additional condition to prevent use for car parking.

The Committee discussed the report and noted the need to restrict use of the building and prevent its use for car parking because of issues around the narrow access.

### **Resolved:**

To approve the application subject to the conditions listed in the Committee report and to include an additional condition to prevent use of the building for car parking.

### **8 PLANNING APPLICATION 24/0135 LAND BOUNDED BY ADELAIDE STREET, LEOPOLD GROVE AND ALFRED STREET, BLACKPOOL**

Councillor Farrell, having declared a prejudicial interest in this application, left the meeting and took no part in this decision.

The Committee considered planning application 24/0315 for the approval of reserved matters (Appearance and Landscape) pursuant to outline planning permission 24/0131, comprising the erection of a hotel development with car parking and associated works.

Ms Susan Parker, Head of Development Management, provided the Committee with an outline of the proposal and noted that this was a reserved matters application seeking to agree the matters of appearance and landscaping. An outline of the previous planning history of the site was provided in that outline permission had been granted in 2021 and in 2023 the applicant applied to vary the description of development to enable the submission of an application under s73 to vary the 2021 outline approval and this had been approved by this Committee in June 2024.

The application sought to resolve matters of appearance and landscaping and Ms Parker advised that a reserved matters application must be submitted within three years of outline consent being granted and that an extension to that timeframe was not possible.

## MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING - TUESDAY, 12 NOVEMBER 2024

The Committee was advised that the site was in a sensitive location opposite the statutorily listed Winter Gardens and within the Town Centre Conservation Area. The building had been approved at five storeys in height, with 266 bedrooms and suites. Vehicular access would be from Alfred Street and the main pedestrian access point on Adelaide Street. A secondary access would also be provided on Leopold Grove. Ms Parker reminded the Committee that the layout had been approved as eastern and western wings with a central podium at first floor level and designed to reflect Blackpool's art deco heritage.

In terms of design features, Planning Officers had secured two vertical features to frame the main entrance on Leopold Grove to enhance the roof line on either side of the door to animate the building and provide legibility. The Committee was informed that some of the proposed materials were not considered appropriate, such as the use of dark grey window and door frames and a condition was recommended that would require these details to be agreed post determination. However on balance and subject to conditions, the appearance of the building was considered to be acceptable.

The Committee's attention was drawn to the lack of objection from Historic England, the lack of response from the Civic Trust and Built Heritage Manager, and the concerns raised by the Tree and Landscape Officer. In respect of landscaping, statutory biodiversity net gain requirements did not apply, however the scheme should ensure efforts be made to maximise green infrastructure provision. Ms Parker advised the Committee that a potential green roof had been mentioned at the Section 73 stage, however this was not proposed due to maintenance and operational challenges, which was not, in her view adequate justification for what could be considered a retrograde step. The scheme required 26 trees to be provided and although indicative landscaping had been provided, this did not contain any detailed specifications.

The Committee was advised that some information had been submitted to suggest that 26 non-native trees could be provided in planters, with additional planting of ferns, shrubs and grasses proposed, again in planters. Details of drainage, irrigation, soil volume and maintenance arrangements had been requested, but not received and as a result Ms Parker felt that it was unclear if the indicative landscaping proposals were viable. In view of the lack of information provided, conditions had been proposed that required these details to be provided and confirmed post-determination and on this basis the Committee was asked to approve the application subject to the conditions listed in the Committee Report.

Mr Ian White, on behalf of Stay Blackpool, spoke in objection to the application and raised concerns regarding the lack of landscaping detail provided and the indication that the 26 trees may be provided in planters. Concerns regarding parking provision were also raised along with the detriment to the community and impact on small hoteliers.

In response to the representation made by Mr White, Ms Parker clarified that this was a reserved matters application to determine appearance and landscaping only.

Mr Harry Spawton, Agent for the Applicant, spoke in favour of the application and advised the Committee that the application would enable development of an important hotel site to house a global hotel brand and that this was a reserved matters application for appearance and landscaping only. In respect of landscaping, Mr Spawton advised that

## **MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING - TUESDAY, 12 NOVEMBER 2024**

there was no policy requirement for a green roof and that 26 trees would be delivered on the site and if this was not possible due to the drainage and soil conditions, then a contribution would be made to ensure green provision was delivered appropriately. The appearance of the building was designed to enhance the existing Winter Gardens building and provide a high quality entrance to the hotel.

The Committee discussed the application and expressed concern at the lack of planting in the ground, a lack of planting at ground level, and the fact that a lot of the landscaping would only be visible to those staying in hotel bedrooms. The Committee noted it would have preferred more detailed information to have been included within the reserved matters application with regards to landscaping and biodiversity net gain.

### **Resolved:**

To defer the reserved matters application to a future meeting of the Planning Committee to enable to Applicant to provide more detailed landscaping information, particularly in relation to provision of trees and planting in the ground and on the road frontages.

## **9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

### **Resolved:**

To note the date of the next meeting as 10 December 2024.

### **Chairman**

(The meeting ended at 6.54 pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:  
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