

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Date: Tuesday, 5 March 2019

Time: 6.30pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present: Councillors: David Cullen (Chair), Maureen McKay (Vice-Chair), Doug Bainbridge, Lloyd Briscoe, Michael Downing, James Fraser, Liz Harrington, Lizzy Kelly, Graham Lawrence, John Lloyd and Graham Snell.

Start / End Time: Start Time: 6.30pm
End Time: 7.25pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Michelle Gardner and Jodie Hanafin.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES - 5 FEBRUARY 2019

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Planning and Development Committee held on 5 February 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 18/00328/FPM - MICHAEL FARADAY HOUSE, SIX HILLS WAY

The Committee considered an application for the construction of a split-level car park with an attached plant room and cycle store and alterations to the existing parking arrangement that would create an additional 82 car parking spaces across the site; alterations to the existing northern vehicular access point and associated works.

The Principal Planning Officer gave an introduction to the Committee. She advised that the main issues for consideration in the determination of the application were the acceptability of the proposal in land use policy terms, design and scale of the proposal, impact on neighbour amenity, acceptability of increased levels of parking and sustainability and acceptability of the Travel Plan.

The Chair then invited Richard Priestley, Sodexo, Solar House, an objector to address the meeting. Mr Priestly advised that the main concerns from the residents of Solar House were loss of light and impaired view, security, noise and disruption, congestion and the impact on any future lease of the site and continued occupation of the premises.

The Chair then invited Ann Rees from Michael Faraday House, on behalf of the applicant to address the Committee.

Ms Rees advised that the application would provide much needed secure parking on site. She confirmed that the IET chose Stevenage as their preferred location in 1989. Employees travelled from areas not on appropriate public transport links and public transport was neither cost effective nor reliable. Other comments included parking on site being an attractive provision for prospective employees and that car travel supported families and flexible working.

The Chair thanked Ms Priestly and Ms Rees and invited the Principal Planning Officer to continue with her presentation.

Members were advised that in terms of the objections relating to the design and scale, this was considered acceptable given the function of the building and its placement within the site. In relation to impact on neighbour amenity, the affected property would be Solar House to the east. However, officers advised that the impact on sunlight would be minimal.

In relation to parking and sustainability, officers advised that the existing site provided 220 parking spaces. This application sought to provide an additional 82 spaces. The addition of these spaces was considered to be contrary to national and local policies promoting sustainable transport. The proposed Travel Plan to reduce car use by staff by 10% was also not considered viable for what was already an overprovided sustainable site adjacent to the town centre. The proposal was therefore contrary to policies in the District Plan Second Review and emerging policies of the Borough Local Plan, the Council's Mobility Strategy, the Council's adopted parking provision, HCC Local Transport Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Officers therefore recommended refusal of the application.

Members expressed concern that although the objections of officers were on sustainable grounds, the recommended refusal did not support the requirements of what was an important company to the Town. Members were of the view that although according to the Council's policies there was already an overprovision of parking on the site, the reality of the situation was that the parking available did not meet the needs of the applicant.

It was then moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the application by the Institute of Engineering and Technology (IET) for the construction of a split-level car park with an attached plant room and cycle store and alterations to the existing parking arrangement that will create an additional 82 car parking spaces across the site; alterations to the existing northern vehicular access point and associated works be approved subject to conditions to be agreed by the Assistant Director (Planning and Regulation) in dialogue with the applicant and in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Planning and Development Committee.

4 **INFORMATION REPORT - DELEGATED DECISIONS**

Noted.

5 **INFORMATION REPORT - APPEALS/CALLED IN APPLICATIONS**

Noted.

6 **URGENT PART I BUSINESS**

None.

7 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Not required.

8 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR