
Planning Committee MINUTES

Of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Thursday, 18 June 2026 from 7.30 - 9.33 pm

Present: Councillors Chris Whately-Smith (Chair), Elinor Gazzard, Oliver Cooper, Raj Khiroya, Chris Mitchell, Debbie Morris, Reena Ranger and Tom Smith

Also in Attendance:

Parish Councillors Jon Bishop (Chorleywood Parish Council), Andrew Gallagher (Croxley Green Parish Council), Alistair Park (Chorleywood Parish Council) and Elizabeth Willetts (Batchworth Community Council)

Officers in Attendance:

Matthew Barnes, Principal Lawyer - Planning
Lauren Edwards, Principal Planning Officer
Emma Lund, Senior Committee Officer
Adam Ralton, Development Management Team Leader
Kimberley Rowley, Head of Regulatory Services
Scott Volker, Development Management Team Leader

PC146/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Stephen Cox.

PC147/25 MINUTES

The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 27 May 2026 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

PC148/25 NOTICE OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

PC149/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Debbie Morris declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 10 (26/0325/RSP – Sandalwood, 7a Wolsey Road, Moor Park, Northwood) having previously expressed a view on the application. Councillor Morris left the meeting room whilst the application was considered and did not participate in the debate or vote.

PC150/25 23/0483/FUL: CHANGE OF USE OF EXISTING BUILDING FROM CARE HOME (C2) USE TO A NURSERY (CLASS E) INCLUDING PARTIAL DEMOLITION OF EXISTING SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSION AND CONSTRUCTION OF TWO STOREY FRONT EXTENSION; PROVISION OF SPIRAL STAIRS, RAMP ACCESS, GREEN ROOF, ROOFLIGHTS AND VENTS; REPAIRS TO BOUNDARY WALL WITH ASSOCIATED

PARKING AND LANDSCAPING WORKS; AND WIDENING OF EXISTING ACCESS TRACK, INTERNAL ALTERATIONS AND ALTERATIONS TO FENESTRATION AT CROXLEY HOUSE, CROXLEY GREEN, RICKMANSWORTH, HERTS WD3 3JB.

The application was for change of use of existing building from care home (C2) use to a nursery (Class E) including partial demolition of existing single storey rear extension and construction of two storey front extension; provision of spiral stairs, ramp access, green roof, rooflights and vents; repairs to boundary wall with associated parking and landscaping works; and widening of existing access track, internal alterations and alterations to fenestration at Croxley House, Croxley Green, Rickmansworth.

The planning application and the associated Listed Building Consent application at agenda item 6 were considered together.

The Planning Officer reported that there were no updates, and for the benefit of Committee Members summarised the reason for the application being now before the committee.

The applications had been brought to Planning Committee in November 2023, and in accordance with the officer recommendation Members had resolved to grant both planning permission and Listed Building Consent which would have allowed the conversion and extension of the building for use as a children's nursery. The resolution to grant planning permission was subject to the completion of a S106 Agreement, as required by Hertfordshire Highways, to secure a full Travel Plan and monitoring fee in accordance with Hertfordshire County Council's Travel Plan Guidance. The Travel Plan was required in order to incorporate measures to promote sustainable transport; the County Council's full requirements for the Travel Plan were set out in full in its consultee comments at paragraph 4.1.7.1 of the officer report.

Since November 2023, the Local Planning Authority had allowed the applicant a significant and reasonable length of time to progress and complete the S106 Agreement. However, to date it had not been completed: it was understood that this was due to issues with the existing landowner. Given the length of time which had now passed, it was considered very unlikely that a S106 agreement would be progressed or completed. Therefore, officers had had further discussions with HCC which had re-considered the application and the requirement for a Travel Plan to be secured via a S106 Agreement. Whilst a S106 agreement would have been the preferred mechanism to secure the Travel Plan and monitoring fee, HCC had confirmed that it would not be able to defend a reason for refusal on the basis of failure to complete a S106 Agreement. HCC had therefore confirmed that it would be content for the Travel Plan to instead be secured via a condition only. As such, this application was being returned to the Committee in order for Members to consider to the removal of the requirement for a S106 Agreement and for the Travel Plan to instead be secured via a condition only, with no monitoring fee payable to the County Council.

The application was in all other respects identical to the previously approved scheme and whilst officers had re-assessed it within the new National Planning Policy Framework it was not considered that there would be any harm to the Green Belt or to heritage assets, nor any requirement for Very Special Circumstances to be demonstrated.

Committee Members asked questions about the details of the application which were responded to by officers. The Committee's discussions included the following:

- A Committee Member questioned whether the Travel Plan would still be monitored if secured by condition, given that a monitoring fee was no longer being sought. Officers responded that the Travel Plan itself would include an obligation for certain monitoring activities to be undertaken and periodically reported to the County Council. Therefore, there was no change in the level of control provided. The difference was that the County Council would no longer receive any fee to review the documentation. The Local Planning

Authority could take enforcement action against any failure to comply with the planning condition in the event that the required monitoring and reporting was not carried out.

- A Committee Member sought assurance that sufficient attempts had been made to secure the S106 Agreement, in order to be able to determine whether the approach presented to the Committee represented the most appropriate way forward. The Planning Officer responded that there had been regular communication by officers with the applicant since the committee's resolution in November 2023. However, the consent of a number of landowners was required to secure the agreement, and planning officers had not been party to those negotiations.

Councillor Cooper moved, and Councillor Mitchell seconded, that planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

On being put to the vote this was carried, the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

That planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

PC151/25 23/0484/LBC: LISTED BUILDING CONSENT: CHANGE OF USE OF EXISTING BUILDING FROM CARE HOME (C2) USE TO A NURSERY (CLASS E) INCLUDING PARTIAL DEMOLITION OF EXISTING SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSION AND CONSTRUCTION OF TWO STOREY FRONT EXTENSION; PROVISION OF SPIRAL STAIRS, RAMP ACCESS, GREEN ROOF, ROOFLIGHTS AND VENTS; REPAIRS TO BOUNDARY WALL WITH ASSOCIATED PARKING AND LANDSCAPING WORKS; WIDENING OF EXISTING ACCESS TRACK, INTERNAL ALTERATIONS AND ALTERATIONS TO FENESTRATION AT CROXLEY HOUSE, CROXLEY GREEN, RICKMANSWORTH, HERTS WD3 3JB.

The application was for listed building consent for change of use of existing building from care home (C2) use to a nursery (Class E) including partial demolition of existing single storey rear extension and construction of two storey front extension; provision of spiral stairs, ramp access, green roof, rooflights and vents; repairs to boundary wall with associated parking and landscaping works; widening of existing access track, internal alterations and alterations to fenestration at Croxley House, Croxley Green, Rickmansworth.

The application was considered together with the associated planning application at the previous agenda item.

A Committee Member expressed the view that the application improved the nature of the listed building, as well as preserving and enhancing its character. This was endorsed by another Committee Member.

Councillor Cooper moved, and Councillor Mitchell seconded, that Listed Building Consent be granted, subject to conditions.

On being put to the vote this was carried, the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

That Listed Building Consent be granted subject to conditions.

PC152/25 25/1691/FUL – REPLACEMENT OF THE GLADE BRIDGE AT THE GLADE BRIDGE OVER THE RIVER COLNE, ADJACENT GRAND UNION CANAL OFF CHURCH STREET, RICKMANSWORTH

The application was for replacement of the Glade Bridge at the Glade Bridge over the River Colne, adjacent Grand Union Canal off Church Street, Rickmansworth.

The Planning Officer reported that there were no updates.

Committee Members asked questions about the details of the application which were responded to by officers. The Committee's discussions included the following:

- Several Committee Members expressed concern about the absence of information relating to the colour and finish of the proposed new bridge, which was considered to be fundamental to the application. Whilst there was a condition requiring details and samples to be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of any building operations, the Planning Committee would have no role in deciding their appropriateness. Given that the Council was the landowner and applicant, and the importance of the site to members of the public, the view was expressed that the Committee should have a greater role in determining these details. It was noted that the Canal and River Trust had also commented on the lack of clarity regarding the proposed colour, and the significant impact which the colours and materials used could have on the appearance of the bridge and its prominence in the landscape.
- The Planning Officer responded that the attachment of a condition requiring details to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority was not unusual. Additionally, and for clarity, whilst the Council was the applicant it was the LPA which was the deciding authority, and the two were not the same. Should the Committee consider it appropriate, an informative could be added setting out any preference with regard to colour palettes, for example. However, the Planning Officer expressed the opinion that deferral of the application to allow the applicant to provide full details before the application was determined would be unlikely to be considered reasonable. The applicant was unable to tender contracts for the works until planning permission was granted, and it was only at that stage that options regarding the details of the bridge could be fully assessed. Additionally, there may be limitations arising from, for example, accessibility requirements in relation to colours and materials which would only become evident during the tender process.
- In debate it was recommended that an informative should be added to reflect the Committee's opinion that the bridge colour should take account of the following comment submitted by the Canal and River Trust: *'it appears that the current bridge has weathered over time, and this end result colour should be considered in the selection, rather than matching the more vibrant colour of new wood'*.
- A Committee Member recommended that, if possible, any scheduled works should take place in quieter times of the year (for example, avoiding the school holidays) and it was questioned whether this could be required of the applicant. The Planning Officer responded that this would be unlikely to be considered reasonable if conditioned. However, an informative could be included which requested that the applicant give consideration to the time of year when works would take place.
- In response to a Member's suggestion that Condition 4 should be amended to require the applicant to give consideration to the comments of the Canal and River Trust in relation to the bridge's appearance (rather than including it as an informative) Planning Officers cautioned against this approach, noting that the wording may be open to challenge and that the Canal and River Trust was satisfied with the Council's own wording being used in relation to the conditioning of materials. Whilst there was a limit to the extent to which the Committee could reasonably make requirements of the applicant in relation to the colour

and materials of the bridge, Members were encouraged to raise any concerns, or express their views, directly to relevant officers in the Leisure Team.

Councillor Whately-Smith moved, and Councillor Smith seconded, that the application be approved subject to conditions and with additional informatives requesting (i) that the applicant should have regard to the comments of the Canal and River Trust in relation to the bridge's appearance and (ii) that the applicant give consideration to the time of year during which works take place.

On being put to the vote this was carried, the voting being 5 in favour, 0 against and 3 abstentions.

RESOLVED:

That the application be approved subject to conditions and with additional informatives requesting (i) that the applicant should have regard to the comments of the Canal and River Trust in relation to the bridge's appearance and (ii) that the applicant give consideration to the time of year during which works take place.

PC153/25 26/0039/FUL – ERECTION OF TWO SELF-BUILD DETACHED DWELLINGS, ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING VEHICULAR ACCESS AND LAND LEVELS AND PROPOSED ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING AT THE DELL, LONG LANE, HERONSGATE, HERTFORDSHIRE, WD3 5DJ

The application was for erection of two self-build detached dwellings, alterations to existing vehicular access and land levels and proposed associated landscaping at The Dell, Long Lane, Heronsgate.

The Planning Officer reported that there were no updates.

Parish Councillor Alistair Park of Chorleywood Parish Council spoke on the application.

A representative of Heronsgate Residents' Association spoke against the application.

The agent spoke in favour of the application.

Issues raised by speakers against the proposal included: the impact on the Heronsgate Conservation Area and the historic Chartist village and the rural character of Long Lane; the unsustainable location with a lack of pavement and street lighting on Long Lane, poor walking and cycling conditions and poor public transport links; the impact of two substantial five-bedroomed private dwellings in terms of domestic activity, vehicle movements, parking, deliveries, lighting and access works in what had long been experienced as a green Conservation Area edge; the proposal offered modest mitigation compared to the previously refused application; there remained objections from Herts Highways and the Conservation Officer; and the heavily reduced affordable housing contribution meant that there was a lack of benefit to outweigh the harm caused.

Points raised by the speaker in favour of the application included: the proposal was appropriate development in the Green Belt as the site was previously developed land and no substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt would be caused; the proposal would contribute towards meeting a demonstrable unmet housing need; significant reductions had been made to the extent of the built form compared to the previous application in order to ensure there was no harm to the Conservation Area; only a small section at the front of the site was within the Conservation Area, and only limited alteration was proposed at this part of the site; the properties would be set back from Long Lane and be partially sunken and would therefore appear as single storey dwellings with green roofs, limiting their views from Long Lane; extensive landscaping and new tree planting was proposed, enhancing the existing vegetation and preserving the verdant nature of Long Lane; given its semi-rural location the

site was sustainable; and the scheme would offer benefits through an affordable housing contribution, the use of previously developed land, ecological enhancements, economic opportunities during construction work, and energy efficiency enhancements.

Committee Members asked questions about the detail of the application which were responded to by officers. The Committee's discussions included the following:

- A Committee Member expressed the view that the Heronsgate Conservation Area was of exceptional importance and there was a need to ensure that its rural character was not harmed. For this reason, very substantial weight should be given to any harm to the heritage asset as required by paragraph 212 of the NPPF, and this included the strip which formed part of the application site. The Committee Member highlighted the comments of the Conservation Officer, who had concluded that the proposal would cause harm by bringing residential development to the edge of the Conservation Area, undermining its existing verdant character. Additionally, the Heronsgate Conservation Area Appraisal made clear that the 1km long, 10m wide strip to the north-eastern side of Long Lane at the boundary of the Conservation Area had been chosen to protect the character and nature of the historic sunken lane. The proposal before the Committee, which challenged this strong boundary, was therefore harmful.
- Another Committee Member commented that the existing entrance, which was somewhat untidy, already had the effect of altering the uniformly green boundary of the Conservation Area. Therefore, weight should be given to the improvement which the dwellings and the associated planted schemes may bring. Another Committee Member noted a comment made by a public speaker that the reason for the untidy appearance was due to very recent clearing of the site by the applicant, where previously it had had a rural appearance which had blended with the surroundings. Therefore, approval should not be justified on the basis that the existing appearance would be improved.
- In response to a Committee Member's question, the Planning Officer clarified that Hertfordshire County Council did not object to the proposal on the grounds of access arrangements or the provision of visibility splays which would be secured by condition. However, it did object on the grounds of the unsustainable location of the site. This was agreed by Planning Officers and been taken into account in their assessment. However, in considering the tilted balance the benefits of the scheme in terms of the provision of housing, the affordable housing contribution, and the uplift in energy saving measures were considered to outweigh the harm arising from the unsustainable location.
- A Committee Member commented that whilst it was acknowledged that the applicant had made efforts to ensure that the proposed dwellings would blend in with the surrounding area in terms of their appearance, the intensification of the use of the site, which would likely include increased traffic movements, delivery activity and the introduction of domestic paraphernalia, meant that they would not be unobtrusive and there would be intrusion on the rural setting of the area.
- A Committee Member commended the applicant for bringing forward a proposal which lessened the impact on the surrounding area and which had also been designed to be sustainable. However, the Committee Member expressed the view that the concerns about harm to the heritage asset which had been expressed by the Conservation Officer and the unsustainable location of the site meant that, on balance, the officer recommendation in favour of approval may not be supported. This was endorsed by other Committee Members, who highlighted the Conservation Officer's concerns about the proposal's prominence over the sunken lane and erosion of the Conservation Area boundary and the resultant undermining of the character of the area. In assessing the benefits of the scheme, Committee Members considered that substantial weight should be given to the provision of housing due to the lack of a five-year housing land supply. Other benefits of the scheme were the contribution towards affordable housing and the provision

of self-build accommodation. However, these were not considered to outweigh the harm to the Conservation Area.

Councillor Morris proposed, and Councillor Cooper seconded, that the application be refused on the grounds that it would cause harm to the Conservation Area and to the character of the area, the unsustainable location of the site, and the failure to complete a S106 Agreement to secure an affordable housing contribution. Full wording of the reasons for refusal would be circulated following the meeting.

On being put to the vote this was carried, the voting being 5 for, 0 against and 3 abstentions.

RESOLVED:

That the application be refused on the grounds that it would cause harm to the Conservation Area and to the character of the area, the unsustainable location of the site, and the failure to complete a S106 Agreement to secure an affordable housing contribution. Full wording of the reasons for refusal would be circulated following the meeting.

PC154/25 26/0194/OUT: OUTLINE APPLICATION: DEMOLITION OF EXISTING DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE, INCLUDING THE CONSTRUCTION OF UP TO 333 DWELLINGS (USE CLASS C3) OF WHICH 50% AFFORDABLE HOUSING, 66 BED CARE HOME (USE CLASS C2), MEDICAL CENTRE (USE CLASS E (E)), LOCAL CENTRE [CONTAINING RETAIL (USE CLASS E (A-C)), COMMUNITY FACILITIES (USE CLASS F2) AND CAFE (USE CLASS E(A))] AND ASSOCIATED PLAY SPACE, PARKING AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE. NEW VEHICULAR ACCESS ONTO SHEPHERDS LANE AND PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE ACCESSES ONTO SHEPHERDS LANE AND BERRY LANE, BUS STOP, BIKE STATION, LANDSCAPING, PEDESTRIAN / CYCLEWAY ACCESS ROUTES, GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE INCLUDING COMMUNITY AMENITY SPACE, ALLOTMENTS, PLAY AREAS, OUTDOOR GYM TRAIL / EQUIPMENT AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE INCLUDING SUSTAINABLE URBAN DRAINAGE SYSTEMS (ALL MATTERS RESERVED EXCEPT FOR ACCESS) AT CATLIPS FARM, BERRY LANE, CHORLEYWOOD

The Committee considered an issues report prior to outline permission being sought for the demolition of existing development and redevelopment of the Site, including the construction of up to 333 dwellings (Use Class C3) of which 50% affordable housing, 66 bed Care Home (Use Class C2), Medical Centre (Use Class E (e)), Local Centre [containing Retail (Use Class E (a-c)), Community Facilities (use Class F2) and Cafe (Use Class E(a))] and associated play space, parking and associated infrastructure. New vehicular access onto Shepherds Lane and pedestrian and cycle accesses onto Shepherds Lane and Berry Lane, bus stop, bike station, landscaping, pedestrian / cycleway access routes, green infrastructure including community amenity space, allotments, play areas, outdoor gym trail / equipment and associated infrastructure including sustainable urban drainage systems (all matters reserved except for access) at Catlips Farm, Berry Lane, Chorleywood.

The Planning Officer reminded those present that no decision was being sought at this stage; Members were invited to note and comment on the material planning issues raised by the application and consider undertaking a site visit.

The Planning Officer provided an update that since publication of the report, further information had been received from the applicant in respect of an updated ecology assessment, Biodiversity Net Gain statement, updated transport assessment and response in respect of landscape and heritage. These were being reviewed by the consultees to the application.

Additionally, two further objection letters had been received from members of the public. These had not raised any new matters which were not already included in the report.

Finally, a legal opinion had been sought by Chorleywood Parish Council and this had been shared with Planning Officers. However, it had not yet been fully considered and was not addressed within the report.

Parish Councillor Jon Bishop of Chorleywood Parish Council spoke on the item.

The developer spoke in favour of the item.

Points raised by the speaker against the item included that further information was needed in the Green Belt section of the report, particularly in relation to the site's role within the gap between Rickmansworth and Chorleywood, and visual separation and the measurements which had underpinned the officers' opinion in relation to both of these matters; and the unsustainability of the site.

Points raised by the speaker in favour of the item included that the proposal respected the area whilst helping with the severe housing shortage; it would provide up to 333 homes of which 167 would be affordable housing, as well as a care home, medical centre, community uses, open space, bus service contribution and education service contribution. The proposal would not change the identity of Chorleywood but would give more people the opportunity to become part of it.

Committee Members asked questions about the detail of the application which were responded to by officers. The Committee's discussions, comments and questions included the following:

- Committee Members supported having a site visit before the application came to the Committee later in the year. [Note: following the meeting it was agreed that date for the site visit should be decided in due course, once there was a clearer idea of the timescale for the application]. In particular Members wished to understand the walking routes from the site along Common Gate Road and Berry Lane, and considered that it would be helpful if the applicant and the Planning Officer could provide more detail about the distance and route to the Shepherd's Lane side of the site and to the station.
- The fact that Chorleywood was commonly referred to as Chorleywood Village and held an annual Village Day did not necessarily mean that it should be defined as a village in the settlement hierarchy. It would be helpful to have advice on whether Chorleywood was a village or a town, to assist Committee Members in forming a view at the substantive decision stage. It would also be helpful to have an exploration as to the weight which needed to be given to the Council's designation in the emerging Local Plan as an area of importance to the Green Belt, as this needed to be considered as a material consideration (albeit that the emerging Local Plan carried very limited weight).
- Clarity was requested with regard to the financial contribution towards a possible new primary school, which was shown in the report to be c£6m but was stated by the applicant to be £11m. Clarity was also requested with regard to whether the financial contribution towards healthcare facilities set out at paragraph 7.19.6 of the report was to be used to fund the proposed medical centre, or whether it would be required in addition.
- The Woodland Trust had commented that there was a need to provide clear plans showing proposed works in relation to the ancient woodland and further information in relation to this was requested to be included.
- How long would the bus routes be funded for, and what would the impact on the highways network if they were subsequently withdrawn?
- Shepherd's Land and Berry Lane are single track, narrow country lanes with no pavements or streetlights. How will the influx of traffic from 333 homes and a care home be able to safely navigate the highways infrastructure?

- Will the Maple Cross sewage treatment works be able to cope with a development of this size?
- Is the site sustainable, given the access issues and the nature of the roads which would serve the development?
- There are a number of objections which remain outstanding.
- Would the stated solutions to the difficulty in walking to the site actually amount to a positive contribution and respond to what the planning authority would wish to see? If not, could they be given lesser weight?
- More information was requested to be included in the report in relation to the local school provision and capacity. Additionally, more information was requested in relation to all of the infrastructure areas which were already under pressure, namely schools, healthcare, drainage and transport.

By general assent the Committee noted the report and agreed to undertake a site visit.

RESOLVED:

That:

- (1) Members agree for officers to arrange a site visit prior to this application being presented to Planning Committee for a decision; and
- (2) the Committee notes the report and makes general comments with regard to the material planning issues raised by the application as set out above.

PC155/25 26/0325/RSP – PART RETROSPECTIVE: ERECTION OF RAISED TERRACE AREA INCLUDING ASSOCIATED STEPS, LANDSCAPING AND PLANT ROOM FOLLOWING ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING REAR PATIO, PLANT ROOM AND HARD SURFACING AT SANDALWOOD, 7A WOLSEY ROAD, MOOR PARK, NORTHWOOD, HA6 2HN

Councillor Morris left the meeting and did not return.

Councillor Ranger left the meeting during the item and did not return.

The application was part retrospective for erection of raised terrace area including associated steps, landscaping and plant room following alterations to existing rear patio, plant room and hard surfacing at Sandalwood, 7a Wolsey Road, Moor Park, Northwood.

The Planning Officer reported that the reason for Condition 4 had been omitted from the report in error. This would be added in the event that planning permission was granted.

Parish Councillor Elizabeth Willetts of Batchworth Community Council spoke against the application.

A local resident spoke against the application.

Points raised by the speakers included: the site had been subject to a number of planning applications and there had been ongoing disruptive works over a significant period of time, which had included non-compliance with planning controls; appeals against a previous refusal of planning permission and an enforcement notice had been dismissed for reasons which included the detrimental impact on neighbouring amenity; there remained insufficient regard to neighbouring amenity within this amended application; the applicant continued to show no

regard for neighbouring residents or for planning controls; despite the reduction in height, the terraced area within the amended application would continue to impact the privacy of number 9 by overlooking; and the proposed planting on top of the raised patio in order to provide screening was impractical to maintain and was unlikely to thrive.

Committee Members asked questions about the detail of the application which were responded to by officers. The Committee's discussions included the following:

- A Committee Member commented that the new orientation of the plant room meant that the doors (rather than the wall) would now face towards the neighbouring property. There was therefore potential for disturbance to be caused should any noise emitting equipment be contained within it, as well as privacy concerns should the equipment need to be accessed frequently. The Planning Officer responded that the equipment to be housed within the plant room comprised a water tank and booster which served the underfloor heating system. Officers had visited on a number of occasions and were satisfied that it was not unduly noisy and was sufficiently enclosed so as not to impact on neighbouring amenity. Maintenance was likely to be needed on an annual basis, but aside from this the doors were unlikely to be opened and closed on a regular basis. A Committee Member expressed the view that even a low level of noise, if persistent, could cause disturbance. For this reason, it was recommended that a condition be added which required the doors to the plant room to be fixed shut other than during maintenance activities.
- For the reasons set out in the report, officers were of the view that the amended application represented a betterment to what could be lawfully implemented under the previous grant of planning permission and the enforcement notice and would be less impactful on the neighbouring property. Condition 2 required the applicant to submit a soft landscaping and maintenance plan within 14 days of any grant of planning permission, and the addition of a 1.8m hedging screen to the flanks of the raised patio meant that there would be no risk of overlooking. Officers were therefore satisfied that there would be no harm to neighbouring amenity by overlooking arising from the proposal.
- In response to questions, the Planning Officer clarified that the maximum height of the patio would be 1.4m and it would come out at the existing ground floor level of the property. Officers did not therefore have any concerns about the height of the patio. Whilst 1.4m was 0.4m higher than previously approved, this was due to a discrepancy in the measurement in the 2020 application which had been corrected following re-measurement.
- Committee Members noted the comments made by a speaker that the soft landscaping screen would be impractical to maintain and unlikely to thrive, and some Committee Members expressed concerns that should plants fail to survive, or due to conditions at certain times of the year, the screening may not be adequate. It was therefore suggested that Condition 2 be amended to require a more substantial screen. Another Committee Member expressed the view that a permanent fence may appear as an oppressive and dominating feature for neighbouring residents. However, as it would be set back c6m from the boundary, this view was not shared by all Committee Members. It was noted that there was also potential to combine a permanent fence with soft landscaping, so as to mitigate the visual impact of a permanent fence.

Councillor Whately-Smith moved, and Councillor Mitchell seconded, that part retrospective planning permission be granted subject to conditions and (i) the addition of a reason for Condition 4 (ii) variation of Condition 2 to require a screening fence to be used and (iii) an additional condition requiring the plant room doors to be fixed shut other than during maintenance activities. On being put to the vote this was carried, the voting being 4 in favour, 0 against and 2 abstentions.

RESOLVED:

That part retrospective planning permission be granted subject to conditions and (i) the addition of a reason for Condition 4 (ii) variation of Condition 2 to require a screening fence to be used and (iii) an additional condition requiring the plant room doors to be fixed shut other than during maintenance activities.

CHAIR