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Legal and Democratic Services



To: All Members of the Planning Committee

Dear Councillor,

PLANNING COMMITTEE - THURSDAY, 17TH FEBRUARY, 2022 , Council Chamber - Epsom Town Hall, <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1320156544475185422>

Please find attached the following document(s) for the meeting of the Planning Committee to be held on Thursday, 17th February, 2022.

1. **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: UPDATE REPORT** (Pages 3 - 6)

Update Report regarding Item 3 on the Agenda.

For further information, please contact Democratic Services, email: democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk or tel: 01372 732000

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Beldan".

Chief Executive

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Planning Committee Update Report
17 February 2022

~~Removed wording~~

New wording

ITEM 3

21/01708/FUL

107 -111 East Street, Epsom, Surrey, KT17 1EJ

New information:

The Applicant submitted a Planning Statement, on 11.02.2022. Section 4 includes a summary of the reasons for refusal and how the proposed scheme addresses the reasons for refusal. This Planning Statement is publicly available on the Council's website.

ITEM 4

21/01156/FUL

7 Station Approach, Stoneleigh, Surrey, KT19 0QZ

New information:

The Applicant submitted a letter, dated 08.02.2022, concerning the Officer's assessment and recommendation for refusal. This letter is publicly available on the Council's website. Appended to the letter is a Briefing Note, prepared by Ecology Solution, which seeks a Condition to be attached to any Planning Permission granted, to require an update emergence survey, in May 2022.

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Ecology

The Local Planning Authority's Ecologist provided a further response on 09.02.2022, setting out a summary of the position:

The building in question was and still is of potential for bats and requires a further survey.

The initial bat survey for the building is now out of date. Surveys are current for only 2 years due to bats being very mobile and frequently changing their roosts, meaning they could now be present.

A further survey is therefore required to determine present/absence which is a material consideration of granting planning permission.

The Council's approach is that initial and, in this case, a further survey after the 2-year time limit, should not be Conditioned as per the guidance. The exceptional circumstances argument is not applicable here as the issue in this case is just one of the survey timings being missed.

The use of one of the 4 new Natural England policies is also not applicable in this case as these cover European Protected Species licencing not granting planning permission.

The Applicant's argument revolves around the likelihood of a licence being granted due to the probability of a simple roost possibly being present and therefore ok for the survey to be Conditioned. However, this is only one of the reasons for not conditioning surveys. Ecological surveys must be carried out before any work could be carried out i.e., before planning permission is granted because they cannot be done retrospectively. This avoids the possibility of irretrievable damage to protected species caused by the clearance of vegetation on a site or removal of a roof. As a Local Authority, we have a wider duty relating to protected species over and above ensuring that a licence would be granted. This is supported by current DM4 policy and the NPPF.

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Reasons for refusal

Reason refusal 2:

The proposal would adversely impact the ~~daylight and sunlight enjoyed at 6 Station Approach, with the loss of afternoon sun,~~ **neighbouring amenity at 6 Station Approach through overbearing impact**, due to the development's excessive height, mass and bulk, constituting an overdevelopment. This fails to comply with Policy DM10 of the Development-Management Policies Document (2015).

Potential Applications for Consideration on the March Agenda:

- 21/01762/FUL - *Land to the rear of 23A and 29 Links Road, Epsom (College Ward)* - Erection of three dwellings with associated access, parking, landscaping and other minor ancillary development.
- 21/01406/FUL - *140 -142 Ruxley Lane, West Ewell (Ruxley)* - Demolition of existing dwellings and erection of 20 flats within two blocks with associated car parking and landscaping.
- 21/00057/FUL - *138 Miles Road, Epsom (Town)* - Replacement roof to Block B and conversion of roof space to provide new residential dwellings (Class C3) and construction of a new three-storey side extension to Block B to provide one new residential dwelling (Class C3)

Development Management Service Update

Following the appointment of the Head of Place Development, Victoria Potts and the Planning Development & Enforcement Manager, Justin Turvey, in early January 2022, a programme has been established to modernise the development management service and implement change. Work is progressing on this, but the immediate focus is on reducing the backlog of planning applications. A Member Task & Finish Group has been established to oversee the reduction of the backlog. Once the backlog has been addressed, the focus will broaden to become the medium to long term aims for the transformation of the entire planning service.

The backlog of Major, Minor and Other planning applications has reduced substantially since the beginning of the year, when it stood at 383. As at 14/02/2022, there were 209 'out of time' applications, a reduction of over 40%.

The contract with ET Planning to assist in processing planning applications has now come to an end, and WS Planning & Architecture have been engaged to assist further with the backlog. WS Planning & Architecture began work on assessing their first batch of applications last week.

An internal project team is taking forward actions around performance information, process issues and improvements, unused capabilities within existing IT systems, customer service, finance and procedural issues affecting delivery of the service. A series of Business Process Reviews will be undertaken to identify areas where processes can be improved to deliver a more efficient and customer focused service.

In terms of staffing, an advert for the new Senior Technical Validation Officer role is due to be posted this week. A new Planning Officer is due to start in Development Management on Monday, and the Service are hoping to appoint a replacement Enforcement Trainer by the end of this month.

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