

Planning Committee

Council Chamber, Town Hall
23 May 2012 at 1.00pm

This committee deals with

planning applications, planning enforcement, public rights of way and certain highway matters.

If you wish to come to the meeting please arrive in good time. Attendance between 12.30am and 12.45am will greatly assist in noting the names of persons intending to speak to enable the meeting to start promptly.

Information for Members of the Public

Access to information and meetings

You have the right to attend all meetings of the Council, its Committees and Cabinet. You also have the right to see the agenda, which is usually published 5 working days before the meeting, and minutes once they are published. Dates of the meetings are available at www.colchester.gov.uk or from Democratic Services. Occasionally meetings will need to discuss issues in private. This can only happen on a limited range of issues, which are set by law. When a committee does so, you will be asked to leave the meeting.

Have Your Say!

The Council values contributions from members of the public. Under the Council's Have Your Say! policy you can ask questions or express a view to most public meetings. If you wish to speak at a meeting or wish to find out more, please refer to Attending Meetings and "Have Your Say" at www.colchester.gov.uk

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Access

There is wheelchair access to the Town Hall from St Runwald Street. There is an induction loop in all the meeting rooms. If you need help with reading or understanding this document please take it to Angel Court Council offices, High Street, Colchester or telephone (01206) 282222 or textphone 18001 followed by the full number that you wish to call and we will try to provide a reading service, translation or other formats you may need.

Facilities

Toilets with lift access, if required, are located on each floor of the Town Hall. A vending machine selling hot and cold drinks is located on the ground floor.

Evacuation Procedures

Evacuate the building using the nearest available exit. Make your way to the assembly area in the car park in St Runwald Street behind the Town Hall. Do not re-enter the building until the Town Hall staff advise you that it is safe to do so.

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www.colchester.gov.uk

Material Planning Considerations

The National Planning Policy Framework highlights that the planning system is plan-led and reiterates *The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004*, which requires (in law) that planning applications “*must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise*”.

The following approach should be taken:

- Identify the provisions of the Development Plan which are relevant to the decision and interpret them carefully, looking at their aims and objectives
- Identify and consider relevant material considerations for and against the proposal
- Consider whether or not the proposal accords with the Development Plan and, if not, whether material considerations warrant a departure from the Development Plan.

When applying material considerations the Committee should execute their decision making function accounting for all material matters fairly, reasonably and without bias. In court decisions (such as *R v Westminster CC ex-parte Monahan 1989*) it has been confirmed that material considerations must relate to the development and use of land, be considered against public interest, and be fairly and reasonably related to the application concerned.

Some common material planning considerations which the Planning Committee can (and must) take into consideration in reaching a decision include:-

- Planning policies, including the NPPF and Colchester’s own Local Plan documents
- Government guidance, case law, appeal decisions, planning history, “fallback” positions
- Design, scale, bulk, mass, appearance and layout
- Protection of residential amenities (light, privacy, outlook, noise or fumes)
- Highway safety and traffic issues, including parking provisions
- Heritage considerations such as archaeology, listed buildings or a conservation areas
- Environmental issues such as impacts on biodiversity, trees and landscape, flooding
- Economic issues such as regeneration, job creation, tourism
- Social issues such as affordable housing, accessibility, inclusion, education, recreation
- The ability to use planning conditions or obligations to overcome concerns

The following are among the most common issues that are **not** relevant planning issues and cannot be taken into account in reaching a decision:-

- land ownership issues including private property rights, boundary disputes and covenants
- effects on property values
- loss of a private view
- identity of the applicant, their character, previous history, or possible motives
- moral objections to a development, such as may include gambling or drinking etc
- competition between commercial uses
- matters specifically controlled through other legislation
- unless they are “exceptional”, personal circumstances, including hardship

Strong opposition to a particular proposal is a common feature of the planning process. However, in the absence of substantial evidence of harm or support from the Development Plan is unlikely to carry much weight. The same principles apply in reverse where there is strong support for a proposal that is contrary to the Development Plan and there is harm (or lack of substantially evidenced benefit).

Inspectors and Courts (see *North Wiltshire DC V SoS & Clover, 1992*) have established that precedent can be a legitimate consideration, but it is not enough to have a “general anxiety” and there has to be evidence of a real likelihood that similar applications (in all respects) will be submitted.

Human Rights, Community Safety and Equality and Diversity Implications

All applications are considered against the background and implications of the:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (and in particular Section 17)
- Equality Act 2010
- Colchester Borough Council Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Framework

In order that we provide a flexible service that recognises people's diverse needs and provides for them in a reasonable and proportional way without discrimination.

Using Planning Conditions and Considering Reasons for Refusing Applications

The Planning System is designed to manage development, facilitating (not obstructing) sustainable development of a satisfactory standard. The National Planning Policy Framework reinforces this by stating that “*Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth*”. Therefore, development should be considered with a positive approach. However, not all development is acceptable and almost every permission will require planning conditions in order to make them acceptable. Some will remain unacceptable and should therefore be refused. Circular 11/95 (The Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions) and Circular 03/2009 (Costs Awards In Appeals And Other Planning Proceedings) set out advice on the government’s policy regarding the appropriate use of planning conditions and when decision makers may make themselves vulnerable to costs being awarded against them at appeal due to “unreasonable” behaviour. They derive from an interpretation of court judgments over the years and, although not planning law, are important material considerations. A decision to set them aside would therefore need to be well-reasoned and justified.

In terms of the Planning Committee, Circular 03/2009 makes it clear that “*Planning authorities are not bound to accept the recommendations of their officers. However, if officers’ professional or technical advice is not followed, authorities will need to show reasonable planning grounds for taking a contrary decision and produce relevant evidence on appeal to support the decision in all respects. If they fail to do so, costs may be awarded against the authority*”.

The power to impose conditions is an important material consideration in any determination. Circular 03/2009 states that “*Whenever appropriate, planning authorities will be expected to show that they have considered the possibility of imposing relevant planning conditions to allow development to proceed*”. Therefore, before refusing any application the Planning Committee should consider whether it is possible to resolve any concerns by use of conditions before refusing permission. *The Circular adds that “A planning authority refusing planning permission on a planning ground capable of being dealt with by conditions risks an award of costs where it is concluded on appeal that suitable conditions would enable the proposed development to go ahead.”* Advice on the need to consider whether conditions may make a proposal acceptable which would be otherwise unacceptable is also to be found in Circular 11/95.

Any planning condition imposed on a development must be necessary, relevant to planning, relevant to the development to be permitted, reasonable, precise and enforceable. Unless conditions fulfil these criteria, which are set out in Circular 11/95, they are challengeable at appeal as *ultra vires* (i.e. their imposition is beyond the powers of local authorities). If no suitable condition exists that can satisfy these tests a refusal of planning permission may then be warranted.

In considering the reasons for that refusal, Circular 03/2009 makes it clear that planning authorities must “*properly exercise their development control responsibilities, rely only on reasons for refusal which stand up to scrutiny and do not add to development costs through avoidable delay or refusal without good reason*”. In all matters relating to an application it is critically important for decision makers to be aware that the courts will extend the common law principle of natural justice to any decision upon which they are called to adjudicate. The general effect of this is to seek to ensure that public authorities act fairly and reasonably in executing their decision making functions, and that it is evident to all that they so do.

**COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE
23 May 2012 at 1:00pm**

Members

Councillors Nick Barlow, Nigel Chapman, Peter Chillingworth, Helen Chuah, John Elliott, Stephen Ford, Theresa Higgins, Sonia Lewis, Michael Lilley, Jackie Maclean, Jon Manning, Nigel Offen, Philip Oxford and Laura Sykes.
(Chairman and Deputy Chairman to be appointed at first meeting)

Substitute Members

: All members of the Council who are not members of this Committee or the Local Plan Committee and who have undertaken the required planning skills workshop. The following members meet the criteria:-
Councillors Lyn Barton, Mary Blandon, Mark Cable, Barrie Cook, Beverly Davies, Annie Feltham, Marcus Harrington, Jo Hayes, Pauline Hazell, Peter Higgins, Brian Jarvis, Michael Lilley, Sue Lissimore, Colin Mudie, Will Quince, Terry Sutton, Anne Turrell, Dennis Willetts and Julie Young.

Agenda - Part A

(open to the public including the media)

Pages

1. Substitutions

Members may arrange for a substitute councillor to attend a meeting on their behalf, subject to prior notice being given. The attendance of substitute councillors must be recorded.

2. Appointment of Chairman

To appoint the Chairman for the ensuing Municipal Year.

3. Appointment of Deputy Chairman

To appoint the Deputy Chairman for the ensuing Municipal Year.

4. Exclusion of the Public

In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public, including the press, from the meeting so that any items containing exempt information (for example confidential personal, financial or legal advice), in Part B of this agenda (printed on yellow paper) can be decided. (Exempt information is defined in Section 100I and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).



Colchester Borough Council Development Control

Advisory Note on Parking Standards

The following information is intended as guidance for applicants/developers.

A parking space should measure 2.9 metres by 5.5 metres. A smaller size of 2.5 metres by 5 metres is acceptable in special circumstances.

A garage should have an internal space of 7 metres by 3 metres. Smaller garages do not count towards the parking allocation.

The residential parking standard for two bedroom flats and houses is two spaces per unit. The residential parking standard for one bedroom units is one space per unit. One visitor space must be provided for every four units.

Residential parking standards can be relaxed in areas suitable for higher density development.



Colchester Borough Council Environmental Control

Advisory Notes for the Control of Pollution during Construction & Demolition Works

The following information is intended as guidance for applicants/developers and construction firms. In order to minimise potential nuisance to nearby existing residents caused by construction and demolition works, Environmental Control recommends that the following guidelines are followed. Adherence to this advisory note will significantly reduce the likelihood of public complaint and potential enforcement action by Environmental Control.

Best Practice for Construction Sites

Although the following notes are set out in the style of planning conditions, they are designed to represent the best practice techniques for the site. Therefore, failure to follow them may result in enforcement action under nuisance legislation (Environmental Protection Act 1990), or the imposition of controls on working hours (Control of Pollution Act 1974).

Noise Control

1. No vehicle connected with the works to arrive on site before 07:30 or leave after 19:00 (except in the case of emergency). Working hours to be restricted between 08:00 and 18:00 Monday to Saturday (finishing at 13:00 on Saturday) with no working of any kind permitted on Sundays or any Public/Bank Holiday days.
2. The selection and use of machinery to operate on site, and working practices to be adopted will, as a minimum requirement, be compliant with the standards laid out in British Standard 5228:1984.
3. Mobile plant to be resident on site during extended works shall be fitted with non-audible reversing alarms (subject to HSE agreement).
4. Prior to the commencement of any piling works which may be necessary, a full method statement shall be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority (in consultation with Environmental Control). This will contain a rationale for the piling method chosen and details of the techniques to be employed which minimise noise and vibration to nearby residents.

Emission Control

1. All waste arising from the ground clearance and construction processes to be recycled or removed from the site subject to agreement with the Local Planning Authority and other relevant agencies.
2. No fires to be lit on site at any time.
3. On large scale construction sites, a wheel-wash facility shall be provided for the duration of the works to ensure levels of soil on roadways near the site are minimised.
4. All bulk carrying vehicles accessing the site shall be suitably sheeted to prevent nuisance from dust in transit.

Best Practice for Demolition Sites

Prior to the commencement of any demolition works, the applicant (or their contractors) shall submit a full method statement to, and receive written approval from, the Planning & Protection Department. In addition to the guidance on working hours, plant specification, and emission controls given above, the following additional notes should be considered when drafting this document: -

Noise Control

If there is a requirement to work outside of the recommended hours the applicant or contractor must submit a request in writing for approval by Planning & Protection prior to the commencement of works.

The use of barriers to mitigate the impact of noisy operations will be used where possible. This may include the retention of part(s) of the original buildings during the demolition process to act in this capacity.

Emission Control

All waste arising from the demolition process to be recycled or removed from the site subject to agreement with the Local Planning Authority and other relevant agencies.

The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended)

Class A1. Shops

Use for all or any of the following purposes—

- (a) for the retail sale of goods other than hot food,
- (b) as a post office,
- (c) for the sale of tickets or as a travel agency,
- (d) for the sale of sandwiches or other cold food for consumption off the premises,
- (e) for hairdressing,
- (f) for the direction of funerals,
- (g) for the display of goods for sale,
- (h) for the hiring out of domestic or personal goods or articles,
- (i) for the washing or cleaning of clothes or fabrics on the premises,
- (j) for the reception of goods to be washed, cleaned or repaired,
- (k) as an internet café; where the primary purpose of the premises is to provide facilities for enabling members of the public to access the internet where the sale, display or service is to visiting members of the public.

Class A2. Financial and professional services

Use for the provision of —

- (a) financial services, or
 - (b) professional services (other than health or medical services), or
 - (c) any other services (including use as a betting office)
- which it is appropriate to provide in a shopping area, where the services are provided principally to visiting members of the public.

Class A3. Restaurants and cafes

Use for the sale of food and drink for consumption on the premises.

Class A4. Drinking establishments

Use as a public house, wine-bar or other drinking establishment

Class A5. Hot food takeaways

Use for the sale of hot food for consumption off the premises.

Class B1. Business

Use for all or any of the following purposes—

- (a) as an office other than a use within class A2 (financial and professional services),
 - (b) for research and development of products or processes, or
 - (c) for any industrial process,
- being a use which can be carried out in any residential area without detriment to the amenity of that area by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit.

Class B2. General industrial

Use for the carrying on of an industrial process other than one falling within class B1 above

Class B8. Storage or distribution

Use for storage or as a distribution centre.

Class C1. Hotels

Use as a hotel or as a boarding or guest house where, in each case, no significant element of care is provided.

Class C2. Residential institutions

Use for the provision of residential accommodation and care to people in need of care (other than a use within class C3 (dwelling houses)).

Use as a hospital or nursing home.

Use as a residential school, college or training centre.

Class C2A. Secure residential institutions

Use for the provision of secure residential accommodation, including use as a prison, young offenders institution, detention centre, secure training centre, custody centre, short-term holding centre, secure hospital, secure local authority accommodation or use as military barracks.

Class C3. Dwellinghouses

Use as a dwellinghouse (whether or not as a sole or main residence) by—

(a) a single person or by people to be regarded as forming a single household;

(b) not more than six residents living together as a single household where care is provided for residents; or

(c) not more than six residents living together as a single household where no care is provided to residents (other than a use within Class C4).

Class C4. Houses in multiple occupation

Use of a dwellinghouse by not more than six residents as a “house in multiple occupation”.

Class D1. Non-residential institutions

Any use not including a residential use —

(a) for the provision of any medical or health services except the use of premises attached to the residence of the consultant or practitioner,

(b) as a crèche, day nursery or day centre,

(c) for the provision of education,

(d) for the display of works of art (otherwise than for sale or hire),

(e) as a museum,

(f) as a public library or public reading room,

(g) as a public hall or exhibition hall,

(h) for, or in connection with, public worship or religious instruction, (i) as a law court.

Class D2. Assembly and leisure

Use as —

(a) a cinema,

(b) a concert hall, (c) a bingo hall or casino,

(d) a dance hall,

(e) a swimming bath, skating rink, gymnasium or area for other indoor or outdoor sports or recreations, not involving motorised vehicles or firearms.

Sui Generis Uses

Examples of sui generis uses include (but are not exclusive to):

theatres, amusement arcades or centres, funfairs, launderettes, sale of fuel for motor vehicles, sale or display for sale of motor vehicles, taxi businesses or a business for the hire of motor vehicles, a scrapyards or the breaking of motor vehicles, hostels, retail warehouse clubs (where goods are sold, or displayed for sale, only to persons who are members of that club), night-clubs, or casinos.

Interpretation of Class C3

For the purposes of Class C3(a) “single household” shall be construed in accordance with section 258 of the Housing Act 2004.

Interpretation of Class C4

For the purposes of Class C4 a “house in multiple occupation” does not include a converted block of flats to which section 257 of the Housing Act 2004 applies but otherwise has the same meaning as in section 254 of the Housing Act 2004.