

**ORAL QUESTIONS TO THE CHAIRMAN OF DCC AT THE MEETING HELD ON
20 MAY 2021**

Question 1: From Alisa Igoe

Item 6, Land at South Eden Park Road

Reference: Page 21 - London Borough of Bromley Housing Strategy 2019 – 2029

"Lower paid workers, including those in key roles, are finding it very difficult to get accommodation they can afford within a reasonable travelling distance of the borough. As a result of this, the health and social care sectors, in particular, report difficulty recruiting and retaining staff"

Question:

In light of Bromley's own comments, this needs to support lower paid workers and in particular NHS workers who have supported us so magnificently during the pandemic, is it not vital to insist the developer complies with the condition to build 35% affordable housing at this large 143 unit development?

Chairman's Response

Under the terms of extant planning permission the developer can progress the development without any scheme of affordable housing having been agreed, because it has been demonstrated that the development is not viable at this point in time. However, by retaining condition 3 and securing a viability review mechanism through S106 legal agreement the Council has assurance that, should the development become more viable in the future, it may be able to provide some affordable homes or a payment in lieu towards off-site affordable housing.

Supplementary Question

At the DCC meeting on 20 October 2020, the applicant offered £345k in lieu of the 35% affordable housing condition which was a small amount of money for what would be approximately 50 homes. Do you consider this to be an adequate amount of money to build 50 homes elsewhere and would it also include having to buy the land for the homes?

Chairman's Response

No, I do not consider that amount of money to be at all adequate and that is even more reason to retain condition 3 and secure a viability review mechanism through the Section 106 Legal Agreement at a later date when the development could be more viable and therefore there could be more money available to build affordable housing.

Question 2: From Lauren Whiting

My question is in regard to HMOs, in particular those currently being developed in Biggin Hill.

Will Bromley Council introduce a local planning policy that will limit the density of this type of development?

Chairman's Response

Local Plan policies 4 and 9 and London Plan policy H9, would apply to planning applications for HMOs and we are discussing the issue of HMOs under item 12 on the agenda this evening. We have a policy in progress so we are taking the issue of HMOs very seriously.

Question 3: Professor Bernard Williams on behalf of Shortlands Golf Club

The BEAMS Report states in its conclusions 'the conservation area status would protect the Shortlands Golf Club (although this does have Metropolitan Open Space Status) thereby preserving the boundaries of the village as it was originally conceived and protecting the open space for future generations.' Other references to the golf course in the body of the BEAMS report are, however, noticeably sparse .

The Report also references the NPPF 2019, Para. 186 which states that "local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest."

Question

Does the Committee agree with the Trustees of Shortlands Golf Club and its highly qualified heritage consultant that the case for the inclusion of the Golf Course in the proposed CA has not been made in a manner which would satisfy the NPPF policy para.186 beyond question?

Chairman's Response

The DCC report sets out the recommendation for the adoption of the Shortlands Village Conservation Area including the golf club. The justification for including the golf club is set out in the BEAMS report with relevant elements cited in Table 1 (in response to the Golf Club's representation). As per paragraph 3.3 of the report, representations received show there was widespread support for the proposed Conservation Area. As noted in paragraphs 3.6 and 3.7, this included support from Historic England.

Question 4: From Alisa Igoe

Item 6, Land at South Eden Park Road

Reference: Page 26 - London Borough of Bromley Housing Strategy 2019 – 2029

"In April 2019 there were 1,556 households in temporary accommodation in Bromley. This figure more than doubled in five years. In April 2013, it was 764. Nearly 80% of those households include dependent children. Because there is so little affordable housing in Bromley, most temporary placements are outside the borough, 73% as at March 2020. Most of these out of borough placements are a significant distance away. Pressure on accommodation in the borough means that current policy is to place people (where possible) within 75 minutes travelling time from schools and up to 90 minutes from their place of work."

Question:

A minimum 75 minutes travel to school/90 minutes to work, places exceptional strain on low-income families. Will the Council follow its own policies, page 23 states "immediate target of 1,000 new affordable homes", by insisting the developer at South Eden Park Road comply and will Committee members please be asked to vote to retain the approximate 50 affordable homes?

Chairman's Response

Under the terms of extant planning permission, the developer can progress the development without any affordable housing, as it is not currently viable. However, the Officers recommendation to the Committee is that the application to remove condition 3 is refused so that viability can be re-visited at a later time and, potentially, some affordable housing can be secured.

Supplementary Question

In April 2019 there was 1,556 households in temporary accommodation. By the time of the Renewal, Recreation and Housing PDS Committee meeting in March 2021 the number had risen to 1800 households in temporary accommodation, a rise of 244. This is an incredible rise which could not be due solely to COVID. How many affordable homes required to build each year?

Chairman's Response

The number of affordable homes relates to major applications for developments of 11 or more units. In this borough, there is a requirement for applicants to build a minimum of 35% affordable housing for all major developments of 11 or more units. There is no set total figure for affordable housing.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Fawthrop

Are you aware that out of the number of homeless families quoted, approximately 400 of those are in settled accommodation through the More Homes Bromley project which entitles them to two years' of stable accommodation.

Chairman's Response

I was aware of that and we are doing more work to put homeless people, in particular those who have to stay in nightly paid accommodation into stable accommodation where they can stay for two years or so.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Wilkins

How many of those properties are out-of-borough? My understanding is that a large number of those are actually in Medway towns or other areas but not in-borough.

Chairman's Response

Some of them are out-of-borough in Medway towns and other places but you will be aware that all the modular housing that the Council has recently granted planning permission for is within borough including in the Crystal Palace Ward.

Question 5: From Lauren Whiting

How many HMO's are you aware of in Biggin Hill that are in the process of being purchased or completed and of those what are the names of the companies placing the tenants?

Chairman's Response

The DCC report appendix sets out publicly available information relating to HMOs at Biggin Hill. We are not able to share other information at this time. The Bromley planning application search function - <https://searchapplications.bromley.gov.uk/online-applications/> allows members of the public to search for any planning applications received, including applications to convert to HMOs. Even where a house is converted through permitted development, there may still be an application for a certificate of lawfulness, which may provide further details.

Question 6: From Professor Bernard Williams on behalf of Shortlands Golf Club

The Shortlands Golf Club and Shortlands Village have lived in peaceful co-existence for 125 years during which period this private members' Club has successfully maintained the course and its facilities in the excellent condition needed in order to retain a viable number of playing members. It has had Metropolitan Open Space Status for over 30 years.

Question

Can the officers please explain what they considered to be the potential adverse effects on the proposed Conservation Area of excluding the golf course when deciding to include it?

Chairman's Response

I draw your attention to my response to your first question, which referred to relevant parts of the report where justification for the Conservation Area is set out, including reasons why the golf club is recommended for inclusion. I am delighted that the Shortlands Golf Club and Shortlands Village have lived in peaceful co-existence for 125 years and I hope now with the Conservation Area status proposed, the two of you will live in peaceful co-existence for another 125 years at least.