

Title of meeting:	Planning Committee
Date of meeting:	22 nd July 2015
Subject:	Savoy Buildings
Report by:	Assistant Director of Culture and City Development
Ward affected:	Eastney & Craneswater

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To respond to the request of Full Council and to address the question raised during the Full Council meeting of the 7th July 2015.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the report is noted.

3. Background

- 3.1 In January 2015 the Planning Committee considered a planning application relating to the former Savoy buildings site, South Parade, Southsea. The application sought permission for the redevelopment of the site to form a mixed use development comprising of Retirement living(C3), Assisted Living (Extra Care)accommodation (C2) a ground floor retail unit(A1) and associated surface car parking spaces and landscaping. The officer recommendation was that planning permission should be granted however the Planning Committee overturned this recommendation and planning permission was refused.
- 3.2 The applicants appealed against the refusal and the appeal was dealt with by way of an informal Hearing on 21 May 2015. In considering the appeal the Inspector considered the main issues to be whether the proposals would: preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the East Southsea Conservation Area; preserve the settings of the Grade II listed terrace of buildings at 38-42 South Parade and South Parade Pier; cause any harm to the adjacent Sea Front Conservation Area, and; deliver any benefits sufficient to outweigh any harmful impacts.
- 3.3 The Inspector considered the proposal and found the scheme acceptable and the appeal was accordingly allowed. In coming to his decision he concluded that the proposal would enhance the character and appearance of the East Southsea Conservation Area and the Sea Front Conservation Area. In addition to enhancing the character and appearance of the ESCA, the proposal would take place in an accessible location and entail the re-use of previously developed land for a mix of uses. Further that the proposal would also include an energy efficient design. He considered that the provision of accommodation

to meet the requirements of older members of the community would increase the housing choice for some local residents whilst allowing them to maintain their independence. Further that the development would create employment opportunities and that incoming residents would increase footfall and local expenditure. The Inspector considered that the package of environmental, economic and social benefits must be weighed in the planning balance and gave this considerable weight. The Inspector was aware that there had been an officer recommendation of approval.

- 3.4 Whilst the decision of the Inspector to allow the appeal has been disappointing for a number of residents the Inspector did identify all the relevant issues and fully consider all relevant material considerations. His decision letter set out how he had considered all the relevant material considerations and the conclusions he had come to on all the key issues. Whilst it is accepted that the conclusion that the Inspector has come to is not in line with the Council's decisions nevertheless there is nothing in his decision making process that could reasonably be challenged. He has identified and considered all the key issues in coming to his conclusion and has not misguided himself on any points. Accordingly there is nothing that the Council could challenge this decision on.
- 3.5 Concern has been raised that the site was not included within the area covered by the Seafront Masterplan. It has been suggested that if it had been included in the Masterplan the development could have been stopped. The site was not included in the Masterplan boundary as it already had a permission and any reference would have just repeated that planning permission had been granted at appeal in 2007 for a residential development of 92 apartments and there had been a technical commencement of development on the site. If the site had been included in the Seafront Masterplan any reference to future development on the site would have had to reflect the permission that was in place and had a technical commencement.
- 3.6 In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework policies and policy documents should follow the approach of a presumption in favour of sustainable development so that development that is sustainable can be approved without delay. All policies in local plans and Supplementary Planning Documents must be positively worded and cannot seek to resist development or forms of development within an area.

Within the overarching roles that the planning system ought to play, a set of core land-use planning principles should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. These 12 principles are that planning should:

- be genuinely plan-led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings, with succinct local and neighbourhood plans setting out a positive vision for the future of the area. Plans should be kept up-to-date, and be based on joint working and co-operation to address larger than local issues. They should provide a practical framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made with a high degree of predictability and efficiency;

- not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives;
- proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth. Plans should take account of market signals, such as land prices and housing affordability, and set out a clear strategy for allocating sufficient land which is suitable for development in their area, taking account of the needs of the residential and business communities;
- always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;
- take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas,
- support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change, and encourage the reuse of existing resources, including conversion of existing buildings, and encourage the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy);
- contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework;
- encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value;
- promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas, recognising that some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage, or food production);
- conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations;
- actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable; and
- take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.

Work will shortly commence on the review of the current Portsmouth Plan, this will set a positive vision for the future of the city and provide a frame work to proactively support sustainable economic development for the next plan period to deliver homes and employment supported by the necessary infrastructure to the city.

4. Reasons for recommendations

- 4.1 The report is for information, it is considered that there is already a well-established group working across the LEP area to promote these and other key sectors.

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Signed by:
Assistant Director of Culture and City Development

Appendices:

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
14/00790/FUL	
APP/Z1775/W/15/3005296	