

**Case Officer:** James Kirkham                      **Ward(s):** Banbury Neithrop

**Applicant:** Cherwell District Council

**Ward Member(s):** Councillor Matt Johnstone  
Councillor Surinder Dhési

**Proposal:** Extension to existing leisure centre for use as cafe/ library area ancillary to the leisure use. Library currently exists but is being relocated.

**Committee Date:** 17/03/2016                      **Recommendation:** Approve

## 1. Application Site and Locality

- 1.1 The application site is Woodgreen Leisure Centre which consists of a leisure centre with outdoor pool, indoor bowls hall, gym and exercise studio. It also has a library situated within the building. It is accessed from a roundabout on Woodgreen Avenue and has car parking situated to the north and west of the building.
- 1.2 The building is a mix of architectural styles including a main two storey pitched building with flat roof and mono-pitched extensions around the building. It is constructed with a mix of materials including brick and render.
- 1.3 The Banbury Early Intervention Hub exists to the north of the site and is a modern building with a mix of mono-pitched roofs. The building is predominantly finished in a blue and cream render. A new housing development is currently under construction to the west of the site (approved under 13/01880/CDC). This includes a number of properties facing onto the vehicular access to the site and then the rear elevations of a number of properties facing onto the western boundary of the site.

## 2. Description of Proposed Development

- 2.1 The current application seeks permission to erect a new single storey extension to the northern side of the building adjacent to the library and exercise studio. This would be located on an area currently laid to grass and hard standing.
- 2.2 The proposed extension would be part of a wider project for the remodelling of the inside of the building and would allow for a new main entrance foyer to be formed, the upgrading of the exercise studio and for the existing library to be relocated within the building and linked to a new café area.
- 2.3 The extension would be modest in scale compared to the existing building being 7.5 metres deep by 10.4 metres wide. It would be a single storey structure with a flat roof. It would be finished in timber cladding. The existing flat roof part of the building the extension adjoins would be rendered and painted white.

- 2.4 As part of the works an existing door in the western elevation would be altered to be a window to serve a new breakout room as part of the internal reorganisation of the building

### 3. Relevant Planning History

<u>App Ref</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Status</u>
11/00956/CDC	1no. banner sign and 1no. freestanding sign	PER

### 4. Response to Publicity

- 4.1 The application has been advertised by way of neighbour letter and site notice. To date no comments have been received from members of the public.

### 5. Response to Consultation

#### Cherwell District Council

- 5.1 **Landscape Services** – No comments at the time of writing

- 5.2 **Ecologist** – No comments at the time of writing.

#### Oxfordshire County Council

- 5.3 **Highways** – No objections

#### Other External Consultees:

- 5.4 **Thames Water** – No objections. They recommend the installation of a properly maintained fat trap on all catering facilities.

- 5.5 **Natural England** – No comments and refer to their standing advice if the development is likely to affect protected species.

### 6. Relevant National and Local Planning Policy and Guidance

#### 6.1 Development Plan Policies:

The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 was formally adopted by Cherwell District Council on 20th July 2015 and provides the strategic planning policy framework for the District to 2031. The Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 replaced a number of the 'saved' policies of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 though many of its policies are retained and remain part of the Development Plan. Planning legislation requires planning decisions to be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The relevant planning policies of Cherwell District's statutory Development Plan are set out below:

#### Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 (adopted July 2015)

PSD1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development  
BSC5: Area Renewal

Policy Banbury 10: Bretch Hill Regeneration Area  
ESD10: Protection of Natural Environment  
ESD15: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment

Saved Policies of the Cherwell Local Plan (Adopted 1996)

C28: New development design  
C30: Design Control

## 6.2 Other Material Planning Considerations:

National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) - National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) – This sets out regularly updated guidance from central Government to provide assistance in interpreting national planning policy and relevant legislation.

## 7. Appraisal

7.1 Officers' consider the following matters to be relevant to the determination of this application:

- Principle of Development
- Design, Layout and Appearance
- Neighbouring Amenity
- Highways

### Principle

7.2 The site lies within the Bretch Hill Regeneration Area, as identified in the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1. Policy BSC5: Area Renewal and Policy Banbury 10: Bretch Hill Regeneration of the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 states planning permission will be granted for small scale redevelopment proposals that would result in improvements to the existing community facilities and services. Paragraph C.178 of the Local Plan Part 1 states that community facilities in the Woodgreen area provide an opportunity for improvements and regeneration to maximise the use of buildings by co-locating/sharing facilities. Policy Banbury 10 goes onto state that the layout of new development should enable a high degree of integration and connectivity with the existing communities. In this context there is considered to be policy support to allow the extension of community facilities such as the library and leisure centre. The principle of the development is therefore considered to be acceptable subject to other considerations.

### Design, Layout and Appearance

7.3 Policy ESD15 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 states new development will be expected to complement and enhance the character of its context and states all development will be required to meet high design standards. It goes onto state that proposals should be designed to integrate with existing streets and buildings should be clearly configured to create defined active public frontages. Saved Policy C28 and C30 of the 1996 Local Plan also seek to ensure high quality development.

- 7.4 The existing building does not have a strong unified appearance or character. It consists of a number of elements that have been altered and extended over time. The surrounding area also has a mixed character and appearance. The scale and form of the proposed extension would be in keeping with the existing building and the wider area. It would create a new clearly defined main entrance to the leisure centre through the use of different materials and tall glazed windows. This would help to provide some additional legibility to the site and modernise the appearance of the building. It would also have the additional benefit that it would also provide an active frontage and surveillance over the car park to the north of the site.
- 7.5 Overall the design of the extension is considered to be acceptable would improve the appearance of the building when entering the site via the vehicular access to the north of the site and would not be out of character with the surrounding area.

#### Neighbouring Amenity

- 7.6 Policy ESD15 of the Local Plan seek to ensure development proposals provide a good standard of amenity for both existing and proposed occupants of land and buildings relating to privacy, outlook, natural light and noise.
- 7.7 The proposed development would be visible from the new residential properties which are being constructed to the west of the site. Immediately to the west of the application site, the rear elevations of two new two-storey properties face onto the area where the new extension is proposed. Given the single storey scale of the extension, intervening distance and screening the proposed extension is not considered to significantly impact on the outlook or light to these properties.
- 7.8 The new ground floor window on the side elevation of the existing building would face these properties. However it is not considered to significantly impact on the amenity of these properties in terms of overlooking or loss of privacy given the fact that the window is situated at ground floor and would be screened by the existing boundary fence between the application site and these properties
- 7.9 The proposals are considered to be a sufficient distance from the other surrounding building to ensure they would not significantly impact on their amenity.

#### Highways

- 7.10 Paragraph 32 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should take account of whether safe and suitable access to a site can be achieved for all people however development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe. Policy SLE4 of the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 states that all development, where reasonable to do so, should facilitate the use of sustainable modes of transport to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling. It goes onto state that development which is not suitable for the roads that serve the development and which have a severe traffic impact will not be supported.
- 7.11 The proposed development would lead to some additional facilities at the site including a café and improved exercise studio provision. Whilst this might lead to some modest increase in use of the building it is not considered that this is likely to be significant and some users will come from the nearby housing or use the facilities in linked trips with existing provision at the leisure centre. The proposed development will not impact on the existing parking serving the site and sufficient parking is considered to be provided around the building. The Highway Authority has raised no objection to the application.

## Engagement

7.12 With regard to the duty set out in paragraphs 186 and 187 of the Framework, the application was acceptable as submitted. It is considered that the duty to be positive and proactive has been discharged through the efficient and timely determination of the application.

## **8. Conclusion**

8.1 The proposed development would improve the facilities at the application site to serve the local and wider population and there is planning policy support for this. The design and appearance of the extension will update the appearance of the building and provide a new entrance to the building. The proposal would not lead to a significant detrimental impact on neighbouring properties or highway matters. Overall the development is considered to constitute sustainable development and is considered to be acceptable.

## **9. Recommendation**

1 The development to which this permission relates shall be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason - To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2 Except where otherwise stipulated by condition, the development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the following plans and documents: Application forms and drawings numbered: 2168/100, 2168/101, 2168/111, 2168/112, 2168/122 and 2168/123.

Reason - For the avoidance of doubt, to ensure that the development is carried out only as approved by the Local Planning Authority and to comply with Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework

## **STATEMENT OF ENGAGEMENT**

In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015 and paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012), this decision has been taken by the Council having worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive way as set out in the report and the decision has been made in an efficient and timely way.

**CONTACT OFFICER:** James Kirkham

**TELEPHONE NO:** 01295 221896