

Planning Committee

Wednesday, 30 July 2025

7.00 pm

Present:

Cllr Lee Croxton (Chair)

Cllr Narinderjit Singh Thandi (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: Gurdip Ram Bungar
Aaron Elliott
Gary Harding
Samir Jassal
Lyn Milner
Peter Scollard
Frank Wardle

Note: Councillors: John Burden, Shane Mochrie-Cox, Jo Hart, Baljit Hayre, Tony Rana and Alison Williams were also in attendance.

Shazad Ghani	Head of Planning
Faye Walsh	Team Leader (Development Management)
Richard Hart	Team Leader (Development Management)
Laura Caiels	Assistant Head of Legal Services
Karen Gingles	Committee Service Officer (Minutes)

12. Apologies for absence

No apologies of absence were received.

13. To sign the Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on Wednesday 2 July 2025 were signed by the Chair.

14. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

15. Planning applications for determination by the Committee

15.1 20250369 - Peacock Public House, 78 Peacock Street, Gravesend

The Committee were presented with application 20250369 - Peacock Public House, 78 Peacock Street, Gravesend. The application was for the change of use from Public House (sui generis) to a Place of Worship or Religious Instruction (Class F1) at the ground floor. There were no structural changes proposed to the outside of the building.

The Head of Planning updated Members on key areas of the report:

- The location was part of a resident parking scheme.
- The upper floors of the building were residential, which would remain so and were not part of the application.
- Alterations were proposed to the ground floor, accommodating a prayer hall for up to 65 worshipers. The applicant did not expect the mosque to be at full capacity for all prayer sessions.
- The busiest prayer was expected to be the Friday midday prayer. The proposed mosque would host 5 prayer sessions a day, plus 2 prayers for Eid during the year. The applicant also wished to hold educational activities for up to 30 children, midweek in the early evenings and on weekend mornings.
- The earliest prayer would be at 4am with the latest prayer at 10.45pm during the summer solstice. During the winter solstice the earliest prayer would be 6.45am and latest at 8pm.
- The application accorded to paragraph 98 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- Research had shown that noise impact of attendees travelling to and from the mosque was deemed to be low. If approved, conditions were in place to manage noise within the building.
- KCC Highways had no objections to the proposal. The GBC Parking department were content that the parking restrictions already in place, would still be appropriate if approved.
- The site was considered to be in a sustainable location with a condition proposed to encourage active travel and responsible parking.
- Temporary planning permission was recommended to assess both noise levels and parking impact to the area.

The Head of Planning informed Members that the recommendation was set out within the report to grant temporary planning permission, however noted a couple of modifications were proposed:

- To take a proportionate approach to travel and parking plan with the focus in terms of monitoring to be of the main prayers (Friday midday prayer).
- In order to allow worshipers to leave the building in a safe manner after evening prayer, it was proposed that the hour of operation be changed from 11pm to 11.30pm.

The Chair invited Committee questions for clarification:

- Members queried the evidence provided to evaluate the potential noise impact to the local amenity. The Head of Planning explained that the Environmental Health department at GBC had analysed evidence provided by the applicant. The conclusion reached was that there was not expected to be a significant impact. Temporary permission was proposed to monitor this. The documents relating to noise assessment were publicly available on the Council's portal.
- The Committee made reference to paragraph 6.42 – 6.45 of the report which noted KCC's recommendations in respect of parking provision and queried whether this has been considered. The Head of Planning noted that KCC's parking provision

recommendation was based upon best practice, explaining that Planning officers had given consideration to matters such as active travel and the sustainability of the site.

- Members had concerns with the safety of those using Parrock Street car park, crossing the main road to walk to the proposed mosque. The Head of Planning noted that KCC had expressed no concerns regarding the functionality of the road or any safety issues with the crossing.

The Committee heard the views of registered speakers in favour of the application and had their questions answered:

- Members sought clarity on the number of expected attendees at the early prayer sessions and the level of noise this may generate. The speaker expected no more than 10-15 visitors for the early prayers. The applicant had employed sound consultants who had carried out surveys on other established mosques with recordings. It was believed the noise impact would be minimal.
- With 600 Muslims in the Town Ward, Members queried how the calculation of 10-15 attendees for morning prayers had been reached. The speaker noted that the figure was the applicant's expectation, noting that not all members of the faith attended a place of worship. The capacity of the prayer hall was 65, but none of the prayer sessions were expected to reach capacity.
- The Committee expressed concern in relation to parking in an already congested narrow street. The speaker updated that many patrons were expected to attend on foot rather than by car.
- Following further discussion, the speaker informed Members that despite expected numbers being low for some prayers, other mosques in Gravesend often had Friday prayers outside, due to capacity being full, so the proposed mosque would alleviate pressure.
- The Committee wondered how the mosque would advocate quiet transfer to and from the mosque in the early hours. The speaker advised that other mosques had volunteers to assist with traffic flow and similar would be expected at the proposed site. The Head of Planning noted there was a condition proposed to manage this concern with traffic and parking management.

The Committee heard the views of registered speakers against the application.

The Committee heard the views of the Leader of the Council, Cllr John Burden.

The Chair invited comments from non-board Members.

With permission from the Chair, the Head of Planning read a statement from Cllr Ejaz Aslam, who was unable to attend the meeting.

The Chair invited further discussion from the Committee:

- Members raised concerns regarding the availability of parking near to the proposed mosque, as well as the ability of those dropping off children to park in a safe location so that children could leave and enter private motor vehicles safely.

- Members also raised concerns regarding the noise disruption to local residents as a result of attendees to the mosque entering/leaving, especially at unsociable hours e.g. early in the morning.
- Points were raised regarding the consideration of an alternative venue, and the possible loss of Parrock Street car parking. The Head of Planning clarified that these matters were not a material consideration in relation to this application, as such they were not considered further.

RESOLVED that the application be DELEGATED to the Head of Planning in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair to be **REFUSED** on the following grounds:

- Noise
- Highway safety
- Parking concerns

Note: Haris Kasuji (agent), Ansar Rasif and Ashfaque Hussain spoke in favour of the application. Ektaveen Thandi (resident) spoke against the application.

15.2 20250167 – Milton Place Car Park, Gravesend

The Committee considered application 20250167 – Milton Place Car Park, Gravesend. The application was for the construction of 76 dwellings, consisting of 61 apartments and 15 dwellings, with associated infrastructure and open space improvements. The site consisted of the former BT Depot car park, Milton Place public car park, Ordnance Road open space and including the skate park.

The Team Leader outlined key areas of the report:

- The apartment block was proposed to the west of the site with the houses centrally located.
- Enhancements would be made to the local amenity with new tree planting along Milton Place.
- The apartment block proposed would be up to 4 story's high and of staggered height. Houses proposed were a mix of detached and semi-detached properties, varying between 2 and 3 story's in height. Subject to approval, conditions were proposed to ensure materials, windows and doors were submitted and approved.
- The proposed development would bring 76 new dwellings to the borough.
- The housing would be allocated by GBC Housing and was subject to Housing Policy.
- 30% of the properties would be Affordable Housing Social Rent with the remainder, affordable housing subject to Homes England funding.
- The proposal meant the reduction of car park spaces from 148 spaces to 84 spaces. Ordnance Road car park would also see a reduction of 3 spaces to 27 spaces.
- The development would create a new vehicular access point onto Milton place along with an internal road network. No objection had been received from Parking Services or KCC Highways in respect of access or parking provision.
- The proposal meant there was a reduction in open space, however the quality of the remaining space would be improved upon. Along with the retention of the skate park, linear garden spaces were proposed with an informal boulder/log play area.
- The site was located within the Gravesend Riverside Conservation Area, next to the Milton Place Conservation Area and adjacent to scheduled ancient monuments. There were also a number of listed buildings within the vicinity. It was concluded that

the proposal would cause less than substantial harm to heritage assets. However, this was outweighed by a number of public benefits, including the regeneration of derelict land and creation of new homes. There were no objections received from Historic England or GBC Conservation, subject to conditions.

- It was highlighted that the Lewis property was undersized, however since the report was published, the property type had been amended to become policy compliant. As such the officer recommendation had been amended to remove this matter.

The Chair invited Member questions for clarification:

- Members queried whether there would be residential parking. The Head of Planning advised that each dwelling house would have its own parking in addition to the 84 spaces and the 8 spaces for the Independent Living properties.
- Following questions relating to flood risk at the nearby promenade, the Head of Planning explained that the applicant had worked with KCC on sustainable urban drainage. There was a requirement to have a sustainable urban drainage system (SuD) at the east of the car park.
- Members noted the loss of open space and queried if this loss was reflected in the S106 contribution. The Head of Planning advised that there was a contribution towards leisure provision which would be used for improvement to the immediate open space and skate park, plus also towards the development of Cascades Leisure Centre. Plans for improvement to the skate park included sensitive landscaping for active surveillance to mitigate anti-social behaviour, providing a greater sense of safety.
- Consideration was given to the existing skate park users with concern they could be a target for complaints from new residents. The Head of Planning reassured Members that the scheme had been designed to ensure residents were not impacted by the skate park, so complaints were not anticipated.
- Members queried the reduction of the public car park and whether this was a concern in terms of the wider parking scheme in the town. The Head of Planning clarified that the Parking Services team had been consulted and had advised there was sufficient capacity within the system to be able to reduce the scale of this car park.
- Members made reference to the proposed hedging surrounding the skate park and the maintenance commitment. The Head of Planning updated that this matter would be addressed via a landscaping condition. The open space was currently Council maintained and once the development was completed, there was an expectation that elements of the site would still be maintained by the Council. Such elements required full clarification and needed to be secured by condition and form part of the S106 agreement. The landscaping condition would enable any landscaping detail to be considered further before final decisions were made.

The Committee heard the views of registered speakers in favour of the application.

The Committee heard the views of registered speakers against the application.

The Chair invited further discussion from the Committee:

- Members raised a few concerns in regard to; the loss of parking impacting the neighbouring school, the reduction of green space, the potential increase in traffic with a new access road and the design of the buildings not being in keeping with the

Conservation Area. The Head of Planning acknowledged the loss of green space but noted that the quality of the open space would be greatly improved. It was reiterated that KCC posed no objection to the access road and the reduction in parking spaces. Members were assured that there was an expectation of high standards, with a condition to secure further details of the facades.

- Members felt the scheme overall was positive for the borough offering a mix of accommodation.

The Committee heard the views of the Leader of the Council, Cllr John Burden.

RESOLVED that the application be DELEGATED to the Head of Planning to grant Planning **PERMISSION** subject to the finalisation of planning conditions (including making any necessary modification, deletion or addition to the proposed conditions) and completion of a S106 legal agreement.

Note: Chloe Houston (Applicant) and Paul White (GBC Senior Development manager) spoke in favour of the application. Mr Pieroni, Glen White and Patrizia Sigot (local residents) spoke against the application.

15.3 20250141 – Coachfields, Northfleet Green, Northfleet

The Committee considered application 20250141 – Coachfields, Northfleet Green, Northfleet. The application was for the change of use of an existing equestrian feed barn and equipment store to a residential dwelling and associated works. The Team Leader updated that since the report was published, the applicant had agreed to the change of description of the application from 'conversion' to 'change of use' to accurately reflect the scheme to Members.

The Team Leader updated Committee of key areas of the report:

- The site was located within Green Belt and was currently in equestrian use.
- The location of the site within the wider context, had a mix of agricultural and equestrian uses and isolated dwellings within the vicinity.
- The proposal was to introduce windows and doors into the barn along with garden hedging and domestic paraphernalia where it was currently open grass void of development
- The site met the definition of Green Belt as set out in Annex 2 of NPPF (2024) however, the site was also required to meet the requirements of paragraph 155 of the NPPF. As outlined in the report the application failed to meet paragraph 155 (c).
- Consideration had been given to paragraph 154 of the NPPF in relation to Green Belt however, the application did not meet the criteria of paragraph 154 (g), due to the harm to the openness of the Green Belt. It was noted that developing the site into a dwelling would mean the introduction of windows, doors, car parking, garden and other residential paraphernalia, undermining the openness of the Green Belt. As set out in the report, the development also failed to comply with NPPF paragraph 154 (c) and (h) iv, thereby failing to meet any of the exceptions for building on Green Belt land.
- The proposal failed to comply with the requirements of the Habitat Regulations.

The Chair invited Member questions for clarification:

- Members sought clarity on the age of the building. It was confirmed that the building had been constructed fairly recently, with planning permission granted in 2019.
- Reference was made to a previously approved application in Grey Belt land in Pear Tree Lane, Shorne whereby Members felt the stance on impact to openness was not a consideration, and thereby against this application was inconsistent. The Head of Planning advised that in the case of Pear Tree Lane the application met the requirements of Grey Belt, whereas this application did not meet the requirements of Grey Belt or paragraphs 154 and 155 of the NPPF.
- Members queried how there could be a harm to openness when there were existing structures covering neighbouring fields in which residents had previously objected to. The Team Leader advised the structures in question were agricultural poly tunnels and were not deemed as inappropriate in the Green Belt as they met 154 (a) of the NPPF as an exception, as were buildings for agriculture and forestry.
- Following further discussion surrounding the proposal's impact to openness, the Head of Planning clarified that when the exceptions within the NPPF were engaged, they were caveated with the consideration to the harm to openness. If it was found that there was a harm to openness, as there was in this case, the direction of the NPPF was to refuse an application.

The Committee heard the views of registered speakers in favour of the application.

The Committee heard the views of the Leader of the Council, Cllr John Burden.

The Chair invited further discussion from the Committee:

- Members felt there was inconsistency with applications being approved in Green Belt and this particular case there was no increase in footprint. The Head of Planning explained that in the case of this application, in line with NPPF guidance, the proposal did not meet the requirements of Grey Belt (Para. 155) and was therefore considered under Green Belt (Para. 154).
- Members raised concern that the structure in question was not an old barn but in fact a fairly recent structure, in which the owners now wished to develop into a property within the Green Belt. It was felt that agreement to such a proposal may start a precedence in development and eroding Green Belt land. Members expressed that they would not want to see a loophole established for developers.

RESOLVED that the application be **REFUSED** for the following reasons:

- Does not meet the requirements of Para 154(g) or 154(h) iv. due to harm to openness.
- Encroachment to the countryside.
- Does not meet requirements of Para 155 (c).
- Undermines spatial layout and character of the area.
- Unacceptable private amenity space.
- Fails to comply with the requirements of the Habitat Regulations (SAMMS)

Note: Peter Biggs spoke in favour of the application.

15.4 20250262 – The Builders Yard, Lower Range Road, Gravesend

The Committee considered application 20250262 – The Builders Yard, Lower Range Road, Gravesend. The application was for to allow for the variation of condition 2 attached to planning permission reference number 20190520 (the erection of a three-storey building to form 14no. two-bedroom self-contained flats). The variation was to allow an increase in building height, a new ramped and stepped approach to both principal entrances along with omitting private gardens to Units 2, 3, 4 & 5.

The Team Leader outlined key areas of the report:

- The site was located in a former builder's yard at the eastern end of Lower Range Road.
- The surrounding area was a mix of 19th and 20th Century residential dwellings and to the east were various commercial uses
- The change proposed to increase the building height by 1.6 metres, would enable flood water to pass under the building. This alteration was required to satisfy flood risk requirements. Ramps and stepped access were proposed for both entrances to compensate for the raised height of the building.
- The changes proposed posed no detrimental impact on the character or appearance of the area or to the privacy of the neighbouring amenity.
- It was noted that the loss of private gardens was not a planning policy requirement for flats and the garden space would become communal gardens for residents which complies with planning policy.

The Chair invited Member questions for clarification:

- Members queried why flooding had not been a consideration when the initial planning permission was obtained. The Team Leader updated that the previous application had a condition in place to ensure the ground level was a certain height. After the site changed ownership, the current applicant having reviewed the condition relating to flood risk understood the only way to address this condition was to raise the height of the building, which necessitated some additional minor changes.
- Members noted that Gravesham's design guide, Design for Gravesham 2024 had not been referenced in the report. It was queried whether condition 3 fitted with the new design code. The Team Leader explained that the initial application had been approved and implemented on site lawfully. Consideration would be given to Design for Gravesham 2024 to ensure the amendments were in line with the guide. The Head of Planning clarified that the applicant would be required to submit a further application to discharge condition 3. When this occurred, the applicant would be required to meet Design for Gravesham guidance, which would be included as an informative, so this was clear.

RESOLVED that the application be granted **PERMISSION** subject to the conditions set out in the report and to **DELEGATE** authority to the Head of Planning to make any necessary modifications, deletion or addition to the proposed conditions.

15.5 20250438 – The Hive, Northfleet

The Committee considered application 20250438 – The Hive, Northfleet. The application was for the enhancement of the thermal performance and to renew the waterproofing system on the main roof, removing some of the existing vent channels, replacing the existing edge protection with new freestanding edge protection, changing the capping to a new GRP trim system, and converting the north elevation door into a window.

The Team Leader highlighted key areas of the report noting that the proposed small changes would improve the energy efficiency of the building. In addition, 55 solar panels were proposed for the roof area to create more green energy for the building.

The Chair invited Member comments and questions:

- Members felt the improvements would be beneficial and a positive change. It was queried whether the residents would benefit for the addition of solar panels. The Team Leader explained this was not something that the Planners were able to pass comment on but advised that this could be confirmed via the housing/property team, outside of the meeting. Members noted that solar panels may assist with communal lighting and therefore potentially reduce service charges for residents.

RESOLVED that the application be granted **PERMISSION** subject to the conditions set out in the report and to **DELEGATE** authority to the Head of Planning to make any necessary modifications, deletion or addition to the proposed conditions.

16. Planning applications determined under delegated powers by the Director (Environment)

A schedule showing applications determined by the Director (Environment) under delegated powers had been published on the Council's website.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 10:10pm