

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning Committee held on Wednesday, 14 August 2013 at 6.00pm in the Walker Room, Meeting Point House, Telford

PRESENT: Councillors J C Minor (Chairman), N A Dugmore, J Loveridge, A A Meredith (as substitute for Councillor I T W Fletcher), C P R Mollett (as substitute for Councillor R T Kiernan), G C W Reynolds, S A W Reynolds and B J Thompson (as substitute for Councillor A S Jhawar) and C R Turley.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors A J Eade (for planning application TWC/2013/0312) and V A Fletcher (for planning applications TWC/2013/0154 and TWC/2013/0448).

PC-020 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 24 July 2013 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

PC-021 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors I T W Fletcher, A S Jhawar and R T Kiernan.

PC-022 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor N A Dugmore declared an interest in planning application TWC/2013/0154 as he was Chair of the Granville Management Committee, however, as he had not been involved in any discussions regarding this application, he indicated that he would not be withdrawing from the meeting for that item.

With reference to planning application TWC/2013/0448, Councillors S A W Reynolds and B J Thompson advised that they were members of Wrockwardine Wood and Trench Parish Council but stated that, in the circumstances, they would not be withdrawing from the meeting for that item.

Councillor C R Turley indicated that as a member of the Granville Management Committee and Chair of the Council's Housing, Economy & Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee which was scrutinising waste procurement in the borough, he would withdraw from the meeting for the determination of planning application TWC/2013/0154.

PC-023 DEFERRED/WITHDRAWN APPLICATIONS

Councillor S A W Reynolds expressed disappointment that the design for planning application TWC/2013/0448 sought to demolish historic buildings rather than seek to preserve them. She proposed that the application be deferred for further discussion between Planning Officers and the Applicant with regard to restoration and conversion. The proposal was seconded by Councillor B J Thompson and it was unanimously

RESOLVED - that determination of planning application TWC/2013/0448 be deferred to a future meeting of the Planning Committee to enable Planning Officers to discuss the scheme with the Applicant with the aim of preserving the current buildings and achieving a design more sympathetic to the character of the area.

PC-024 SITE VISITS

None.

PC-025 PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR DETERMINATION

Members had received a schedule of planning applications to be determined by the Committee and fully considered each report and the supplementary information tabled at the meeting regarding planning applications TWC/2013/0154, TWC/2013/0312 and TWC/2013/0448.

- (a) TWC/2013/0154 - Granville Landfill, Grange Lane, Redhill, Shropshire, TF2 9PB

In accordance with his declaration of interest Councillor C R Turley left the room during determination of this application.

This was an application for the development of a waste transfer station with the erection of a refuse vehicle depot, office building and ancillary works. The application was originally submitted when the applicant was one of the three bidders for the Council's municipal waste contract. However, the applicant had since withdrawn from that process but had decided to continue with the planning application from a commercial perspective. The proposals were comprehensively detailed in the report. An update report was tabled, setting out additional information regarding the planning history of the site, further planning policy considerations, need for the facility in the borough, and providing clarification of the concluding paragraphs of the main report. A site visit had also been undertaken in the afternoon prior to the meeting taking place.

Cllr V A Fletcher, adjoining Ward Member, addressed the Board to support the recommendation to refuse the application on the grounds that the volume of heavy goods vehicles accessing the site along Castle Farm Way to the M54 junction 4 would have a detrimental effect on residents in that area of Priorslee ward and could cause road safety hazards. She also expressed concern that the proposals would significantly delay the restoration of the Country Park and would have a detrimental impact on the environment and landscape. Councillor Fletcher also considered that more appropriate locations were available for the development and that the application was contrary to local and national planning policy.

Mr A Collinge, the Applicant's Agent, spoke in support of the application, commenting upon the time-limited nature of the application, lack of objection from Council departments or the Environment Agency, rejection of alternative sites, lack of waste policy, ecological value and restoration of the Country Park, design and enhancement of access and nearby larger developments.

The Planning Officer referred Members to the main report, particularly highlighting the planning policy context, which emphasised locational factors, and consultation responses from the Environment Agency, Highways Engineer and Parks and Open Spaces Officer. He suggested that Members consider whether there was a proven need for a waste transfer station in the area and, if so, whether this site was an appropriate location. In this regard, he contended that the alternative site analysis could be more comprehensive and pointed out that the location of a waste transfer station at this location would not only have a significant adverse impact on the local landscape, but would also frustrate and delay the Council's ambitions for the expansion of the Country Park. It was also the Planning Officer's view that co-locational benefits had not been sufficiently demonstrated and, although the visual impact would be modest, the presence of a waste transfer station at this location would conflict with Green Network policies. Furthermore, whilst the compensation measures proposed were welcomed, on balance it was the Planning Officer's view that the Green Network and future expectations for increased recreational amenity in the area outweighed the proposals.

The Assistant Director: Planning Specialist drew Members' attention to the update report tabled at the meeting, particularly regarding the planning policy background. He noted:-

- the revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy
- that PPS10 was currently being consulted upon by the Government and advised Members that until the revised draft statement was finalised their decision should be based upon the current document;
- the potential for an intensification of waste related activity alongside the Borough's only Country Park and whether future waste management facilities should be located in a more urban setting;
- the subtle difference between the Council's Highways Engineer not objecting to the proposal and the Applicant's Agent's verbal assertion that it was supported;
- whether the physical enhancements offered by the applicant outweighed the protection of the Green Network and restoration of the Country Park; and
- traffic movements would undoubtedly impact upon the tranquillity and peaceful enjoyment of the Local Nature Reserve.

During the course of the debate, Members voiced their collective concerns regarding traffic movements, whether the need for the facility at this site had been proven, the adequacy of the analysis of alternative sites and the opinion that waste facilities should be located in an urban area, protection of the Green Network, noise impact upon the tranquillity of the Local Nature Reserve, frustration to the restoration of the Country Park and public rights of way.

On being put to the vote it was, by a majority:

RESOLVED – that planning application TWC/2013/0154 be refused for the following reasons:-

1. **The proposed development would have a negative impact upon the character, appearance and amenity of the Green Network, the wider**

local area and Granville Country Park. The presence of the proposed WTS/workshop buildings and waste transfer operations at Granville for some 14-15 years after landfill tipping has ceased would delay the overall completion of the landfill reclamation proposals and the Council's wider plans to extend the Granville Country Park and green space designation and bring it into beneficial use. Despite some localised environmental benefits immediately at the site, there would be no significant community and environmental benefits arising from the development and no exceptional circumstances that would outweigh the protection and aims of Green Network/green space and as such the proposals is contrary to WLP policies OL3, OL4 and OL5, Core Strategy policy CS11, Joint Structure Plan policy P67, the NPPF and PPS10 as well as Telford & Wrekin Council's aspirations of restoring this area to landscape and recreational uses.

- 2. The applicant has failed to fully demonstrate that there are no preferable alternative sites and hence the proposed development would be contrary to PPS10.**

(b) TWC/2013/0312 - 9 Woodcote, Telford, Shropshire, TF10 9BW

The Council's Highways Development Team Leader was present for this item of business.

This proposal sought planning permission to change the use of vacant land to a permanent travellers site. The proposals included hardstanding for 4 chalets, spaces for 3 caravans, a permanent amenity/day room block, the erection of a small package sewage treatment plant and provision for parking for 4 cars.

Councillor A J Eade, Ward Member, had requested that the application be determined by the Planning Committee; the application had subsequently been deferred at the meeting of the Committee on 3 July 2013 to enable officers to assess highways issues raised at that meeting and to enable the Highways Engineer to attend.

Councillor M Roberts, representing Chetwynd Aston and Woodcote Parish Council, spoke to oppose the application on the grounds of traffic generation, traffic speeds, appropriateness of the site, future development at the site, perceived loss of value of neighbouring property, sustainability and referred to the content of objections posted on the Council's e-Planning website.

Cllr A J Eade addressed the Committee to oppose the application on the grounds of planning and sustainability. He referred to the Government's Planning Policy for Traveller Sites guidance, particularly paragraphs relating to sustainability (11), green belt (14 and 15) and development in open countryside (23). Councillor Eade also referred to the planning history at the site, highways issues, recent acquisitions by the Council for traveller sites, and procedural issues.

Mr K Saxon, a local resident, also spoke in opposition to the application. He referred to the Council's Co-Operative values in terms of the volume of objections received.

Mr Saxon urged the Committee to consider traffic speed and the number and severity of road traffic accidents in the vicinity, many of which had not been recorded by the Police.

The Planning Officer drew Members' attention to the update report tabled at the meeting which summarised additional neighbour objections and comments from the Local Highway Authority and Planning Officer upon the contents of a letter received from a firm of solicitors on behalf of a neighbour (also tabled). He particularly drew attention to assertions that the applicable visibility calculations exceeded those advocated by current design guidance and commented upon the inability to verify accident data not recorded by the Police. The Planning Officer noted that the application was supported by the Council's Gypsy and Traveller Officer and advised that there was a demonstrable need for traveller pitches in the borough, which would not be met by recent land acquisitions for transit sites; no site allocations had been identified as part of the Local Development Framework or "Shaping Places" plan. It was acknowledged that the application site was located in open countryside and sustainability concerns in this regard were noted, however, he considered that the application generally conformed with the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Policy for Traveller Sites. The Planning Officer also considered that if Members were minded to approve planning permission at this site, Officers sought authorisation to seek an additional planning condition or Section 106 Agreement to restrict the occupancy of the residential units to the applicant and named family members and their dependents.

A Member of the Committee sought to table an independent traffic survey. The Chairman noted that this was received after the deadline for submission and was of the opinion that the documentation should have been submitted as part of the consultation process. Accordingly he advised that the document should not weight Members' views during their deliberations.

During the debate Members expressed conflicting opinions, with some Members expressing concerns regarding anecdotal accident data, the accuracy and timeliness of the traffic management survey, the impact of detrunking the A41, history of refusals at the site, demonstration of need, and parking issues. Conversely, other Members considered that a demonstrable need for the site existed and felt that the application accorded with guidance in the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites; in addition the proposals would widen the site access and enhance safety for towing vehicles by setting entrance gates 14m back from the road, accidents were noted to be largely due to human error or poor driving and it was further noted that fears for future development at the site could not be considered as part of this application.

The Chairman invited the Highways Development Team Leader to respond to the highways concerns raised by Members. The Highways Development Team Leader advised that:-

- The location points of the 2009 speed surveys were not critical to the Highway Authority's recommendation to approve subject to conditions because the proposed visibility splays were achievable in terms of meeting current guidance (Manual for Streets and Manual for Streets 2).
- Speeding issues were matters for Police enforcement.

- All reported accidents which had taken place within a 300m radius of the site during the preceding five years had been taken into account. The Department for Transport acknowledge that some under-reporting of accidents appears to take place and this should be borne in mind when analysing data, however, the current STATS19 reporting system remained the most detailed, complete and reliable single source of information on road casualties. Any assertions regarding accident data needed to be verifiable or the data could not be taken into account.
- Some consideration could be given to white-lining or other road markings if deemed necessary.
- Previous highway refusals on the site were acknowledged, but these were all made prior to the Department for Transport's decision to detrunk the road in 2002. As the road had been detrunked, a different set of rules applied regarding the visibility requirement at the site access and, therefore, the current application fell within guidelines.
- He did not have in-depth knowledge regarding changes to construction vehicle weight and length in recent years and whilst he acknowledged that traffic volumes may have increased over time, these were not critical issues in determination of the application.

The Assistant Director: Planning Specialist also addressed Member comments and queries by reiterating to Members that the prevalence of bad driving and speeding in the area were not reasons to refuse the application, but were a matter for Police enforcement. With regard to guidance regarding development in the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, he pointed out that there was no green belt land in the Borough and, whilst it was acknowledged the site was in open countryside, the proposals were deemed to be an acceptable use. With regard to sustainability issues, it could be argued that the applicant and his family would have the same access to services as other residents in very nearby locations. The Assistant Director: Planning Specialist also indicated to Members that despite plans to increase pitches in the Borough, there would still be a shortfall. He further commented that whilst government advice was for Local Authorities to deal with unauthorised traveller sites, there remained an expectation for adequate pitch provision to be made.

On being put to the vote it was, by a majority:

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2013/0312 0448 the Development Management Manager be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the applicant/landowner entering into a Section 106 Agreement (if deemed appropriate) to limit occupation to named family members and their dependents and further subject to the conditions set out in the update report tabled at the meeting.

The meeting ended at 7.23pm

Chairman:

Date: