

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY, 3RD AUGUST 2020, AT 6.04 P.M.**

PRESENT: Councillors R. J. Deeming (Chairman), P. J. Whittaker (Vice-Chairman), S. J. Baxter, A. J. B. Beaumont, S. P. Douglas, A. B. L. English, M. Glass, S. G. Hession, J. E. King, P. M. McDonald and P.L. Thomas

Officers: Ms. C. Flanagan, Mr. D. M. Birch, Mr A. Young, Mr. P. Lester, Ms. K. Hanchett, Worcestershire Highways Authority, Mrs. P. Ross and Mrs S. Sellers

14/20 **APOLOGIES**

No apologies for absence were received.

15/20 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor A. B. L. English declared in relation to Agenda Item 5, (Minute No 18/20), that she had a predetermined view on the matter and would be speaking on this item as Ward Councillor under the Council's public speaking rules.

Following the conclusion of public speaking, Councillor English took no part during the Committee's debate or in the Committee's consideration nor voting on this matter.

16/20 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020 were received.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020, be approved as a correct record.

17/20 **UPDATES TO PLANNING APPLICATIONS REPORTED AT THE MEETING (TO BE CIRCULATED PRIOR TO THE START OF THE MEETING)**

The Chairman confirmed with Members that they had received and read Committee Update 1 and 2, which had been published and circulated to Planning Committee Members prior to the commencement of the meeting.

18/20

**19/01544/FUL - CONTINUED USE OF LAND AND FARM BUILDINGS AS A FARM BASED RURAL EDUCATIONAL AND INTERPRETATION VISITOR CENTRE WITH ASSOCIATED FACILITIES INCLUDING VISITOR PARKING. DEVELOPMENT TO INCLUDE THE RETENTION OF OUTDOOR PLAY EQUIPMENT, TOILET BLOCKS, ANIMAL ENCLOSURES, SHELTERS AND FENCING, THE WALL FILLING THE FORMERLY OPEN SIDED ELEVATION OF THE SOUTHERNMOST BUILDING, PEDESTRIAN LINK BETWEEN THE CAFÉ/PLAY BARN AND WINTER BARN AND STEEL WALLING ADJACENT TO THE VISITOR PARKING AREA. RETENTION OF A MOBILE OFFICE BUILDING FOR A TWELVE MONTH PERIOD - SEAFIELD FARM, SEAFIELD LANE, BEOLEY, B98 9DB - MR M. ATTWELL**

Officers reported that further representations had been received, as detailed in the published Update Reports 1 and 2, copies of which were provided to Members and published on the Council's website prior to the commencement of the meeting.

Officers further reported that in the event of the application being approved, the Highway Authority had recommended that, an additional planning condition be included requiring the overspill car park to be properly surfaced in a bound material and properly drained; as detailed in Committee Update 1, page 1.

Committee Update 2 highlighted that the applicant and Local Residents Group had submitted Counsel Opinions in relation to the development. In response to these, officers had sought independent legal advice on behalf of the District Council. All three documents were circulated to Members in advance of the meeting and placed on the Council's website. The two Counsel opinions were considered along with the independent legal advice sought and officers concluded that the committee report was sound and required no changes. A petition from Local Residents Group was received on 31 July 2020, as detailed in Committee Update 2.

Officers provided a detailed presentation of the application and in doing so informed the Committee that the Application was for continued use of land and farm buildings as a farm based rural Educational and Interpretation Visitor Centre with associated facilities as detailed on page 5 of the main agenda report.

The proposal, on Green Belt designated land, was inappropriate development and that by definition should not be approved except in very special circumstances. The Council found that the proposal would not represent sustainable development, and other material considerations did not outweigh the conflict with the Bromsgrove District Plan.

The proposal would be contrary to Bromsgrove District Plan Policies BDP1.4 a), BDP13.1 e), BDP15.1 a) and c), BDP 16.6, BDP22.1 c) and Paragraph 84 of the National Planning Policy Framework. No very

special circumstances existed or had been put forward that would outweigh the identified harm to the Green Belt.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Ms. S. Griffiths, on behalf of residents, addressed the Committee in objection to the Application. Mr. B. Davies, the Applicant's Agent, on behalf of the Applicant; and Councillor A. B. L. English, in whose Ward the Site was located also addressed the Committee.

During the debate Members commented on the points made by Councillor A. B. L. English, Ward Member, during her address to the Committee. Members raised several questions with regard to the four reasons for refusal, as detailed on page 21 of the main agenda report.

Members further commented that a farm based rural Educational and Interpretation Visitor Centre would not be possible in a sustainable urban area, furthermore the proposed site was in close proximity to Birmingham. Members also noted that the proposal highlighted that the existing buildings would be used.

Members noted the suggested additional planning condition from the Highways Authority in respect of the overspill car park; and sought advice from officers, with regard to a hybrid hard/soft surfacing landscaping condition.

Following further debate Members were in agreement that the proposal would not cause harm to Green Belt and were therefore of the opinion that the proposal was not inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would not have an impact on the openness of the Green Belt. Councillor P.J. Whittaker highlighted that the development was appropriate because it involved the reuse of buildings and that the small amount of play equipment and hutches and fencing would mean that openness was retained. Members also considered the development to be appropriate development because any Green Belt harm arising from the overspill car park could be sufficiently mitigated by landscaping.

Members went on to further discuss suitable conditions in the event of planning permission being granted. This included a scheme of hard and soft landscaping for the overspill car park, to include the provision of sympathetically constructed and drained hard surfacing for visitors to park, akin to sympathetic visitor parking schemes found at National Trust properties, and provision of acoustic boundary fencing to mute the noise of the carpark for the benefit of residents living at Seafeld Lodge.

Following on from this discussion, an alternative recommendation to grant the application, with delegated powers to allow officers power to impose other appropriate general planning conditions, was agreed.

**RESOLVED** that Planning Permission be granted as follows:

- a) Provision of a scheme of hard and soft landscaping for the overspill car park, to include the provision of sympathetically constructed and drained hard surfacing for visitors to access and park, and provision of acoustic fencing (including design specification) along the boundary of Seafield Lodge; and
- b) Appropriate general planning conditions.

In response to Members, officers clarified that whilst Councillor A. B. L. English, Ward Member had requested for the application to be brought to committee for determination, this would have happened automatically, as required under the Council's Scheme of Delegation, because the development consists of the provision of 1000 square metres or more of floor space.

Members were also advised that the status of the application was that of a Major application.

Members noted the Planning Officer's further comment that he would have to seek clarification on the provisions of The Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009 with regard to this application.

19/20

**20/00521/FUL - EXTENSION TO EXISTING DATA HALL SET UP. NEW SELF CONTAINED DATA HALL - LAND AT, THE COFTON CENTRE, GROVELEY LANE, COFTON HACKETT, BIRMINGHAM, WORCESTERSHIRE - MR. I. BERRY**

Officers provided a detailed presentation and in doing so, informed the Committee that the planning application sought permission for the erection of a single storey data centre which will be operated by ATOS. The application site was located within Cofton Centre which had been allocated as Designated Employment Land within the Bromsgrove District Plan 2011-2030 as well as the Longbridge Area Action Plan. The existing site was an undeveloped plot within the business park. The application will assist in the retention of the existing 15 employees.

Officers drew Members' attention to page 42 of the main agenda report with regard to residential amenity, and that the proposal was set a significant distance away from the nearest residential properties to be considered to have no significant impacts regarding noise levels.

**RESOLVED** that Planning Permission be granted subject to the Conditions as set out on pages 43 to 44 of the main agenda report.

The meeting closed at 7.30 p.m.

Chairman