

SOUTH AND WEST PLANS PANEL

THURSDAY, 3RD JUNE, 2021

(1.30PM)

PRESENT: Councillor E Taylor in the Chair

Councillors B Anderson, S Hamilton,
J Heselwood, D Ragan, P Wray,
R Finnigan, Burke, D Collins and T Smith

1 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals.

2 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There was no exempt information

3 Late Items

There were no late items.

4 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations.

5 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor C Campbell.

6 Minutes - 29 April 2021

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

7 Application 20/06103/FU - Acanthus Golf Club, Thorpe lane, Tingley, WF3 1SL

The report of the Chief Planning Officer presented an application for the erection of a garden centre incorporating a restaurant, indoor soft play, outdoor play area, outdoor sales area, service area, outdoor adventure play area and associated access improvements, car parking and landscaping at Acanthus Golf Club, Thorpe Lane, Tingley.

The application was deferred at the meeting of the South and West Plans Panel held in April 2021 to allow for the following:

- An additional condition regarding local employment.
- Explore with the applicant the possibility of a shuttle bus for employees/customers as at Tong site.
- Provision of better photographs illustrating poor condition of the site at present.
- Provision of CGI's of the proposed development.
- Ask if the applicant was prepared to offer a travel plan.
- A condition that clearly describes and limits retail development, particularly those elements that go beyond goods which might normally be expected at a garden centre.
- Need to show that there is a net biodiversity gain on site.

Site photographs and plans were displayed and referred to throughout the discussion of the application.

The following was highlighted:

- Members were informed of the previous planning history at the site including a consent given in 2016.
- The application was debated in length at the previous meeting of the Plans Panel and Members were reminded that it was considered that special circumstances for development in the greenbelt had been met.
- Reasons for deferral at the previous meeting.
- The applicant had held further discussion with Ward Councillors since the last meeting. There had been supportive comments regarding the principal of development and regeneration of the land. There were still concerns with regard to traffic and accessibility via public transport.
- There had been a further biodiversity assessment carried out which showed that there was still a shortfall of 5.6 biodiversity units. Both local and national policy required for there to be a biodiversity gain and where this was not possible benefits could be made via financial contributions for off-site provision. A contribution of £150,000 had been proposed by the applicant which equated to 6 biodiversity units and would be a net gain.
- Sustainable travel – the applicant operated a centre in a similar location with similar transport links. Surveys had shown that 98% of customers and 84% of staff used cars. First Bus had reported that it would not be commercially viable to extend existing services to the centre. The applicant has considered options for sustainable travel and submitted a travel plan. There would be improved pedestrian links to the site with the provision of cycle facilities to encourage sustainable travel.
- There would be conditions to the sale of goods to match that of the approval made in 2016/
- Local employment would be included within the Section 106 agreement and every effort would be made to employ local people.
- Photographs demonstrating the existing condition of the site.

- It was felt that the applicant had addressed the issues that had previously been raised by Panel and it was recommended that the application be deferred and delegated to the Chief Planning Officer for approval.

In response to Members questions, the following was discussed:

- There would be significant landscaping to the front of the site which would screen the car park. There was already a large car parking area with adjacent area to store building materials. The landscaping would be a visual improvement within the greenbelt area.
- The survey carried out for biodiversity was carried out at the optimal time of year and the units found to be lost through this survey was 5.6 units. The financial contribution was the equivalent of 6 units which would be a net gain.
- Access from the site to Thorpe Lane. There would be improvements and a widening of this access and there would be enough capacity for the traffic expected. It was not envisaged that there would be a problem with queuing traffic.
- With regard to local employment, this would include the involvement of Ward Councillors and the Council's Jobs and Skills team.
- Whilst not required under policy for this type of development, the applicant was nonetheless providing a travel plan. This travel plan would include various measures including the provision of electric charging points and reference to incremental improvements such as staff car share and pedestrian/cycling access.
- The right-hand turning lane would be of sufficient width and length and would be able to hold up to ten vehicles.
- The use of financial contributions for biodiversity could be influenced by Ward Councillors on other sites within the ward.
- There had been 18 accidents between the junction of the A650 and the site within the past five years. That was considered to be low.
- The proposals were considered to be fully compliant with policies EN1 and EN2.

Members commented on the application. The following was raised:

- The proposals were not inclusive and available to all.
- Disappointment that there would not be a shuttle bus service and whether this could be further investigated under the travel plan.
- The land was poor quality greenbelt land and needed improvement.
- The need to ensure that local people have the benefit of the employment opportunities and that biodiversity gains should be within the ward.
- Concern that a better scheme could have been provided.

The officer recommendation was moved and seconded.

RESOLVED – That approval be deferred and delegated to the Chief Planning Officer for approval subject to the specified conditions identified in the report

(and any others which he might consider appropriate); the completion of a S106 agreement; and consultation with the Secretary of State in relation to inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

The Section 106 Agreement shall include:

- A financial contribution of £150,000 for off-site biodiversity improvements within the city;
- The implementation of a Travel Plan, including relevant monitoring fee (£3,819); and
- Local Employment Initiatives.

8 Date and time of next meeting

Thursday, 3 June 2021 at 3.30 p.m.