

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

PLANNING COMMITTEE 11 JUNE 2020

Held: online via Zoom videoconferencing, at 10am.

Present: Alun Alesbury (Chair), Heather Baker, Thérèse Evans, Barbara Holyome, Diana van der Klugt, Gary Marsh, William Meyer, Robert Mocatta and Vanessa Rowlands.

Officers: Tim Slaney (Director of Planning), Rob Ainslie (Development Manager), Becky Moutrey (Solicitor), Richard Sandiford (Senior Governance Officer) and Sara Osman (Governance Officer).

Also attended by: Richard Ferguson (Development Management Lead), Rafa Grosso-Macpherson (Senior Development Management Officer), Heather Lealan (Development Management Lead (Minerals and Waste)).

OPENING REMARKS

411. The Senior Governance Officer confirmed the Members of the Planning Committee who were present and that the meeting was quorate.
412. The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting and informed those present that:
- Due to the current Coronavirus pandemic the South Downs Centre and Memorial Hall remained closed until further notice, hence the meeting of the South Downs National Park Authority was held using the Zoom Cloud Meetings software.
 - The meeting was being webcast by the Authority and would be available for subsequent on-line viewing. Anyone entering the meeting was considered to have given consent to be filmed or recorded, and for the possible use of images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purpose
 - SDNPA Members had a primary responsibility for ensuring that the Authority furthers the National Park Purposes and Duty. Members regarded themselves first and foremost as Members of the Authority, and would act in the best interests of the National Park as a whole, rather than as representatives of their appointing body or any interest groups.
413. The Senior Governance Officer reminded Members of the protocol that would be followed during the meeting.

ITEM 1: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

414. Apologies were received from Pat Beresford, and Gary Marsh sent apologies that he would be late.

ITEM 2: DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

415. Robert Mocatta disclosed a public service interest on items 7 and 10 as an East Hampshire District Councillor. Item 7 was in his ward and he was acquainted with many of the public speakers for both items.
416. Barbara Holyome disclosed a non-prejudicial interest on items 9 and 10 as two of the public speakers were known to her.
417. William Meyer disclosed a non-prejudicial interest on item 9 as three of the public speakers speaking against the application were known to him. He had met the applicants once at an SDNPA meeting, but had not taken part in any discussions with them on this application. His decision would be based on Member discussions at this meeting, which he would consider with an open mind.
418. Vanessa Rowlands disclosed a non-prejudicial interest on item 9 as one of the public speakers was known to her.
419. Alun Alesbury disclosed a non-prejudicial interest on item 9 as one of the public speakers was known to him.

ITEM 3: MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 12 MARCH 2020

420. The minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 March 2020 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the following amendments:
- The third bullet point of minutes 379 should read 'there were design concerns' (amended from 'there was').
 - Minute 397 should read 'Bob Fewings spoke against the application representing Newton Valence Parish Council' (not 'himself' as stated).
 - The third bullet of Minute 400 should include 'Estate' after Newton Valence, to read 'It was further recognised that Newton Valence Estate had a WEP' to ensure clarity that it was the Estate, and not the village as a whole, that had a WEP.

ITEM 4: MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

421. There were none.

ITEM 5: UPDATES ON PREVIOUS COMMITTEE DECISIONS

422. The decision had been issued for SDNP/18/05206/FUL - Aldi House.

ITEM 6: URGENT ITEMS

423. There were none.

ITEM 7: SDNP/19/04720/FUL - WORKSHOP AND LAND REAR OF 34 LAVANT STREET, PETERSFIELD, HAMPSHIRE.

424. The Case Officer presented the application, referred to the update sheet which included an amendment to the recommendation and an amendment to condition 3. The Officer also gave the following verbal update:
- Further comments had been received from Petersfield Town Council. Whilst their latest formal response stated that they have no objection to the scheme, they commented on the design and expressed concerns about whether the scheme addressed policy SD35 (loss of an employment site).
425. The following public speakers addressed the Committee:
- Ben Smith spoke against the application representing himself.
 - Matthew Warner spoke against the application representing himself.
 - Alistair Harris spoke in support of the application representing Metis Homes.
426. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC19/20-57), the update sheet and the public speaker comments, and requested clarification as follows:
- Would a precedent be set if this employment site, which was designated in the SDNPA Local Plan and the Petersfield Neighbourhood Plan, was approved for housing?
 - What was the current space allocated to business use premises on the site.
 - Did the conclusions of the viability study concur that this site could only provide 3 affordable houses? Was there any clawback mechanism which could allow for more than 3 affordable dwellings to be provided for when development commenced?
 - Had East Hampshire District Council's shown any current interest in purchasing the site?
 - Why did the architectural design change from the previous application when the Historic Buildings Officer comments advised that the more traditional design of the previous application would produce a better result for this important site?
 - Could there be an opportunity for residents of Charles Street to have vehicular access to the back of their properties via the site?
 - Was there provision for cycle storage on site?
 - What percentage of electric charging vehicle points would be provided on this site?

- Had the Design Officer comments on landscaping been taken into consideration, including the use of green roofs and more meaningful infrastructure?

427. In response to questions, Officers clarified:

- Whilst this site is identified as an important local employment site, each site is considered on its own merit. Local Plan policy SD35 seeks to safeguard employment sites, however all policies contain matters for exceptions which should be taken into consideration, allowing for judgement to be used on each site. Applications that would result in a loss of employment land on principal employment sites would only be permitted provided that evidence of a robust marketing campaign of at least 18 months clearly demonstrated that there was no market demand for the business premises. That had been demonstrated in this case and therefore other options could be considered.
- The current site provided just under 2000m² of business premises, and the proposals provided for 241m².
- This application was an improvement on the previous application which did not provide for any affordable housing. Policy SD28 on provision of affordable housing did not need to be met if an application was robustly shown to be unviable. Whilst there had been different opinions on the value of land, the viability studies we had assessed showed that the scheme could not be policy compliant for affordable housing due to high costs. Officers had asked for detailed costs for the scheme, which were shown to be high. The SI06 agreement would contain provision for clawback should provision for more affordable housing be possible.
- East Hampshire District Council made an offer on the site in June 2017, which was rejected, and no further approach to the landowner had been made. Policy D35 required a minimum of 18 months marketing to show that there was no interest in a site, and this had now passed.
- The design had changed after pre-application discussions between the applicants, the Design Officer and Case Officer. The Design Officer was happy with the application, which incorporated a modern design with some traditional architectural features of the conservation area.
- An access road to the rear gardens of Charles Street properties would limit the layout and scale of what could be achieved on the site. This would lead to loss of courtyard spaces, and possible loss of trees along the boundary. The increased vehicle dominance in the plans could result in a negative visual impact from the Charles Street properties.
- A communal cycle store would be provided within the flats and cycle hoops would be situated in the central courtyard for the office site.
- A high percentage of charging points would be included in the schemes, to meet policy SD22.
- The Landscape Officers comments had led to new and improved planting, including a rainwater garden. There had also been improvements to enhance biodiversity and improve quality of the bank of the stream at the rear of the site. The conditions would ensure opportunities for Green Infrastructure to be maximised, despite limitations of the site.

428. The Committee discussed and debated the application, making the following comments:

- It was accepted that this was a more complex site than other employment sites in Petersfield. It was a key location in a conservation area, and provided a first impression for visitors arriving in the Park by public transport.
- Members concurred with the concerns expressed by the Historic Building Officer that the proposed building on the Lavant Street frontage, a prominent site within the Conservation Area, would be more appropriate if it had a more traditional form..
- Members also accepted that inclusion of a small access road to the rear of properties on Charles St would negatively impact the design of site.

- The location of this site, next to the train station and in walking distance to the town centre, was deemed a prime location to meet affordable housing provision.
 - Members recognised that Metis homes were trying to build to a high quality design, and that the associated costs may reduce the ability to meet affordable housing policies. However Members agreed that policy SD28 was a landmark policy, had been through rigorous debate and was recently approved by an Examiner. To provide only 10% affordable housing was not sufficient to warrant approval.
 - It was agreed that the design on Lavant Street, along with a lack of affordable housing provision, were key causes for concern.
429. It was proposed and seconded that the application be refused for the following reasons:
- The lack of affordable housing given its proximity to local amenities;
 - The design of the particular frontage on Lavant street was not deemed appropriate.
430. **RESOLVED:** That planning permission be refused for the following reasons, the final form of words to be delegated to the Director of Planning in consultation with the Chair of the Planning Committee:
- The lack of affordable housing given its proximity to local amenities;
 - The design of the particular frontage on Lavant street was not deemed appropriate
431. Gary Marsh joined the meeting at 12:15.
432. The meeting adjourned for a 5 minute comfort break. On resumption of the meeting the Senior Governance Officer confirmed the Members of the Planning Committee who were present and that the meeting was quorate.

ITEM 8: SDNP/19/02919/FUL - SOLDIERS FIELD STABLES SOLDIERS FIELD LANE FINDON.

433. The Case Officer presented the application and referred to the update sheet.
434. The following public speakers addressed the Committee:
- Michael Drakeford spoke against the application representing himself
 - Kris Mitra spoke against the application representing Mr & Mrs Fagan – Downsedge House, Stable Lane.
 - Cathrine Gear spoke against the application representing Findon Village Parish Council.
 - Dawn Appleton spoke in support of the application representing the applicant.
 - Tina Cook spoke in support of the application representing herself.
435. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC19/20-58), the update sheet and the public speaker comments, and requested clarification as follows:
- As this was a hybrid application, Members sought clarification on whether they would be voting parts 1 and 2 of the application separately, or both together.
 - Confirmation that the site was outside the settlement boundary, and whether it was acceptable to build 2 new residences outside a settlement boundary?
 - In providing 4 bedroom dwellings, did the application conflict with the housing mix outlined in policy SD27?
 - What ecosystem services were provided in the application?
 - Had there been any discussions on the use of carports instead of garages?
 - Were there any policies that referred to supporting a business?
 - What lighting would be permitted on the site, to ensure the Dark Night Skies were protected?
436. In response to questions, Officers clarified:
- The officer clarified that the Committee should decide on the application as a whole.

- The site was outside the settlement boundary. Ordinarily 2 new dwellings was not acceptable outside the settlement boundary, however the site lies within previously developed land and the extant permission allowed a similar amount of development.
 - This application would remove any permitted development rights ensuring no further development could take place without applying for planning permission.
 - The housing mix for this application was in conflict with SD27. However the Officers recommendation for approval was based on an on-balance view, taking into consideration the scheme as a whole and the progress made from previous applications.
 - The use of sustainable drainage systems (SUDs) was outlined in detail in the Officer's report. There had been a lot of local concern about water run off onto Soldiers Field lane, and it was considered that the current proposals addressed this issue.
 - The Landscape Officer comments on garages had led to amendments to the plans. There were no garages at the stables or equestrian area; undercover parking spaces were provided for the holiday cottages; and plot no 2 had an open sided garage, similar to a carport. This would be approved at the discharge of conditions stage.
 - The Findon Neighbourhood Plan supported equestrian businesses within the village.
 - The only lighting controlled by conditions referred to external lighting to dwellings. No other lighting would be permitted on site.
437. The Committee discussed and debated the application, making the following comments:
- Members were pleased that there would be no lighting around the arena area, which would be a concern for light pollution.
 - It was recognised that this application proposed a reduction in dwellings when compared to the extant planning permission and the Officer was commended in getting this proposal to Committee.
 - The application was considered an improvement on the previous extant application and Members were of the opinion that the existing landscape would be improved by this application.
438. It was proposed and seconded to vote on the officer's recommendations.
439. **RESOLVED:** That planning permission be granted subject to the conditions set out in paragraph 10.1 of the Officer report.
440. Gary Marsh left the meeting.
441. The meeting adjourned for a 5 minute comfort break. On resumption of the meeting the Senior Governance Officer confirmed the Members of the Planning Committee who were present and that the meeting was quorate.

ITEM 9: SDNP/19/03768/FUL - IFORD FARM, THE STREET, IFORD.

442. The Case Officer presented the application and referred to the update sheet, which included a revision to the recommendation, an additional condition, an amendment to condition 6 and details of additional representations made against the application.
443. The Chair indicated that, due to the exceptional public interest in this application, and the background to this matter being brought before the Committee, he had used his discretion, as set out in the Authority's Standing Orders, to allow an increase in the numbers allowed to speak, and had permitted a fourth speaker against the scheme. It was made clear that this was an exceptional circumstance, and this decision would not be taken as a precedent for future applications. The applicant had been informed and, in the interests of fairness, given the opportunity to register a fourth speaker, but had elected not to do so.
444. The following public speakers addressed the Committee:
- Fiona Harrison spoke against the application representing Kingston Parish Council, part of the Parishes of the Lower Ouse (POLO).

- Sue Carroll spoke against the application representing Rodmell Parish Council and POLO (The Parishes of the Lower Ouse Valley group)
 - Peter Earl spoke against the application representing Cycle Lewes.
 - Vic lent spoke against the application representing the South Downs Society.
 - John Robinson spoke in support of the application representing the Iford Estate.
 - Ben Taylor spoke in support of the application as the applicant.
 - Lee Scott spoke in support of the application representing the applicant.
445. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC19/20-59), the update sheet and the public speaker's comments, and requested clarification as follows:
- Would this application be considered if the Estate did not have a Whole Estate Plan (WEP)?
 - Should this application be considered along with other sites listed in the WEP?
 - Were other sites considered for this proposal, specifically sites nearer a main road or sites which had less impact on the landscape?
 - How many farms within this Estate will be affected by, or benefit from, this consolidation, and how many buildings on those farms will be rendered redundant as a result of this application?
 - Was this application an expansion of the farm, and would that lead to an increase in farm traffic on the C7 road?
 - What impact would there be from the significant raise in levels needed for this site?
 - How would this application deliver the proposed new wetland/meadows?
 - Was the proposed route of the Egrets Way the link that would join both ends of the route from Lewes to Newhaven? What was the risk to the long term future of the Egrets Way after the 25 year lease period expired?
446. In response to questions, Officers clarified:
- An application for agricultural buildings, such as in this application, would be considered on its planning merits regardless of whether the site had a WEP. The existence of a WEP is a material consideration and allows all to see the wider picture, aspirations and opportunities arising from the Estate as a whole, (in this case such as the Egrets Way Link), in order to outweigh any harm which may be perceived from the development.
 - A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) was submitted with the application, which considered various locations and provided details explaining why this site was considered the most appropriate. The LVIA had been accepted by the Case Officer and the Landscape Officer.
 - There were a further 3 planning consents, which were addressed in the highway report. However, the committee were advised that this current application did not proposed to increase the trips on the highway network
 - The agricultural statement provided an inventory of buildings on the connected 3 sites but it was difficult to say how many buildings would be rendered redundant. It could be in the regions of 15-20 buildings.
 - This application was not an expansion of Iford farm but was a consolidation. As there was no expansion to the farm operations, it was not considered that there would be an increase in traffic.
 - Advice was sought from the Landscape Officer on the raised levels and the potential visual impact. It was agreed that in this case the raised levels proposed would not result in an unacceptable impact to visual appearance. Natural England did not comment on the land being raised and the Environment Agency was satisfied with a flood risk assessment which

was undertaken and found no greater risk of flooding. Water movement through the site was to be improved with the inclusion of ponds and reed beds.

- The proposed new wetland/meadows would be on land to the west of the raised cattle yard, and would require an ecological management plan to be put in place. This was covered in the conditions.
- The proposed route of the Egrets Way would link both ends of the route, however there was still a lot of work to be done and funds to be raised to finalise this. The proposed 25 year lease was a commitment agreed through discussions between the Egrets Way project and the Applicants. Agreement of the proposed lease would be secured through a S106 agreement.

447. The Committee discussed and debated the application, making the following comments:

- The Committee recognised the need for farms to consolidate and diversify and that larger buildings were needed to accommodate larger, modern farm vehicles.
- The Officers were commended on the extensive conversations that had taken place to get to this point. However there were concerns about making a decision on one part of a site included in a WEP which also contained other sites. There was a view that a decision for this site needed to be taken with regard to the wider picture of what plans existed for the other sites within the WEP.
- Concerns were raised that buildings on the other farm sites, not considered as part of this application, could be repurposed and lead to an increase of traffic on the C7.
- This application was considered to be a large development in a prominent location in the National Park, and it was agreed that the visual impact on the landscape was unacceptable.
- Members were not convinced that this was the only location this development could take place.
- There was strong agreement that this application did not support the first of the two statutory purposes for National Parks in England, which was to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park.
- Members acknowledged the large amount of public interest in this application and suggested that wider consultation with local communities might have led to a scheme that was more acceptable to the community.

448. Members debated whether deferment of the application would be useful, but decided that there would be no benefit in doing so.

449. It was proposed and seconded that the application be refused for the reasons of its impact on the landscape and that it did not meet policy SD39 of the South Downs Local Plan on Agriculture and Forestry.

450. **RESOLVED:** That planning permission be refused for the following reasons, the final form of words to be delegated to the Director of Planning in consultation with the Chair of the Planning Committee:

- its impact on the landscape;
- it did not meet policy SD39 of the South Downs Local Plan on Agriculture and Forestry.

451. The meeting adjourned for a 5 minute comfort break. On resumption of the meeting the Senior Governance Officer confirmed the Members of the Planning Committee who were present and that the meeting was quorate.

ITEM 10: SDNP/19/03160/OUT - LOWER YARD, SELBORNE ROAD, NEWTON VALENCE, ALTON.

452. The Case Officer presented the application and referred to the update sheet.

453. The following public speakers addressed the Committee:

- Philip Lucas spoke against the application representing himself.

- Bob Fewings spoke against the application representing Newton Valence Parish Council.
 - Charles Louisson spoke against the application representing East Hampshire District Council.
 - Jon Fountain spoke in support of the application representing Newton Valence Farm.
 - Lionel Fanshawe spoke in support of the application representing the applicant.
 - Ian Ellis spoke in support of the application representing the applicant.
454. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC19/20-60) and the public speaker comments, and requested clarification as follows:
- Was it possible for Parish Council to be a signatory to the S106 legal agreement?
 - Should the amount of CIL payable be more?
 - Was the payment to the Parish Council for repairs to the village hall sufficient?
 - Were the two key worker houses for Estate staff and were they considered affordable housing?
 - What was the benefit of reopening the disused Meon Valley railway line along the western edge of application site? Could the Officer explain why the northern route is proposed to be a 'path dedicated for public use' but southern part of the route proposed to be a 'permissive path'?
455. In response to questions, Officers clarified:
- Normal parties to a S106 legal agreement would be the Planning Authority and all landowners involved. All necessary landowners would need to sign up to the agreement, and if it was not delivered, planning permission could not be granted. In this instance the Parish Council is not understood to be a landowner and would not need to be a party to the S106. It would, however, be the beneficial recipients of funds.
 - The amount of CIL payable was subject to various conditions set by Government, and the amount of CIL payable could be reduced if exemptions applied. As this was an outline application, the final amount of CIL liable would be decided at the reserved matters stage.
 - The applicant proposed to provide costs of up to £35k for repairs to the village hall, which was considered a significant amount, but not the whole amount required.
 - The proposal recommend that the key worker dwellings would remain under the tenancy of farm, however a S106 legal agreement would include the allocation criteria for key workers to be specified.
 - The Officer would prefer to see a 'path dedicated for public use' along the full length of the trail but was satisfied that the proposal put forward would enable the public access which the SDNPA aspired to achieve. Any new public Rights of Way would be secured through a legal agreement and the land dedicated as public highway.
456. The Committee discussed and debated the application, making the following comments:
- Members commended work done on the WEP and could see improvements to the application.
 - It was accepted that if the 2 farm workers dwellings allocation criteria was controlled in the S106, it would be a good outcome in terms of affordable housing provision.
 - This was not considered a sustainable location the application did not contribute to sustainable development. Newton Valence was a rural location with no opportunities for work, so any new housing would rely on individual car use.
 - Concerns were raised that the Landscape Officer had raised an on balance objection. However it was recognised that the principle of development had been accepted on landscape and visual impact terms, and that all other concerns raised by the Landscape Officer could be controlled by conditions or thorough benefits secured through S106 agreement.

457. It was proposed and seconded to vote on the officer's recommendations, with assurance that the concerns raised by the Landscape Officer would be addressed in the S106 legal agreement or in the conditions.

458. **RESOLVED:**

1) That outline planning permission be granted subject to:

- The completion of a Section 106 legal agreement, the final form of which is delegated to the Director of Planning, to secure the delivery of the following:
 - a. Two affordable dwellings and two key estate workers' dwellings;
 - b. A public bridleway and permissive path on the former Meon Valley Railway and appropriate connection to the right of way network;
 - c. A scheme of new permissive footpaths and signage across the estate;
 - d. Repair and maintenance of public bridleway no. 12;
 - e. A scheme of Green Infrastructure Initiatives;
 - f. A financial contribution towards repairs of Newton Valence Village Hall (up to £35,000);
 - g. An energy audit of the estate and a strategy for energy reduction and use of renewable energy;
- The completion of bat and reptile surveys and provision of a suitable policy compliant mitigation and enhancement strategy, the consideration of which is delegated to the Director of Planning; and
- The conditions, substantially in the form set out in paragraph 11.2 of this report along with any additional conditions, the form of which is delegated to the Director of Planning' to address those mitigation matters that arise from the completion of bat and reptile surveys and strategy.

2) That authority be delegated to the Director of Planning to refuse the application with appropriate reasons if:

- a) The S106 agreement is not completed or sufficient progress has not be made within 6 months of the 11 June 2020 Planning Committee meeting.
- b) The bat and reptile survey and provision of a suitable policy compliant mitigation and enhancement strategy is not completed or sufficiently progressed within 6 months of the 11 June 2020 Planning Committee meeting.

459. It was agreed that, due to the length of this first online Committee meeting, that the Strategy and Policy items 11, 12 and 13 should be deferred.

460. The Chair closed the meeting at 5.45pm.

CHAIR

Signed: _____