

AGENDA ITEM 3

FALKIRK COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the PLANNING COMMITTEE held in BONNYBRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL, WELLPARK TERRACE, BONNYBRIDGE on WEDNESDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2012 commencing at 7.00 P.M.

The purpose of the meeting was to hold a pre-determination hearing in terms of the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006. When sitting in this capacity, the Planning Committee comprises all members of the Council.

PRESENT: Provost Reid; Depute Provost Patrick; Councillors Blackwood, Buchanan, Carleschi, D Goldie, Gow, Hughes, Jackson, McCabe, McLuckie, Meiklejohn, Nicol and Turner.

CONVENER: Councillor Buchanan.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Alexander, Black, Coleman, Mahoney, Murray, Dr C R Martin, MacDonald, McNally and Nimmo.

ATTENDING: Director of Development Services; Chief Governance Officer, Development Manager, Senior Planning Officer (B Vivian); Network Co-ordinator; Roads Development Officer (C Russell); Environmental Health Officer (S Henderson); Legal Services Manager (I Henderson); Committee Officer (A Sobieraj); and Committee Assistant (S McGhee).

ALSO

ATTENDING: Transport Planning Co-ordinator; Senior Forward Planning Officer; Planning Officer (D Thallon); Parks and Recreation Manager (Falkirk Community Trust); and A Bell, C Peat, R Heggie and J Jewitt (applicant's representatives).

DECLARATIONS

OF INTEREST: None.

P129. MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT COMPRISING RESIDENTIAL AND SPORTS FACILITIES ON LAND TO THE EAST OF BONNYBRIDGE HOSPITAL, BONNYBRIDGE, FOR ANTONINE PROPERTY DEVELOPMENTS GROUP LTD - P/09/0431/OUT

There was submitted Report (circulated) dated 6 November 2012 by the Director of Development Services on an application for planning permission in principle for the mixed use development comprising residential development (including approximately 200 dwellinghouses) and sports facilities on land, extending approximately to 19 hectares lying to the east of the existing Bonnybridge urban limit.

1. The Convener formally welcomed those present and outlined the procedures relating to the meeting.
2. The Development Manager outlined the nature of the application and read out comments from a consultee unable to attend.
3. The applicant's representatives were heard in relation to the application.
4. The consultees present had no further comments in relation to the application.
5. Questions were then asked by Members of the Committee as follows:-

Q(a) Clarification was sought on the applicant's consultations with NHS Forth Valley and the Council's Education Services in relation to required contributions to health and education provision.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

Consultation with NHS Forth Valley and Education Services had not taken place due to the application's early stage of consideration. Should the Council be minded to grant planning permission in principle appropriate consultations would follow.

Q(b) Further detail was sought on the option to demolish Bonnybridge hospital on the site.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

The demolition of Bonnybridge hospital was one option to be considered but it was also necessary to consider whether the building could be adapted for alternative use. Link Housing Association, for example, had indicated an interest in being involved in discussions concerning the future of the building.

Q(c) Clarification was sought from Falkirk Community Trust on the consultation response regarding sports pitch provision in Bonnybridge.

Response by the Parks and Recreation Manager, Falkirk Community Trust:-

It was clarified that Falkirk Community Trust was not saying that Bonnybridge is not entitled to have a pitch but the Sports Pitch Strategy developed considered degrees of need and Denny was considered to have a higher need.

Q(d) Clarification was sought on the business case for the development and how facilities could be delivered.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

The detailed business case would be developed should the Council be minded to grant planning permission in principle. Three national house building companies had approached the Antonine Group to be involved and that spoke volumes.

Q(e) The applicant's representatives were asked whether they had fully recognised the recommended reasons for refusal with the officer's Report.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

There was indeed recognition that the development did not strictly accord with appropriate policies. There was however scope for Members to consider whether there should be a departure from policy as there is a balance to be struck as material considerations can be determined to outweigh policies. It was evident that Falkirk Community Trust's Sports Development Strategy could not deliver the sports pitch. The proposed development would however be able to do so. The applicant was therefore requesting that members weigh up the material considerations.

Q(f) Clarification was sought on the issue of the erosion of the greenbelt through coalescence and the education provision for schools.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

Clear coalescence would not occur. This was because there would still be a distance between Falkirk and Bonnybridge and there are natural boundaries. There also is not particular concern with landscape quality issues as a result of development. As previously indicated, schools provision, other developer contributions and associated issues would be looked at a later stage. It was also noted that the applicant would have to meet a significant sum of money to carry out a full assessment in relation to the gas main and the HSE objection. Planning permission would therefore enable the applicant to start to put in the necessary financial investment. Members could be assured of the applicant's commitment to the development and that this was backed up by its adherence to Supplementary Planning Guidance which stated that all sites required developer contributions.

Q(g) Clarification was sought on the easement zones either side of the two gas feeder lines traversing the site in a north south direction and the major hazards envisaged from the development from the gas pipelines bisecting the site.

Response by the Development Manager:-

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) was concerned about the dangers associated with the gas pipelines bisecting the site. It indicated that the HSE sterile area negated this type of development and the applicant would be required to provide significant financial investment. This issue could possibly be addressed but it depended on the applicant illustrating to the HSE that it would address its safety concerns.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

Reference was made to the incidents of the rupturing of gas pipelines in Belgium and Northampton and the lessons learned. The HSE Padi system comprised of 3 safety related zones. Within a middle zone there can be a lot of uses such as a hospital for instance. It was noted that a lot is known about this particular gas main and there are good management systems that can be put in place. They consider the gas main can be built over and they will do further work if they get a minded to grant decision.

Q(h) Clarification was sought on why the applicant had not requested that the site be added into the Local Plan at its development stage thus ensuring that the application would comply with policy.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

It was evident to the applicant that the site had not been Development Services' favourite site although the applicant had made representations. It was noted that a site doesn't need to be allocated to allow a minded to grant decision. The applicant was approached by the local football teams to help pursue local sports facilities and this seemed important to the community.

6. Section 38A of the Town and Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 together with Regulation 27 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2008 give those persons who have submitted representations on relevant planning applications the right to be heard before a Committee of the Council before the application is determined. On this occasion, in addition to those persons who had submitted representations, other members of the public in attendance at the meeting were permitted to address the Committee.

(a) Mr D Moffat, Bonnybridge Youth Football Club, in support of the development, raised the importance of the sports facilities to the local community as provided within the planning application. He highlighted concerns in relation to the inadequate facilities currently within Anderson Park and the Bonnybridge area and the envisaged benefits from the proposed facilities. He stressed the need for financial investment in sport within Bonnybridge and the value to the local community of this facility. It was important to educate young people about sport and there was no doubt that an astro turf pitch would be widely used and contribute to the overall quality of life of young people in this current economic climate. He also noted the benefit of the affordable housing. This view was also taken by Mr C Campbell and Mr J Miller.

- (b) Mr G Rae, Secretary, Bonnybridge Community Council, made reference to the need to consider the pressure on services that could occur within Bonnybridge from the development and the increased number of cars and parking at the Toll. He believed that the Council should consider the effect on the village from the development and how any congestion and other pressures could be addressed.
- (c) Mr K Russell, in support of the development, referred to the insufficient parking at present at the park and the associated safety issues. He welcomed the development and the resultant road improvements for greater road safety, including traffic calming measures.
- (d) Mr D Martin, Bonnybridge Football Club, in support of the development, welcomed the traffic calming measures and stressed the sports facilities' contribution to crime reduction and in addressing vandalism and anti social behaviour amongst young people in the local area.
- (e) Ms M Currie, in support of the development, stressed the value of the use of Bonnybridge hospital as an older peoples' centre and to families from the area visiting relatives locally.
- (f) Ms L McCann, in support of the development, stressed the development's contribution to local area regeneration and job creation.

7. Close of Meeting

The Convener concluded by thanking the parties for their attendance and advising that the matter would be determined by Falkirk Council on 5 December 2012.