

FALKIRK COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the PLANNING COMMITTEE held in BONNYBRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL, WELLPARK TERRACE, BONNYBRIDGE on 8 JUNE 2010 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 Black; Councillors Alexander, Blackwood, Buchanan, Coleman, Goldie, Gow, Hughes, Jackson, Kenna, Lemetti, A MacDonald, C MacDonald, Mahoney, CR Martin, McLuckie, McNeill, Meiklejohn, Nicol, Patrick and Thomson.

CONVENER: Councillor Buchanan.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Carleschi, Constable, Fry, Oliver, Nimmo, McNally, C Martin, Ritchie, Spears and Waddell.

ATTENDING: Director of Development Services; Acting Director of Law and Administration Services; Development Manager, Senior Planning Officer (B Vivian); Roads Development Officers (B Raeburn and C Russell); Legal Services Manager (I Henderson); Committee Officer (A Sobieraj); and Modern Apprentices (L Stewart and N Nicol).

ALSO

ATTENDING: Parks and Recreation Manager; Transport Planning Coordinator; Senior Forward Planning Officer; and A Bell, C Peat, R Heggie and J Jewitt (applicant's representatives).

DECLARATIONS

OF INTEREST: None.

P40. 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 31 May 2010 by the Director of Development Services on an application for outline planning permission (now 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.
3. The applicant was heard in relation to the application.
4. The consultees were heard 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 response to the concerns by the Health and Safety Executive in relation to the Pipeline Construction Zone for two high pressure gas mains bisecting the site as set out in paragraph 4.8 of the report. Clarification was also sought of national and international paragraph 4.7 of the Report in relation to the treatment of heritage features of national and international importance.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

The HSE's concern was not unique to this application. The pipeline runs under the golf course, the railway, the road and some houses. Other developments are located in the vicinity of the same pipeline. There would be a distance of 70 metres from the centre line of the gas pipes to the position of the houses. The exact location of which will be clarified at the full planning stage. With regard to Heritage Scotland's concerns, the applicant had taken on board recommendations by their archaeological specialist on mitigation methods to prevent a detrimental or adverse effect on the listed monument. A buffer zone was also added. The site cannot be seen from the Antonine Wall. The applicant would work with Historic Scotland on detail at the next stage.

Q(b) Further detail was sought on the arrangements for maintenance of the sports facilities.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

The maintenance of the facilities could be the responsibility of a Trust that would be set up by the applicant. It was considered that the Trust could be self funding, generating income from use of facilities, and could even return a profit which could be used to maintain open space in the development. While the applicant would be involved with maintenance of the open space initially, it was anticipated that it would be released gradually for the community to maintain.

Q(c) Clarification was sought from Education Services on the details of the required contributions to local schools and the associated cost per house.

Response by the Senior Forward Planning Officer, Education Services:-

The Education Service considered that the scale of the development would contribute significantly to the demand for the provision of additional school capacity at Bonnybridge and St Joseph's RC Primary Schools, Denny and St Mungo's RC High Schools and nursery capacity. Should planning permission be granted Education Services would request a pro-rata contribution of £4,500 per house and £2,900 per flat towards the expected required investment in local schools. St Joseph's Primary School, for example, currently operated five teaching classrooms in temporary accommodation.

The school required a permanent extension in the future. The requirement for the applicant's financial contribution was in accordance with Supplementary Planning Guidance issued in February 2010.

Q(d) Clarification was sought on the programme and timescale for delivering the sports facilities.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

There would be no commercial viability without funding. It would not be commercially viable to create all the sports facilities first. There would need to be a phased approach dependent upon funds being released from the remainder of the development.

Response by the representative from Sportscotland:-

Sportscotland welcomed in principle the provision of additional sports facilities in Bonnybridge. It was important however that the applicant provided justification for the athletics provision as part of the development as there were alternative facilities, for example, within Grangemouth. There would be a need to establish a club to justify the provision of athletics facilities. There is no point in providing such a facility where there is no direction from the governing body that a need exists and no demonstrable demand. Sportscotland has no issue with sports provision but it has to be thought out otherwise it does not add value.

Q(e) The applicant was asked why they had not submitted a Transport Assessment with the application and what proportion of affordable housing would be provided.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

The applicant had considered that the high cost of a full Transport Assessment was financially prohibitive at the outline planning stage. The applicant had decided that other priorities and fundamental decisions would take precedence. The applicant would however provide any information requested by the Council in future.

On affordable housing, the applicant would take direction from the planning authority. Eighteen flats and 22 houses were shown currently but the applicant was flexible on this matter.

Q(f) Clarification was sought on the nature of the client group the nursing home would cater for.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

The applicant had no clear plan at the moment. A nursing home was originally planned but the applicant had been approached by an organisation for the blind interested in such a facility. Further discussion was needed and the nature of the development would depend on demand.

Q(g) Further detail was sought on the nature of the sports facilities.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

The sports facilities would comprise an all weather pitch for football and hockey. This surface would need replaced every 10 years. It was anticipated that this would be paid for by the Trust. Other facilities included accommodation for one permanent manager and staff, paid for from income generated by use of the facilities. Further information would come through as part of the future detail. The athletics track was not proposed to be of a competition standard and would not be intended to compete with Grangemouth Stadium.

Q(h) The applicant was asked why they had not provided a Flood Risk Assessment with the application particularly in light of policy ST12 set out at paragraph 7b.34 of the report, and the concerns expressed by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) in relation to the risk of flooding.

Response by the Development Manager:-

A full Flood Risk Assessment would be expected to be submitted with an application of this size and scale. This had not been produced and was of concern.

Response by the applicant's representative:-

The applicant brought in a flooding consultant to carry out a desktop exercise at the outline (in principle) stage. There can be a risk but mitigation approaches can be included in the full planning application. Further detail would come forward at the full application stage.

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 Deans, in support of the development raised the importance of the sports facilities detailed in the planning application to the local community.
 - (b) A further (un-named) supporter of the development reiterated the invaluable nature of the financial investment in sports facilities within Bonnybridge. This view was also taken by Ms E McConnochie and Mr Fuller.
 - (c) Mr D Moffat and Mr G Ramsay, in support of the development, a supporter, highlighted concerns in relation to the inadequate facilities currently within Anderson Park and the envisaged benefits from the proposed facilities.
 - (d) Ms C Spicer, in support of the development, welcomed the proposed sports facilities and their contribution to addressing anti social behaviour amongst young people in the local area and giving them another interest.
 - (e) Mr G McIntosh, in support of the development, stressed the sports facilities contribution to local area regeneration and job creation.
7. Responses were given by the applicant's representatives in relation to the issues raised by Members and contributors as follows:-
- The applicant had an Education consultant working on the proposals. The applicant would hold discussions with Falkirk Council's Education Services in relation to a financial contribution to schools and with Development Services in relation planning related matters. The Report by the Director of Development Services raised no issues that could not be dealt with at the next stage. The fundamental issue to be resolved at this point, however, was the principle of development within the greenbelt, before further expenditure was incurred in submitting reports to the planning authority.

8. 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 23 June 2010.