

SWT Planning Committee - 8 December 2022

Present: Councillor Marcia Hill (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Ian Aldridge, Steve Griffiths, Roger Habgood, John Hassall, Mark Lithgow, Craig Palmer, Vivienne Stock-Williams, Ray Tully, Brenda Weston, Keith Wheatley and Loretta Whetlor

Officers: Alison Blom-Cooper, Martin Evans (Shape Legal Partnership), Simon Fox, Darren Roberts, Ron Moss, Ben Gilpin, Kerry Kerr-Peterson and Tracey Meadows

(The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm)

71. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Coles and Wren.

The Vice-Chair, Councillor Marcia Hill took the Chair for this meeting.

72. Minutes of the previous meeting of the Planning Committee

(Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 10 November 22 circulated with the agenda)

Resolved that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 10 November 22 be confirmed as a correct record.

Proposed by Councillor Habgood seconded by Councillor Griffiths

The **Motion** was carried.

73. Declarations of Interest or Lobbying

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Councillor or Clerk of a County, Town or Parish Council or any other Local Authority:-

Name	Minute No.	Description of Interest	Reason	Action Taken
Cllr I Aldridge	All Items	Williton	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr R Habgood	49/22/0016	Visited site prior to application. Discretion not fettered.	Personal	Spoke and Voted

Cllr Mrs Hill	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee & Shadow Taunton Town	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Lithgow	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Palmer	All Items	Minehead	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr R Tully	All Items	West Monkton	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr B Weston	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee & Shadow Taunton Town	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr K Wheatley	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Whetlor	All Items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke and Voted

All Councillors declared that they had received correspondence for application No. 49/22/0016.

Councillor Palmer declared that he had received an invitation for a site visit for application 49/22/0016, which he declined.

74. **Public Participation**

Application No.	Name	Position	Stance
42/22/0027	Mr T Smith	Local Resident	Against (read out by the Clerk)
	Ms T Dean	Chair of Trull PC	Against
	Mr L Turner	Boyer Planning	In favour
3/39/22/007	Mr N Leaney	Agent	In favour
49/22/0016	Ms R Riley	Applicant	In favour
	Ms K Benson	Applicant	In favour
	Ms B Forgham	Local resident	In favour
	Mr J Mellor	Local resident	In favour
	Mr E Gaines	Wiveliscombe TC	In favour
	Mr J Shorten	Agent	In favour
	Cllr Blaker	District and Wiveliscombe TC	In favour

75. **42/22/0027 Application for Approval of Reserved Matters in respect of the appearance, landscape, layout and scale, following Outline Approval 42/14/0069 for the erection of 70 No. dwellings, hard and soft landscaping, car parking including garages, internal access roads, footpaths and circulation areas, public open space and drainage with associated infrastructure and engineering works at Phase H1e, together with additional details as required by Condition No's., 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18,**

19, 20, 21 and 23 on land west of Comeytrowe Lane, Taunton

Comments from members of the Public included;

- Concerns with the Placemaking Specialist's objections regarding financial viability of the development;
- Concerns that the access roads were not being adopted by SCC Highways;
- Concerns with Neighbourhood Plan Policies being ignored with Affordable Houses not being scattered, but in two blocks;
- Concerns that the parcel was visually prominent on the Northern Slopes Character Area;
- Concerns with the lack of EV charging points and that residents would have to pay separately for their own installation;
- Concerns with the long-term maintenance of the surface water drainage arrangements;
- Concerns that 20 of the 70 houses on the site will have between 3 and 7 steps to their front door which would be an obstacle to pushchairs, shopping trolleys, wheelie-bins, recycling boxes and bicycles;
- Cycle path concerns;
- Concerns with the design of the development with regards to the Garden Town scheme;
- This development would deliver more affordable homes than stated on the site that Taunton needed;
- A huge amount of public consultation had been undertaken over the years with local people, businesses, schools, Stakeholders, Officers and Central Government to help prepare the master plan for the site;
- No technical objections had been received from statutory consultees;
- This site was viable and deliverable;
- The development was supported by a Phosphate and mitigation strategy for the site which had been prepared in consultation with SWT, SCC and Natural England;
- No adverse effects on natural species on the site;

Comments from Members included;

- Concerns that the Design Guide was not followed and the concerns raised from the Place Making specialist ;
- Extra tree planting was needed on this site, they needed to be nurtured and looked after in the first 5 years;
- Concerns that this development was not carbon neutral with gas being used on site for this development;
- Charging points should be fitted as standard on the site at the onset;
- Broadband concerns;
- Concerns with the distance of the public EV charging point;
- Affordable homes concerns and what was being delivering on the site;
- Concerns with the viability of the site;
- Stated that this development was well balanced and should be approved;

Councillor Habgood proposed, and Councillor Hill seconded a motion for Planning permission to be **GRANTED** subject to conditions and the additional condition of tree planting.

The motion was carried.

76. **3/07/22/017 Raising of brick chimney by 250mm - Lawford Farm, Stickle Hill, Crowcombe, TA4 4AL**

Comments from Members included;

- The application was for safety issues on a thatched roof;

Councillor Tully proposed and Councillor Habgood seconded a motion for Listed Building Consent to be **GRANTED** subject to conditions.

The motion was carried.

At this point in the meeting a 15-minute break was proposed.

77. **3/39/22/007 Installation of a battery energy storage facility, substation, underground cabling, access, landscaping, biodiversity enhancements and ancillary infrastructure and equipment to include acoustic fence, security fence, CCTV and gates. Land adjacent to Gas Substation, Smithyard Lane, Williton**

Comments from members of the public included;
(summarised)

- The battery storage unit was widely recognised as an essential part of the transition to low carbon economy and addressed the urgent need to reduce emissions, enabling the wider environmental, economic and social benefits associated with increased production of energy from low carbon resources;
- The ability to connect to the grid was critical but due to limitations in the grid infrastructure the choice of locations where such schemes could be brought forward were limited to the point that Western Power were specific to the proposed pylon on this overhead line between both sub stations;
- Vegetation would separate the site from the surrounding area so therefore there was no unacceptable adverse impact on the surrounding landscape character of the AONB or the Quantocks;
- Safe construction access had been identified with no objections from Highways;
- A detailed battery plan would be submitted to ensure safety risks are understood and accounted for;

Comments from Members included;

(summarised)

- Concerns with the frequency level on the site;
- Concerns with the visual impact of the development;
- Concerns that there was already these types of unit in Watchet;
- Concerns with future development in the area;
- This type of development could be sited anywhere, why was this location chosen;
- Concerns that the amenity area of the cabin was too large for rare visits;
- Concerns with the narrow lane to the site for HGV's turning in and out of the development;
- Visibility concerns on the A39 egressing from the site;
- Concerns with good agricultural land being used for this facility;

Councillor Habgood proposed, and Councillor Lithgow seconded a motion for the application to be APPROVED. That motion failed.

Councillor Habgood proposed, and Councillor Weston seconded a motion for the application to be DEFERRED.

Reasons

1. Clarification sought on why this location has been chosen for this development.
2. Concerns with the size of the service building and whether there was a need for this size of building.
3. Highway access concerns with getting the building onto the site.

The motion was carried.

78. **49//22/0016 Erection of 1 No. dwelling, to be tied to farm, with demolition of outbuildings at Pitt Farm, Ford, Wiveliscombe (resubmission of 49/21/0032)**

Comments from members of the public included;

(summarised)

- The development was well thought-out with intention and with an authentic heart to do right by the land and to be sensitively integrated with the surrounding landscape;
- The development would be complementary to the main house and surrounding out buildings, made from locally sourced sustainable materials;
- The development was designed to be highly energy efficient making good use of passive solar gain with large photovoltaic array which aligned with the corporate objectives and planning policy of Somerset west and Taunton Council to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030;

- The application was a policy compliant exemplary development and a model for sustainable intergenerational family living with overwhelming support from the community;
- Pitt Farm was a hub for the community and the new dwelling would allow for expanse on all the farm;
- The development was sustainable due to a direct route to the development via a long and well used footpath through the fields. Cyclists would use Grants Lane which was less than 5 minute ride to Langley Cross where there were pavements and lights into Wiveliscombe;
- This application would reduce phosphates load;
- This was a low impact development that complements the existing buildings on the site. It respected heritage and merged into the surrounding landscape;

At this point in the meeting a 30-minute extension was proposed.

- This was a sustainable development well imbedded in the community;
- The development offered sufficiency on the site, carbon sequestration and genuine benefits for nature;
- The tie would allow for the needs of the Farm, not sold off or used as a holiday let or an Airbnb;
- The development complies with the NPPF as the Farm was not isolated and met local needs;
- No objections were received for this application;

Comments from Members included;
(summarised)

- This development would increase the well-being of the land and was a sustainable development;
- No objections of substance from anyone, this reflected the value of what was being done on the site;
- An exception should be made for this development because we need to interpret this application more along the lines of what is being done on the site;
- There was already a dwelling for a rural worker on this site;
- Concerns that we were going against our own Development Plan;

At this point in the meeting a further 30-minute extension was proposed.

- The development was phosphate compliant;
- There would be no increase in the reliant of private cars;
- The community aspect for this development was immense;

Councillor Lithgow proposed, and Councillor Tully seconded a motion for the application to be REFUSED. The motion failed.

Councillor Habgood proposed, and Councillor Aldridge seconded a motion for the application to be APPROVED against Officer recommendation.

Reasons

That delegated authority be granted to Officers to approve the application, contrary to the Officers' recommendation, on the grounds that:

1. This is an exceptional site with high community value;
2. The development will support the expansion of the current activities on the site and lead to greater educational, community and experimental agricultural practices;
3. The development is sustainable;
4. The development will not increase transport needs;
5. The new building is well designed and is offset by demolition of other buildings on the farm;
6. There would be no harm caused to the listed building.

and subject to:

1. The proposed approval of the application being formally advertised as a departure from the Development Plan and any new, unresolvable issues raised being reported back to the Committee for consideration;
2. The wording of the planning conditions being delegated to Officers to determine;
3. The prior completion of a S106 Agreement to:
 - a. ensure that the ownership of the new dwelling is permanently tied to the ownership of the existing dwelling and farm for the duration of the use of the land in the form to be identified in sub-section 'b' below;
 - b. ensure the submission of a scheme to secure the long term operation and management of the farm (to include, but not be limited to, a program of educational benefits that will have demonstrable targets that can be measured);
 - c. secure the installation and maintenance of a biological package treatment plant for the purposes of phosphate mitigation;
 - d. on cessation of onsite activity as detailed in sub-section 'b', or failure to evidence the demonstrable benefits as required and agreed in that sub-section, the building shall be decommissioned and removed from site within 18-months, and land returned to its agricultural use;

The motion was carried.

At this point, Cllr Griffiths left the meeting and a 10-minute break was proposed.

79. **38/21/0525 Formation of synthetic pitch with perimeter fencing, sports lighting and wildlife area bunds with additional 7v7 and 11v11 grass pitches with site compound and accommodation facilities at Richard Huish College, South Road, Taunton**

Comments from Members included;

- This application would be good for the community;
- Concerns with light spillage from the site;

- Native seeds need to be put on the grass bunds;
- Public right of way, the college needed to keep this pathway clear;
- Concerns with the Metal storage container on site;

Councillor Lithgow proposed and Councillor Wheatley seconded a motion for planning permission to be GRANTED subject to conditions and the additional conditions;

1. The new playing field land at Ash Meadows shall be provided in accordance with the details set out in the planning application and drawing No. MCA-MUK2520-30Rev D and made available for use within 12 months of the Artificial Grass Pitch development being first used.

REASON – to ensure the satisfactory quantity, quality and accessibility of compensatory provision which secures a continuity of use and to accord with Policy of the Taunton Deane Site Allocation and Development Management Plan;

2. Use of the development shall not commence until a community use agreement prepared in consultation with Sport England has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and a copy of the completed approved agreement has been provided to the Local Planning Authority. The agreement shall apply to the Artificial Grass Pitch and Playing Pitch at Ash Meadows and include details of pricing policy, hours of use, access by non-educational establishment users, management responsibilities and a mechanism for review. The development shall not be used otherwise than in strict compliance with the approved agreement.

REASON – to secure well managed safe community access to the sports facilities, ensure sufficient benefit to the development of sport and to accord the Policy C4 of the Taunton Deane Site Allocations and Development Management Plan;

The motion was carried.

80. **3/21/22/105 Erection of ground mounted solar panels. Avondale, Martlet Road, Minehead, TA24 5QD**

This application is adjourned to the next Planning meeting on the 5 January 2023.

81. **Latest appeals and decisions received**

Appeals and decisions adjourned until the next Planning meeting.

(The Meeting ended at 5.41 pm)