

Chair - Councillor E G R Jones

Present (for all or part of the meeting):-

Councillors:

A G Cooper

A D Hobbs

J Hood

P W Jones

B McKeown

M Phillips

A Nixon

C V Trowbridge

Also present:- Councillors J K Price and M J Winnington

Officers in attendance: -

Mr J Holmes - Development Manager

Mrs V Blake - Senior Planning Officer

Miss L Collingridge - Principal Solicitor

Mr J Dean - Democratic Services Officer

PC48 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors F Beatty, A P Edgeller (substitute M Phillips) and G P K Pardesi.

PC49 Application No 20/32222/FUL - Land West of Stallbrook Hall, Crossing Lane, Derrington

(Recommend approval, subject to conditions).

The Committee arrived on site at 09:45 and viewed the proposal from within the site in question, Members departed at 10:15 and reconvened at the Civic Centre at 11:10.

Considered the report of the Head of Development regarding this matter.

Prior to her presentation, the Senior Planning Officer reported receipt of one further neighbour representation in support of the application.

Public speaking on the proposal was as follows: -

Ms K Davies raised the following points and displayed a number of slides during her objections to the application: -

- Thanked Chairman for the opportunity to speak.
- Was representing over 100 objectors who had raised concerns.

- Local residents were dismayed works had taken place on site without planning permission granted, setting a dangerous precedent.
- Objected to the proposals on several grounds.
- Supported farmers and local businesses.
- Queried 'Principal of Development' section of committee report.
- Development would have adverse effects on local community.
- (Slide 1) demonstrated potential impact on character and landscape.
- Application constituted industrial scale development in the rural area.
- Referred to and quoted from local objections raised.
- Historic England raised concern as did Council Conservation Officer.
- Was not possible to undertake archaeological evaluation of the site.
- Access was to be from an already busy small rural lane.
- (Slide 2) showed lane surface already damaged by HGVs.
- (Slide 3) land cannot cope with added traffic, noted lack of objections from SCC Highways Department.
- Had concerns re flooding and drainage from the site, quoted from flood risk assessment.
- (Slides 4/5) quoted Environment Agency advice.
- Water course had been diverted without authorisation, then all evidence removed, what guarantees applicant would comply with conditions?
- Residents raised concern re pollution/waste from the site.
- (Slides 6/7) showed burning of waste/smoke emanating from the farm.
- (Slides 8/9) showed smoke from the site drifting across the area.
- Quoted from waste/biodiversity elements of the report, noting examples of local wildlife.
- Local Parish Council raised a number of associated concerns.
- Was concerning that Seighford Parish Council raised no objections.
- Further quoted from Officers report.

- Conclusion as set out was wrong - was hard to see any benefits from the application.
- Highway safety in the area would be adversely affected.
- On balance the application must be rejected by Members.

Mrs Busby and Mr D Rawthorne raised the following points during their support for the proposal:-

Mrs Busby:-

- Thanked Chairman for the opportunity to speak.
- Ran Billington Farm as was the family business.
- Had grown soft fruit from 1976, using polytunnels since 1996.
- Growers were under pressure to extend the growing season.
- Proposal would allow increased production of soft fruit.
- Application was driven by demand from supermarkets for produce.
- Fruit currently imported into the Country during winter months.
- Proposal would offset 39k of Co2 emissions per annum.
- Would enable extension of the growing season and retention of 30 workers.
- Green energy to be used to power ground source heat pump.
- Environment would be enhanced by proposed tree planting scheme.
- Energy saving led to 60% heat retained in said Poly tunnels.
- Would be able to reduce pests and increase yield by 66%.
- Provision of fencing would prevent insect access and reduce need for pesticides.
- Tunnels would last longer and were 100% recyclable.
- Rainwater would be collected and retained on site.
- Was Government policy to encourage farmers to grow more produce.
- Application had been validated on 7 April 2020.
- All consultees had been fully briefed, with finding leading to the conclusion to approve the application.

- To commence with the development was the only way to move forward.
- Welcomed the Officers decision and sought approval from Members.

Mr Rawthorne:-

- Had lived in Derrington for entire life.
- Had visited the site in question.
- Proposal would have no detrimental effects on local community.
- Would extend growing period for soft fruit and reduce carbon footprint.
- Visual impact would be low, nearest property was ½ mile away.
- Site was screened by existing trees.
- A blocked (now cleared) culvert had led to the flooding as referred to.
- Associated meadow would benefit local wildlife.
- Hoped Committee would accept the recommendation to approve.

Councillor M J Winnington, Seighford and Church Eaton Ward Member, at the invitation of the Chairman addressed the Committee and raised the following issues:-

- Thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to speak.
- Was making his representation as local Ward Member.
- Original application was registered in 2020 - timescale was unacceptable to all parties.
- Was a very successful business which created a number of benefits.
- This was one of several rural enterprises in the Ward.
- Was unacceptable level of consultation carried out.
- Noted level of local concern but was also support for the application.
- Development had partly started on site.
- Quoted from paragraph 4.17 of the report.
- Area had experienced flooding in the past.
- Historic England raised real concerns.

- Quoted from Conservation Officers comments.
- Noted Conclusion as set out in paragraph 9 of the report.
- Asked Committee to consider all issues carefully.
- Was a complicated application.

In response to comments raised by the public speakers, the Development Manager clarified the associated timescales pertinent to the application.

The Committee discussed the application and raised a number of points, including: -

- Flooding concerns.
- Provision of associated wheel-wash facilities
- Condition of local road surface and traffic concerns
- Tree planting and subsequent maintenance
- Size and location of retention pond

It was subsequently moved by Councillor M Phillips and seconded by Councillor A Nixon that the application be approved, subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

Upon continuation of the debate, an amendment was proposed by Councillor C V Trowbridge and seconded by Councillor J Hood to amend Condition 4 to read 'within two months of the date...'

On being put to the vote the proposal to amend Condition 4 was declared to be carried.

Members then voted on the motion to approve the application, including the amended Condition 4, which was duly carried.

RESOLVED: - that planning application No 20/32222/FUL be approved subject to the conditions as set out in the report of the Head of Development and the following amended condition:-

Within two months of the date of this permission, vehicle wheel wash facilities shall be provided at the field track ear of the shared drive. The wheel wash facilities shall be retained and all vehicles exiting the site shall utilise the facilities for the life of the development.

CHAIR