



**Minutes of the Planning and Highways Committee Meeting held in the Market Chambers,
Holsworthy on Wednesday 15th December 2021 at 5.15pm**

Present: Cllr Parker, Cllr. Musker, Cllr. Piper, Cllr. Shepherd, Cllr. Stone

In Attendance: Town Clerk (TC), ATTC
Cllr De Ste Croix

470. Apologises for Absence.

There were no apologies

471. Declaration of Interests

Both Cllrs. Piper and Stone declared an interest and signed the Declaration of Interest book accordingly.

472. Minutes of last meeting

The Minutes of the Planning & Highways Committee held on the 17th November 2021 will be altered to add the presence of Cllr. Piper.

473. Matters Arising. – To consider matters arising from the Minutes of the 17th November 2021 not already covered by the agenda. For information, only.

Item 467 Cllr. Shepherd asked for an update on the new signage. The TC confirmed that the information is with DCC for their consideration and approval.

474. To discuss and give observations on any Planning Applications received prior to the Meeting.

Applications

1/1185/2021/FULM - Restoration of nuclear bunker to provide a tourist attraction and change of use of land for the stationing of holiday lodge caravans, creation of a new access, associated internal roadways, landscaping and drainage.

The TC has contacted the Planning Officer dealing with the application to find out if the deadline for comments can be extended but a reply has not yet been received. Cllr. Parker asked Cllr. Musker to give the committee an overview of the site meeting he had attended regarding this planning application. (It was noted that Cllr. Hutchings had also attended the meeting as a District Councillor not as a Town Councillor). Cllr. Musker mentioned that Holsworthy Hamlets Parish Council (HHPC) had not had a presentation from the architects unlike Holsworthy although many of the proposed holiday lodges are in the HHPC area. At the site meeting the Bunker on site was unlocked, however, it was only a single room accessible only via a single ladder, so nobody entered. Cllr. Musker stated he did not receive any extra information from the visit that wasn't already mentioned at the presentation Ara Architecture did at Full Council previously. The Bunker is in HHPC area not Holsworthy.

5:20pm Cllr. Stone entered.

Cllr. Musker reported to Cllrs. that the HHPC objection to the application already lodged with TDC mentioned the negative impact of increased traffic movements onto a stretch of highway with a 60mph speed limit. They were also concerned that there was no footpath nor street lighting at location of the proposed development and that the development is outside the planning boundary and is building in the open countryside.

gmp

It was mentioned that DCC Highways also expressed concerns that the A3072 and the A386 do not currently offer safe and suitable access for cyclists wishing to access Holsworthy and without further information it is currently recommending refusal.

Cllr. Shepherd also expressed concerns about the speed of traffic, problems with it being a potential accident hotspot and with poor pedestrian and cycleway access into town. Cllr Piper pointing out that this was contrary to DM18 of the Local Plan which stated that tourism accommodation will only be supported where the safety of public highway users is maintained.

Several concerns were raised regarding the application using the proposed restoration of the bunker as a part of the application this was felt this was only being done in order to conform with DM18 to get the planning application approved. However, Cllr Shepherd stated that there are no major plans or any detail regarding the restoration of the old Bunker in the application, which is insignificant as a possible tourist attraction anyway, the only thing proposed for it is an interpretation board. Cllr Piper commented that it appears that the application is based on very tenuously using the bunker to try and gain planning permission. Also, the historic windmill the application also refers to was demolished without leaving any remains over 100 years ago.

Cllr Shepherd mentioned that the previous public consultation on the development was rushed with little publicity before the event but what had been raised at the event was that some of the lodges would be very visible. This was noted by the Planning Consultants at the event but the lodges concerned were still there and no changes had been made to alleviate these concerns.

There then followed a discussion on the 'Pros and Cons' of the application as follows:

Pros

There may be an increased footfall into town from those using the lodges

The application does suggest some improvements to pedestrian and cycle users into town, but these are only minor and will not be suitable for those using wheelchairs, mobility scooters, pushchairs or those with restricted mobility. Sometime ago it was suggested that that the layby and grass verge opposite the footpath be upgraded to provide safe pedestrian access, but this has not been considered neither has the connecting and the opening up of the Coles Mill historic viaduct.

Possible employment opportunities is stated at between 3 – 5 but this is not clear if these are full or part time or seasonal.

There is some open space provided for in the proposed development and there is a lack of dog walking and running areas in the town but there is no information on how this open space will be able to be used, managed, and maintained.

Cons

There are no recreational facilities on the site therefore it is unlikely to attract families and therefore is contrary to DM18 as it does not improve facilities for or diversifies the range of existing tourism accommodation.

The proposed development is on a prominent site which currently forms a distinct highly visible natural landscape boundary to the town, it is rich in wildlife and is framed by two valleys and two historic Viaducts. The application would be for a development contrary to the Local Plan and would be a main departure from it as it is in open countryside and therefore should be protected from development. It would be in full view of a large number of existing residential properties and businesses and also from the heritage and historic conservation area of the Town. The landscaping proposals do little to mitigate the visual impact of the development and many of the lodges will be from 2m to 5m above the existing ground level. Any planting proposed will also take a considerable time to mature and will also provide little screening of the site especially in the late autumn and winter months. It is recognised by Red Bay Design the landscape Consultants employed by the applicant that the proposals are likely to 'form a recognisable and uncharacteristic new feature' which will be a permanent development within the open countryside and falling outside the development boundary.

There appears to be a conflicting information whether the proposed development is for

static Caravans or Lodges. This needs to be clarified as the site is an extremely prominent one and the sight of static caravans would only exacerbate the damage that the development would have on the existing landscape.

The proposed development is outside the development boundary of the Town in an area of open countryside. The council is concerned that the application is only using the proposed restoration of the small bunker as part of the application in order to conform with DM18 to get the planning application approved. There are no major plans or any detail regarding the restoration of the old Bunker in the application, which is insignificant as a possible tourist attraction anyway, and the only thing proposed for it is an interpretation board. It therefore appears that the application is based on very tenuously using the bunker to try and gain planning permission. The historic windmill the application also refers to was demolished without leaving any remains over 100 years ago. The application is therefore not directly related to and compatible in scale with an existing tourism attraction and therefore does not comply with the Local Plan Policy DM18 in anyway.

Concerns were also expressed on the impact to wildlife and the on the site and it was felt that not enough work had been done by the developers to evidence the current wildlife and planting on the site and how this would be protected especially as there is a large amount of cut and fill, work to produce raised platforms and removal/ gapping of some exiting hedgerows.

Also of concern were potential rainfall runoff from the site onto properties downhill and the road junction and possible light pollution from the site.

The Committee agreed that the Council should object to the Planning Application on the grounds discussed.

5.49pm Cllr De Ste Croix arrived.

475. To receive decisions from the District/County Council on previous applications and any other received prior to the Meeting.

No other decisions had been received.

476. To discuss any Highway Matters (including DCC approved signage into the Town).

The TC is still awaiting confirmation from DCC on the alterations made on the draft Welcome to Holsworthy signs. Regarding the Vehicle activated signs- the TC has contacted DCC regarding the installation of the signage and a preliminary meeting to discuss it further will be held after Christmas and the outcomes reported back.

477. Town Clerks Report

The TC had nothing further to report.

478. Close

Cllr. Parker closed the meeting at 5:58pm

Signed *DM Parker*

Dated *19.1.22*