

Planning Committee (South)
19 DECEMBER 2023

Present: Councillors: Len Ellis-Brown (Chairman), Joanne Knowles (Vice-Chairman), Jon Campbell, Paul Clarke, Mike Croker, Lynn Lambert, Alan Manton, John Milne, Roger Noel, Josh Potts, John Trollope and Peter van der Borgh

Apologies: Councillors: Sam Bateman, Mark Baynham, Emma Beard, Philip Circus, Joy Dennis, Victoria Finnegan, Claudia Fisher, Joan Grech and Nicholas Marks

PCS/37 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2023 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

PCS/38 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

DC/23/1177 – Councillor Joanne Knowles declared an interest on this item on the basis that she had spoken to one of the public speakers previously. She remained in the room during consideration of the item and took part in the vote.

DC/23/1594 – Councillor Roger Noel declared an interest on this item. He spoke on the item as a member of the public but left the room thereafter and did not participate in the debate or the vote.

DC/23/1595 – Councillor Roger Noel declared an interest on this item. He spoke on the item as a member of the public but left the room thereafter and did not participate in the debate or the vote.

PCS/39 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

PCS/40 **APPEALS**

The list of appeals lodged, appeals in progress and appeal decisions as circulated were noted.

PCS/41 **DC/23/1177 - HENFIELD SPORTS CENTRE, NORTHCROFT, HENFIELD**

The Senior Planning Officer reported that the application related to the erection of two padel tennis courts to the adjacent north of Henfield Leisure Centre within an area known as the King's Field. The site sat within the defined built-up area boundary for Henfield and constituted designated Local Green Space

within the meaning of the National Planning Policy Framework. It was also defined as a 'playing field'.

Members were shown images of the application site and the proposed courts. Officers were satisfied that the proposed courts and enclosure were appropriate in terms of scale and design.

It was proposed that one of the two adjacent football pitches would be reorientated to ensure that there was sufficient 'run-off' space. This would be secured by a condition. It was reported that Sport England had not objected to the proposed reorientation and was satisfied that it would not diminish the quantity and/or quality of playing pitch provision. Members were advised that Sport England's response carried significant weight as it was a statutory consultee.

The proposals for lighting were outlined. Of particular note was the implementation of a low-impact lighting scheme to mitigate the effects of lighting on a hedge situated adjacent to the proposed courts that was significant for bat commuting and foraging. This would be secured by a condition.

A noise impact assessment had been undertaken and the Council's Environmental Health team was satisfied that the proposed development would not have an adverse acoustic impact.

Members' attention was drawn to an excerpt from the comments received from Sport England. Sport England had consulted with the Lawn Tennis Association who had highlighted that the only other padel tennis facility in the vicinity was at The Triangle Leisure Centre in Burgess Hill, which was operating at 92% capacity. Members were advised that there was anecdotal evidence of a need for such a facility and that the recreational health and wellbeing benefits of having one should be accorded significant weight.

One public speaker spoke in objection and two public speakers spoke in support of the application.

The Local Ward Member also spoke on the application.

Members gave consideration to the concerns raised by one of the public speakers in relation to noise disturbance.

RESOLVED

That the application be approved in line with officer recommendation, subject to the conditions set out in the report.

The Principal Planning Officer reported that the application was retrospective and sought full planning permission for the change of use of the land for dog day care, overnight boarding of dogs and equestrian use; the erection of a grooming building operated as ancillary to the dog day care business; and the erection of a stable building for mixed equestrian and dog day care purposes.

The application site was located to the west of Henfield Road, outside of any designated built-up area boundary and within the countryside. Several properties were located to the north and east of the application site and the wider surroundings comprised open fields and woodland.

The application site comprised an existing residential dwelling known as Old Dairy East Cottage which was used for overnight boarding of dogs, several buildings used for a mix of equestrian and dog day care purposes, and a former sand school and paddocks which were used as exercise fields. There was also an unauthorised residential dwelling known as Lavender Cottage which was the subject of a separate planning application.

Members were shown images of the application site and associated buildings.

The business that operated from the application site was licensed for dog day care services for up to 20 dogs and for overnight boarding at Old Dairy East Cottage for up to 12 dogs. Dog grooming services ran alongside the day care services.

Whilst acknowledging that the development provided a service to the rural locality and contributed to the wider rural economy, it had not been demonstrated to officers' satisfaction that there was sufficient parking for the cumulative needs of the business and the unauthorised residential dwelling. In addition, insufficient information had been supplied in relation to water neutrality. Accordingly, the application was recommended for refusal.

Three public speakers spoke in support of the application, including Roger Noel (speaking as a member of the public rather than as a Local Ward Member) who requested that the application be deferred.

The other Local Ward Member spoke on the application.

Members were supportive of the application being deferred to allow additional information to be supplied.

RESOLVED

That the application be deferred to allow the submission of additional information to seek to address the reasons for refusal (water neutrality and parking provision).

The Principal Planning Officer reported that the application was retrospective and sought full planning permission for the erection of a three bedroom residential dwelling.

The application site was located to the west of Henfield Road, outside of any designated built-up area boundary and within the countryside. Several properties were located to the east and west of the application site and the wider surroundings comprised open fields and woodland. The land immediately to the south and west of the application site was used for dog day care, grooming and boarding, and the keeping of horses.

Members were shown images of the application site and adjacent buildings.

Since the committee report was published, NatureSpace had advised that the development was unlikely to impact on great crested newts or their habitat. Some additional comments had also been received stating that the dwelling would use less water than the former equestrian use of the site, and would be occupied by a worker associated with the business that operated from the wider site. Officers' view was that the dwelling was not essential for the needs of the business, as the dog day care operated between 7.30am and 6.00pm and there was a separate dwelling within the same ownership that was licensed for dog boarding.

It had not been demonstrated to officers' satisfaction that the dwelling was essential to its countryside location, that there was sufficient parking for the cumulative needs of the dwelling and the business, and that the development would not be adversely impacted by noise and disturbance from the activities taking place on the wider site. In addition, insufficient information had been supplied in relation to water neutrality. Accordingly, the application was recommended for refusal.

Four public speakers spoke in support of the application, including Roger Noel (speaking as a member of the public rather than as a Local Ward Member) who requested that the application be deferred.

The other Local Ward Member spoke on the application.

Members were largely supportive of the application being deferred to allow additional information to be supplied.

RESOLVED

That the application be deferred to allow the submission of additional information to seek to address the reasons for refusal (needs of the business, water neutrality, noise, and parking provision).

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 7.08 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm

CHAIRMAN