

Local Meeting Note 17th January 2020

Chair: Councillor Elliot

Officers: James Hughes (Development Management Team Leader – South Area) and Georgia McBirney (Planning Officer)

Applicant Team on behalf of the applicant: Lydia Harper (PWA Planning), Marco Bartolini (Arbor-Eco Consultancy) and Bryony Jennings (Austringer Ltd)

Number of attendees: 21 attendees signed the register of attendance (including Councillor Clarke)

Presentation

Councillor Elliot gave a short introduction to the local meeting and Officers and the Applicant Team introduced themselves.

James Hughes explained the purpose of the local meeting. A local resident asked if a second local meeting would take place due to number of attendees in relation to the number of objections of the application. James Hughes stated that second meeting would not be arranged and that only those who comment on the application are invited to the local meeting. The attendees of the meeting raised concerns in respect of the criteria for inviting residents to local meetings.

Lydia Harper of the applicant team presented the proposed development and Marco Bartolini presented the tree sections of the presentation.

Q & A

Councillor Elliot invited questions and comments from the attendees.

Q: Question, A: Answer and S: Statement

Q: A local resident stated that the gates at the site have been locked for a long time and the anti-social behaviour that was referenced in the presentation is in the park not the application site. The local resident also asked why is the 'riding arena' which has asbestos is not being repaired and also stated that 40 horses have never been on the site and that the proposal seems a lot of work and investment for 26 horses. The local resident also stated that there is no security at the site, that the applicant previously offered the site as a Traveller Site and that whether the site could be purchased by the Council.

A: The applicant team stated that the local residents raised comments rather than questions. In respect of the asbestos, the applicant team also stated that asbestos is not an issue unless it has been disturbed and will need to be removed by the applicant following the appropriate procedures. The applicant team advised that 26 horses have been proposed as a result of consultation with an Equestrian Consultant (Anne Clarke). The applicant team also stated that the proposal will allow for an attempt to overcome issues with anti-social behaviour.

The applicant team stated that part of the site was made secure in 2016 and that the site cannot be made fully secure due to the fly-tipping on the site.

S: Local residents did not disagree with the applicant that anti-social behaviour was occurring on the site.

Q: A local residents asked what will happened to the pond area.

A: The applicant team stated that the pond is currently full of old tyres and the land drain is currently blocked. If the land drain is open, it would be a good pond (southern area of the site).

S: A local resident stated that if the local residents saw good management or maintenance of the site, residents would be less suspicious of the applicant.

Q: A local resident stated that their garden backs onto the site and said that they have not witnessed the anti-social behaviour that the presentation alluded to and raised concern that the owner of the site has a disregard for the micro-organisms on the site and herbicides have historically been sprayed on the site and trees have been cut down without permission.

A: The applicant team stated that herbicides have not been sprayed on the site.

S: A local resident stated that horse manure has been linked to asthma and that there will be more pollutants due to trees being cut down. The local resident stated that trees will need to be cut down to remove the rubbish that has been piled on the site. The local resident also stated that previously when a replacement fence was constructed that applicants used the rear access which they have no right of access to and that the replacement fence encroached into the allotment land by 1m.

A: The applicant team stated they recall the fencing being implemented and that due to the trees on the site, using the access road was the only way to repair the fence.

Q: A local resident stated that the applicant team have explained that the buildings would not have a much larger footprint than the existing, however, the car parking has been omitted. The local resident also stated that a local child died recently due to air quality, and asked if the number of horses are reducing, why are the number of car parking spaces increasing?

A: The applicant team stated that they are of the view that the proposed hardstanding does not impact the openness of the Metropolitan Open Land and that the number of car parking spaces have been proposed in line with policy requirements. The applicant team also stated air quality was not raised as an issue in the previous appeal decision.

Q: A local resident asked if the Council can seek amendments in regards to car parking and air quality.

James Hughes stated that the baseline of the appeal decision needed to be used and that an assessment of the number of trips would be compared to the baseline. James Hughes highlighted that amenity impacts of car parking can be considered.

Q: A local resident stated that traffic is an issue in Ronver Road with vehicles double parked, how will horse boxes and users impact on traffic?

A: The applicant team stated that it is the resident's opinion that traffic would increase. The applicant team stated that the baseline and the appeal decision need to be considered. The applicant team also stated that a transport assessment has been submitted with the application.

Q: A local resident asked for clarification about how the 19 car parking spaces would be split between staff and visitors.

A: The applicant team stated that car parking is not allocated between staff and visitors and that the site is in a highly accessible location with proximity to rail station and bus stops. The applicant team also stated that a Travel Plan can be secured by condition.

Q: A local resident asked how many staff would be required for 26 horses.

A: The applicant team stated that this is a question for the end-user of the site and that an end-user has not been secured for the site. The applicant team also stated that car parking proposed is based on policy. The applicant team also stated that as the proposal is a community use it is likely that staff will be in the local community.

Q: A local resident stated that there was previously a community use on the site but the tenant was evicted, why was the tenant evicted.

A: The applicant team stated that the previous tenant was not evicted and stated that the previous tenant did not manage the site as per the lease.

Q: A local resident stated that the owner of the site knows the site is a SINC and that bulldozers have previously been used on site.

A: The applicant team stated that this is not the case.

Q: A local residents questioned if the width of the track is to encourage use by cars and what is the proposed material of the track.

A: The applicant team stated that the site is privately owned and that the material of the track can be secured by condition.

Q: A local resident asked if the Japanese Knotweed is only restricted to the site, as it will keep coming back to the site if the source is not on the site.

A: The applicant team stated that only the site has been surveyed.

Councillor Elliot asked if anyone attendance wanted to speak in favour of the application. No one responded. The applicant team stated that when they did a consultation event prior to the submission of the application that some people did say they were in support of application.

Q: A local resident asked if the current application is a new application.

A: James Hughes stated that the application was submitted in April 2019 and that the application is a different proposal to the appeal decision.

Q: A local residents asked how long the owner has owned the site and whether they are a British company.

A: The applicant team stated that the owner has owned the site for 10 years and that the company was previously off-shore and has been transferred to a UK company.

Q: A local resident stated that wildlife prefers unkempt site and the birds of prey on the site helps control vermin numbers. How do you plan to tidy up the without disturbing the wildlife on the site.

A: The applicant team stated certain surveys have to be done and that certain species are protected by law. Surveys can be done in phases and a Phase 2 survey has been submitted with the application. The applicant team stated that the submitted Phase 2 survey recommends further surveys to be undertaken prior to the commencement of works and that a licence would be required from Natural England.

Q: A local resident asked how long would a planning permission last for.

A: James Hughes stated that if permission is granted then the applicant would have 3 years to implement the permission and that there is no expiry date for the established use on the site.

Q: A local resident asked when would the Councils ecologist comment on the application.

A: James Hughes stated that Councils ecologist was consulted and that their comments will be outlined in the committee report.

Q: A local resident stated that the proposal appears to be a lot of work for only 26 horses, what happens if the use is not viable.

A: James Hughes stated that the applicant would need to apply for planning permission for a change of use and that if a proposal was contrary to policy it would be refused.

Q: A local resident asked if the applicant would allow residents to commission an independent ecologist for a phase 2 survey.

A: The applicant team said no to the local residents commissioning their own survey of the site.

Councillor Elliot stated that due to the time that no more questions would be taken and invited Councillor Clarke to comment.

Councillor Clarke stated that there is mistrust of the developer from local residents and if the developer was willing to be more open this would build trust with the community. Why would a good developer turn down this request?

A: The applicant team stated that in all their extensive experience they have never had such a request and that it is normal for Councils to use their own expertise and the request shows distrust of the Councils Ecologist and that any request would need to be put in writing to the owner of the site.

James Hughes outlined the Planning Committee process.

Councillor Elliot closed the meeting at 9.05pm.