

EDC Planning Committee 17.2.22

Chair: William Patterson, Councillors: Ian Chambers, Mike Eyles, Elaine Martin, Ali Ross, Henry Sawry-Cookson, Graeme Simpkins, Debra Wicks, Michael Hanley. Planning Officer: Richard Fox. EDC solicitor: Rebecca Harrison

Planning Issues.

Item 1: Application from Barrnon Ltd (owner: Andy Barr), engineering company based in Appleby, to build an industrial building to house the engineering works, The Westmoreland Herald and a cafe.

Richard Fox (RF): This item has been called in by the minister of state, so we cannot formally issue a notice. We can debate the item but it is subject to the secretary of state to intervene. In other words the committee cannot give a formal decision notice.

Since January there has been talks to safeguard the railway bed (the site is on the old Penrith to Keswick line). The building will be further away from the former track (the initial plans had the building straddling the track). We have received the drawings. Network Rail has told us they have no plans to reopen the line. There is a company called CKP which plans to reopen the line. There is a "Restore your Railway" fund but CKP failed to get funding recently. We are satisfied that this development will not prejudice the long term reopening of the branch line.

Speakers.

Martin Oakley: I previously worked for British Rail. Initially I objected to this proposal but there has been a modified earthworks design. I have tabled a proposal to CPK. This will safeguard the integrity of these earthworks. The applicant has agreed to this. The railway maintenance staff would need access to this stretch of line.

Andy Barr: I am trying to create 250 new jobs. In 2012 we were drawn to the nuclear industry to design machinery (for the decommissioning of nuclear power plants). Our products are industry leading. The average staff salary is £50-60 per annum. Our business is growing exponentially. There is a potential to make £20 million in the next 1-2 years. We are negotiating with the US government for contracts in the billions. We are currently in a constrained site. The proposed site is perfect: its near mainline railway and town and its secure. It is also on the A66 and M6. If we are not permitted to build, where else would we go, I don't know, we might have to move out of the area.

Mike Eyles (ME): Is there sufficient space to reopen the railway line.

RF: Yes.

Ali Ross (AR): Asked about cycleways.

RF: This might rely on third party agreements.

Michael Hanley: Asked whether, if the railway line was reopened, would it be fenced off.

RF: This is not known.

AR: Asked about the adequacy of biodiversity and that the assessment was very inadequate. This was a high quality woodland habitat which was obliterated prior to application when many trees were removed (by the applicant). I don't think this affects the outcome of the decision. I wonder if the officers can put conditions to balance the destruction.

RF: We can look at the proposed landscaping scheme to get more biodiversity. We regret what has happened in the past.

Debate

Henry Sawry-Cookson (HSC): It is not clear to me that this will be good for Eden. We should be looking to make better use of the railways.

William Patterson (WP): This will not have any effect on the opening of the railway.

Ian Chamber (IC): The site is surrounded by industrial units.

AR: I see the merits for this business. If this committee approves, the cycling and biodiversity conditions. should be applied.

John Lynch (JL): I propose to accept this application.

IC: The safeguarding of the railway line has been sorted out. I will not give my personal opinion on this.

Rebecca Harrison (RH): JL is the proposer to accept, he will have to agree to an amendment concerning AR's conditions on cycling and biodiversity.

JL: I don't accept the amendment.

Debra Wicks (DW): I think we have to compromise. I think we should accept the amendment.

RF: I can't give assurances about this without discussion with the applicant. There is a condition to

provide a footway, this may be extended to make a cycleway.

WP: I will go outside normal procedure and ask the applicant.

Andy Barr: We would be very happy to put an extra few feet of tarmac down.

Voting: All voted in favour except HSC who voted against.

Item 2: Change of use of agricultural land to the siting of 103 timber clad lodges at Hutton.

RF: The site can only be seen from along distance. It is outside the Lakes National Park, and there will be economic and social benefits.

Speakers

Applicant's Agent Mr Broadhead: There is good access from the site to cycle routes, the Sea to Sea cycle route is nearby. There will be EV charging points on the site. The application has drawn a large number of objections. A lot of these are hypocritical as they come from other caravan owners.

There will be 12 staff and a £2.5 million spend in the local economy.

AR: Asked about the drainage issue.

RF: This is a change of use application. There is a separate regime to get this passed. Its a two stage process. There are archaeological remains nearby but there is no proposal to dig into the earth here.

MH: Asked about the fact that there appearance of the lodges was not specified and whether this was not needed as this is an application for change of land use.

RF: Yes.

HSC: What about the loss of agricultural land?

RF: This has to be balanced against the increased prosperity to the area.

DW: This application is sympathetic to the environment and of benefit to the local employment and I give it my whole hearted support.

AR: The EV charging is welcome but where is the renewable energy as the lodges will be heated by gas?

Agent: We hope to have air-source heat pumps.

Voting: All voted in favour except HSC who voted against.

Item 3: Hesket: Site for landscaping with intention to build 5 properties.

RF: Planning application for the site has already been approved. He read out an objection letter which said that planning was only granted for two properties. The land is boggy and the nearby beck overflows in the winter. The site is not big enough for five properties. There is a significant issue with surface water.

Speakers

Local EDC councillor David Ryland: The site is too small for five properties. Residents have video evidence of otters at the site. With this plan we are encroaching on the river (beck). The site is a natural soakaway for rainwater. If developed it would increase the risk of flooding to existing

residents. I would recommend a site visit.

Debate

Peter Baker (PB): Where does the river (beck) run?

DW: I would not build on this site.

RF: There were conditions put on the planning approval.

JL: I propose a site visit.

AR: Did the application include any hydrological survey? If not done, could we ask for this?

RF: I don't know if this was done but we could ask for such a survey.

PB: We need a hydrological survey before the site visit.

The committee voted for a site visit.

Item 4: Creation of a car park at Long Meg.

Applicant's Agent: Ms Knox: I work with the North Pennines Partnership. Long Meg is at risk from vehicle damage. Its getting worse all the time. There has been scarring of the site. NPP have secured funding for the site. Local residents have voted in favour of this project. There will be a net gain to biodiversity, a 90 metre hedge will be planted when 10 metres of hedge is removed to create an entrance. There will be notices to visitors to take their litter home. Volunteer litter pickers will be arranged. There will be no overnight parking allowed.

MH: Asked if there will be parking charges.

RF: Not that I know of,

ME: Asked about measures to ban parking at the Long Meg site.

RF: There will be signs directing visitors to the car park.

MH: I asked about parking charges. The fact that there will not be any charge will encourage visitors to use the car park.

Quarterly Planning Performance

RF: The department does perform well against national standards. We have had new planning officers in enforcement with an increase in enforcement completion in the last year. In 2020-21, 97% of planning applications were determined within 13 weeks, the national target is 60%.