

## **Planning Committee: 20 June 2023**

### **Observations received following the publication of the agenda**

#### **Items 06 – W/22/1877 – Land at Warwickshire Police HQ, Woodcote Lane, Leek Wootton**

##### Addition to Report

The committee report was generated without the body of the Archaeology section. The section should have read as follows;

The County Archaeologist considered the submitted information which included a geophysical survey of the site.

Whilst the geophysical survey undertaken across parts of this site did not identify any magnetic anomalies to which an archaeological interpretation could be attributed with any degree of confidence, the Archaeologist has advised that this should not be relied upon as providing evidence that archaeological deposits are absent from this site. In line with the guidance on geophysical survey, supported by Historic England, any lack of geophysical anomalies cannot be taken to imply a lack of archaeological features.

On the basis of the above, the County Archaeologist recommended that the applicant be requested to arrange for further archaeological evaluation to be undertaken before any decision on the planning application is taken to help to define the character, extent, state of preservation and importance of any archaeological remains present and also provide information useful for identifying potential options for minimising or avoiding damage to them.

The applicants have since agreed a Written Scheme of Investigation with the County Archaeologist for trial trenching on the site to further investigate the archaeological potential of the site in much greater detail and this work is ongoing.

On the basis of the above, Officers consider that the ongoing archaeological work can be secured by condition and worded in such a way that the results are submitted prior to the submission of any reserved matters so that the extent of any deposits identified, and any necessary mitigation can inform the layout of any reserved matters submission.

##### Condition Update

Condition 2 has been amended to read;

*"The further approval of the District Planning Authority shall be required to the undermentioned matters hereby reserved before any development is commenced on any phase of development:-*

- (a) *Appearance*
- (b) *Landscaping*
- (c) *Layout*

(d) *Scale*

*REASON: To comply with Article 4(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015 (as amended)."*

#### Additional Consultation Responses

**WDC Arboricultural Officer:** Following a conversation via Teams on Thursday 15 June with both Gary Fisher and Harry Wilson on behalf of the LWFG, there was an expressed concern that the positions of the trees in G10 had been adjusted between the date of the initial survey, as shown on RPS drawing Tree Constraints Plan dated June '21, and the Tree Protection and Removal Plan dated November '22. Having reviewed the documents, it is noted that what has been adjusted is the red line, to reflect the boundary of the site more accurately, the positions of the trees have not been altered.

Additional correspondence has also been received regarding the submitted Tree Survey report.

**WCC Flood Risk Management:** Additional information has been received on 20 June 2023 and will be reviewed in due course.

#### Additional Public Responses:

**1 letter from resident** reiterating safety concerns with regard to the safety of the Woodcote Lane/Warwick Road junction.

**1 letter received from agent acting on behalf of Broome House** seeking revisions to proposed Condition 9 (additional tree surveys) to introduce clearer wording and a workable condition to ensure the protection of trees to the boundary.

The following summaries are from correspondence sent directly to Members prior to the Committee Meeting.

**1 letter from CPRE** urging Members of the Committee to object to the scheme for the following reasons;

(1) The location is in an attractive village and is itself an unspoilt site. The Conservation Officer's critical response describes the proposal as 'a condensed arrangement of dwellings contrary to the site's semi-rural setting on the edge of Leek Wootton'. (*Response to App W22/1877, 30 Jan 2023, end of fourth para - see text below*).

(2) Local Plan Policy DS22 is an approved framework for restoring the Woodcote landscape with funding from enabling development. The application site was removed from the Green Belt in the 2017 Local Plan under 'exceptional circumstances', these being that it was to be the enabling development. The Council should adhere to Policy DS22. The site should only be developed at all if it brings about the conversion of Woodcote as a historic building to residential use and restoration of its garden and landscape. *See listing description of Woodcote (Grade II) below.*

(3) The current retention of the Police HQ at Woodcote means that a review of Policy DS22 is needed: not disregarding the Policy as the Officers' report in effect recommends. The new South Warwickshire Local Plan (SWLP), now at Issues & Options stage, is the right vehicle for this full review.

(4) On whether there is any need for housing at this location now, the officers' report has only one passage (at p11), which is vague. *"Considering the need for some residential development to be realised to assist in meeting the overall numbers of dwellings identified in the Development Plan and the five-year supply position, it is Officers' opinion that the application should be adjudged positively."* WDC has a 5-year housing land supply and there is no reason why permission for housing on this site is needed now, rather than reviewing the allocation in the new South Warwickshire Local Plan.

(5) There is no obvious ground for granting permission to Cala Homes now. To do so will pre-empt the review of Policy DS22 in the SWLP. The total housing requirement for Warwick District should and will be fully reappraised in the SWLP.

**1 letter from resident speaking at Committee** with full list of objections. A summary in the document states;

*The NPPF lays out a system of planning within which the community and the council produce their own local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities. The idea was to "empower local people to shape their surroundings, with succinct local and neighbourhood plans setting out a positive vision for the future of the area" (NPPF 17)."*

The main points are:

- 1. The principles behind Policy DS22 were to restore and enhance the Woodcote Estate. This will not occur. To allow this opportunistic plan for development given the land is no longer surplus would be to circumvent Green Belt legislation and the principles and spirit behind DS22.*
- 2. It would undermine the tenets of local democracy given the previous referendum on the 2016 Masterplan, the Planning Inspector's report in 2017 and the Local Plan. The sale of the land to Cala was done clandestinely seeking to make this a closed case. The applicant should not profit from the lack of transparency.*
- 3. There has been a woeful lack of pre-application consultation with the public and misleading documentation from Cala about the current proposal.*
- 4. The proposal will lead to a very significant loss of habitat in terms of the quantity and quality of the planned destruction and the visual impact this will have on the village.*
- 5. This is not a sustainable development. The effect of increased traffic on Woodcote Lane along with its pinch points, the lack of existing residency carparking which causes cars to park on the lane and render it single lane in parts, the very narrow footpath, the lack of cycle lanes, the blind corner on the Anchor Junction of Woodcote Lane all mean that it would be unsafe to permit the development.*
- 6. It would cause permanent, substantial cumulative harm to a heritage site which should be protected rather than allowing it to be plundered.*

*For the reasons given above I respectfully submit that the planning application should be refused.*

**Correspondence from Leek Wootton Focus Group:** Summary of objections previously raised and concerns with the application.

**Items 10 and 11: W/23/0381 & W/23/0381/LB – Town Hall, Parade, Royal Leamington Spa**

1 neutral response received from a third party which raises no material planning considerations.