

ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
13th DECEMBER 2000

CORSHAM: POCKEREDGE FARM AND PEEL CIRCUS

Purpose of Report

1. To respond to a notice of motion to County Council by Mr. P.G. Allnatt on 21st November 2000, and referred for consideration and report by this Committee.

Background

2. Mr. Allnatt moved the following motion at County Council on 21st November 2000, in relation to proposed housing development on land at Pockeredge Farm and Peel Circus, Corsham:

“Given the size of this development and strength of opposition to it, including by Cllr.T Sturgis, Council regrets that the County Council’s comments as Highways Authority and Local Education Authority were taken under delegated authority and invites councillors Mrs Scott, Mrs Seager, Mrs Crisp, Mrs Bryant and Mr Sturgis to explain how the County’s Social Services, schools and highways will cope.”

3. The planning application (N.99.1947) is for housing development on land identified for allocation in the North Wiltshire Local Plan, due to be adopted following consideration by North Wiltshire District’s full Council at its meeting on 23rd January 2001. The planning application was approved, subject to referral to the Secretary of State, by the District Council at a Council meeting on 31st October 2000. The referral to the Secretary of State is required because the application is a departure from the adopted Local Plan.
4. The social services and education requirements for the site are not a matter for this Committee and are not addressed.
5. The highway authority comments were made under delegated authority. This is usual for planning applications. The consultation response reflects the result of many months of discussion and negotiation on the application, and identifies various requirements of the highway authority to safely accommodate the highway needs of the development, to deal with issues pertaining to sustainable transport and to mitigate as far as is reasonably practicable the adverse impacts the development will have on the immediate transport infrastructure.

Considerations

6. Responses to referred planning applications are dealt with under powers delegated by the Committee to the Director of Environmental Services, under the provisions of Standing Order 2.1.1 and 3.4.1

7. It is generally impracticable to bring such consultation responses before Committee for several reasons, as set out below:
- (i) The highway authority is permitted 14 days to respond to planning applications under the provisions of the General Permitted Development Order 1995, after which time the local planning authority is not required to take account of the authority's response. Although this timescale is often not achieved for larger applications, the inevitable delays of bringing highways responses before Committee would seriously affect performance targets for most applications.
 - (ii) Larger applications often require substantial negotiation, understandings and agreements between the parties so as to arrive at a point where a coherent recommendation can be put before the planning committee.
 - (iii) In the case of Pockeredge Farm, a dedicated team of officers and members was set up as a working party by North Wiltshire District Council to determine the general framework of requirements associated with the development of the site. Negotiations on the application were undertaken within the generally agreed framework.
 - (iv) The site is included as an allocation in the emerging Local Plan; this is a material consideration the planning committee and the Secretary of State have to address, and to which weight has to be attached. Any reference of consultation matters to the County's Committees would not influence the principle of development on the site.
 - (v) Members of the County Council are advised of current applications in their division, and they will generally become aware of contentious issues through a variety of channels. It is quite common for interested members to contact the officers responsible for dealing with applications to discuss any concerns and ask to be informed of progress.

Recommendation

8. To recommend County Council that no changes be made in relation to current practices and procedures in respect of responses to referred planning applications.

RICHARD J. LANDER

Director of Environmental Services

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report:

None

Environmental impact of the Recommendations contained in this Report:

None