

SPECIAL MEETING OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE
18 APRIL 2012

Minutes of the meeting of the Special Meeting of Planning and Development Control Committee of Flintshire County Council held at Council Chamber, County Hall, Mold CH7 6NA on Wednesday, 18th April, 2012

PRESENT: Councillor Alison Halford (Chair)

Councillors Haydn Bateman, Chris Bithell, Jim Falshaw, Veronica Gay, Patrick Heesom, Ray Hughes, Christine Jones, Dave Mackie, Billy Mullin, Mike Peers, Gareth Roberts, Carolyn Thomas, Owen Thomas and David Wisinger

APOLOGIES: Councillor Bernie Attridge, David Cox, Fred Gillmore, Grenville James and Neville Phillips

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Eng. Klaus Armstrong-Braun and Marion Bateman

IN ATTENDANCE:

Head of Planning, Development Manager, Planning Strategy Manager, Highways Policy & Strategy Manager, Senior Engineer - Highways Development Control, Senior Planner, Principal Solicitor and Committee Officer

244. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

245. LATE OBSERVATIONS

The Chair allowed Members an opportunity to read the late observations which had been circulated at the meeting.

246. OUTLINE APPLICATION FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT OF A STRATEGIC BROWNFIELD SITE FOR AN EMPLOYMENT LED MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT OF WITH NEW ACCESSES AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE INCLUDING FLOOD DEFENCES AND LANDSCAPING AT RAF SEALAND SOUTH CAMP, WELSH ROAD, SEALAND. (049320)

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning in respect of this application which had been the subject of a site visit on 16 April 2012. The usual consultations had been undertaken and the responses received detailed in the report. Additional comments received since the preparation of the report were circulated at the meeting.

The Head of Planning introduced the report and explained that the site was in the Enterprise Zone and that approval of the application would provide the confidence to invest in the Zone. The Authority would retain control of the whole site based on the number of conditions recommended and through the reserved matters applications which would come forward following the grant of the outline planning permission.

The Senior Planner explained that there were additional late observations from Highways to give assurance on three matters which were:-

- i) the extension of the Deeside Shuttle response bus service
- ii) the penetration of the bus service into the site
- iii) the infrastructure and connection to Hawarden Bridge railway station to be required

The site was part of the Deeside Enterprise Zone and had the potential to bring forward 5000 of the 7000 jobs target for the zone. It was reported that the Northern Gateway allocation had been recognised for some time as a potential crucial economic driver for the sub-region. In the West Cheshire/North East Wales Spatial Strategy 2006-2021 the site was identified as an important future employment site. The site was further recognised in the Flintshire Regeneration Strategy 2008-2020 as a critical location for future employment use and wider regeneration benefit.

The site formed part of the larger 170 Ha site allocated in policy HSG2A of the Flintshire Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The remaining 70 Ha lay to the west and south of the site and was in a different ownership. Policy HSG2A allowed for the mixed use development of the site and stated that the development would be phased over the plan period (2000-2015) and should comprise 20-25 Ha of housing (at least 650 dwellings), 30% of which would be sought as affordable housing. The current application proposed 725 dwellings on an area of 25 Ha, however Members were referred to the late observations which highlighted that officers did not necessarily accept these figures and required further information. Proposed condition 45 had been included to cater for this and the condition stated that affordable housing was to be provided in accordance with Council policy and an appropriate scheme was to be agreed detailing precise numbers, sizes and tenures.

The scheme included enhanced or new health and education sectors and an improved access point and highway improvements. Proposed condition 4 required the submission and approval of a development brief, masterplan and design statement before submission of any reserved matters application. The officer drew Members' attention to paragraph 7.03 which provided details of the major strategic proposals for a mix of development. Paragraphs 7.38 to 7.40 detailed the parameter plans of the application and the indicative phasing plan was also detailed on pages 17 and 18 of the report. It was proposed that phases 1 and 2 would be brought forward together followed by phases 3 and 4. The construction was proposed to last for 10 to 15 years.

The main issues were considered to be flood risk, highways, sustainable transport, layout and phasing of development including integration with the whole allocation, compliance with requirements of the development plan and other Council policies. Once a masterplan had been submitted it would require a Transport Assessment (TA) to be carried out on it. Then a TA would be needed for each phase, followed by a revised TA once each phase was built. The current TA did not adequately address how this site would be serviced by sustainable transport measures, particularly public transport.

Mr. Peter Disley spoke in support of the application as the Development Manager for PRAXIS, the owner of the site. He explained that when they first acquired the site PRAXIS had indicated that they had the capital to invest and

were now keen to bring forward delivery of the scheme. They had continued to invest in the site, had engaged with stakeholders, including the residents of Deeside, and following discussions with officers on the proposal they intended to bring forward reserved matters applications if this application was approved at outline stage today. The proposal would deliver thousands of new jobs and quality housing and it was proposed that the commercial part of the application would commence by the end of 2013. A potential partner was on board to bring forward the residential element and they could be on site by the end of 2012. The site was one of the most strategic in North Wales and the site had been dormant for ten years before PRAXIS bought it. Mr. Disley stated that the outline planning permission would be a landmark and that it was now possible to unlock the potential of the site. He commented on the masterplan for the site and added that PRAXIS was ready, willing and able to deliver the proposals.

Councillor C.M. Jones, the local Member, proposed the recommendation for approval which was duly seconded. She welcomed the proposed development which would be of significant benefit to Flintshire, and Deeside in particular, and was long awaited. The allocation for mixed development in the UDP was on a site located next to the Deeside Industrial Zone which employed 9,000 people. This proposal would bring up to 5,000 jobs and apprenticeships to the area and would be a major boost for the economy. The proposal would also include good quality housing and provide homes for people who wanted to work in the area. The Northern Gateway development would be a huge benefit to the people of Garden City and Sealand could potentially provide a new health centre for the area, and fill the surplus places in the local schools. No built development could commence until after approval and implementation of a scheme for strengthening the River Dee flood defences. Consultation had been undertaken with officers, the local Member and residents.

Councillor D.E. Wisinger thanked officers for the excellent work they had undertaken on the application and said that consultation by the developer had been exceptional. He felt that the Deeside Enterprise Zone had to be of benefit to Flintshire and said this was an exciting opportunity to bring forward housing and jobs to the area.

Councillor P.G. Heesom strongly endorsed the comments of the local Member. This was a complex site and consultation had always been undertaken with the local Member. He highlighted paragraph 8.39 and drew Members' attention to the late observations and the officer additions to the report. It was important to make clear that 30% of affordable housing would be sought on the site. He asked that the local Member always be consulted as the development moved forward.

Councillor M.J. Peers thanked the officers for the report. He highlighted paragraph 7.03 and queried whether the figures for storage & distribution floorspace and manufacturing floorspace were correct. He also asked for more information on the skilled jobs which would form part of the development. He felt that there were a number of issues to be outlined at the reserved matters stage. He welcomed the opportunity for Member involvement on the development brief and the masterplan. He concurred with Councillor Heesom on the requirement for 30% affordable housing as detailed in the policy. He welcomed the late observations from Highways and said that it was important to utilise the railway

links adjacent to the site. He drew Members' attention to the late observations by Councillor Eng. K. Armstrong-Braun which he hoped would be considered.

Councillor C.A. Thomas seconded the Member involvement in the development brief and masterplan. She spoke of the ecological importance of the site and the flood risk element and asked what mitigation would be put in place. She requested further information on the tidal and fluvial flood storage areas. She noted the need for flood consequences assessments at each stage and also asked that an environmental/ecological survey be undertaken at each phase of the development and that a strategic ecological plan be carried out for the whole site. Councillor W. Mullin paid tribute to the officer, developer and local Member for their work on the application.

Councillor W.O. Thomas said that this was a great opportunity but added that he had concerns. He highlighted paragraph 7.03 and the figures quoted for storage & distribution floorspace as he felt that, in comparison, the small amount of Manufacturing floorspace would not bring many skilled jobs into the area. He raised concern about the access into the industrial area of the site, which he felt was poor even though the access to the residential properties was good. He hoped that there would be more emphasis on jobs rather than residential development.

Councillor R.C. Bithell welcomed the proposed development of what he considered to be a strategic site of regional importance. He welcomed the additional conditions detailed in the late observations sheet covering details of the design and timing of construction of site accesses and internal estate roads to be submitted for approval. He was disappointed that the masterplan which had been submitted was only for indicative purposes and said that this was a one off opportunity to make it work well. He felt that submission of a masterplan was vital and said that, when it was undertaken, he hoped that Members would be involved in it. He agreed that the figure quoted for manufacturing floorspace was low and added that manufacturing jobs were vital for the area. He also said that a section 106 obligation had not been included in the recommendation and asked if it needed to be covered at the outline application stage or whether conditions were sufficient.

Councillor H.G. Roberts said that it was important that the message went out to investors that Members were in favour of the application. He welcomed the application and, in referring to Hawarden Bridge railway station, felt that it would prove to be a vital component in the infrastructure. He commented on the flora and fauna in the area and said that there could be industrial activity with a healthy ecological background. On the issue of 10,000 sq m floorspace for the manufacturing sector, he said that this could be changed in the future.

The Principal Solicitor said that it was in the remit of the Committee to request that the development brief and Masterplan come back for approval and that this could form part of the recommendation.

In response to a query from Councillor W.O. Thomas, the officer said that the green area shown on the presentation slide was for phase 1 of the proposal. The Planning Strategy Manager said that a final phasing plan was still required,

so that Members were not being asked to agree to the phasing until the plan was submitted.

On the issue of ecology the Senior Planner said that consultation with Countryside Council for Wales and the Council's ecologist had led to condition 54 being included. The UDP specified that B8 storage would be for a greater amount than manufacturing floorspace hence the larger amount of floorspace being proposed. On the issue of poor access, she said that she had explained at the site visit that the submitted proposals would provide for two new accesses onto Old Welsh Road, one for residential and one for employment. A third new access would be provided on the northern side to link with Deeside Industrial Park. On the issue of residential use being favoured over employment, she said that the application was for a mixed use development and the amount of land proposed for employment uses was larger than the residential area.

The Planning Strategy Manager said that the issue of employment mix was prescribed to a degree in the development plan and the site adjoined a very large manufacturing site which contributed to Flintshire having a high proportion of manufacturing jobs compared to the national average. He added that the allocations of 10,000 sq m for class B2 floorspace and the office space of 9,000 sq m was both substantial and sustainable and he felt that the right balance had been achieved. On the issue of housing/employment balance, he said that the site had been in the development plan for 20 years for employment use and had not been taken up. Changing it to a mixed use made it a more attractive option to bring forward. He said that a balance was needed but added that it was an employment led development. On the masterplan he said that officers would have liked both developers to have brought forward a masterplan together but this had not happened. He referred Members to the late observations and the comments from the adjacent land owner who indicated that a planning application was to be submitted in June 2012 for that part of the allocation.

The Highways Policy & Strategy Manager detailed the highways issues on the site and in the wider area, commenting in particular on the access to the site and said that the site was important strategically and that Flintshire would work with the developer and other Agencies to ensure a sustainable transport scheme.

In response to a query from Councillor Bithell regarding the need for a section 106 obligation, the Principal Solicitor said that it was not required at the outline stage as it had been dealt with by the inclusion of conditions 44, 45 and 46 requiring schemes to be brought forward in due course. Following a query from Councillor C.A. Thomas, the Principal Solicitor said that it was entirely appropriate to deal with the requirements for a section 106 agreement at a later stage. At this stage it was not possible to deal with a 106 agreement for issues such as play provision as the detail was not available.

The Chair explained that Councillor M. Wright, the Executive Member for Regeneration & Tourism, was present at the meeting and asked if Members had any questions to put to him. Councillor Peers asked about the level of interest in the site but was advised by the Principal Solicitor that the Committee should decide the application based on the information before them. Councillor Wright confirmed what had been said with regard to the significance of the development.

The Planning Strategy Manager clarified that the proportions of Class B8, B1 and B2 set out in the policy were indicative adding that if a significant Manufacturer came along, this could be accommodated.

In summing up, the local Member Councillor C.M. Jones thanked the Executive Member, officers and in particular the Senior Planner and the Highways officers for their work on the application. She thanked the Committee for their positive comments and said that she agreed with Councillor Peers that the whole Committee should be involved with the masterplan. She said that PRAXIS had been excellent and had taken comments on board from herself and the community.

On being put to the vote, the proposal to approve the application with the additional conditions detailed in the late observations sheet was CARRIED.

The Principal Solicitor reminded Members of the request from earlier in the meeting that a detailed development brief, which would include a Masterplan, would be brought back to a Committee. On being put to the vote, the proposal was CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That planning permission be granted subject to the conditions detailed in the late observations sheet and in the report of the Head of Planning; and
- (b) That a detailed development brief (including a Masterplan) be reported to the Committee for approval.

247. DURATION OF MEETING

The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and ended at 11.23 a.m.

248. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were 8 members of the public and 2 members of the press in attendance.

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Chair