

Pre-Application Meeting Notes

Land R/o the Hollies, Reading Road, Burghfield Common

5th October 2022

Attendees:

Michael Bulter (MB) – West Berks Council (Planning)

Carolyn Richardson (CR) – West Berks Council (Emergency Planning)

Katherine Miles (KM) – ProVision Planning Consultants

James Blake (JB) – ProVision Planning Consultants

Steve Davies (SD) – T A Fisher

Richard Barter (RB) – T A Fisher

Key Points:

1. MB explained the background to the pre-app and the reasoning behind his decision to refuse the application 22/0244/fulext. Principally this was due to the objection from Emergency Planning (EP), AWE and ONR. Following discussion with senior members of the Council, it was resolved that it should be refused on public safety and non-accordance with Local Plan (LP) policy CS8.
2. CR confirmed that a 'line-in-the-sand' had to be drawn as to which potential housing sites to include (in addition to the existing housing stock) for the purposes of evaluating population counts\densities to inform the new off-site emergency plan. CR confirmed that it was a personal interpretation of the requirements rather than any statutory legislative rationale or guidance to accommodate sites with Outline planning consent and not those with a Local Plan (LP) allocation in these calculations despite both permissions and allocations being relied upon by WBC in their Core Strategy housing requirement and in assessing their 5 year housing land supply.
3. CR confirmed the site is not within the urgent evacuation zone (i.e. 600m from the boundary of either AWE Burghfield and AWE Aldermaston).
4. Following subsequent questioning from KM, CR confirmed that the EP doesn't and cannot cater for evacuation of every resident in the DEPZ since assumptions have been made over both population density (the assumed 2.4 average occupancy) and ability to self-evacuate. It was acknowledged that some residents would be able to make alternative arrangements directly (as noted in the plan) without needing to rely on blue light services or refuge centres.
5. CR couldn't quantify how many of the residents in the same zone as the application site would need to rely on the emergency services for assistance. It was also agreed that the

plan makes no provision for population increases within the zone through births and household changes.

6. CR confirmed that the EP is currently out of date and was in the process of being updated at present.
7. MB confirmed that it was his understanding that WBC Senior Planning Policy Officers' consider there is now effectively a moratorium on all new development in the DEPZ. This was discussed and was agreed to be a different stance from that taken by Basingstoke & Deane BC, and also by the SoS as evidenced by the Boundary Hall decision. MB added that it was now highly unlikely that West Berks Council would now allocate any new sites in the DEPZ areas as part of the LPR.
8. MB confirmed that the Council currently has a 7yr housing land supply. Discussion was then had as to whether the Councils stance on the DEPZ issue would be different if it was less than 5 yrs. MD agreed that it would likely be different if there was a sub 5yr supply.
9. RB highlighted the recent planning consent granted in July 2022 at Tadley Hill by Basingstoke & Deane BC which is within the Aldermaston DEPZ and proposed a net increase in both dwellings and population. No objection was made by EP to this application subject to a telephone landline being installed in each property. CR and MB to review and respond accordingly.
10. MB confirmed that assuming the other reasons for refusal (Impact on TPO trees and the lack of the s106 for the affordable housing were resolved) the Council should be in a position to recommend the application favourably. MB confirmed that the allocation of the site within the current LP assumed that the TPO tree impact could be overcome and was not in itself a block on the development of the site, and that if the objection from Emergency Planning is removed, then it is possible a favourable recommendation will be made.
11. KR commented that in line with recent planning consents at Boundary Hall and Dauntless Road applications, why a condition could not be attached to any permission [if granted] on the site about requiring each dwelling to have landlines. It was generally agreed that a new telecommunications emergency system which notified residents by mobile phone text message would be far more effective in the future. Discussion was had on the merits of a bespoke, site-specific emergency plan required by condition, similar to that placed on the recent Pavilions consent, could be applied in this case. CR/MB to confer and confirm councils' position on this.

Outcomes and following actions

- A. CR said she would confer and potentially reconsider this situation as no other allocated site in the current CS was affected by this situation, so would not set a precedent if the positions was altered.
- B. SD confirmed that if the main objection (DEPZ impact) were removed / resolved, then T A Fisher would submit another application on the site. However, it was also confirmed that If the Council maintained their objection, TA Fisher would have no recourse but to appeal the decision to refuse 22/0244/fulext. The deadline date for lodging an appeal was confirmed as 1st December 2022.

C. MB to respond in writing to the pre-application request prior to the end of October.