
PLANNING WORKING GROUP

MINUTES of the Meeting held at the site listed below on Monday, 29 December 2014 from 9.38 - 9.59 am.

PRESENT: Councillors Barnicott (Chairman), Adrian Crowther, Peter Marchington, Bryan Mulhern (Vice-Chairman), Prescott, Ghlin Whelan and Tony Winckless.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Philippa Davies and Graham Thomas.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Andy Booth and Sue Gent.

412 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

413 3.1 - 14/502473 - HAZELHOPE BARN, STALISFIELD ROAD, STALISFIELD

The Chairman welcomed the applicant and 13 members of the public in support of the application, to the meeting.

The Area Planning Officer introduced the retrospective application for a temporary dwelling and land to support an equestrian enterprise. He advised that there were no proposed changes to the barn for the residential use, and permission for accommodation had been requested to oversee the management of the horses on the site.

The Area Planning Officer advised that the site was in a remote rural location, within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). He reported that Stalisfield Parish Council supported the application, subject to the signing of a Section 106 agreement to include that residential use of the barn was directly linked to the business of the equestrian centre. The Area Planning Officer explained that residential use was not normally permitted at a site like this. He outlined the viability of the business and explained that it did not appear that it was profitable. This was contrary to the cancelled Annex A of Planning Policy Statement 7, still referred to as guidance, and he referred to paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework which stated 'the essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside'. He noted that planning permission had not been granted for business use at the site.

The applicant explained that she had submitted a three-year financial forecast, with the need for 3 workers at the site, but no wages were required. She explained that there was nothing further to invest in, and the infrastructure was in place, with no financial assistance needed. The applicant stated there was a functional need to live on the site because of the horses.

Local residents, in support of the application, raised the following points: the business complemented the rural setting; it was safer having residential use on the site; it was an advantage to have people here all the time; it was not an intrusion on the village; horses were a part of the rural setting; this was part of the rural community; hope common sense prevailed; it was important to be on site for the care of the horses which were high quality blood stock; this enhanced the area; the applicants needed to be present on the site and if they were not here, this would increase traffic movements in the area.

In response to questions, the Area Planning Officer advised that there had been no third party objections to the application. He further advised that there was no long term viability to the enterprise and that the Council could not accept the situation whereby the applicants recently sold the original house on the site and now wanted to return to live within the business. He reported that holiday lets were an exception to residential use of premises similar to this as there were tourism reasons to consider. The Area Planning Officer advised that 15 letters of support had been received.

In response to a question, the Chairman advised that the objection was not solely because of the financial aspect of the application, but also because the site was within the AONB.

Members then toured the site with the officer and the applicant.

Chairman

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All Minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee.