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Parish Clerk Helen Butcher

Minutes Planning Meeting 21st November 2022

73/22 **Public Open Forum (under adjournment);** for members of the public to bring issues to the Council's attention. Any issues not on the agenda cannot be discussed but will be noted and discussed at the next meeting if appropriate. Issues relating to the agenda will be taken into consideration when the item is discussed in the meeting

5 Members of the Public were present

74/22 **Attendance and apologies;** Present were Councillor Holland Chair, Councillor Hockley Vice Chair, Councillors Goodger, George and Jones. Clerk Helen Butcher

Apologies received and accepted from Councillor Coxall

75/22 **Members Interests;** Members are invited to declare disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests in items on the agenda as required by the Akeley Parish Council Code of Conduct for Members and by the Localism Act 2011.

Councillors Hockley and Jones declared an interest in the Boundary of the Leys Field development
Councillor George declared an interest in the Chapel Lane planning application

76/22 **ENVIRONMENT;**

a. Recreational Field;

-The third quote for the concrete bases for the new picnic benches has been received and is more expensive than the others.

Council **RESOLVED** accept GRB Building Services quote and apply to Community Board mentioning that there will possibly be an increase in costs of materials. Therefore, we need to ask if we can put a percentage on top to cover this if needed.

77/22 **Planning**

a. **Other planning Consultations –**

Ref. No: 22/03402/VRC Land Adjacent To Leckhampstead Road Akeley, variation of conditions-
To receive an update on the consultation response

Council **RESOLVED** to object to this planning application. A copy of the objection is attached below.

To consider a response to the appeal- APP/J0405/C/22/3308032: Land at Akeley Lodge Fields, MK18 5AA

Council **RESOLVED** to object to this appeal. A copy of the objection is attached below

-Outline Planning Application Consultation 22/03762/AOP Maple Tree Cottage Chapel Lane Akeley

On this occasion the Council **RESOLVED** to support this application because it is for two-bedroom house subject to the comments below

The Ecology & Tree checklist appears incomplete and incorrect and therefore needs revisiting. Also other wildlife species such as hedgehogs need to be considered, not just those currently listed i.e . hedgehog highways putting in

78/22 **Date and time of next meeting; Monday 9th January 2023 at 7.30pm - Date to be confirmed**

Pursuant to the 1960 Public Bodies Act (amended), the Chairman advises that the participants & proceedings of this meeting may be reported upon (filmed, recorded, photographed, blogged, tweeted or streamed) but verbal reporting may not take place whilst in session. Non-participating attendees not wishing to be subject to such media should indicate this by sitting to one side.

Ref. No: 22/03402/VRC Land Adjacent To Leckhampstead Road Akeley –

Akeley Parish Council objects to this planning application on the grounds that the revised plans for a “home office in the garages ” effectively makes another potential independent dwelling with separate toilet facilities. In doing so the properties also lose a parking space so at the same time the changes increase the likelihood for additional parking being needed. The plans would increase the dwelling from four bedroom to potentially 5 bedroom properties and should be assessed accordingly.

The plans submitted do not give any clear indication of how this is to be mitigated. There is a vague suggestion of an additional parking space with no clarity of the surface or size it represents. Or indeed if this really is extra parking spaces. There is no transparency in the plans about what the changes are. There are no measurements on the plans to enable any check as to whether the proposed changes affect the height of the garages.

The County Council Sustainable Drainage Team comment that “The applicant has not provided any additional drainage information as a result of the layout changes”. Therefore the application should not be approved without this being submitted and approved especially in view of the ongoing problems the site has had with drainage resulting in the Contractors regularly pumping excess water off the site and onto the neighbouring highways of Leckhampstead Road and Church Hill. The drains that the site is due to be connected to are already partially blocked and in need of attention.

The footpaths shown on the map are not correct and appear to have been repositioned with no explanation or consultation. There is some dispute from a resident about the siting of the developments boundary as it shows on their Land Registry Deeds as being part of their property.

The changes to the footpaths not only alter the siting of the paths but also the access to them. The removal of the styles suggests that the field will no longer be used for stock grazing. However there appear to be no proposed safety barriers to stop young children running down the paths out onto the roads. A meeting with a Footpath Officer would be useful to ensure there is clarity about the footpath surface, route and safety barriers before proceeding. No footpath diversion was put in place to ensure the safety of families walking to and from the village school during the roadworks to widen the road.

The “existing stabling/paddocks” does not in fact exist as shown on the plans. The current stable is on the other side of the field , there is no menage and a temporary paddock only. It is unlikely that the current stable would survive a move so there should be some transparency in these plans about the size, fabric and siting of the stable. If a menage is to

be built again there needs to be clear plans about the size, surfacing and drainage of surface water. This is especially vital given the existing and ongoing problems dealing with excess water from this site.

Given the ongoing difficulties that have arisen during this development the Parish Council is concerned about how any ongoing issues will be resolved once the houses are occupied? Some clarity on this would be appreciated.

Site Address: Lodge Fields Akeley Wood Lodge Road Akeley Buckinghamshire Breach: Appeal against(1) the material change of use of the Land from agriculture to a mixed use of agriculture and residential by the siting of 6 touring caravans, the laying of hardstanding and the construction of an earth bund and (2) the laying of hardstanding and construction of an earth bund Appeal Enforcement Ref: NC/22/00269/COU Appeal Ref: 22/00154/ENFNOT Planning Inspectorate Ref: APP/J0405/C/22/3308032

Akeley Parish Council objects to this appeal on the grounds stated below.

The original planning application was uncontested as it appeared to be within the remit of permitted agricultural development. The design and access statement stated that the straw would be transported to the site from within the local area using tractor and trailers. There appeared to be no reason to stand in the way of a farmer simply putting a barn on their land nor indeed any real option to object as it fell under permitted development. However the reality has been very different.

Had the original application given an accurate and full account of the size of the barn, amount of straw to be stored on the site and the size and weight and number of vehicles required to transport the straw, plus the need to have seasonal workers living on site for three months of the year, it would have fallen outside the scope of permitted agricultural development and thus been subject to full public consultation and scrutiny. The local residents would have had the opportunity to contest the development and this opportunity was denied.

The owners state in their appeal statement that the large areas of hardstanding are needed because of the volume of straw they would be storing which needs to sit on hardstanding rather than damp soil, and to enable the HGVs to gain access to the straw for transportation. Therefore why was this not identified within the original application? it could be interpreted that this was in order to avoid public scrutiny and objection. There was no mention in their original plans of needing any hardstanding for caravans and when they started appearing on site local residents were concerned that the site was being occupied illegally by trespassers.

The land agent states that the development has made no material impact upon neighbours in the wider area. Akeley Parish Council strongly disputes this. The single track road the site is situated upon was previously used to access five residences and otherwise was used more or less as a bridleway by horse riders and walkers. Now the local residents have had to amend their families use of the road due to the heavy goods traffic and the state of the road which was never intended to withstand the frequency of the weight of vehicles used to transport the straw. The road surface has been badly affected by the heavy use in just one harvest season. The road has also been blocked on occasion by articulated lorries arriving before the site is unlocked posing potential risk to these residents should an emergency vehicle need access, not to mention inconvenience in getting to and from their properties for work and school.

Residents in the village, away from the site itself have also been affected by the large HGVs transporting the straw at all times during the day and night along the village roads disturbing their sleep and depositing large amounts of straw in their gardens, along the roads, and also blocking drains.

Whitehead Planning also states that “ It makes no sense for the workers to use B&B establishments, hotels or other accommodation remote from the site and/or the other farms where they bale straw, given that all the straw is brought back to be stacked at Akeley. The appeal site is the base of operations during the harvest season and WHITEHEAD PLANNING Town Planning Consultancy Page 8 of 29 accommodating the workers off-site would necessitate a considerable number of additional vehicle movements to and from the site, which would take time (and burn fossil fuels) and make the business inefficient and unproductive.” There is an established campsite within easy walking distance that could accommodate the seasonal workers. This would negate the need to ruin the agricultural land with hardstanding and support a local business at the same time without any extra burning of fossil fuels.

Whitehead Planning claims that “For the remaining 9 months of the year, this area of hardstanding is used for the parking and storage of agricultural machinery. The hardstanding is necessary given the heavy clay soil, the potential for machinery to otherwise sink into the mud and the need to park/store valuable equipment on a free-draining hard surface.”. Akeley Parish Council questions whether in reality, any valuable agricultural machinery would be stored outside in an open unsecured, unoccupied site for the majority of the year? This appears to just be an attempt to justify the existence of an area of hardstanding that is not necessary.

The statement that “the site is well-enclosed by trees and hedges and the only clear view into the site is via the access onto Akeley Wood Lodge Road. Views of the caravans would thus be limited” is also disputed as it was residents that initially alerted the council to the presence of the caravans as they can clearly be seen as can the stacks of straw and the barn which all stand out in an area that was previously open fields. Akeley parish Council therefore refutes the statement “The caravans and hardstanding are of limited height and have no discernible adverse impact in the landscape”, as due to the size and scale of the operation they do adversely impact on the landscape. As there are no other farm buildings in the vicinity this site stands out.

Akeley Parish Council strongly disputes the assertion that “the development does not produce any unacceptable transport impacts that necessitate mitigation or otherwise.” The straw is not just brought in from the local area, it is also brought in from Bedfordshire, and other areas, on large artic lorries which the local roads are not built to take. Akeley is an old, small village with narrow roads and overhanging trees. The lorries regularly hold up the flow of traffic, shed straw along the road and break branches off the trees which residents have been left to clear. This shows a lack of respect for the local community and the safety of the residents. The site itself is situated on an awkward bend in a road which is in constant use, especially at school drop off and pick up times as it is en route between the two sites of the local school.

Akeley is a rural community and as such is used to increased farm traffic during the harvest season however there was not typical agricultural traffic connected with this site. Large artic lorries were transporting the hay and straw through the village at frequent intervals throughout the day and night. There is usually limited large vehicle movements through Akeley as the roads are too narrow so the impact this site made was dramatic and very obvious. It was certainly not the use of the odd tractor and trailer alluded to in the original application.

Akeley Parish Council disputes the fact that “the development is close to the farms providing straw which reduces the travel distance and hence fossil fuel use”. This site is further away from many of the farms

covered i.e. in Bedfordshire than the family's previous site in Milton Keynes. Therefore the mileage and use of fossil fuels has in fact increased.

The bales stacked outside of the barn pose a potential health and safety risk as the stacks tilt badly. Should this development be allowed to continue there will no doubt follow applications for more barns as the photos show the scale of the straw stored far exceeds the current storage capacity even taking into account the larger than permitted barn having been built. There will also be the additional impact should the appeal be permitted for the accommodation on site.

Throughout the owner's and the Planning Consultant's statements the constant theme is that the size of the barn, the bunds, and the areas of hardstanding are integral and necessary for the scale and type of business they are running. Therefore this should have been stated from the outset in the original planning application so that it could have been given the due consideration it required as to whether this is an appropriate site for an operation that is agricultural in nature three months of the year, haulage for nine months of the year and whether the local road network is suitable to support the size and weight of the vehicles utilised. Akeley Parish Council strongly feels that this is industrial planning by stealth with no regard for the impact on the local community. Hence their strong objection to the appeal. Had the original application truly reflected the scale of the business proposed it would have been strongly contested from the outset.

Should a site visit be arranged in order to consider this appeal, please can the visit also look at the roads leading to and from the site that the HGVs are using? This includes the routes through Buckingham, through Akeley from Leckhampstead and from Towcester. Also the road via Chackmore which would lead from the A43. This would enable the Inspectors to gain an understanding of the impact such large vehicles are having and consider the sites suitability for the scale of this operation.

With regards to the soil bunds the Parish Council supports the findings and recommendations of the Ecological Report.



