



FRESHWATER PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk's office 01983 752000

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 1st AUGUST 2023 AT 6.45PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, MEMORIAL HALL, FRESHWATER.

PRESENT: Councillors E Cox (Chair), D James, G Kennett, C Jarman, J Medland, B Hobbs, B Hinton MBE, C Bray and A Bamford

Members of the Public: 2 including Cllr Peter Spink.
Clerk: H Rowell

Cllr Cox was elected to Chair the Planning Meeting.

1. **APOLOGIES:**
Councillor E Roberts, N Thomas and D Hicklin.
2. **TO INVITE CLLRS TO DECLARE ANY INTEREST THEY MIGHT HAVE IN THE MATTERS ON THE AGENDA.**
Cllr James declared a pecuniary interest in **23/01148/FUL. Mountfield Holiday Park, Norton Green, Freshwater.**
Cllr Cox declared a non-pecuniary interest in all planning applications for this meeting as a member of the LPA Planning Committee stating the following "Please note that any predisposed view I express tonight is based on the information that has been presented. However, I remain open to listening to all arguments and receiving further material planning information potentially enabling me to change my mind in light of further information."
3. **TO INVITE MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO SPEAK ON A PLANNING APPLICATION ON THE AGENDA, AT THE CHAIRMAN'S DISCRETION.**
None
4. **TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF LAST MEETING HELD ON 18th JULY 2023**
The minutes of the meeting held on 18th July 2023 (having been circulated) were agreed, (AB /BH).
5. **UPDATES FROM LAST MEETING AND IWC PLANNING DECISIONS.**
Approvals
23/00809/CLPUD. 6 Millways Freshwater.
Lawful Development Certificate for proposed replacement of existing fence with brick wall and fence

23/00458/CLPUD. Bridle House, Norton Green, Freshwater.
Lawful Development Certificate for alterations to vehicular access.

6. PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO BE DISCUSSED (AT TIME OF SENDING OUT NOTICE).

23/01148/FUL. Mountfield Holiday Park, Norton Green, Freshwater.

Two residential chalet bungalows with parking.
Cllr James left the meeting for the discussion of this item.

Freshwater Parish Council objected (with one abstention) to the application for the following reasons:

Norton Green is acknowledged in the application as a hamlet and the main road through is a conservation area. The site is not within a settlement boundary. It comprises less than 40 dwellings and with an existing permission of 5 residential dwellings along with application would see an increase of residential units to almost 20% for the hamlet. The gradual increasing of housing units will have a permanent and substantive impact on the hamlet and its community. If this application is approved by the LPA it would further increase the housing density within the hamlet.

In 1971 permission was granted by the LPA for 52 Tourism units, to date only 6 units have been completed. The applicants have in place a planning permission for 6 holiday units and a separate permission for 5 residential units time is running down on those permissions as they were granted in 2020. (planning nos. 20/00787/OUT and 20/00779/FUL). If the site was suitable for 52 units why is the applicant moving forward a bits and pieces approach to the site? One reason would be to side step the need for the applicant to be required to pay for additional infrastructure costs and in regard to residential units by-passing the LPA requirement to provide affordable housing which would normally be applicable for a site which could provide this number of units. If this application was successful planning permission would be for a total of 13 units. We could reasonably assume their approach would continue until the site is covered with a patchwork of planning approvals for residential units. None of which the LPA could be confident would be built or indeed be confident which of the approvals, if any, would be utilised. The applicant has a history of achieving planning permissions for this site and then not progressing to the build stage. Whilst they conclude each application asking that planning permission is granted so that these units can be delivered, they do not deliver.

The distance from the proposed development to local amenities supports the likelihood that prospective residents of these units are more likely to use their cars than walk. An article in the Mirror newspaper dated 4th August 2022 stated the following:

“A study by walking app WeWard established that the exact maximum most were prepared to walk was 587 yards (537 metres)

Most adults would prefer to drive 600 yards to the shops rather than **walk**, a shocking survey reveals.

They make at least seven needless car journeys a month to places within 10 minutes’ strolling distance, clocking up 276 unnecessary miles a year.”

The site would encourage the use of the private car. The distance from Norton Green to the Tesco store in Freshwater (the nearest supermarket) is approximately 1.8 km or 1.1 mile (1936 yards). The lack of pavements within the hamlet and into Freshwater Village would further discourage families with children from walking particularly in poor weather conditions. The Parish needs to attract more families with or planning to have children. The West Wight demographic continues to show that it has an increasing aging population which again is not sustainable.

The site was historically a tourism site and this would in effect be a further change of use from employment land/tourism site to residential land. The Parish of Freshwater has grown in population but the opportunities to work within the Parish have not kept pace. The LPA has already given permission for residential units on this tourist site, and again on the West Bay tourist site within the Parish. The LPA is slowly reducing the employment land within the Parish and this is not a sustainable model, at a time when the public are being encouraged to give up their private cars and the IW Council works towards being carbon neutral. Ever increasing numbers of residents are required to leave the Parish for work, early mornings see the residents of West Wight driving to Newport and beyond for work. The people of West Wight need employment opportunities and a major income source for the West Wight is tourism. This is expected to grow rather than shrink, the existing population will not benefit from these residential units as they would from the site developing tourism units which would bring much needed economic benefits to the area.

The applicant refers in their section 7 to the loss of tourism accommodation and says that there is not a market demand for such units.

Loss of tourism accommodation

Part of the clients' pre-application submission considered the loss of tourism accommodation that this application scheme would represent. The Isle of Wight Council stated in its pre-application response that "Policy SP4 (Tourism) of the Island Plan seeks to protect tourism accommodation. However, the planning permission has not been implemented and the covering letter reasons that there is not market demand for such units. Added to this, the LPA has supported a separate planning application for the wider site, that would change much of the site to residential use, rather than historic tourism use. The LPA therefore has no objection to the loss (or non-implementation) of the tourism units."

Whilst the LPA may not have an objection to the loss of tourism units the Parish does and it is not alone in this premise. Whether one agrees with the statement "there is not market demand for such units", this does not mean there is not a need for tourist units. The rise of Airbnb on the Island which has been linked to a loss of rental units for residential use proves that the Island's need for tourism units continues to be high. In an Isle of Wight Council press release of 23rd May 2023, Councillor Paul Fuller, cabinet member for planning, stated: "To protect the Island's demand for high-quality holiday accommodation... is paramount for our Island's economy."

SP3 Economy This policy states that “Economic growth on the Island over the plan period will be focussed upon employment, retail and high quality tourism... with locally sustainable employment opportunities being supported... Sustainable growth in the rural economy will be supported”.

SP4 Tourism This policy states that “The Council will support sustainable growth in high quality tourism... development should utilise the unique characteristics of the historic and natural environments, without compromising their integrity. The Council also wishes to see the Island become an all year round tourism destination, which develops green and new niche tourism products... development proposals should maintain a mix of tourism accommodation that offer a range of styles, types and quality of provision”.

National Government planning policies (4.2) The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) detail Central Government policies. Relevant NPPF (July 2021 edition) policies include:

Paragraph 81. “Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development...”

Paragraph 84. “Planning policies and decisions should enable:

a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings...

c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside...”

The applicants in obtaining planning permission 20/00787/OUT which is a planning permission for this site and still current the applicants submitted the following information:

Community and local authority consultations

“My clients are submitting this application following a community public consultation event and a meeting with Freshwater Parish Council. Consultees visited the application site, and looked at both the previously approved plans and an early version of the plans submitted with this application”

In the case of the Parish Council meeting, five of the Parish Councillors attended. In the case of the community consultation, all residents in the hamlet of Norton Green were invited and sixteen of those people attended. Consultees were shown the plans and given an opportunity to voice their support for the scheme, as well as any concerns. Their comments are reflected in my clients’ changes to the final versions of the plans submitted with this application. In

these meetings it was apparent that both the Parish Councillors and local residents preferred the proposed schemes to the extant permission. This was mostly because the existing 1971 permission enabling 46 additional tourism units would be surrendered in favour of a much smaller number of residential and holiday units. The proposed schemes would have substantially less impact on the village life of Norton Green, especially during the summer season, and would also result in fewer cars on the one-way road passing through the hamlet. My clients also sought pre-application advice from the local authority, which resulted in further changes to the proposed schemes.

Conclusion

With the tourism market on the Island constantly changing, it has become apparent to my clients that the extant 1971 permission on their site would not deliver the high-quality provision anticipated by Isle of Wight Council policy. The scheme previously granted permission on this site, as approved, would result in a cramped layout of flat-roofed chalets of a very poor design. The extant scheme would not enhance the nearby conservation area and would lead to higher traffic flows on the oneway Norton Green road system during the tourist season. The new proposed scheme would be far better quality, with a design in-keeping with the conservation area. It would draw a sustainable number of additional tourists to Norton Green and the West Wight generally. Although located outside of the settlement boundary, the application site is at least as well suited for sustainable transport as many contemporary suburban developments, due to its pedestrian access to the village centre, cycle route via the Golden Hill bridleway, and the nearby bus stop for a regular service. My clients believe that this scheme would deliver a better outcome for the Norton Green area than either the extant 1971 permission, or leaving the site in its current under-utilised state. They request that permission is granted so that construction of the proposed scheme can begin.

The applicant clearly demonstrated the need and desirability of the tourism units within the site and the local area as the application was approved by the LPA.

Nitrate Neutrality

It is of considerable concern that within the application form the following has been submitted by the applicant/agent:

Foul Sewage

Please state how foul sewage is to be disposed of: Unknown

Are you proposing to connect to the existing drainage system? Unknown

The applicant has not given any details of the foul sewage and this is not acceptable. There is no evidence submitted by the applicant to show that the site will be nitrate neutral. Given the existing planning permissions for 11 units as previously referenced, which are yet to be

built, and the addition of two more units the impact should be investigated and evidenced by the applicant that there will not be an additional nitrate impact within the Solent Special Protection Area.

In conclusion it is preferable that this previously developed site remain as far as is possible (allowing for existing planning approvals) a tourism site for the economic benefit of the Parish and its residents. That the LPA resists all attempts by applicants to further reduce employment land within the Parish.

Planning Meeting Closed 7.02pm.