



Strategic Planning Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee held at The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester, NN12 6AD on Tuesday 20 June 2023 at 2.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor Alan Chantler
Councillor Andre Gonzalez De Savage
Councillor Rosie Humphreys
Councillor David James
Councillor Charles Manners
Councillor Ken Pritchard
Councillor Bob Purser
Councillor Danielle Stone

Substitute Members:

Councillor Stephen Clarke

Also Present:

Brian Skittral
Graham Ferrie
John Thomason, Flore Parish Council
Naomi Heikalo
Christine Barrant
David Smith, Ward Councillor
Robert Nadler
Julian Carter
David Frisby
Chris Moore

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor Phil Bignell
Councillor Ann Addison
Councillor Rosie Herring
Councillor Cathrine Russell

Officers:

Erica Buchanan, Principal Planning Officer
Eamon McDowell, Area Planning Officer
Shaun Robson, Development Manager
Pritpal Singh-Swarn, Planning Solicitor
Diana Davies, Democratic Services Officer

There were no declarations of interest.

127. **Minutes**

The Chair noted that the presence of Councillor Stone be recorded, as an observer, at the meeting of 22 May 2023.

Resolved: That, subject to the amendment above, the Minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee of 22 May 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

128. **Chair's Announcements**

There were none.

129. **WND/2022/0410 Land at Glassthorpe Hill and Land off Brington Road, Flore**

The Development Manager advised the Committee that there had been a typographical error on the report of Agenda Item 5, confirmed the Ward was Long Buckby, and that the relevant Ward Councillors had been included as consultees.

The Principal Planning Officer outlined the information in the report and provided a presentation which included maps, master plans, site layout, illustration of solar panels, panoramic views and photographs from various viewpoints overlooking the proposed site. A verbal update was given relating to a late representation received. An objection on the designated landscaping, the impact on the settlements, and the public rights of way.

In response to questions the Development Manager added:

- The grading of agricultural land, and the parameters of the Council's permissible development of land, was included within the Local Plan.
- The Planning Inspectorate would consider solar photovoltaic developments with capacity over 50MW and West Northamptonshire Council would be a consultee.
- The visual impact study had been available for viewing but had not been included in the presentation before Committee.

In response to questions the Legal Advisor added:

The Council did not have an agricultural land strategy but protecting land usage was, to a degree, included in national guidelines and the Local Plan.

In response to questions the Principal Planning Officer added:

- Two thirds of the site was designated as a special landscape area.
- With the advances in technology, the period of 40 years for the site was considered a normal life span.
- It was expected that the National Grid would handle the supply generated by the solar photovoltaic development.
- It was proposed that sheep would graze the agricultural land below the panels.

- An assessment had been carried out by the Landscape Officers and a report sought from an independent which indicated a differing interpretation of potential harm.

The Committee considered the officer's report, the presentation and the verbal update, discussed the merits of viewing the substantial site to assess the topography, vision splay and consider the effectiveness of the proposed mitigation on site.

Councillor Purser proposed the application be deferred to enable a site visit, the proposition was seconded by Councillor Gonzalez de Savage and on being put to the meeting was declared carried with 6 voting in favour, 2 against and 2 abstentions.

Resolved:

That, the application be Deferred, to a future meeting to enable a site visit to be carried out.

130. **WND/2023/0155 Farthingstone Hotel & Golf Course, Everdon Road, Farthingstone, Northamptonshire, NN12 8HA**

The Area Planning Officer outlined the information in the report and provided a presentation which included maps, satellite view of site, existing and proposed landscaping of the site, site layout, and photographs from various viewpoints of the proposed site.

The Area Planning Officer provided a verbal update regarding the number of representations received. In total there were, 15 letters of objection and 52 letters of support. Objections raised were representative of points included in earlier representations. And further added, that the conditions set out in the report were subject to ongoing discussions with applicants.

Christine Barrand addressed the Committee in objection to the application. Objections included, the loss of natural habitat and the restriction of movement for wildlife, light and noise pollution, the impact of increased movement by both pedestrians and vehicles on footpaths and roads through the village.

Councillor David Smith, the local ward member, addressed the Committee and commented on the extensive consultation that had taken place for the application. And suggested that the questions and reservations of the Committee would be addressed by undertaking a site visit. In particular; the suitability of the highway access to the site and the state of the road; the interconnection of the ancient woodland and the rewilding; that, less imposing measures could be considered to protect the proposed new planting from deer.

Robert Nadler, the applicant addressed the Committee in support of the application and explained his vision of a place of tranquillity for the eco tourist, the positive effects of the renaturing of the site, and the benefits to the local community.

The Committee considered the case officer's report, the presentation, the addresses of the public speakers and the verbal update.

At the conclusion of the debate Councillor Parker requested that the minutes show the Strategic Planning Committee required highways representatives be available at future meetings.

Councillor Gonzalez de Savage proposed the application be approved, with the addition of the proposed condition regarding the bridleway, the proposition was seconded by Councillor Stone and on being put to the meeting was declared carried unanimous.

Resolved:

That the Assistant Director for planning and development be given delegated powers to grant permission for the development subject to minor revisions set out in this report and conditions as recommended or any changes to those conditions as considered necessary by the Assistant Director, and subject to the inclusion of the condition:

- 1) Prior to the commencement of works affecting any existing Public Right of Way, full details of any enhancement, improvement, signage, diversion or closure shall be submitted for the approval in writing of the local planning authority. To ensure that the Public Rights of Way remain accessible and safe for users throughout, and on completion of, development.

The meeting closed at 3.56 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____