

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No:	19/P/2777/FUL	Target date:	22.01.2020
Case officer:	Ellena Fletcher	Extended date:	14.02.2020
Proposal:	Change from agricultural to mixed use (agricultural and equestrian) and erection of a stable		
Site address:	Field To The South Of The Hillcote Estate, Bleadon Hill, Weston-super-Mare,		

SUMMARY OF MAIN ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATION

Planning History/Background – most recent applications

Reference	Proposal	Decision
16/P/1053/O	Outline application for up to 79 open market and affordable dwellings, public open space and associated infrastructure. All matters reserved except for means of access.	Withdrawn
15/P/0167/O	Outline planning permission for the erection of up to no.79 open market and affordable dwellings, public open space and associated infrastructure. All matters reserved for subsequent approval except	Appeal dismissed

Policy Framework

The site is affected by the following constraints:

- Outside the settlement boundary
- NS and Mendip Bats SAC Consultation Zone B

The Development Plan

North Somerset Core Strategy (NSCS) (adopted January 2017)

The following policies are particularly relevant to this proposal:

Policy Ref	Policy heading
CS1	Addressing climate change and carbon reduction
CS2	Delivering sustainable design and construction

CS3	Environmental impacts and flood risk management
CS4	Nature Conservation
CS12	Achieving high quality design and place making
CS27	Sport, recreation and community facilities

West of England Joint Waste Core Strategy (adopted 25 March 2011)

The following policies are particularly relevant to this proposal:

Policy	Policy heading
Policy 11	Planning Designations

The Sites and Policies Plan Part 1: Development Management Policies (adopted July 2016)

The following policies are particularly relevant to this proposal:

Policy	Policy heading
DM8	Nature Conservation
DM9	Trees
DM10	Landscape
DM24	Safety, traffic and provision of infrastructure etc associated with development
DM32	High quality design and place making
DM52	Equestrian development

Sites and Policies Plan Part 2: Site Allocations Plan (adopted 10 April 2018)

The following policies are particularly relevant to this proposal:

Policy	Policy heading
SA6	Undesignated Green Spaces

Other material policy guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (February 2019)

The following is particularly relevant to this proposal:

Section No	Section heading
1	Introduction
2	Achieving Sustainable Development
4	Decision-taking
11	Making effective use of land
15	Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Development Plan Documents (DPD)

- North Somerset Landscape Character Assessment SPD (adopted September 2018)

- Biodiversity and Trees SPD (adopted December 2005)

Consultation summary

Copies of representations received can be viewed on the council's website. This report contains summaries only.

Weston-Super-Mare Town Council

- The Town Council object to the change of use and consider that a mixed use site will have a detrimental impact on both the visual amenity of the area and highway and pedestrian safety on Bleadon Hill.

Bleadon Parish Council

- No comments received

Neighbours' views

The principal planning points made are as follows:

- Proposal would adversely impact local ecology
- Concerns over future development onsite
- Removal of hedgerow to allow for visibility would be harmful to the character of the area.
- Proposal too large and out of character with the area
- Proposal would be visually harmful to the landscape
- Close proximity to SSSI and AONB
- Proposal would adversely affect highway safety
- Use of land should be kept as agricultural

Conclusions

The principle of development

The application seeks to change the use of the land from agricultural to mixed use to allow for equine use and development. Policy DM52 of the North Somerset Sites and Policies Plan Part 1 permits equestrian development provided it does not harm the landscape character of the area; the design of the development is appropriate; there is no harm identified to wildlife or archaeology; and the proposal would not prejudice highway safety. Each of the criteria is explored in more detail below.

EIA Screening

The proposed development does not fall within Schedule 1 or 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. A formal EIA screening opinion is not, therefore, required.

Character and appearance

The proposed size of the stable is considered appropriate to support two horses and livestock. The proposed materials would be timber, which would also be considered

appropriate for equestrian development. The proposed siting would be in the north west corner of the field, so the impact would be mitigated against with screening from existing hedgerow. The council's Highway Officer required amendments to the proposed access to achieve adequate visibility. This resulted in the proposed removal and thinning of some of the hedgerow along the boundary. Tall hedgerows do contribute to the character of the local area. Therefore, it was requested that the applicant mitigates against hedgerow removal with planting in the field on the south side of the hedgerow. It is considered this would overcome concerns regarding the hedgerow and the parts to be removed or thinned would be unlikely to result in unacceptable harm to the character of the area. There were also concerns regarding the impact on the AONB. The proposal It is considered the screening, together with the distance from the AONB would be adequately preserve views in and out of AONB and would be unlikely to result in unacceptable harm to the AONB.

The proposal would not unacceptably harm the characteristics of the existing site or the character of its surroundings. In this respect, the proposal complies with policy CS12 of the Core Strategy, policies DM32 and DM52.

Impact on neighbours

There are no nearby neighbours that would be adversely affected by the proposed development. In this respect, the proposal complies with policy DM32 of the Sites and Policies Plan (Part 1).

Parking and highway safety

Access

It is proposed to use the existing access to the field which consists of a 4m wide consolidated stone driveway with 6.5m bellmouth radii at its intersection with Bleadon Hill. The access has gates set back 12m from the edge of the carriageway of Bleadon Hills which would allow agricultural or equestrian vehicles to pull off the carriageway safely to open the gates without obstructing traffic on Bleadon Hill.

The applicant proposes to improve visibility from the site onto Bleadon Hill by removing sections of hedging to allow a visibility splay of 43m from a point 2.4m into the access. Any vegetation forward of the e visibility splays should be maintained to a maximum height of 0.6m. The applicant has confirmed that before any works within the highway boundary will be to the council's specification and agreed with the council's highways team in advance of any works taking place.

Traffic Movements

Traffic movements from the proposed level of development for private use is not expected to have a significant impact on the local or wider road network.

Parking:

The applicant is proposing to use the existing drive as hardstanding for parking vehicles when visiting the site. This is considered adequate for the expected level of casual use

The proposal is therefore in accordance with policies DM24, DM28 and DM38 of the Sites and Policies Plan (Part 1).

Protected species (bats)

The results from the bat activity survey completed by Quantock Ecology considered the removal of the hedgerow would be unlikely to adversely affect bats or their commuting routes. The council's ecologist considered the north field did not have high biodiversity value. It is advised that no external lighting shall be used, so the increase in light spill would be minimal. The proposed siting would allow a 5 metre buffer from the hedgerow to the north and west of the site which would reduce any disturbance to commuting or foraging bats.

In this respect, regard has been paid to the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, and to policy CS4 of the North Somerset Core Strategy, policy DM8 of the Sites and Policies Plan (Part 1) and the council's Biodiversity and Trees SPD.

Archaeology

The area proposed for the erection of a stable and associated hardstanding is in an area of recorded archaeology. The archaeology comprises potential boundaries and enclosures relating to a prehistoric field system, with the potential for pits to also date to this period. This was interpreted from a geophysical survey undertaken in 2013.

Unfortunately, there has been no intrusive fieldwork in relation to these potential archaeological features, and as such, the nature, extent and level of significance of these remains has not yet been appropriately evaluated.

Therefore, the council's archaeologist considered there was a requirement for a condition for an archaeological watching brief, to ensure the remains are examined and recorded in accordance with Sites and Policies Plan Part 1 policies DM6: Archaeology and DM7: Non-designated heritage assets:

Setting of Listed Building

The proposal does not affect the setting of any listed buildings.

Other matters

There were concerns regarding a site notice. However, neighbour notification letters were sent out to the nearest houses and a site notice was placed allowing neighbours a further 21 days to comment as prescribed in article 15 of the Development Management Procedure Order (as amended).

There were concerns raised that the proposed development would lead to further development. However, any further development would be subject to a further planning application.

Recommendations

APPROVE subject to conditions (see draft decision for conditions).

Reason for Overriding Parish Council comments (if appropriate)

See report

In recommending this application, I have taken into consideration the relevant policies of the Development Plan and the comments made by the consultees and other interested parties and the:

- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Public Sector Equality Duty, Equality Act 2010

Signed: Ellena Fletcher