

Agenda item

Whitby Business Park Area Action Plan

- Meeting of Planning & Development Committee, Thursday, 10th October, 2013 1.00 pm (Item 10.)

To consider a report by the Planning Services Manager (reference 13/354) attached.

Minutes:

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Service Delivery (Reference 13/348) regarding the proposed submission of the Whitby Business Park Area Action Plan (the Action Plan).

The Planning Policy Officer presented the report. The Action Plan was a joint plan between the Council and the National Park Authority as some of the land on the Business Park was in the National Park. The Action Plan looked to the future. The Business Park was nearly full with little land left for development. The identification of potential land for development to expand the Business Park, and external funding already identified, will increase the opportunities to attract new businesses and subsequent private sector investment. Consultation had been carried out in 2009 and a joint Members Working Group, comprising members of both the Borough Council and National Park Authority, had held meetings to discuss the plan and had met last week.

With regard to retail developments, these would be focussed on the Town Centre. Retail development would only be permitted on the Business Park if they had carried out the sequential tests set out in the Planning Policy Framework that sought to protect the viability of the Town Centre. An area along Stainsacre Lane adjacent to existing retail units had been identified for retail development. An area of land had also been allocated for public house and hotel development. In respect of a public house the only public houses on the east side were near the harbour. A hotel would benefit the businesses on the Business Park.

The Planning Policy Officer advised there were two amendments to the Action Plan. Paragraph 1.9 was now included as a policy. The wording was the same as the model wording by the Inspectorate.. An additional sentence has been added to paragraph 8.18 "Discussions will take place with businesses to identify solutions to existing parking problems; those solutions could include the more efficient use of existing land and the provision of new off-street parking." This reflects discussions at the Joint Members Working Group. The public path had been inadvertently omitted from the Policies Map and this had been corrected.

The Action Plan would be sent out for a six week consultation period commencing on 6 November 2013 and ending prior to the Christmas holidays. The only representations that could be made were on legal compliance and soundness of the Plan, not on the contents of the Plan itself. After considering any representations the Action Plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State. If there were any objections to the Plan these would be examined by an Inspector.

Members were concerned as to the mix of hotels and industry. Was there a limit to the number of hotels? Care must be taken that any hotel was not sited next to a potentially noisy industrial unit as this may lead to complaints. The Planning Policy Officer advised that the area allocated for hotels was near the residential area and separate from the industrial site to reduce potential for conflict.

A member commented that Universal Garage had relocated to Fairfield Way and left a large empty unit which had potential for retail development. The Planning Policy Officer advised that the Borough retail studies for convenience goods demonstrated that these were at a satisfactory level. When developing the Action Plan the aim had been to build into the Plan room for changes to the economy so that if a retail business could demonstrate that there was no capacity in town this could be done in a controlled way on the Business Park. The Plan took a pragmatic approach in identifying areas for specific uses rather than risk an application for any site on the Business Park with possible conflict with other developments on the Park.

A member was worried that that as the only consultation on the Business Plan was in relation to legal processes and soundness, there had been no consultation on the viability of any hotel development. Hotels in the town were converting into flats, and cited a recent case. A hotel development on the Business Park seemed to conflict with what was happening elsewhere in the town. The member felt that because the Action Plan had allocated space did not mean to say that it would encourage hotel developers to build new hotels rather than redevelop existing buildings. The Planning Policy Officer reassured members that consultation had taken place on the hotel development aspect. If concerns were raised during the six week consultation period then this would be something that the Inspector would look at. The Chairman added that the Action Plan also considered land usage and how this is allocated. Because hotel development was included in the Plan did not mean to say that this would happen but that there was space allocated on the Business Park if anything did come forward.

A member was concerned that the parking issue would be sorted satisfactorily and that the entrances and exits enabled traffic to flow smoothly. The Chairman advised that traffic flow had been discussed by the Members Working Group. There would be two way traffic on Cholmley Way but there would be access for traffic to come out via the estate rather than all exiting off Cholmley Way. The Planning Policy Officer advised that new roads would be built to open up the site in phases. All the roads had planning approval and gone through the Tender process. Work on the new roads could commence in the New Year.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Mrs Clegg and Councillor Tindall for their time on the Members Working Group and noted that Hawker-cum-Stainsacre Parish Council had also looked at the Action Plan.

RESOLVED that:-

- i) the report be received;
- ii) the Proposed Submission Whitby Business Park Area Action Plan (as set out in Appendix 1 to the report) be published to allow representations under Regulations 19 and 20 of the Town and Country Planning Act prior to submission to the Secretary of State. Including the amendment at Paragraph 1.9 of the Plan that this be a Policy and the inclusion of a sentence in Paragraph 8.18 regarding parking problems..
- iii) officers are given delegated powers to make minor amendments to the Plan prior to submission to the Secretary of State and subsequently at Examination if suggested by the Inspector.

Members' reasons - The need to address current operational limitations of the Business Park and the needs of existing businesses, allied to the potential development of a Potash Mine to the south of Whitby and the potential local opportunities presented by the off-shore wind industry provide an opportunity to bolster the local economy. The delivery of a joint Area Action Plan with the North

York Moors National Park Authority covering Whitby Business Park would place the area in a better position to benefit from such investment.