

Horton Heath Development Management Committee

Report of the Executive Head for Planning and Economy

Application Number: O/20/89498

Received Date: 22 December 2020

Site Address: Land at Burnetts Lane, Fir Tree Lane and Allington Lane, Eastleigh, SO50 7BZ

Applicant: Eastleigh Borough Council

Proposal: Outline: Phased mixed-use development comprising: up to 2,500 residential units in total; a primary Local Centre (and supporting secondary local centres) comprising mixed-use residential/retail/leisure/community/employment/day nursery/food establishment uses; office, commercial and industrial uses; a Primary School; public open space including formal sports facilities and informal provisions; relocation of solar panels; key infrastructure and utilities provision including new roads, footpaths and cycle paths and improvements to the existing road junction at Fir Tree Lane/Burnetts Lane; and ecological, landscape, site preparation and demolition works (All Matters Reserved Except Access). This application is subject to Environmental Impact Assessment.

Recommendation: **Support application in principle and delegate decision to Executive Head for Planning and Economy (in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Horton Heath Development Management Committee) following receipt and consideration of final comments from consultees (and any resulting application amendments); completion of the Habitats Regulations Appropriate Assessment; completion of the Environmental Impact Assessment; completion of draft conditions; completion of a S106 legal agreement; with the proviso that should there be substantial objections from key consultees that cannot be resolved, the application is returned to the Committee for determination.**

Report:

1. This application has been referred to Committee because it is a major development which is subject to Environmental Impact Assessment, contrary to the current adopted Development Plan and is controversial.

Structure of Report

2. The Report cover the following matters:
 - The Site and its Surroundings
 - The Proposals
 - Environmental Impact Assessment
 - Documents Submitted
 - Parameter Plans
 - Relevant planning history and Designations
 - Planning Policy Context
 - Representations and Consultation Responses
 - Assessment of Proposals including Sustainable Development matters
 - Planning Obligations
 - Other Matters
 - Planning Balance
 - Conclusion and Recommendation
 - Draft Conditions
 - EIA draft Conclusion

The site and its surroundings

3. The 125ha site is an area of largely agricultural land west of Horton Heath, approximately 7km north west of Eastleigh town and approximately 9.5km north of the city of Southampton. Southampton International Airport is located approximately 8km west of the site. The Site borders Allington Lane to the northwest, part of Burnetts Lane at the eastern extent and Bubb Lane in the southernmost corner. Fir Tree Lane intersects the Site linking Allington Lane to Horton Heath Village, whilst Chalcroft Solar Park is situated towards the centre of the site on the western side (but outside the application boundary). Horton Heath village is located adjacent to the site on the east boundary. Chalcroft Business Park is located immediately south, beyond which an active railway line lies, running between Hedge End and Eastleigh stations. The existing settlement of Horton Heath has no central focus and is largely of relatively recent suburban construction. Dwellings adjoining the southern stretch of Burnetts Lane fronting the site are more sporadic and rural in character. South east of Fir Tree Lane, to the rear of existing dwellings, is an area of informal public open space within the site. Site topography is broadly flat with gentle rises and undulation, with the highest point north of the solar park.
4. Northeast is Quobleigh Wood, a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and a habitat for protected species within Quobleigh Pond. Three watercourses, tributaries to the River Itchen,

flow through the site and there are ponds at Chalcroft Farm and south west of Foxholes Cottage. Further SINCs are located to the south at Chalcroft Business Park, within which is ancient woodland. Vegetation is generally restricted to field boundaries and includes some strong hedgerows and woodland areas. The closest designated site of nature conservation interest is the River Itchen Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which is located approximately 1.1km west at its nearest point.

5. In the centre of the application site is the Grade II Listed Fir Tree Farmhouse and its grounds, whilst Chalcroft Farm buildings are of heritage interest but not formally designated and are largely not to be retained. They currently accommodate some of the Owton Butchery activities, which are to relocate. Fir Tree Farm and Victoria Farm dwellings are to be demolished.
6. The site is crossed by public rights of way. These broadly run in an east to west direction and are connected by additional north to south footpath links.
 - Footpath Route 3 West End (now renumbered Footpath 703 Fair Oak and Horton Heath) runs from east to west including part of the access track to Chalcroft Farm, connecting Allington Lane and Burnetts Lane.
 - Footpath Route 1 West End (now renumbered Footpath 701 Fair Oak and Horton Heath) runs from Allington Lane through the middle of the Site, along the northern boundary of the Chalcroft Solar Park, to Horton Heath Village.
 - Footpath Route 2 West End (now renumbered Footpath 702 Fair Oak and Horton Heath) joins these paths providing a north to south link.
7. In the north of the Site, Footpath Route 11 connects Fir Tree Lane to additional Rights of Way outside the Site boundary, eventually linking up with the residential properties at Pavilion Close. Footpath Route 10 is located on the eastern boundary linking routes 11 and 1.
8. Previously, approximately half of the site lay within each of the administrative areas of Fair Oak & Horton Heath Parish in the north and West End Parish in the south. A boundary review has now put the whole site within Fair Oak & Horton Heath parish.

The Proposals

9. Following the previous grant of outline planning permission under two permissions for up to 1400 homes, two schools, commercial land and local facilities, this further outline application seeks to combine these sites and other land, update the proposals, and propose a revised scheme for up to 2500 homes, a primary school, comprehensive open space and sports facilities, commercial land, a new local centre and associated infrastructure. The previously approved secondary school on the site is no longer required in this location. The outline planning

application seeks an approval “in principle” for the development and the only matters for detailed consideration are the site access points.

10. In more detail, the proposals comprise:
 - Site clearance, including some demolition.
 - Up to 2,500 dwellings comprising a mix of market and affordable housing (Use Class C3).
 - Up to 3.3ha of employment land (Use Classes E(g)(i),(ii),(iii)), to include approximately 19,000 sqm of industrial or warehousing floorspace.
 - Up to 3.1ha of mixed-use development across two mixed-use local centres (E, C2, C3, F1, F2 and Sui Generis) including up to 2,499 sqm of retail floorspace.
 - A three form entry (3FE) Primary School on a 2.8ha site.
 - Open Space, formal areas for sports and play, and associated facilities and amenity space, including, landscaping, green infrastructure and sustainable drainage systems.
 - Primary vehicular access to the proposed development from Allington Lane, Burnetts Lane and the existing junction of Fir Tree Lane and Burnetts Lane (detailed plans)
 - A distributor road between Bubb Lane and Allington Lane
11. Under the existing permissions for the site, the delivery of part of the distributor road site has commenced with the construction of the Bubb Lane to Burnetts Lane stretch, with roundabout, and the new roundabout junction and road alignment at Allington Lane.
12. At this stage it is primarily necessary to consider:
 - Whether the proposed land uses are acceptable in principle in this location;
 - Whether the proposed amount of development is appropriate;
 - Whether the proposed vehicular accesses remain acceptable.
13. All other matters of detail, such as the detailed layout, appearance, design and landscaping are not for detailed consideration at this stage. However, the submitted parameter plans, an Illustrative Masterplan and other supporting information can be considered, and these give other key aspects of the proposed development.
14. The application also references demolition, and specifically this is in respect of the Victoria Farm, Fir Tree Lane dwelling, as other demolition at Chalcroft Farm, Firtree Farm and Foxholes Cottage already has approval. Solar panels from the existing solar farm are also proposed to be relocated (both works are also the subject of separate planning applications).
15. It is anticipated that construction of the Proposed Development would commence in 2021/early 2022 and continue to 2035 (representing a 15

year construction period). First residential occupation would be in late 2022/ early 2023. It is anticipated that development would be undertaken on a rolling programme of site preparation and construction, allowing earlier phases to be completed and occupied while subsequent phases are constructed and with an estimated average delivery of 166 dwellings per year.

16. The Applicant is pursuing an Infrastructure First approach to integrate key services and facilities to make the development an attractive place to live, work and invest from the outset. As shown on the Indicative Phasing Plan, the first phases of the construction deliver the necessary site-wide infrastructure, including the Link Road, Internal Distributor Road, Sustainable Drainage Systems and Strategic Green Infrastructure.
17. The on-site primary school, Phase 1 of the principal Local Centre, formal sports provision and the allotments are anticipated to be delivered in the first five years of construction and the second phase of the local centre, including the commercial and retail uses, are anticipated to be delivered from Year 5 onwards.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

18. The Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 ('the 2017 regulations') came into force on 16 May 2017. The 2017 Regulations set out the types of development that must always be subject to an EIA (Schedule 1 development) and other development that will only require assessment if they are likely to give rise to significant environmental effects (Schedule 2 development). Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations provides guidance and thresholds to help to decide whether EIA is required for a Schedule 2 development.
19. The Proposed Development falls within Schedule 2 Section 10(b) of the 2017 Regulations as an "Urban development project" in which "the development includes more than 150 dwellings", "more than 1 hectare of Urban development which is not dwellinghouse development" and "the overall area of the development exceeds 5 hectares".
20. Given of the nature and scale of the Proposed Development, the applicant concluded that significant environmental effects could arise. As such, it was considered that the Proposed Development qualifies as EIA development as defined within the regulations. Therefore, a formal Screening Opinion was not requested. In April 2020, an EIA Scoping Opinion was requested from EBC and a formal Scoping Opinion was issued in August 2020 (ref V/20/87717).

Environmental Statement Non-Technical Summary and Addendums