



Addendum to Planning Statement and Retail Statement

Application reference 18/05086/FUL

Application for Eco – Leisure Proposal at Thoulstone Park, Thoulstone,
Chapmanslade, Wiltshire

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1.0 Introduction

This statement is submitted to Wiltshire Council in support of the planning application for an Eco-Leisure proposal at Thoulstone Park, Thoulstone, Chapmanslade.

The application, Wiltshire Council reference 18/05086/FUL, was registered on 18th June 2018.

Subsequently the Government has adopted and published a revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (adopted July 2018).

Wiltshire Council have sought clarification from the applicant about the proposals in the light of this new Guidance, given the NPPF is material in determining planning applications.

The purpose of this document is to amplify the Planning Statement and Retail Statement submitted with the planning application in the context of the NPPF (July 2018).

2.0 Background

The planning application seeks permission for an eco-leisure proposal consisting 28 holiday lodges, 4 lodges for staff, a community and leisure building comprising swimming pool, changing facilities and a community space as well as a central building comprising a farm shop, restaurant, spa and conference facilities.

The site is previously developed land; former uses being as a golf course, club house and associated facilities. Planning permission has also previously been approved for use of the site for a hotel with function suite, spa, swimming pool, and bar and associated facilities.

Approval also exists for use of parts of the site for a campsite.

The established use of the site is use class D2 – Assembly and Leisure.

The proposals are a reconfiguration of what exists, or has benefitted from planning permission for in the past, and proposes innovative eco-leisure proposals that will positively contribute to the Wiltshire economy as well as deriving social and environmental benefits.

3.0 The NPPF and the Principle of Development

“The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.” Para 7

Paragraph 8 goes on to outline the principles of sustainable development being about the three overarching objectives - economic, social and environmental.

The NPPF (para 11) states that it is the Government's policy that decisions about planning applications should be made applying the "...presumption in favour of sustainable development." (para 11).

The applicant has already demonstrated in the planning application submission the compliance of the proposals with these principles.

Specific attention is also drawn to Section 6 of the NPPF and the section on 'Building a strong, competitive economy'.

*"...decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. **Significant weight** should be placed in the need to support economic growth ..."* paragraph 80 (bold emphasis mine)

Moreover, at paragraph 81 it says planning policies should *"...be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, allow for new and flexible working practices (such as live work accommodation), and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances"*

The Government recognizes the importance of the rural economy of great relevance to this application is the following policy statement in the NPPF:

"Planning policies and decisions should enable:

....

c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure development which respect the character of the countryside; and

d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship." Paragraph 83

On the basis that the Local Planning Authority accepts these policies, the question may arise, in particular in respect of the farm shop and leisure facilities, about why here at Thoulstone? The NPPF significantly states the following:

"Planning policies and decisions should recognize that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make the location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist." Para 84.

The applicant has made the point in the robust design and access statement and associated technical studies that the site is sensitive to its surroundings and with landscaping and good design actually enhances the landscape and ecological habitat.

The Transport Assessment describes access to the proposed development which is appropriate and manageable. Also, as has been discussed with Planning Officers, there is a long-term aspiration to work with adjacent landowners to attempt to improve local access to the site.

Particular attention is drawn to the policy that there should be an emphasis on previously developed land¹ which Thoulstone Park is.

4.0 The NPPF and matters of detail

Retail and Leisure Impact

The NPPF sets out at Section 7 that Government, through the planning system, seeks to ensure that the vitality of town centres is maintained and enhanced.

There follows a direction to apply a sequential test to planning applications for town centre uses (such as leisure, office and retail) with these uses being located in town centres first, then edge of centres and finally in certain circumstances out of town.

Importantly para 88 states the following:

“This sequential approach should not be applied to applications for small scale rural offices or other small scale rural development”

Therefore, a sequential approach should not be applied to the proposals at Thoulstone Park.

The impact of retail and leisure out of town can however be assessed, and indeed has been as part of the application for Thoulstone Park. The Governments threshold for testing impact is set at 2,500m² which remains higher than the threshold set out in the Development Plan and which has been tested and submitted as part of the application in the Retail Assessment.

Promoting sustainable transport

¹ Page 70 of the NPPF provides the definition of previously developed land which supports the applicants assertion that Thoulstone Park should be considered as previously developed land in the planning application determination.

“Development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.” Para 109.

The responses to the Planning Application consultation from the statutory consultees support the view within the Transport Assessment submitted with the application that this proposal does not cause an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

Making effective use of land

The development area is contained and does not unacceptably spread within the whole curtilage. The spread has been kept to a minimum whilst balancing the need of the eco-leisure operator to create and maintain a sense of space and the ‘great outdoors’.

Paragraph 118 a) seeks to ensure that developments make the best use of previously developed land and as part of the proposals create additional habitat. The ecological studies submitted with the application demonstrate the proposals achieve this at Thoulstone Park.

5.0 The NPPF and the planning process

“Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available.... And work with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.” NPPF para 38.

The applicant for Thoulstone Park has assembled a comprehensive application, sought to pursue pre-application discussion (para 38 NPPF), has engaged local people and stakeholders and sought a positive dialogue throughout the determination process.

As a sustainable development, using previously developed land, to create economic and social benefit with wildlife and landscape net gains this application should be supported and approved.

6.0 Conclusion

The revised NPPF is a material consideration in determining the planning application at Thoulstone Park.

The policies in the NPPF support the development proposals in principle and detail.

There are no policies within the NPPF that suggest this application should be refused.

The applicant therefore respectfully requests that in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development the application should be approved without delay.