

## W/23/02112/OUT – Orchard Farm, Pershore – Meeting Minutes

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### MS Teams

07-12-23 11:00

#### Attendees

Gillian McDermott – WDC Development Management

Eileen Marshall – WDC Landscape Officer

Jack O’Beirne – Formula Land

David Roach – Formula Land

Jeremy Peachey – Pegasus Group Landscape

Michael Davies – Savills Planning

Gina Wynter – Savills Planning

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#### 1. Landscape

#### ACTION

- 1.1. JP – there is no reference in EM’s landscape response to the LVIA methodology being flawed, or any requests for additional information. Is anything extra considered to be required?
- 1.2. EM – does not take issue with the LVIA methodology. The LVIA covered everything which was expected and EM understands the rationale behind the landscape masterplans provided. EM considers that the best job possible has been done with the site given its constraints, however her concerns are related to the principle of developing the site. EM does not consider any additional information to be required.
- 1.3. JP – the landscape comments picked up that some of the viewpoints could differ depending on seasonality. Would it be beneficial for winter views to be submitted, perhaps in relation to Bredon Hill?
- 1.4. EM – does not consider that winter views are specifically required for Bredon Hill. EM is very familiar with views from Bredon Hill having visited before, however not recently in relation to this application. It may be helpful to have a winter view from Defford Road. The existing hedge is established, but part of it would be opened up through the new access and associated visibility splays, at least until new planting becomes established. EM understands that the existing rural character can be re-established at this area in time. Given we are in December, it might be helpful to have a similar photo but without vegetation.
- 1.5. JP – returning to the principle of development, the landscape response referred back to previous comments made in response to the site’s draft allocation in the SWDPR. How many dwellings were proposed at this time?
- 1.6. EM – 450. EM acknowledges that the current proposal is for 300 dwellings, but similar in-principle concerns still apply.

**JP to provide  
winter views  
from Defford  
Road**



- 1.7. JP – the landscape comments assert that some of the proposed planting could obscure views to Pershore Abbey. The applicant is not aiming to do this and will work to maintain this view. Detailed landscape design can accommodate this.
- 1.8. EM – agreement on this point.
- 1.9. JP – in terms of cumulative effects, JP’s understanding is that the concept of cumulative impact refers to the proposed development of this site, together with other proposed development of a similar type/character. Cumulative impact does not include established development. Can it be agreed that existing development on Desjardins Way is part of the baseline landscape position?
- 1.10. EM – EM’s understanding of cumulative impact is that it includes not only proposed development, but existing as well. The Desjardins Way development has been constructed recently and has already extended Pershore to some extent away from the town centre. The Desjardins Way development does not, however, impact on the setting of Tiddesley Wood. The application site is key to the setting of Tiddesley Wood in terms of the wider landscape type (Wooded Estate lands). This site is very different to Desjardins Way. EM’s understanding has always been that proposed development should be considered alongside existing development of a similar type. There is already a significant amount of housing in this area which has been constructed fairly recently. This proposal would take development further up the land contours.
- 1.11. JP – JP defines cumulative landscape and visual effects differently and proposes to take discussion offline and send a note to clarify a shared understanding of cumulative. Would this be agreeable?
- 1.12. EM – yes that’s fine. Guidance is just that – guidance. There is sequential cumulative impact where someone could be walking along a route and see similar developments as you walk along, in sequence. There is also combined cumulative impact which needs to be considered. It may be worth addressing these points too: users of footpaths would see the developments sequentially, whereas others would see the sites as a combination.
- 1.13. JP – before those recent developments were constructed, there was a gap between the existing settlement and the cemetery, which includes existing listed buildings. The Desjardins Way development effectively removed an area of sloping pastureland similar in character to that of the site, and hence there are some similarities between the application site and previous proposals. Is it EM’s view that the application site is significantly different to previous development sites, such that the way EM has assessed them is not comparable?
- 1.14. EM – the application site is much more sensitive due to its proximity to Tiddesley Wood and the presence of, and potential impact on Millennium Way. In terms of landscape character, at land cover parcel level (ref. Landscape Character Assessment of Worcestershire) the vast majority of the site is in a different parcel to Dowling Drive and so has a different baseline. The baseline is different for the two sites, so it is not a simple like for like comparison of the two.

**JP to provide a note setting out understanding of cumulative development.**



- 1.15. JP – save for the fact that both sites are both visible as sloping green pasture from the river valley?
- 1.16. EM – it is similar in that both sites propose/proposed new built form above existing built form. The application proposals propose to build beyond the existing building line. We should question ‘When is enough enough? When is it high enough?’ EM considers that the acceptable limit has been reached.
- 1.17. MD – from a contextual point of view... when assessing, does the officer take into account where else development could feasibly be located? Or just this site? The wider context is that Malvern Hills and Worcester are heavily constrained, and Wychavon also has a number of constraints. At a Pershore scale, where else could development be located? In the SWDPR sites like Throckmorton are proposed in order to meet housing need - these are not ideal in landscape terms either. The application site is not within a protected landscape. The proposals should also be viewed in light of standing advice on ancient woodland which requires a 15 metre buffer. The proposals would provide a significantly larger buffer. Is the wider context of town/district/SWDPR area relevant?
- 1.18. EM – EM’s role is to consider the landscape and visual impact of this proposal only. EM also fed into the SWDPR process which feeds into the preferred location of development. It is for the Natural Heritage officer to advise on the SSSI.
- 1.19. MD – Have any discussions taken place with the Natural Heritage officer?
- 1.20. GM – Has been advised that the Natural Heritage officer will provide comments by end of the week.

**2. Public Rights of Way**

**ACTION**

- 2.1. MD/GW – clarified that the PRow misalignment identified by WCC has been rectified in a revised plan.

**3. Archaeology**

**ACTION**

- 3.1. MD – advised that the applicant is looking into the request for trial trenching to be undertaken prior to determination.

**4. Natural England**

**ACTION**

- 4.1. MD – advised that the ALC report is being revised to rectify a small typo, and will be accompanied by a letter responding to Natural England’s queries.
- 4.2. GM – will the response also address other issues raised in respect of ecology?
- 4.3. MD – yes, the intention is to package all responses/scheme amendments up into one submission in January.
- 4.4. GM – is supportive of this approach.



- 4.5. MD – we are surprised with Natural England’s response, which our ecology consultant considers to be unprecedented (with regards to Natural England asserting that there is no possible mitigation). The inconsistency of their approach will be raised in our response. Their response to the SWDPR did object to 450 dwellings at the site, but they did not object to SWDP NEW 22,23,24 (land at Holloway). Natural England have shown an inconsistent response to these allocations. Aspect Ecology (applicant’s consultants) are looking at this in detail and will respond with a thorough and detailed response, highlighting the unprecedented nature. We have also picked up on Natural England’s commentary on Malvern Hills SSSI and proposals by NE for a per-dwelling contribution as a mitigation strategy. There is a clear difference in the treatment of this site vs Malvern Hills SSSI.
- 4.6. GM – Understands points put forward. There will be an additional period of consultation when additional documentation is received, and Natural England will have another opportunity to respond.

**5. Environment Agency**

**ACTION**

- 5.1. MD – the Environment Agency have responded, as have the LLFA, with no objection. This is interesting as this was one of the reasons the site was removed from the Plan. MD also shared that the applicant is working to demonstrate betterment to drainage from the site onto Defford Road via hydraulic modelling. The site currently floods due to surface water overflow from the site, as there is no managed drainage at present on Defford Road. The provision of a new junction will bring formalised road drainage and significantly reduce flood risk.
- 5.2. DR – confirmed that we are undertaking further hydraulic modelling work to quantify the degree of betterment to be delivered by the scheme in terms of reducing the amount of flash flooding that currently occurs on Defford Road. The LLFA have already confirmed in their consultation response that they believe the scheme will reduce the flood risk issue.
- 5.3. GM – useful to know.

**6. Outstanding responses**

**ACTION**

- 6.1. MD – anything else to discuss?
- 6.2. GM – will chase up comments from conservation officer, tree officer, planning policy, and WCC highways in particular.

**7. Next Steps**

**ACTION**

- 7.1. MD – will package up responses and issue them to GM in the New Year. It should be noted that the end of the 13 week determination period falls on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January – is it worth us extending this until the end of January?
- 7.2. GM – yes certainly. It would be useful to have a further period if possible, perhaps to the end of February? GM will send through a EOT request.

**GM to issue extension of time request up to the**



- 7.3. MD – would prefer to extend to end of January for now, with the view to extending further if required. **end of January 2024.**
- 7.4. GM – that is fine.

**8. Programme for determination**

**ACTION**

- 8.1. MD – as not all responses have been received it is difficult to estimate a timeframe for the application's determination. Can we review at the end of January?
- 8.2. GM – that's fine. The application is likely to go to committee, so this will have to be factored in too.

**9. AOB**

**ACTION**

- 9.1. MD – anything else to be covered?
- 9.2. GM – No. GM has started going through responses. GM questioned whether pre-application discussions were held with WCC Highways?
- 9.3. MD – explained that a pre-application scoping exercise was taken for the TA.