



Report to:

South Cambridgeshire District
Council Planning Committee

14 June 2023

Lead Officer:

Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development

22/05065/FUL – Avenue Business Park, Elsworth

Proposal: Creation of a mixed-use food hub with additional parking

Applicant: Davison and Co.

Key material considerations:

1. Principle of retail use in the countryside, impact upon the community shop and re-use of existing rural buildings
2. Design, scale, layout and landscaping
3. Highway safety impacts
4. Residential amenity impacts

Date of Member site visit: 12 June 2023

Departure Application: No

Decision due by: 19 June 2022

Application brought to Committee because:

Called-in by Cllr Howell

Called-in by Elsworth Parish Council

Application raises special planning policy or other considerations

Presenting officer: Tom Gray

Update/ Amendments Report

It is requested that the following paragraphs are amended as follows:

[~~Strikethrough~~ = deletion]

[Underline = insertion]

6.0 Consultations:

A further representation from the Parish Council has been received and summarised as follows:

- Accept that the food park would not add to the flooding problems experienced in Elsworth. Suggest further measures to be conditioned on any approval.
- Revised figures reinforce the concern felt about traffic.
- Not clear why the idea of putting the access to the site elsewhere has been abandoned.

- Late openings for events raises concern about disturbance to residents of neighbouring properties and amount of parking provision, in which an event may attract substantially more attendees. Requirement for more overspill parking.

A further consultee comment from the Local Highways Authority confirms they have no objection to the revised transport figures.

7.0 Third Party Representations

A further 3 representations (from the same addresses that have previously sent in representations) have been received post-publication of the Officer report. These are summarised as follows:

- 212 journeys per day with them weighted particularly at the weekends. Unacceptable traffic levels and not environmentally sustainable.
- Application greatly overstates the social and economic benefits and understates the adverse impacts upon Elsworth residents.
- Information contradictory, incomplete and inconsistent and not supported by sufficient evidence.
- Failed to properly consider issues and dismissed submissions from residents and the Parish Council.
- Community shop used to sell artisan goods but there was insufficient demand. Food park would depend entirely on attracting customers from outside the community.
- Proposal does not comply with the sustainability or planning policy principles.
- Applicant terminated the offices leases and the proposal would not create additional jobs, in which the offices for the past 20 years were fully occupied.
- 53 arrivals and 53 departures per day in addition to a further 20 arrivals and departures a day from the expansion of the new office building to the rear would be hugely detrimental to residents in terms of disturbance, congestion, noise and pollution.
- Key information in terms of opening hours, generation of traffic and special events have been submitted late.
- Concern about 'special events' and effect on homes nearby.
- Will increase traffic movements at weekends.
- No business plan submitted.

Amendments to paragraphs:

3.8 ~~The application has been amended since its original submission with the additional access connecting to Rogues Lane to the north removed from the proposal and the area of car parking reduced in size. The application has been amended since its original submission with the additional access connecting to Rogues Lane to the north removed from the proposal due to the limited visibility for cars exiting onto this road and due to the adverse impact upon the recreational enjoyment of this public right way. The car parking has also been reduced in size to minimise the visual impact upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.~~

Reason for amendment: to clarify matters.

9.71: ~~With regards event days for the café, there is considered sufficient car parking within the site for such events. In terms of special events opening hours, these would be specifically for the café and not other units within the food park. In comparing the level of parking to other farm and artisan shops within the area, for example Gog Magog Farm Shop and Ben's retail shops (near Ely), the parking for 44 vehicles is sufficient for customers and employees, taking into account the small scale nature of the development. It is envisaged that the café would extend their opening hours to allow for evening events when the other units would have closed as of 18:00 and therefore no additional parking would be required to cater for these events. The amount of parking required also meets the indicative car parking figures within Policy TI/3.~~

Reason for amendment: to clarify matters.

9.77: ~~53 arrivals and 53 departures per day~~ 53 arrivals and 53 departures per day (totalling 106 per day)

Reason for amendment: to clarify matters.

Report Author:

Tom Gray – Principal Planner