

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

3rd March 2010

AUTHOR/S: Executive Director (Operational Services)/
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S/6103/00/F - CAMBOURNE

Temporary Use of Car Park in Connection with South Cambridgeshire Hall Plot 3000, South Side Applicant - Cambourne Business Park

Recommendation: Approval

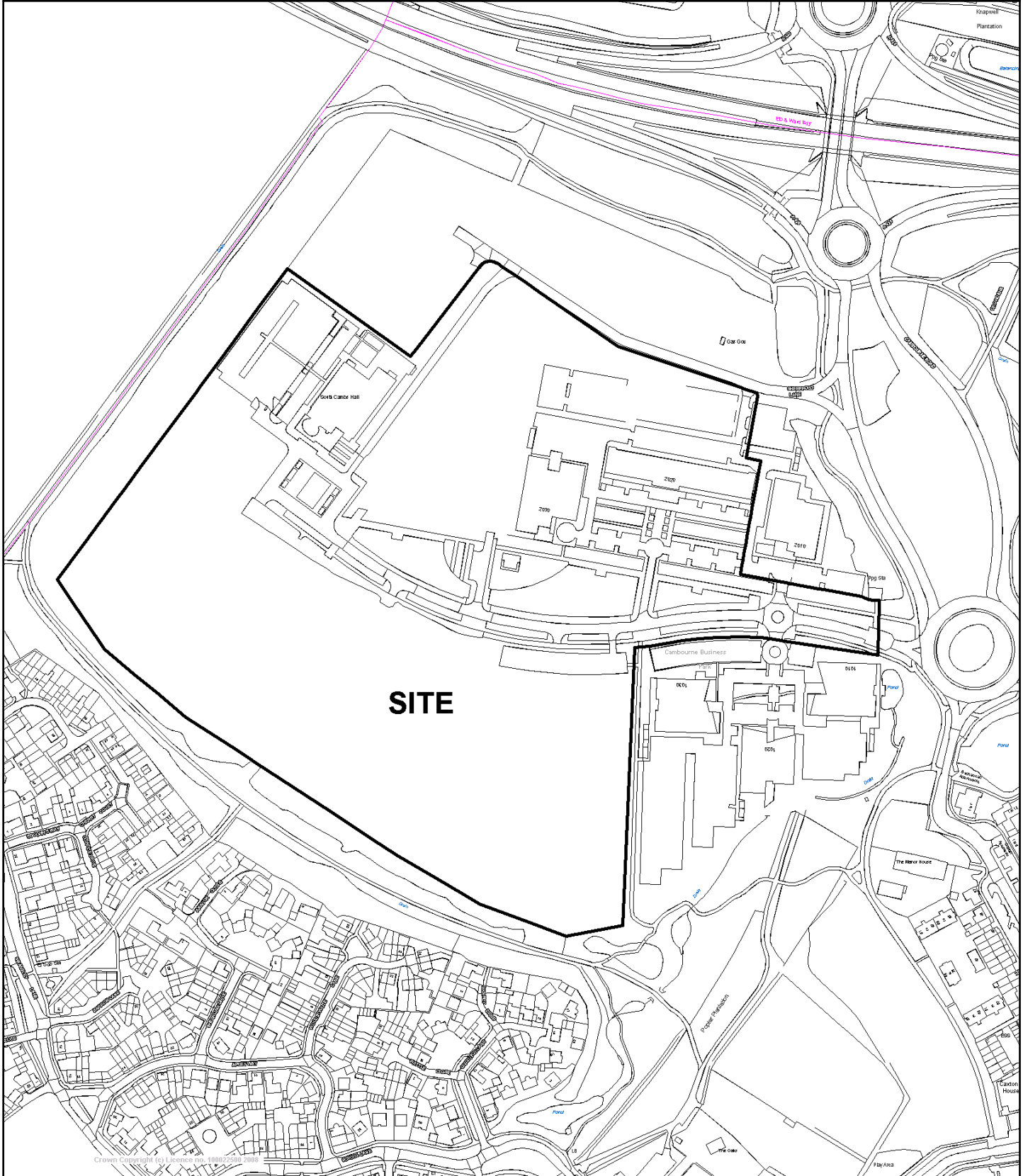
Date for Determination: 15th February 2010

Notes:

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because South Cambridgeshire District Council is the proposed user of the application site.

Site and Proposal

1. The site lies on the south side of the Cambourne Business Park spine road. It lies within parcel 3000 and is allocated for eventual use as permanent parking for development on that parcel. The building to the east is occupied as an office and has its own car park at the rear. On the north side of the lakes and spine road the Cambourne Business Park Marketing Office is sited in front of the 2030 office building. The car park which is the subject of this application is laid out with a tarmac surface marked with 75 car spaces. Lighting columns are in place, and a separate pedestrian access to the footway has been installed. There are 3 metre wide strips of shrub planting between the car park, the footway and the carriageway. The proposal is to use this temporary car park for specified occasions as overflow from South Cambridgeshire Hall car park.
2. This application is submitted to comply with a condition of planning permission S/6103/00/F for Temporary Car Parking which was granted, as provision in excess of the Business Park long term parking ratio, in recognition of the occasional intensive use of buildings by firms awaiting the construction of larger premises in the Business Park for them to move or expand into. The permission was subject to Condition 2 which required details to be approved for each proposed use of the temporary car parking, in order to ensure, among other things, that the proposal would accord with the promotion of reduced reliance on the private car for travel to work and the use of alternative means of travel with less environmental impact, as required by national and local planning policies.
3. The proposal is to regularise the use which has continued since 31st March 2009 on occasions when parking demand was high at South Cambridgeshire Hall, with a view to ceasing the use on 30th April this year.
4. The application is submitted with background information about car parking at South Cambridgeshire Hall. The main circumstances are outlined as follows:-



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5. South Cambridgeshire Hall provides public access for the community to key local services including housing, planning and environmental health functions, and is therefore a destination not only for staff and councillors but also visitors from partner organisations as well as members of the public. The range of functions includes democratic meetings, inspections, examinations and hearings, partnership conferences, seminars and workshops. The Council's role in terms of community leadership, 'place shaping' and partnership working has created significant demands on car parking terms of hosting major conferences, meetings and other events.
6. South Cambridgeshire Hall was designed to accommodate approximately 340 staff plus Members. 239 parking spaces were provided. This was a higher allocation in relation to the floorspace than for other offices on the Business Park, in recognition of the public function of the building, customer visits and Council meetings. 24 of the parking spaces were intended to be "sacrificial", to be phased out as the Travel for Work Plan was successfully implemented. There was also a 4 year Council bus service which was discontinued in April 2008. In the intervening years demand for car parking spaces at South Cambridgeshire Hall has exceeded supply. The additional 21 spaces built on site, combined with the rationalisation of the car park have resulted in a total of 252 spaces.

Planning History

7. **S/1371/92/O** Outline permission for the new settlement of Cambourne, including a business park.
8. **S/6136/01/O** outline permission for the siting of building 6010 for use as headquarters for SCDC subject to conditions including requiring implementation of a green travel plan.
9. **S/6147/02/RM** approval of reserved matters for Building 6010 as headquarters for South Cambridgeshire District Council.
10. **S/6103/00/F** permission for Temporary Car Parking for the Business Park, granted subject to condition 2 requiring c) the built form that the temporary car parking is intended to serve, d) date of commencement of use and e) period of use..
11. **Application in compliance with Condition 2** approved at Planning Committee 2nd April 2008 for a period of one year for use by South Cambridgeshire District Council.
12. **S/0951/08/F** permission for construction of additional 21 car parking spaces on South Cambridgeshire Hall site approved by Planning Committee 3rd September 2008. At that time monitoring of the "Civic Square" unauthorised parking (prior to provision of the temporary overflow car park), had identified a maximum excess demand of 22 vehicles. Observation of the use of the temporary car park between coming into use in May 2008 and September indicated that this number had rarely been exceeded. The significant peaks were the District Council Election count day, and a training course. Both of these events are of a pre-planned type for which it would be possible to make special transport arrangements. It was therefore considered that the provision of 21 new spaces was adequate to meet the development criteria of safe and convenient access to public buildings required by Policy DP/3 (f) of the Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD 2007. The permission was implemented in the winter of 2008.

Planning Policy

Local Development Framework Development Control Policies 2007:

13. **DP/1** requires development to demonstrate that it is consistent with the principles of sustainable development.
14. **DP/2** requires the design of new development to be of high quality, with criteria listed.
15. **DP/3** sets development criteria, a checklist to ensure all requirements are met.
16. **TR/1** encourages planning for more sustainable travel through accessibility, alternative modes, and parking levels. This is supported by **TR/2** which sets parking standards, **TR/3** which requires mitigation of travel impacts, and **TR/4** which encourages use of non-motorised modes.

Consultation

17. **Cambourne Parish Council** resolved permission be given for a further temporary period.

Representations

18. None

Planning Comments – Key Issues

19. The main issues in this case are: the adequacy of the site for the proposed use, how the use will be managed in connection with South Cambridgeshire Hall, compliance with sustainability objectives and policies, timescale in relation to the travel plan, and safety and security.

Adequacy of the site for the proposed use

20. The car park is sited 250 metres from South Cambridgeshire Hall. This is a reasonable distance for meeting attendees or staff to walk, and the building is easily visible to those arriving. The car park surface is not a permanent finish, but is firm, well-drained, and is marked out with parking spaces. The access to the Business Park spine road is adequate, and signage is erected to highlight its location on days when it is brought into use.

Management of the use in connection with South Cambridgeshire Hall

21. The additional car parking is not available for general use. The Council continues monitor the South Cambridgeshire Hall car parking on a regular basis and uses evidence from this to identify a daily threshold. The additional parking is only brought into use for days on which the cumulative predicted attendees at planned meetings and other events are likely to cause the demand for car parking to exceed the threshold. The number of days of use in September and October 2009 was approximately half the working days recorded, but the figure may be distorted by the period of the Clay and Glebe Farm Planning appeals. On those days, the additional parking has been managed by Council facilities management staff by means of collapsible bollards and demountable signage. No monitoring of the number of cars using the temporary car park has been undertaken; although it has been variable, the

whole extent of the car park has never been used. Since its use was secured, unauthorised parking has reduced significantly and been almost eliminated around the Civic Square.

Compliance with sustainability objectives and policies

22. The Council has at the heart of its Local Development Framework Core Strategy, the “cornerstone of sustainability”, which requires effective protection and enhancement of the environment, and prudent use of natural resources. This is carried forward in the Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD 2007 which has Sustainable Development as the first policy, DP/1, which requires all development, among other things, to minimise the need to travel and reduce car dependency.
23. Policy DP/3 includes development criteria c. “car parking, with provision kept to a minimum” and f. “safe and convenient access for all to public buildings and spaces, and to public transport, including those with limited mobility or those with other impairment such as of sight or hearing.”
24. Policy Objective ET/d is “To reduce commuting distances and the need to travel, particularly by car, by bringing home and workplace closer together, and by encouraging employment opportunities in accessible locations, or accessible by sustainable modes of travel.”
25. TR/1 Planning for more sustainable travel requires that in considering planning applications the Council will seek to ensure that every opportunity is taken to increase integration of travel modes and accessibility to non-motorised modes by measures including public transport improvements, cycling provision, and minimising the amount of car parking provision in new developments, compatible with their location, by, among other things, restricting car parking to the maximum levels. This is emphasised in Policy TR/2 Car and Cycle Parking Standards. Policy TR/3 Mitigating Travel Impact sets out requirements on the preparation and implementation of Travel Plans.
26. The supporting statement accompanying the application describes the situation in relation to the above policies. Although the updated Travel for Work Plan, Travel Link, was adopted by the Council in September 2008, “The steering group has been subject to change in Councillor Chair and participant officers throughout 2008 and 2009. The level of change has impacted continuity and thus progress of the Group’s agenda. In addition uncertainty arose from the Council’s Housing Futures Project... which would most likely have resulted in a significant proportion of the Council’s staff moving from South Cambridgeshire Hall.” Further progress on the Travel Link plan actions relates to the methods for controlling use of the car park, design of a Travel Link brochure, and promotion of further information about alternative modes of travel such as car sharing.

Timescale and Travel Plan

27. The Council reviewed its car parking arrangements as part of its overall review of the Travel for Work Plan. This included the development of a permanent additional parking area on site, to accommodate parking required to support the Council’s enhanced role as a community and partnership facilitator. The additional area has been designated for use by car sharers arriving before 0930 as an incentive. The main car park has also been rationalised so that best use of space is made by marking the bays.

28. The temporary planning approval for use of the overflow car park expired in April 2009, but has continued since expiry of the consent. This application is intended to regularise that situation until the end of the current lease. There is no budget allocated for temporary car park use after 30th April 2010.
29. The extended use of the car park since April 2009 has provided the Council with a “breathing space” during which Travel Plan initiatives could be developed. The provision of additional car parking has been a short-term option to sustain the Council’s community role while developing effective solutions for the long term. The Council is aware that unauthorised parking on the roads or on other users’ car parks will not be tolerated within the Business Park.

Safety and security

30. The car park is well lit and is close to the Business Park spine road. There are overlooking windows in the adjacent office block. As the use is proposed to cater for particular events, it is likely that users would arrive and leave at similar times. It is therefore considered that the location remote from the users’ destination would not be contrary to Policy DP/2.1.i) which requires design to create an “inclusive environment which is and feels safe”. Disabled parking spaces are provided at South Cambridgeshire Hall close to the staff access and the level access to the public entrance.

Recommendation

31. Approve the use until 30th April 2010.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- Local Development Framework Core Strategy adopted January 2007
- Local Development Framework Development Control Policies 2007
- Planning file references S/1371/92/O, S/6136/01/O, S/6147/02/RM and S/6103/00/F

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