

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

14 January 2015

AUTHOR/S: Planning and New Communities Director

Application Number:	S/1952/14/OL
Parish(es):	Sawston
Proposal:	Outline application (access only) for recreation development consisting of 50 no. holiday lodges, indoor tennis complex, 4 no. outdoor tennis courts, fitness centre, bowling green, brasserie, public open space with footpath and cycleway, and associated works.
Site address:	Sand and Gravel Quarry, Sawston Bypass
Applicant(s):	Russell Smith Farms
Recommendation:	Refuse
Key material considerations:	Principle of development; Green Belt; Landscape impact; Benefits of the development; Flood Risk; Transport; Ecology; and Other Considerations
Committee Site Visit:	Yes
Departure Application:	No
Presenting Officer:	Andrew Fillmore
Application brought to Committee because:	The application proposal raises considerations of wider than local significance given its scale and location in the Green Belt
Date by which decision due:	23 January 2015

Update to Report

Representations

1. Two further representations have been received. One supports the development, stating there is nothing anywhere like this anywhere nearby and the development would benefit the local economy and provide much needed amenity space and leisure facilities. The second opposes the scheme on grounds the pedestrian/cycleway should be multi user access available to all, including horses.

Planning considerations

2. Subsequent to the writing of the committee report the applicant has supplied an addendum justifying the development being considered a 'very special circumstance' in the Green Belt for the following reasons;
 - Economic benefit;
 - Improvements to biodiversity;
 - Community benefits;
 - Health benefits; and
 - Transport improvements
3. The applicant has supplied case law which establishes that a combination of commonplace factors could amount to 'very special circumstances'. This is a matter of judgement for the decision maker (planning committee).

Economic benefit

4. There is a clear need for additional tourist accommodation within Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire to cater for leisure and business tourism, with this site well located to provide this accommodation given its good access links to the city.
5. The development will create approximately 30 full time and 20 part time jobs once operational along with a significant number during construction and in the supply chain.

Improvements to biodiversity

6. The applicants are willing to 'give' a large area of land over for biodiversity enhancements as recognised by the council's ecologist, which is very special given the relationship of the site to the SSSI and County Wildlife Site.

Community benefits

7. The development will provide formal (tennis complex, fitness centre and bowling green) sports provision and a large amount of informal open space which will be available to the public. Discussions are taking place with Shelford tennis club about possibly relocating to the site.

Health benefits

8. The creation of jobs itself will impact positively on people employed to do them.
9. It is proposed to promote the location for healthy holidays with opportunities for being in the open air and engaging in physical activity.
10. Existing local residents will have opportunities to use the facilities and be encouraged to access them by sustainable travel resulting in additional health benefits.
11. Positive health impacts result for all the people who will use the footpaths and cycleways within the proposed informal open space.

Transport improvements

12. The application site is a sustainable location with good public transport links to the facilities and services within Great Shelford, Stapleford and Sawston as well as Cambridge. The provision of a traffic free cycle route within the site, and the proposed footpaths in the vicinity of the reservoir will be attractive to the local community.
13. The vehicular access point with the A1301 will be improved.

Recommendation

14. The applicant seeks to justify the development being considered 'very special' on grounds of providing a number of commonplace factors. Officers are of the view these factors, when taken individually or in combination, do not provide sufficient qualitative benefits to be considered 'very special'. The application therefore does not represent appropriate development in the Green Belt.

Report Author: Andrew Fillmore – Senior Planning Officer
Telephone: (01954) 713180