
PROPOSED DIAGNOSTIC TREATMENT CENTRE FOSSETTS FARM, SOUTHEND ON SEA

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 To consider the report of the Head of Planning Services regarding a consultation on a planning application from Southend on Sea Borough Council for a 'diagnostic and treatment centre' on land at Fossetts Farm, Southend on Sea.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Members may recall that the development on the overall Fossetts Farm site is established by its formal zoning in the Southend Local Plan, which has identified the area as 'safeguarded land'. This means that the site has been taken out of the Green Belt and identified as an area suitable for development.
- 2.2 The application site measures approximately 6h (14.8acres) and is located within the wider Fossetts Farm site, which is itself over 30h (74 acres). The Fossetts Farm site currently contains a Waitrose store with petrol filling station and there are separate planning permissions for a new link road through the site and retail warehouses.
- 2.3 The application site itself is irregular in shape and comprises former vacant land, previously in agricultural use. To the north and east the site is bounded by the proposed new link road (separate permission), while to the west the site adjoins further disused arable fields. The south boundary extends around a large circular enclosure, known as Prittlewell Camp, a Scheduled Ancient Monument.
- 2.4 This report relates to a planning application for the partial redevelopment of part of the Fossetts Farm site.

3 APPLICATION DETAILS

- 3.1 The new building comprises 11,800sqm (126,968sqft) of gross floorspace with four 2 storey blocks arranged around a central atrium, the maximum height of the proposal would be in the region of 30m (100ft). The proposed buildings are a mix of flat and curved roofs, with the external materials comprising a mix of rendered walls and timber cladding (red cedar, Siberian larch), with zinc covering to the curved roofs.
- 3.2 The proposal will accommodate 200 staff with 170 being transferred from the existing hospital in Southend.

4 PLANNING ISSUES

- 4.1 As commented above, the principle of the development of the Fossetts Farm site is established through the Local Plan allocation.
- 4.2 Implications for Rochford District Council relate to both the long and short range views of the site and the activity associated with the use of the new building.
- 4.3 The new building will be 'modernist' in terms of the design and external appearance and will be visible from various points within the Rochford area. It is considered that, given the height (30m), mass and bulk, the proposed new buildings would dominate this part of the site and would be visually intrusive to the views from the Rochford area and would therefore be contrary to the principle of maintaining the openness of the countryside/Green Belt.
- 4.4 It is accepted that this proposal forms part of a Local Plan allocated site, incorporating a new spine/service road. Whilst this new road may ease access through/across the site, it would not help to alleviate the long standing problems relating to the volumes of traffic along Sutton Road in both directions. It is considered that the additional traffic created by this use would be likely to have an adverse impact upon the local highway network.
- 4.5 In addition, it is also considered that the siting of the proposed new use on this site would be contrary to established planning principles of sustainable development in that the scheme would be heavily reliant on the use of private motor vehicles given the site's location remote from other transport links. If the scheme is recommended for approval it is recommended that a Green Travel Plan should be submitted to accompany the application.
- 4.6 In terms of the activity associated with this scheme, there would clearly be benefits for Southend Borough given that it would assist access, parking and activity problems with the existing hospital site within the residential part of Southend. In terms of the activity likely to be generated by this site and its implications upon the Rochford area though, it is considered that even with the new road fully implemented there will be insufficient local highway capacity for the increase in traffic, resulting in adverse highway impacts.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That Southend Borough Council be informed that Rochford District Council objects to the proposal on the following grounds:-

- The height, mass and bulk of the proposal would have an adverse impact upon the openness of the countryside and the Green Belt.

- The increase in activity as a result of this use would be likely to have an adverse impact upon the local highway network.
- The application is not supported by a Green Travel Plan and given the site's location, remote from a range of other forms of transport, then there will be a heavy reliance upon the use of private motor vehicles, which would be contrary to the principles relating to sustainable development.

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Background Papers

Consultation letter from Southend Borough Council

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