

Draft Minutes of Llangors Community Council Planning Application Decision meeting
Held at Llangasty Village Hall on Monday 15 July 2024

Members present: Cllr A Jevons Chair), Cllr D Scully, Cllr S Bailey, Cllr Mrs C Owen, Cllr G Beaven, Cllr Mr C Preece, Cllr Helen Quarrell.

In attendance: Hannah Davies (Clerk), Mr P Harwood from Avison Young.

1. Welcome and participation rules for the meeting.

Cllr Jevons welcomed those present and explained that the rules for participation in a normal Council Meeting would apply.

2. Apologies for absence: Cllr Mr D Jones.

3. Declaration of Interest for agenda items as per Members' Code of Conduct: None

4. Consideration of the applications, following members having viewed it online prior to the meeting: -

BBNPA 24/22850/FUL 22 Apr 2024

The Change of use of land and buildings from overnight accommodation by school children using the facilities at the Outdoor activity centre to the use of land and buildings for overnight holiday accommodation and 3 additional holiday cottages including reconfiguration of existing car parking and enhancement to existing on-site restaurant.

Royal Oak Camp Llangorse Brecon LD3 7TR.

As the Community Councillor who oversees and is representative for planning issues on Llangors Community Council Cllr Beaven addressed the meeting.

Cllr Beaven explained that the previous planning application for the Royal Oak Camp was referenced 23/21931/CON and it proposed a change of layout plan to accommodate 15 lodges. Council's consultation submission to the BBNPA was dated 4 May 2023. This application was subject to a re-consultation due to amendment and the Council's submission was dated 20 November 2023. The authority granted permission for the development in February 2024 but for occupation by school children only.

The current planning application for the Royal Oak Camp is referenced 24/22850/FUL and it proposes a change of use from school children to families, whole year occupancy and the conversion of some existing buildings for holiday accommodation. The Council's consultation submission to BBNPA was dated 18 May 2024.

This application is now subject to re-consultation which would allow the Council to consider an Avison Young letter dated 14th June that responded to the Council's 18 May submission. The PAD held on 27 June to consider the 14th June letter was attended by Avison Young and Green Parks when their offer of further information was accepted. The Council then made a holding submission to BBNPA that was dated 1 July.

This PAD is to consider how the Council should respond to the re-consultation after consideration of a further letter from Avison Young dated 4 July that responds to Council's 18 May submission. Cllr Beaven reminded those present that the Council's position in the 18 May submission was that the

change of use to family accommodation was not supported, the change to whole year occupancy was opposed and there were no comments on the building conversions.

Cllr Beaven advised that the Avison Young letter dated 4th July was welcome replacement for the earlier letter and it provided additional material and reassurances related to the Council's concerns.

A key concern was that the application's description of development fails to mention that permission is also sought to extend the season of use and as this description was quoted in several supporting documents it was unclear whether the extended season was taken fully into consideration. The Ecological Appraisal was of particular concern in this respect.

The letter states that the description of development is to be amended but of more significance is the reassurance and additional supporting document from Rachel Hacking Ecology. This confirms that the ecological assessments are robust and already address the impacts throughout the year and any specific issues related to winter recreation have been attended to. Also that Ecologists at the National Park Authority and Natural Resources Wales have not raised any concerns about potential habitat disturbance during the winter period.

A further key concern was the lack of clarity whether the land and buildings recently approved under 23/21931/CON and the associated approval conditions would be carried over except where specific changes are proposed by the current application. Of particular concern was with design features and special measures that were introduced in order to address the potential for light pollution from the Snowdon pods.

The letter states that the Applicant's intention has always been to develop upon the previous application and, except where change is sought, to carry forward the previous designs and approval conditions. In this respect it has been confirmed that the Snowdon pods will be built with a solid roof in accordance with the approved drawings and the condition requiring the blinds to be closed during dusk will be maintained. Also confirmed is that the boundary enhancements as shown in biodiversity drawing no 23137.102 Rev will be implemented in full.

Cllr Beaven further explain that another key concern for the Council was how the site would be operated in order to be reassured that it would blend in with the existing local facilities. The information now provided covers all of the specific matters of concern and the confirmation that there will be a full time warden was welcomed. However the offered acceptance of a planning condition to time limit the playing of loud music is disconcerting as it appears to accept that loud music will be a recurring feature of the site's operation.

Mr Harwood commented there is no intention to play loud music on the site, the applicant's intention is a family and couples retreat whereby a key attraction will be the tranquillity and serenity of the area. Loud music would run in countenance to this. There is not any planned capacity for the playing of loud music as all that is proposed is a restaurant and overnight accommodation. The offer in the letter was simply a planning condition to give comfort around loud music, this condition could also preclude loud music on the site entirely, albeit this may present the BBNPA with challenges in enforcement.

Mr Beaven explained that the letter also confirms that the proposed restaurant will be open to the public and that restrictions will apply although these are yet to be defined. However some concerns remain that the restaurant could represent competition for the existing business in the immediate area and he felt that the Council should seek reassurance that the restrictions will recognise the

need to avoid undermining the viability of the well-established close by Lakeside Café. Mr Harwood commented that the restaurant was primarily intended for use by the sites occupants but he would take this concern to his client and a dialogue would be sought with the operators of the existing facilities.

Mr Beaven recalled that for its earlier consideration of this application the Council has been conscious that a balance is needed between the economic and some social benefits generated by increased tourism and the potential adverse impact on the culture and well-being of local communities and the environment. The Council has accepted that when compared to the previous use the proposed development would be an improvement due to a lower density of occupation. The letter has now largely addressed the Councils key concerns and given that permission has already been granted for the plan amendment Cllr Beaven felt that the Council could now reconsider its earlier position on the change of use part of the application.

After discussion the Council agreed that it would support the part of the application proposing a change of use to holiday accommodation and the conversion of existing buildings to holiday accommodation.

Cllr Beaven continued by recalling that with its original submission the Council opposed the proposed 5 month extension to the approval occupancy condition believing that operation of the site should be constrained to align with the very long established holiday season that is applied to all the other local leisure facilities.

In reaching this position the Council was conscious that in the immediate Llangors area there is a well-established holiday season that is respected by local leisure facilities partly for their own well-being but also in recognition of the impact that tourism can have on the local population and that this seasonality provides the local population and the environment with a much needed and beneficial breathing space.

The 4 July letter has pointed out that the proposal would represent an improvement as the occupation would be spread more evenly throughout the year helping to iron out the peaks and troughs resulting from the current extreme seasonality in the area. At the 27th June PAD the Council asked the applicant's representative to consider reducing the scale or intensity of operations during the winter period but the letter explains that this is not being pursued as the applicant believes they have demonstrated that the change of season will not be harmful in planning terms and they have not been provided with any planning or policy reason to reduce the proposed season of use.

Mr Harwood qualified that there is not definitive reluctance to reduce the season, however at present, the Local Plan does not require a reduced season unless traditional static caravans are proposed. Mr Harwood asked the LCC to note paragraphs 7.8.4.1 and 7.8.4.2 of the BBNPA Local Plan. These paragraphs make clear that accommodation that is capable of occupation during the winter is compatible with the objective of increasing the supply of accommodation throughout the national park and that seasonal occupancy does not promote the objectives of the Sustainable tourism strategy.

Mr Harwood added that there has not yet been any detailed discussions on this matter with the Authority and they are awaiting a formal view from the BBNPA Policy and Planning Officer. If this is to be problematic they may have a compromise proposal to offer. When asked about what form this might take Mr Harwood said that he could not speak for his client on this and that they will await the comments from Policy and the Planning Officer on the principle of the season extension before

making any further comments beyond those provided in the letter.

Cllr Beaven advised that as Council members are not qualified planners and taking the applicants statements at face value it appears that there are not sufficient planning grounds to oppose the proposed whole year occupancy of the site. However, he felt that Council should not support this part of the application because of its belief that the adverse impact on local residents will far outweigh any economic benefits.

After further discussion the Council agreed that it would not support whole year occupation of the site because it believes strongly that the adverse impact on the local residents will far outweigh any economic benefits and also that the precedent whole year occupancy will set will have undesirable long term implications for the character of the surrounding area.

In addition the Council noted that the applicant has provided details of the proposed industry standard occupancy condition but this does not change the Council's previous unease with the situation where measures to prevent permanent long occupation of the site are to be vested beyond the control of the National Park Authority.

Cllr Beaven was asked to respond to the re-consultation advising the Authority of the Council's agreed positions with reasons. The draft submission was considered to require any minor changes for this purpose.

5. Consider any other planning applications received.

None

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.12 pm.