



Ashington Parish Council Planning Committee Meeting

Minutes of Ashington Parish Council Planning Committee Remote Meeting held on Wednesday 20th January 2020 at 7.30pm

Present: Councillors T. Kearney, M. Woolley, P. Linehan, N. Spiers, J. Morris, J. Stillwell

Parish Clerk: K. Dare

Apologies: None

Members of the public: 1

Declarations of Interest: None

Cllr Woolley took the Chair and explained that there is no drive-thru/takeaway at the site or proposed. It was part of the original planning application (DC/14/1420) but was never constructed. The land where it was supposed to be sited was sold to Ashington Autos some time ago.

Public Adjournment

The member of the public explained that they are an Ashington resident and live close to the application site. They explained that Govt. Planning Policy Framework and HDC Planning Policies state that any application must be appropriate to the location and not have adverse impact. They consider that the application will have adverse impact on those residents living close by:

1. Noise - Ashington is a quiet village and the existing Petrol Filling Station (PFS) is very quiet after 10pm. Additional traffic coming off the A24, through residential areas will create higher noise levels. In addition, HGV loading/unloading and car door slamming will create intermittent loud noises that will be more easily heard by nearby residents. There has also been no consideration of noise levels from vehicle braking/accelerating on the site and on residential roads between the A24 and the site.
2. Lighting – all night light pollution is a concern as it could affect the amenity of residents.
3. The A24 is not a strategic road/motorway but the application implies that it is. It is a village PFS and serves the A24 traffic which is mostly 6am-9pm.
4. Need – the application summarises other PFS facilities nearby and is interesting in its interpretation of them. Buck Barn, Hop Oast and Broadbridge Heath are all 24/7 and are all within 15 minutes of Ashington. There are no unmet travel needs demonstrated that justify a 24/7 PFS at Ashington.
5. There are no overnight HGV parking facilities at Ashington PFS and a 24/7 operation could attract HGV parking onto local roads and this will affect residential properties.

They concluded by stating that there is no demonstrated need, harm from noise, lighting and off-site parking will affect residential properties and 24/7 operation is not appropriate at this location. Therefore, it does not comply with Planning Policies.

The Chairman thanked the member of the public for attending and closed the public adjournment.

Planning applications

DC/20/2543 Removal of Conditions 21a and 22 of previously approved application DC/14/1420 (Proposed new service area (operating between the hours of 6am to 10pm) development comprising of petrol filling station (sui generis use) and ancillary shop (A1 use), forecourt canopy, 5 no. pump islands, automatic car wash and associated service facilities (ATM, air/water point, jet wash etc) Restaurant with Drive-Thru facility (A3 and A5 uses) and associated sewage treatment plant) Relating to the operational hours and delivery times.
Petrol Filling Station London Road

Parish Council explanation:

Condition 21a is that the operational hours of petrol station, retail unit are 6am-10pm

Condition 22 is that the delivery hours are 6am-10pm

This application seeks to remove these operational hours and allow 24/7 opening.

Condition 22b of DC/14/1420 is that the car wash, car vacuum, jet wash and airline have restricted hours and this is not being changed. These will remain as 8am-6pm Monday-Saturday and 9am-4pm Sundays and Bank Holidays.

The Clerk had prepared a briefing paper on the application and all its supporting documents, Councillors were made aware of residents' comments on various social media platforms and emailed comments from two other Parish Councillors not on the Planning Committee.

Councillors were in full agreement that this is an important amenity for the village, but they do have several concerns regarding this application:

Noise:

Planning application DC/14/1420 was clear that the current opening hours were imposed for the protection of nearby residential properties. Since its approval there are now 5 more residential properties in very close proximity to the site (Drunken Boat & Hazelbank) so the Parish Council considers that restrictions to opening & delivery times are even more important.

The submitted noise report goes to great lengths to show that additional noise generated is not above 'acceptable' levels, but, it will be above current levels. Suggestion of a Delivery Management Plan to restrict reversing alarms & turning off refrigeration units is welcomed but entirely impractical and unlikely to be enforced.

No consideration of noise levels relating to HGV loading/unloading, car door slamming, braking/acceleration into and out of site has been presented.

Need:

The A24 is not a strategic road and Strategic Roads Network policies do not apply to the A24, however, the application uses them for guidance. The A24 is not a motorway so it does not justify motorway type service stations.

These policies recommend 30 minutes driving time between facilities which, for a 50-70mph road is 25-35 miles. The nearest 24-hour facilities at Findon and Buck Barn (some 12 miles or 15 minutes apart) are well within this parameter.

Govt. advice recommends a minimum 15-minute rest break every 2 hours of driving time, yet the report places great emphasis on the need for 2 hours of free parking at all service stations and suggests that facilities with less than this are sub-standard, thus justifying why Ashington is a more important 24/7 facility. This is flawed logic.

The report analyses detour distance from the main carriageway to the service station for all service stations in a wide radius around Ashington and contends that many are unacceptable as they involve significant detours eg Shell (Hop Oast) 550m detour for northbound traffic. Yet the report raises no concerns about the 600m detour for northbound traffic and 775m detour for southbound traffic from the A24 to access the Ashington service station. The report does not mention that the Ashington detours take vehicles into the Built-Up Area boundary and near more residential properties than the Shell (Hop Oast) detour. The assessment is inconsistent and very subjective.

The report claims that one of the main reasons for 24/7 opening at Ashington is to allow drivers access to a toilet. It claims that the only toilets at Buck Barn service station are within McDonalds and are, therefore closed when McDonalds is closed. This is incorrect as there is a toilet, accessible from the petrol pumps and located next to the ATM. Again, Findon and Buck Barn are only 12 miles apart so at 50-70mph this is <15 minutes.

The Transport Report shows that overnight traffic at the site will be very low so, whilst it is concluded that this will lead to low impact/harm, it does throw into doubt the need for 24/7 opening.

The Transport Statement 3.2.5 acknowledges that the primary function of the PFS is to provide a service for through traffic on the A24 and that it also acts as an ancillary shop for the village of Ashington. Accepted – but the impact of 24/7 opening is on the village of Ashington and its residents.

An additional 'rest stop' is not justified by any accident data on the A24 nor any spur roads.

The Overnight Needs Statement 6.2 refers to the PFS shop as a convenience store – it is not a convenience store as it does not sell all items associated with a convenience store. It is a PFS & retail operation where predominantly service station goods can be bought eg sandwiches, ready meals and flowers. It is of some, but limited, use to Ashington residents.

There is a real danger that 24/7 opening could bring with it unintended consequences such as increased vehicle movements at night on both the A24, B2133 and other local roads and the risk of overnight HGV parking on local roads. There are already problems with daytime and overnight HGV parking in Old London Road, pavement parking and blocking of residential accesses. Littering in this area is also a big problem currently. No mitigation is proposed to prevent this. It is unacceptable to create an entirely predictable problem but leave enforcement to a third party ie the Police.

It has been suggested by some residents that 24/7 opening could reduce anti-social driving at the Billingshurst Road and East Wolves roundabouts as there would be more traffic in the area and possibly the Police would be at the Ashington PFS more often at night? Councillors considered that it was unlikely the Police would visit Ashington at night when their shift numbers are low as they are more likely to be patrolling in large towns. In addition, 24/7 facilities could attract more anti-social driving as it would offer a place to meet up and get refreshments. This is a matter for enforcement authorities to deal with, rather than hoping that planning applications will solve it.

Light pollution is a real concern, especially as the SDNP is pursuing Dark Skies status. Amenity of nearby residents is important.

There would be some limited benefit for EV Charging Station users at Ashington to have the Retail store open at night but other 24/7 PFS nearby have chargers and need at Ashington is likely to be extremely limited.

For these reasons Councillors considered that the very limited benefits were outweighed by the harm that would be caused and Councillors present agreed unanimously to Object to the application.

The Planning Committee meeting closed at 8.00pm

Signed.....

Date.....