

Contact: Lucy Bellinger DDI No. 01494 421525

App No : 19/05996/FUL App Type : FUL

Application for : Formation of Irrigation Reservoir in connection with delivering Sustainable Irrigation to the Golf Course

At Wycombe Heights Golf Centre, Rayners Avenue, Loudwater, Buckinghamshire, HP10 9SZ

Date Received : 15/05/19 Applicant : Mr Guy Giggott - Burhill Group Limited

Target date for decision: 14/08/19

## 1. **Summary**

- 1.1. The approval of planning permission is recommended subject to planning conditions which are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.
- 1.2. The development would accord with local planning policies and would not have an adverse impact on neighbouring land and property.

## 2. **The Application**

- 2.1. Planning permission is sought for the creation of an irrigation reservoir within the grounds of the Wycombe Heights Golf Centre. The golf course is a pay and play golf facility with a main 18 hole course and an 18-hole par 3 course. The site comprises the main clubhouse incorporating bar, dining room, shop and function rooms together with outside grounds and seating area and a large car park. There is also a golf driving range.
- 2.2. The proposed irrigation reservoir will improve the overall operational sustainability and efficiency of water usage of the site, thereby extending the golf season and the quality and playability of the two courses.
- 2.3. The site of the proposed reservoir is 0.82 ha and lies to the southeast of the clubhouse and parking area. The location of the reservoir is currently mown grassland with scattered semi-native trees set amongst established gold holes. The location of the reservoir has been influenced by a number of factors including:-
  - Topography
  - Ground conditions
  - The location of rights of way
  - Views from the Chilterns AONB
  - Ecological and environmental impacts
  - Operational accessibility
  - Proximity to the existing bore hole and storage tank
  - Presence of underground and surface infrastructure
- 2.4. The reservoir would be constructed using cut and fill which will therefore obviate the need to import materials.
- 2.5. The application is accompanied by:
  - a) Planning Statement
  - b) Preliminary Contaminated Land Assessment
  - c) Reservoir Flood Risk Assessment
  - d) Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment
  - e) Flood Risk Assessment
  - f) Ecology Wildlife Checklist

- 2.6. Additional information has been received in relation to surface water and downstream flood risk.
- 2.7. The Council has consulted on the planning application and the responses are summarised in Appendix A of this report and are available in full on our web site.

### **3. Working with the applicant/agent**

- 3.1. In accordance with paragraph 38 of the NPPF2 Wycombe District Council (WDC) approach decision-taking in a positive and creative way taking a proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions and work proactively with applicants to secure developments. WDC work with the applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by offering a pre-application advice service, and as appropriate updating applications/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application.
- 3.2. In this instance:
  - the applicant was provided with pre-application advice;
  - the applicant was provided the opportunity to submit amendments to the scheme/address issues;
  - the application was considered by the Planning Committee where the applicant/agent had the opportunity to speak to the committee and promote the application.

### **4. Relevant Planning History**

- 4.1. **15/08410/FUL**; Re-grading and extension of golf driving range outfield with ecological and environmental landscape enhancements. Permitted June 2016.
- 4.2. **18/07928/MINAMD**; proposed non-material amendment to the above permission 15/08410/FUL. Permitted Nov 2018.
- 4.3. County matter application **CC12/9005/CM**, importation of clean, inert soils and remodelling of golf driving range outfield and formation of irrigation reservoir. Appeal refusal January 2014.

### **5. Issues and Policy considerations**

#### **Principle and Location of Development**

WDLP: CP1 (Sustainable Development), CP3 (Settlement Strategy), CP8 (Protecting the Green Belt), CP12 (Climate Change)

- 5.1. The development would be appropriate within the green belt.
- 5.2. The proposal would be an “engineering operation” which is one of the types of development which is “appropriate” providing it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with its purposes. The proposal would retain the openness of the green belt and would not conflict with the purposes of the designation.
- 5.3. The site is located in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The development would not damage the natural beauty of the AONB which has already been significantly altered by the original creation of the golf course. The proposal would not be visually significant within longer distance views. The Chilterns Conservation Board are neutral in their stance and do not object.
- 5.4. Third party objections on the grounds that the new reservoir is not needed, is not a planning reason that could justify refusal of planning permission. The reasoning behind the proposal is to improve the operational sustainability and efficiency of water usage for site irrigation, thereby improving the quality and playability of golf and the long term commercial future of the golf club. This is perfectly logical and reasonable. It would echo the aims of the local plan of promoting mitigation and adaption to climate change and water efficiency.

## **Transport matters and parking**

DSA: DM2 (Transport requirements of development sites)

WDLP: CP7 (Delivering the infrastructure to support growth), DM33 (Managing Carbon Emissions, Transport and Energy Generation)

- 5.5. The proposal is acceptable in highway terms.
- 5.6. Because the reservoir will be created using “cut and fill” there will be very limited vehicle movements as material will not need to be brought to or taken away from the site. Construction plant will need to be brought to site at the start and there will also be some vehicle movements associated with construction workers. The applicant has stated that only one medium sized excavation vehicle will be used and that there will be low levels of other construction vehicles. A local resident has queried if HGV movement of soil be banned along Rayners Avenue. Although there will not be any importation & exportation of soil involved, there are no planning or highway reasons to impose a total ban of HGV movement of soil along Rayners Avenue.
- 5.7. The Highway Authority has recommended a planning condition seeking a construction traffic management plan, so that the impact upon users of local roads and rights of way can be properly controlled and minimised. Such a condition is necessary to ensure that the safety and convenience of highway users is not compromised and the amenity of local residents is protected.

### Rights of way

- 5.8. There are a number of public footpaths and bridleways through the golf course. The Chiltern Way also passes across the golf course and uses the vehicle access to the golf course in parts. The new reservoir would not impinge of existing routes/paths. There may be some minor effect on the use of paths while work is being carried out. But this is likely to be very limited. The appropriate management of construction traffic will ensure that walkers, cyclists and horse riders are not unduly impacted upon.

## **Place making, design quality and residential amenity**

DSA: DM14 (Biodiversity in development)

WDLP: CP9 (Sense of place), DM30 (The Chilterns AONB), DM34 (Delivering Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity in Development), DM35 (Placemaking and Design Quality)

- 5.9. The development would not have an adverse impact on the amenities of neighbouring land and property.
- 5.10. The location of the reservoir within the golf course and the fact that it would be created by cut and fill technique would ensure that there is no adverse impact on neighbouring residents.
- 5.11. It is not necessary to restrict construction working hours as the normal construction hours (7am-7pm Monday to Friday, 7am-1pm Saturday) would be acceptable given the distance that the reservoir would be from neighbouring houses. The Environmental Health Officer has not requested a planning condition to restrict hours of working.
- 5.12. The creation of the irrigation lake would involve the removal of a small number of trees. An acceptable landscaping scheme is proposed which would naturalise the setting of the reservoir, provide replacement tree & hedge planting and enhance biodiversity. A planning condition is necessary to secure the implementation of the landscaping scheme.

## **Environmental issues**

WDLP: CP7 (Delivering the infrastructure to support growth), DM20 (Matters to be determined in accordance with the NPPF)

- 5.13. The development would not have any adverse environmental effects. The Environmental Health Officer has no objection.

## **Flooding and drainage**

DSA: DM17 (Planning for flood risk management)

WDLP: DM39 (Managing Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage Systems)

- 5.14. The LLFA raise an objection due to insufficient information. At the time of writing a response from the Lead Local Flood Authority on the additional/amended technical information is pending. An update will be provided at the meeting.
- 5.15. It is likely that planning conditions will be necessary to secure technical detailed matters thereby ensuring a satisfactory solution to managing potential flood risk and that the development is built in accordance with the flood risk assessment.
- 5.16. The reservoir will be filled from a nearby borehole and the Environment Agency deal with water abstraction licence and regulation. The Environment Agency do not object. They have highlighted that if the applicant intends to abstract more than 20 cubic metres of water per day then an abstraction licence will be needed from the Environment Agency.
- 5.17. The reservoir will have a management procedure which will include weekly visual inspections and health & safety signage is expected to be erected near the reservoir so that users of the golf course are aware of the risks.

## **Infrastructure and Developer Contributions**

WDLP: CP7 (Delivering the infrastructure to support growth)

- 5.18. The development is not a type of development where CIL would be chargeable.
- 5.19. There would not be other types of infrastructure that will be put under unacceptable pressure by the development to justify financial contributions or the direct provision of infrastructure.

## **Recommendation**

- 5.20. If at the time of the meeting the final response of the LLFA has not been received the recommendation is to delegate the determination of this application to the Head of Planning & Sustainability. This will allow the application to be determined once the Lead Local Flood Authority confirm whether or not they are now satisfied with the proposal in relation to drainage and flood risk.

**Recommendation:** That the Head of Planning and Sustainability be given delegated authority to determine this application subject to receipt of the final view of the Local Lead Flood Authority.

## **It is anticipated that any permission would be subject to the following conditions:**

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.  
Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (As amended).
- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be built in accordance with the details contained in the planning application hereby approved and plan numbers GGD-182-2843, 587.2.3.PD.01 VER 1, 587.2.3.PD.02 VER 1, 587.2.3.PD.03 VER 1, 587.2.3.PD.04 VER 1, 587.2.3.PD.05 VER 1, GGD-182-2870 REV D; unless the Local Planning Authority otherwise first agrees in writing.  
Reason: In the interest of proper planning and to ensure a satisfactory development of the site.

- 3 Prior to the commencement of development, a construction traffic management plan detailing the management of construction traffic (including but not limited to vehicle types, tonnages, frequency of visits, routing, expected daily timeframes, use of a banksman, on-site loading/unloading arrangements and parking of site operatives vehicles) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The construction traffic management plan shall also include reference to or an obligation to:
- a) measures to ensure contractors are aware that the access road is also used by pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists;
  - b) measures to carry out a pre-start and post completion road and bridleway condition survey.
- Thereafter construction shall be carried out in accordance with the approved management plan.
- Reason: This is a pre-commencement condition as development cannot be allowed to take place which in the opinion of the Highway Authority could cause danger, obstruction and inconvenience to users of the highway and of the development.
- 4 The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved landscaping scheme illustrated on drawing GGD-182-2870 REV D unless otherwise first agreed in writing by the local planning authority.
- Reason: In the interests of amenity and to ensure a satisfactory standard of landscaping.
- 5 All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner. Any trees, plants or areas of turfing or seeding which, within a period of 3 years from the completion of the development, die are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority first gives written consent to any variation.
- Reason: In the interests of amenity and to ensure a satisfactory standard of landscaping.
- 6 The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Flood Risk Assessment dated 15th April 2019 by Hydreau Consulting Engineers unless otherwise first agreed in writing by the local planning authority.
- Reason: To ensure that the risk of flooding does not increase.

#### INFORMATIVE(S)

- 1 In accordance with paragraph 38 of the NPPF2 Wycombe District Council (WDC) approach decision-taking in a positive and creative way taking a proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions and work proactively with applicants to secure developments. WDC work with the applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by offering a pre-application advice service, and as appropriate updating applications/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application.
- 2 You are advised that the development lies within 250 metres of a known landfill site and you may wish to satisfy yourself that the details of the construction of the proposals take the necessary account of the possibility of landfill gas from that source. If your proposal requires Building Regulation Consent this issue will be dealt with by the Building Control Division when a formal submission is made. However, this may require you to engage the services of a consultant with expertise in these matters.
- 3 The applicant is advised to contact Transport for Buckinghamshire to determine the extent and timing of pre-start and post completion condition local highway network surveys. This is required as part of the construction traffic management plan and surveys must be accompanied by a representative of Transport for Buckinghamshire.