

Planning and Environment Committee – 31 January 2012, Planning Application H/04210/11 Wyevale Garden Centre, Daws Lane London, NW7 4SL - Public Questions

George Jones

Question

Considering Lilian Tucker has written in response to the consultation for the Wyevale site that her Alzheimer suffering husband needs 'encouragement just to leave the house' as his 'stimulation of mind and heart has gone' now that the Garden Centre has closed, how are you able to justify that his enjoyment of life is less important than an additional 160 places at a school that could move anywhere whereas he can't travel any further than the Garden along with 1,000 other elderly and disabled Member of the community.

Response

Officers have addressed in the report the various issues to be given weight when considering the merits of the planning application and this includes the Council's duty under the Equalities Act 2010 and the impacts of the proposals on particular individuals and groups within the community.

The planning application is for a change of use to a school within Use Class D1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order. Whether or not the garden centre closed is outside the control of the Council as Local Planning Authority. If planning permission for a school is not granted, the Council as the planning authority cannot require a garden centre to re-open on the site.

Officers recognise in the report that it is clear that the garden centre was used by a number of residents and groups, including elderly and disabled persons, who miss the facilities that the garden centre provided and that these residents do not consider that there are any comparable facilities within walking distance of their homes. Officers have identified alternative facilities in the area that could offer similar retail and café facilities, for example the café in Mill Hill Park very close to the application site, the garden centre in Burtonhole Lane and the numerous shops and cafes in Mill Hill town centre. Although residents disagree about the suitability of these premises for all residents, nevertheless they do offer similar facilities to those provided by the former garden centre site including an indoor café and retail shops.

The material impact on these residents needs to be weighed against other material planning considerations. Officers have considered in the report the impact on these residents but conclude that, in planning terms, the benefits of the planning application proposals outweigh the adverse impact identified.

Marilyn Norman

Question

Mrs Aguzzi, wrote in response to the consultation that at 93 and partially sighted, the Garden Centre was the only place that she could go to buy her daily items as shops are “too crowded and she feels uncomfortable’ and she doesn’t go out so often now that her ‘real treat’ has gone and if the council take it away she doesn’t “know what I will do”, so what alternative opportunities have been provided locally for her and the 1,000 others who, like her rely on the Garden Centre.

Response

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Ray Caulfield

Question

Kindly explain to Ms Hilda Hyder, who is 102 and a prominent elder stateswoman of the community where she can go to lunch, walk around and supplement her gardening passion and other necessary purchases while meeting friends, cousins and local residents if you permit the site to be a school which has no shop or facility for community interaction beyond the park provides?

Response

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Mrs Joan Ellis

Question

Mr Andrew Bessford, who has mobility difficulties since his road accident, writes in response to the consultation that the Garden Centre was a “very special meeting place and social centre for the local community”, and Mrs Kate Martin states that the Garden Centre, “played a significant role in my recovery from kidney surgery” so what gives you the knowledge and right to tell them that it was ‘just a shop’ and that their view, that it was more than that, which mirrors 7,000 others, is completely incorrect and irrelevant

Response

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Simon Bessford

Question

How are going to explain to Mr Coleman, who writes in response to the consultation, that “many people who are not used to people with learning difficulties tend to stare” but that the Garden Centre was used by so many groups that regular customers and others take no notice and that he visited the site 3 to 5 times a week with his Barnet Service Carer and that since its closure he has not gone out on his own and his “quality of life is poorer”, that a school where the air quality is potentially dangerous for the pupils gives them a more ‘balanced quality of life than him?

Response

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Professor George Dickson

Question

Ms Hazel Philips who has MS and is 75 drove her batricar to meet local Mill Hill friends and is now “very depressed” at the threat of permanent closure and states that there was “very little traffic”, particularly in the afternoons, when now with the new school the school traffic will be building heavily with children crossing roads and parents driving in and out of the school, while Mrs Stevenson and Mr Mackay note that the 240 bus stopped outside the Chalet Estates (average age over 80 for 75 people) and the Garden Centre but nowhere else leaving them stranded, so how can you explain to them that the traffic plan for the school is so robust that it means that the 90% children who drive and can go to other schools should deprive them permanently of their greatest pleasure in life and should take priority over their transport issues?

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