

Planning application 49/19/0059 - Formation of helipad on land located south of New Road, (B3227), Wiveliscombe (retention of works already undertaken)

Following the additional information provided by the applicant, I write with further comments.

As Ward Councillor, I continue to object to this retrospective application for the physical hardstanding that forms a helipad and allows its use.

The helipad and the shooting lodge, which also lacks planning permission, have brought disturbance to Wiveliscombe through the helicopters using the site and the shooting which can be heard in the town. There is also additional traffic with drivers looking for what some call the hotel, which is the shooting lodge established without approval on the edge of Wiveliscombe.

As has been stated, helicopters fly over the town and low over the Recreation Ground and over properties at Culverhay before landing just after on the helipad or in other nearby fields. There are a small number of other properties close to the helipad and shooting lodge, who may suffer the greatest disturbance from this development.

The original application for a barn conversion did not give a true or accurate reflection of what has been built and the access appraisal, originally submitted, made no mention of helicopters being used for access. These have been using the helipad constructed on site (and now the subject on this retrospective application), which was also not mentioned in the original application. It is understood the applicants work in housing development and so will be familiar with the planning process. If previous information provided was partial and mis-leading, this raises questions whether the current application provides a true indication of plans for use of the site, both now and in the future.

In the additional information provided in a letter (10/1/20) by Rodway Planning for the applicant it is stated the helipad will be used "during daylight hours". This has not been the case. I have seen helicopters landing at the helipad at night, after dark, and I understand there are landing lights and flood lights on site, which are not recorded in the planning application.

The letter also states that “on average there would be just one flight in and out of the site per week”. In recent months, up to three helicopters have been seen using the site at a time. On occasions, I have seen two helicopters, one after another, flying low over Wiveliscombe and landing at the site.

If accurate information about the development of this site had been provided with the original misleading planning application, it would have attracted many objections and I believe would probably have been refused. The development of a luxury self-contained shooting lodge with bedrooms and the associated helipad is too close to the town of Wiveliscombe, including too close to nearby dwellings and the Recreation Ground, which are also on the flight path used to access the site.

I hope this application will be refused. If this is not thought possible, strict controls on any approval recommended are required. The applicant has not provided a full and honest statement about use of the site and the original application was particularly mis-leading. In such a situation and with real concerns about further use and development that could occur, strong and enforceable conditions would be essential.

I would also urge planning officers to consider the use of an Article 4 Direction (www.gov.uk/guidance/when-is-permission-required#article4) to remove permitted development rights for the use of helicopters on this land, due to the loss of amenity, disturbance and nuisance caused to those living nearby and those using the nearby Recreation Ground.

Cllr Dave Mansell

Wiveliscombe and District Ward - Somerset West and Taunton Council

14th February 2020