



Date: Tuesday, 2 June 2020

Time: 2.00 pm

Venue: THIS IS A VIRTUAL MEETING - PLEASE USE THE LINK ON THE AGENDA TO LISTEN TO THE MEETING

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## SOUTHERN PLANNING COMMITTEE

### TO FOLLOW REPORT (S)

#### **7 Date of the Next Meeting (Pages 1 - 6)**

To note that the next meeting of the Southern Planning Committee will be held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 30 June 2020

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# Agenda Item 7

SOUTH PLANNING COMMITTEE		
SCHEDULE OF ADDITIONAL LETTERS		
Date: 2 June 2020		
<b>NOTE: This schedule reports only additional letters received before 4pm on the day before committee. Any items received on the day of Committee will be reported verbally to the meeting</b>		
Item No.	Application No.	Originator:
5	19/05255/FUL	Agent for application
<p>In order to assist with consideration and debate of the above planning application, we hope the following summary information will be of use in making clear the objectives of the proposed service, the nature of the applicant and operator and to address some of the more 'sensational' comments made locally.</p> <p>Firstly to address matters regarding the existing use and the relevance this has to the proposed use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Old Vicarage has been used for many years as a residential and day training and education venue. Visitors often include children, some of whom have special needs. As far as we are aware, this have never has caused any problems to anyone in the village or nearby.</li><li>• Should Compass open the home (which is of course, subject to planning), there will likely be fewer people at the site than there are today with the existing training and education use.</li><li>• The Old Vicarage has had numerous traffic movements on a regular basis while it has operated as a training and education venue. It is likely that traffic movements will actually be rather fewer on a daily basis under the proposed use.</li></ul> <p>Turning now to the home, and the children Compass hope to care for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• At the home, young people will be provided with a safe, caring and nurturing environment, providing them with rules, boundaries, stimulating activities and opportunities to develop skills, interests and social enjoyment that has been lacking in their lives so far.</li><li>• The children will not 'roam around the village'. They will be cared for and supervised. It is the duty of the carers to <i>care</i>, and that includes ensuring their behaviours and activities are appropriate.</li><li>• The children will follow a structured programme including normal school hours, shared family style mealtimes and activities, and will have safe space of their own (perhaps for the first time in their lives) to develop interests. The aim of the operator is to create the type of home that allows the children to develop into rounded individuals able to take part in and contribute to society when they reach adulthood. Can all households in the area claim the same?</li><li>• Compass has an enviable record of creating new homes and also turning around homes they acquire. They often receive 'Outstanding' ratings from Ofsted and such ratings are not achieved where care and behaviours are poor. Indeed, local authorities specifically seek Compass' support to look after young people with potential to succeed based on its achievements.</li></ul>		

- Compass also provides numerous local employment and training opportunities through its homes.
- Compass is and intends always to be a good neighbour and member of any community it joins. It is investing heavily in the proposed service. The home will not prosper or survive if its standards are not high.
- Perhaps the most important point to note is that this is a service for *children*. Children who will likely have had poor experiences in life. Often they will have been bullied or suffered terribly. Their home life may have been so poor that professionals in the local authority see no alternative but to place them in care. They will likely have learning difficulties. Their schooling will have been interrupted, unsupported at home and they will not have done well in mainstream education. They need a chance in life. They will not have enjoyed the advantages other children and their parents can take for granted.

Finally, in terms of the local objections received:

- The objections made so far at local have not been based upon, or even close to planning grounds. Instead they are based on prejudice and unfounded fears. They refer to hearsay and speculation, and tend to demonise young people.
- By comparison, education professionals in the village have offered support for the proposal, and other residents have recognised the benefits of giving children a fresh start and opportunities to flourish and thrive
- We understand that there are no sustainable planning reasons to object to the proposal, and this is reflected in the clear officer recommendation to grant planning permission.

We hope this note has given members useful information regarding the proposed use, and that the application can be approved at committee.

Item No.	Application No.	Originator:
5	19/05255/FUL	Current owner of property

To Whom it May concern,

Having read the recent detailed 'Development Management Report' on the planning portal I wish the following to be included at the meeting on the 2nd June to support the recommendation of this report.

Without repeating the historical use that I have already posted on the portal and evidence used within the report, my support can be easily summarised for the following reasons:

1. As the current occupier I have struggled with the costs to maintain such a large property in recent years. This application ensures that the property is restored to its grandeur without compromise or impact and that it will continue to be a prominent feature and asset of the village.
2. Having been a home to three generations of my family and children that we bought up within the care system, it proved to be an ideal environment and community to do so.
3. Having operated a business from the site for 30 years, it will be great to see the same continued development and education of young people through the continued use of this property.

In summary, I think that it would be difficult to find a more suited use for The Old Vicarage, taking into account its size, location and historical business operations.

Item No.	Application No.	Originator:
5	19/05255/FUL	Agent for local residents

I am acting on behalf of residents of Stottesdon who are very concerned about the above planning application. Both jointly and individually we have made substantive representations to the relevant case officer. I am however not writing to you to revisit the numerous anomalies within the application or the various policies with which the proposal conflicts.

The purpose of my letter is to express our very grave concerns with (a) the preparation of the report; and (b) the new virtual planning committee process.

In relation to the report, whilst clearly we are exceptionally disappointed with the officers' recommendation, the summary of the representations received is wholly inappropriate. 10 letters of support have been summarised over 3 pages taking whole extracts from the letters and reading as proper sentences. However, in stark contrast, the 57 letters of objection have been summarised over just half a page, using single words or a few words – not proper sentences and giving no context. The difference between how the letters of support have been summarised and how the letters of objection have been summarised is stark and gives a very definite bias in favour of those supporting the proposal. This is wholly inappropriate. The report should be withdrawn and rewritten to address this clear bias and misrepresentation.

Turning to my second issue, I have reviewed the process for the new virtual planning committees and again there is bias favouring the applicant and disadvantaging objectors. It is clearly unfair that those wishing to make representations have a considerably shorter deadline within which to prepare their "speech" than that afforded to the applicant. It is also unfair to forward comments to the applicant in advance of the meeting to give them a right to respond.

I appreciate the difficulties in trying to develop a fair and equitable process in these difficult times, but the process adopted by Shropshire Council for its planning committees misses the mark. The consequence of this is that the communities served by the Council not only feel snubbed and disregarded, but moreover, that the Council is giving the upper hand to the applicant.

There is already an inbuilt bias in the planning process in the fact that applicants have a right of appeal if they do not agree with the decision, a right that is not afforded to third parties. The newly structured virtual planning committee further tips that advantage. The combination of a bias report coupled with a bias process is causing feelings to run very high within this small rural community. They feel wholly let down by the planning process and the apparent unfairness of it all. Of course they are disappointed with the recommendation, but the concern runs far deeper than that.

I strongly suggest the report is withdrawn and the representations received summarised with a more even hand. I would also encourage you to urgently review the new virtual planning committee process – it is biased and unfair and as such could result in serious ramifications for the Council.

Item No.	Application No.	Originator:
5	19/05255/FUL	Local resident
<p>I wish to draw to the Committee's attention the failure of the Development Management Report to address points I made (Objection 22/12/19) about risks to Shropshire heritage listed buildings located next to Old Vicarage, if this proposal is approved. Grade 1 St Mary's Church would likely lose a Heritage Lottery Fund grant (£300,000) for essential roof repairs, as a requirement for obtaining the grant is to demonstrate regular use; the risk of vandalism from co-located adolescents with behavioural problems means it could not remain open unmanned daily. Grade 2 Hall Farm (600+ years old) would also be vulnerable to vandalism/arson. Surely the safeguarding of these assets is more important than a non-listed Victorian building.</p> <p>The report also fails to address safety issues raised by Philip Povall (see Objection 24/12/19) arising from the location of the proposed care home next to a working farm. There is a very real risk of harm to both the public and residents of the home themselves, should residents venture onto the farm (the night-time staff/child supervision ratio is insufficient to prevent this). The site map is misleading because both Malt House Farm and Hall Farm (listed building) are missing even though they are in Stottesdon Conservation Area and located much nearer to Old Vicarage than many buildings shown. I believe job opportunities for local people will be lost if this proposal is approved. There is a real need for jobs in Stottesdon for school leavers who do not have transport (there is no public transport serving the village). The jobs offered by Compass Care are not suitable for school leavers (they would likely be younger than some residents), whereas alternative uses for the Old Vicarage for example an outdoor activity centre, nursing home or country hotel would all provide suitable jobs in catering, cleaning, administration and gardening.</p> <p>Anthony Eddies-Davies' comment (Supports 16/03/20) confirms as owner of The Old Vicarage he has "entered into a preliminary sales agreement with Compass Care (Subject to Planning)". Please consider a point raised by Tim Povall (Objection 24/12/19): "I do hope that the County Councillors recognise that this application, by the third party operators, may be a ransom for the sale of that property and as such they are potentially colluding by approving this application".</p> <p>Disappointingly the report is very biased in favour of the proposal. Section 4.2 Public Comments dedicates 136 lines to 10 letters of support including 29 lines copied directly from a comment submitted by Anthony Eddies-Davies the vendor (25/12/19) without any reference to a conflict of interest. In contrast 57 letters of objection merit only 31 lines, with many points being omitted. The report states that there is no evidence that the proposed care home "would lead to any increase in crime and disorder within Stottesdon". However comments submitted by Joanne Harris (24/12/19) and Jo Beattie (24/12/19) provide detailed evidence from their professional experience of working with adolescents with emotional and behavioural difficulties, including comparable establishments to that proposed. Requests for further information from Compass Community Ltd by Chris Madeley (Objection 10/03/20) and others have met with no response. There is a lot of fear in the community about this application because of the high proportion of vulnerable residents whether elderly, disabled or young children. Many Stottesdon residents will not welcome this Care Home.</p>		
Item No.	Application No.	Originator:
5	19/05255/FUL	Planning Officer
<p>The planning officer's response to the above documents and comments will be made verbally at the meeting</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Page 4</b></p>		


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