

Council statement: Consideration of Shorrocks Hill, Formby (AS29) as an allocation

Following the discussion on this Omission Site, the Council was asked to consider whether the benefits that could be secured on this site would outweigh the adverse ecological impacts of developing the site.

Background

The site was subject to a pre-application inquiry earlier this year for redevelopment of the former nightclub under the provisions of paragraph 89 of the National Planning Policy Framework to provide 4 – 5 dwellings. The Council concluded that the proposal was unacceptable as presented but may be capable of complying with the requirements subject to detailed points being addressed. These include (1) the need for a tree survey to minimise the amount of tree cover on the site and to ensure an aerial passage is maintained from the adjacent red squirrel refuge to the nearby residential areas which provide supplementary feeding areas, and (2) the need for an Ecological Appraisal following the undertaking of a number of surveys.

The Council considers that these studies would also be needed to ascertain whether a denser form of development would be acceptable on this site.

Potential benefits from developing an allocated site

It was mooted by the site promoter that the site could be developed for 30 dwellings which would secure the provision of 30% affordable housing.

It was also suggested that the site may be capable of providing a car park for visitors to the coast. Whilst this may be desirable, the Council could not determine that this is the preferred site for a car park of an unknown size without further consultation not only within the Council but also with the National Trust and other organisations. This is not possible before the hearings resume in January.

Conclusion

Taking the requirement for additional surveys to inform any decision about the scale of development that would be appropriate on this site and the need to assess any benefits that may accrue the Council does not consider that it would be appropriate to allocate this site at this time. This would not, however, prevent an application being submitted under paragraph 89 or where the case for very special circumstances for a larger development being satisfactorily argued.