



**NORTHAMPTON**  
**BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
Planning Committee

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| <b>PLANNING COMMITTEE:</b> | 16 <sup>th</sup> February 2016  |
| <b>DIRECTORATE:</b>        | Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning   |
| <b>DIRECTOR:</b>           | Steven Boyes  |
| <b>APPLICATION REF:</b>    | N/2015/1480   |
| <b>LOCATION:</b>           | Rushden Lakes, land adjacent to Skew Bridge Ski Slope<br>Northampton Road, Rushden  |
| <b>DESCRIPTION:</b>        | Erection of a leisure building to include a cinema,<br>restaurant and retail units and other leisure uses and<br>erection of a cycle hire facility together with proposals<br>for access, parking and servicing space, hard and soft<br>landscaping and other associated works. |
| <b>APPLICANT:</b>          | LXB RP (Rushden) Limited  |
| <b>AGENT:</b>              | Quod  |
| <b>REFERRED BY:</b>        | Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning   |
| <b>REASON:</b>             | Major Fringe Area Application   |
| <b>DEPARTURE:</b>          | No  |

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**APPLICATION FOR CONSULTATION BY EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL:**

**1. RECOMMENDATION**

- 1.1 That Northampton Borough Council raise **NO OBJECTION** to the application as proposed.
- 1.2 Whilst Northampton Borough Council objected to the original application for the development proposals for Rushden Lakes and remain concerned regarding the potential impacts of the development on the viability and vitality of Northampton, it is acknowledged that the principle of development has been established through the grant of planning permission by the Secretary of State in 2014 and the subsequent approval of amendments to the original scheme in 2015.
- 1.3 It is not considered that the overall reduction in retail floorspace and subsequent increase in leisure and restaurant and café floorspace would be likely to represent any significant increased impacts on the vitality and viability of Northampton to the scheme already approved.

**2. THE PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 This is a consultation from East Northamptonshire Council regarding a full application for the erection of a leisure building to include a cinema, restaurant and retail units and other leisure uses located in a single block on the western part of the site replacing the previously consented garden centre approved in June 2014. In

addition, cycle hire facilities are proposed to be located in a new building on the eastern part of the site to the north of the previously consented hotel and leisure club. The 'Leisure Block' will have an additional servicing area to the rear and a further ancillary parking area is proposed to the south-west.

- 2.2 The leisure building would be rectilinear in form narrowing and adopting a curved and more sculptured layout on the northern part. The building would be 6.3m high on its northern end rising to a height of 27.8m on its southern end. Materials would include a palette of planar glazing, silver metallic cladding, stone effect cladding, a burnt orange façade and to the rear, graduating green cladding.
- 2.3 The supporting documentation includes an Environmental Statement, Design and Access Statement, Landscape Design Statement, Transport Assessment and Travel Plan and a Retail and Leisure Assessment.

### **3. SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 3.1 The application site to which this application relates is 7.5 hectares in area. The Rushden Lakes site overall extends to roughly 30 hectares and is bound by the River Nene on its northern boundary and the A45 to the south. Beyond the A45, immediately to the south, is an area of mixed commercial, industrial and retail development. The town centre of Rushden is just over a kilometre away to the south, with Higham Ferrers and Irthlingborough situated a kilometre to the east and north respectively.
- 3.2 The site comprises of two main elements, the Skew Bridge Ski Lake and Delta Lake and an area of brownfield land to the south of the lakes.

### **4. PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 The original application was the subject of an appeal by public inquiry in 2013. The application was subsequently approved by the Secretary of State in June 2014 granting full planning permission for the erection of a home and garden centre, retail units, drive thru restaurant, gatehouse, lakeside visitor centre, restaurants, boathouse, together with proposals for access and outline planning permission for the erection of a hotel, crèche and leisure club; plus removal of the ski slope and associated levelling, landscaping, habitat management and improvement works, vehicular access and servicing proposals together with the provision of car and cycle parking and a bus stop.
- 4.2 A subsequent application (14/1938/FUL) to amend the original scheme approved in May 2015 approved a reconfiguration of the outdoor area of the garden centre to create an additional 2,597 sq. m of open A1 retail floorspace and increases/decrease in the floorspace of other retail units resulting in an overall decrease in retail floorspace and an increase in restaurant floorspace from 928 sq. m to 2,164 sq. m.
- 4.3 A further application (15/1127/VAR) approved in November 2015 sought to vary conditions in relation to the number and size of retail units resulting in an overall increase in retail floorspace of 1,797 sq. m from that approved under the 2014 amendment resulting in an overall increase of 3.6% of gross retail floorspace, the addition of a pontoon, increase in size of garage/store and parking and cycle spaces, changes to site levels and variations in relation to the floor space allowed by occupation of units for the sale of clothing and footwear and the range of goods sold at the garden centre.

## **5. PLANNING POLICY**

### **5.1 Statutory Duty**

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a planning application to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The relevant Development Plan for the determination of this application is the Development Plan for East Northamptonshire.

### **5.2 National Policies**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the current aims and objectives for the planning system and how these should be applied. In delivering sustainable development, decisions should have regard to the mutually dependent social, economic and environmental roles of the planning system. The NPPF should be read as one complete document. However, the following sections are of particular relevance to this application:

Paragraph 23 – seeks to ensure the viability and vitality of town centres promoting competitive town centre environments and the allocation of appropriate edge of centre sites for main town centres uses that are well connected to the town centre where suitable and viable town centre sites are not available. If sufficient edge of centre sites cannot be identified, policies should be set for meeting identified needs in other accessible locations well connected to the town centre.

Paragraph 24 – requires a sequential test for applications for town centre uses not in an existing centre and not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan.

Paragraph 26 – requires an impact assessment if the development is over a proportionate, locally set floorspace threshold or if no threshold, 2,500 sq. m.

## **6. APPRAISAL**

6.1 The principle of development has previously been established through the grant of planning permission by the Secretary of State in 2014 and subsequent amendments to the original scheme approved in 2015.

6.2 The main issue for consideration therefore is as to whether these further amendments proposed under the latest application would lead to any significant impact on the viability and vitality of Northampton town centre when compared to the impacts arising from the existing permitted schemes.

6.3 The current application would replace the previously approved garden centre and outdoor planting area which comprised of a gross combined floorspace of 8,350 sq. m with the proposed leisure building which would include the following:

- 14,200.6 sq. m gross internal floorspace of Class D2 (assembly & leisure) uses including a cinema, bowling alley and leisure and climbing facilities;
- 3,241.30 sq. m of Class A3 (restaurant & café) uses comprising of 8 units;
- 1,872 sq. m of Class A1(shops) use including the cycle hire building on the eastern side of the site;
- 2,198.80 sq. m landlord area.

- 6.4 The submitted details indicate that there would be an overall 15% reduction in the extent of Class A1 uses to that previously approved for the overall site although evidently the extent of leisure and Class A3 uses proposed would increase from that previously approved.
- 6.5 The proposal will inevitably make the Rushden Lakes scheme more of a 'town centre' offer retail and leisure destination. However, the decrease in retail use and subsequent increase in leisure and Class A3 uses proposed from that previously approved by the Secretary of State and in subsequent amendments is unlikely to represent any significant increased impacts on more local town centres particularly given that the Secretary of State and the Inspector's decision placed so much weight on the positive benefits of Rushden Lakes.
- 6.6 The erection of a cycle hire facility is in line with policy aims for modal shift to encourage alternative means of transport other than the car and would not have any wider adverse impacts affecting the Northampton Borough.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 In view of the existing permitted schemes it is not considered that the development proposed under the current scheme would lead to any significant impact on the viability and vitality of Northampton to that already approved.

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

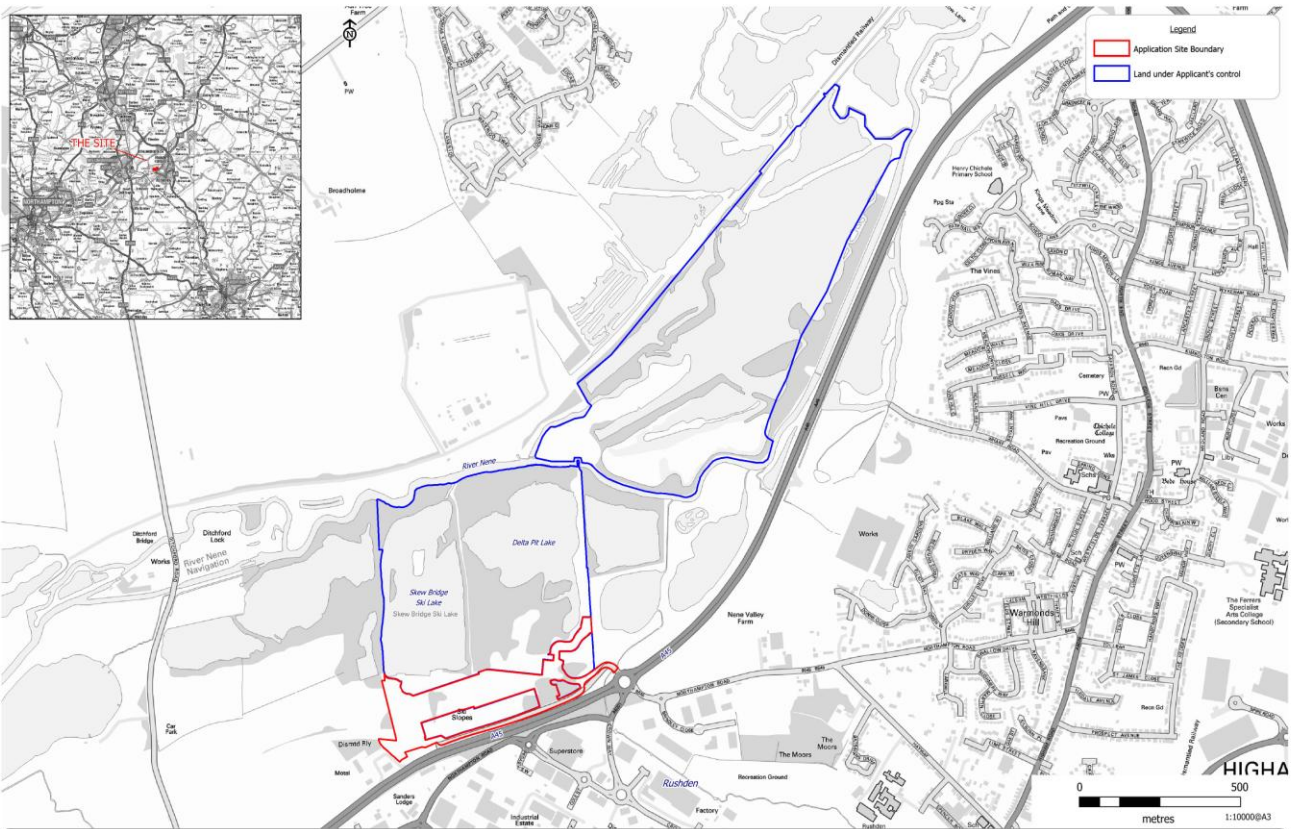
- 8.1 N/2015/1480 (East Northants Ref: 15/02249/FUL)

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 None.

## **10. SUMMARY AND LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN**

- 10.1 In reaching the attached recommendations regard has been given to securing the objectives, visions and priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan together with those of associated Frameworks and Strategies.



Rushden Lakes Leisure Application  
Client: LXB RP (Rushden) Limited

Site Location Plan

Scale: 1:10000@A3, Issue 1: 15/09/2015  
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Job Number: 13015  
Drawn by - Checked by: BC - MC  
By: Ian Spinks/Bevan - 20/04/15 A.  
Date: December 2015

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