
REPORT TO:	ENVIRONMENTAL AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 6
DATE OF MEETING:	6 JANUARY 2009	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES	OPEN PARAGRAPH NO:
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	KEVIN EXLEY (Ext 8717)	DOC:
SUBJECT:	DONINGTON PARK RACE CIRCUIT PROPOSALS	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ASTON, MELBOURNE	TERMS OF REFERENCE: EDS

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 For the reasons set out in Section 4 of this report that no objection to the application be made subject to the following:
- That any future Event Management Plan, for Formula 1, or other major events continue to be bought forward in consultation with Derbyshire County Council as Highways Authority for the District in order that traffic impacts associated with large events can be scrutinised by the highways authority for the District and suitable mitigation measures which reduce local impact can be secured.
 - That should permission for the scheme be granted that NWLDC tie the permission to the Environmental Statement in order that the proposal does not give rise to impacts different from those set out in the ES and to ensure that all mitigation measures outlined in respect of landscape, noise and air quality proposed in the ES are secured.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To seek a Committee resolution on proposals for development at Donington Park Race Circuit.

3.0 Executive Summary

- 3.1 The report considers how the development proposal is likely to affect South Derbyshire in terms of potential noise, traffic, landscape, air quality and economic impacts, and proposes a Council response.

4.0 Detail

- 4.1 In July 2008 Donington Ventures (Leisure) Ltd (the applicants) signed a ten-year contract to host the British Grand Prix from 2010. Given the prestigious nature of this event the applicants have sought to secure improvements to both the race circuit and its facilities.
- 4.2 To this end the applicants submitted two applications on the 9th and 10th of September 2008 to North West Leicestershire District Council (NWLDC). Together these applications seek permission for qualitative improvements to the circuit and buildings, the main elements of which comprise new pits, paddock, media centre,

broadcast centre, race control, medical centre, 3 hospitality suites, club house, toilets, temporary grandstands, and the realignment, widening and extension of the existing track.

- 4.3 Following submission of the planning application, it was determined by NWLDC within a 'Screening Opinion' dated 24th September 2008 that due to the scale of physical development to take place on the site that the scheme could give rise to significant environmental effects. As a result the applicants were asked to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in order that the likely impacts that would stem from the development could be properly assessed ahead of any decision on the planning application being made.
- 4.4 Following the issuance of this 'Screening Opinion' the applicants requested that NWLDC provide details on the types of issues which should be considered within this assessment. This further opinion (known as a 'Scoping Opinion') was issued by NWLDC on the 28th November 2008. A report setting out the findings of the Environmental Impact Assessment (known as an Environmental Statement) was submitted by the applicants on the 4th December 2008.
- 4.5 Following the submission of the Environmental Statement NWLDC are now able to determine the planning application, which is currently programmed to go before NWLDC's Development Control Committee on the 8th January 2008.
- 4.6 North West Leicestershire District Council has consulted this Council on the proposals and the potential implications for South Derbyshire are considered below.
- 4.7 Ahead of this consideration of impacts, however, it should be noted that NWLDC are satisfied that even without the qualitative improvements to the existing track and facilities, F1 could still take place at the site. In essence this means that the hosting of this event is already permitted from the site. Indeed the European F1 Grand Prix was held at Donington during the 1993 race season under the terms of existing planning permissions.
- 4.8 The key impacts of new physical development on site which may have an impact on South Derbyshire and its residents are considered in turn.

Noise

- 4.9 The applicant has provided an assessment of the potential noise impacts in support of the planning application. This assessment includes consideration of construction activities and associated construction traffic, traffic associated with spectators arriving and leaving and operational noise from Formula 1 motor racing. In regard to the latter, the applicant states that the site already has planning permission for such activities and that events can be held on 40 days per year and that since no growth in this number is proposed there will be no need for mitigation measures.
- 4.10 A noise impact assessment is nevertheless included for information purposes. This assessment highlights that the remodelled track will lead to changes in noise levels in communities immediately surrounding the race circuit. Settlements in South Derbyshire which the Environmental Statement notes will be affected include Melbourne, which according to the ES could be affected by a 0.2 dB(A) (decibel) increase in noise due to the realignment of the track and Kings Newton which would see a 0.2 decibel decrease in noise. PPG 24 (Noise) indicates that changes in noise levels of less 3 dB(A) is the minimum perceptible under normal conditions. No specific information on the northern part of Weston-on-Trent or Aston-on-Trent is included in the noise assessment.

officers requested this information during the Scoping Consultation. Notwithstanding this omission the applicant's noise assessment concludes that track alterations for the areas modelled will be generally beneficial to existing settlements around the race circuit.

- 4.11 It should be noted however, that whilst an inspection of the noise modelling maps produced by the applicants indicate that track revisions will generally be positive or give rise to only very minor changes in noise which in most cases will not be perceptible, modelling would appear to highlight that there are a small number of localised pockets or areas which could experience notable changes in noise levels (both positive and negative). However, at the time of writing the exact nature of noise impacts as a result of these proposals remains uncertain due to omissions in the modelling identified by environmental health teams at both North West Leicestershire and South Derbyshire District Councils. South Derbyshire's Environmental Health team therefore continue to have concerns regarding the noise assessment included in the Environmental Statement. It is understood that further noise modelling work may be forthcoming in which case it will be presented verbally to Committee as an update to this report.
- 4.12 The control of noise at the race circuit is currently dealt with via a Nuisance Abatement Notice served by North West Leicestershire District Council in 1995 and an associated document on noise control procedures. In serving the notice that authority had to consider what was reasonable when taking account of both the rights of nearby residents and the fact that the track is a commercial enterprise which can only be forced to do what is "reasonably practicable" to reduce the noise. South Derbyshire District Council has recently received a number of noise complaints about the track from residents of Aston-on-Trent, Weston-on-Trent, Melbourne and Kings Newton and in addressing these must consider, firstly, whether the current Nuisance Abatement Notice is being complied with and, secondly, whether the requirements of the Notice are still stringent enough to constitute all that the track proprietors can reasonably be expected to do by way of mitigation. However, these matters fall outside the scope of planning and will therefore be pursued separately.
- 4.13 Aside from noise impacts associated with the running of race events and other noisy uses of the site, the Environmental Statement submitted alongside the planning application indicates that noise during the 69 week construction phase for the development will not be significant to communities in South Derbyshire by virtue of the intermittent nature of construction activities, existing background noise levels locally and the distance of race circuit from settlements within the District.
- 4.14 Construction traffic noise is not likely to impact on communities in South Derbyshire as this will be routed via the A453 and via the main entrance both of which are located in North West Leicestershire. As such construction traffic would avoid routes through Melbourne/Swarkestone, which in any case are subject to weight restrictions.

Officer Comments

- 4.15 Whilst the noise maps indicate that track revisions will generally be positive or give rise to imperceptible changes in noise, there are gaps in modelling the noise impact on the northern part of Weston-on-Trent and Aston-on-Trent. In addition, there would appear to be a small number of localised pockets or areas which could experience notable changes in noise levels (both positive and negative). At the time of writing the exact nature of noise impacts remains uncertain and South Derbyshire's

Environmental Health team continue to have concerns. It is understood, however, that further noise modelling work may be forthcoming in which case it will be reported verbally to Committee as an update to this report.

- 4.16 No significant noise issues are expected to result from the construction phase of the proposals.

Traffic

- 4.17 The Environmental Statement (ES) submitted alongside the planning application provides a detailed assessment of construction related traffic impacts and a description of the nearby Strategic and Local Highways Network together with a summary of future improvement works to existing roads and other transport projects locally. The ES also considers day-to-day traffic impacts associated with the administration and maintenance of the facilities.
- 4.18 In respect of traffic impacts related to large-scale events the applicant highlight that Donington Park has the required permits to run Formula One Grand Prix races. However, the ES notes that when events are held that will attract crowds greater than 80,000 people it is necessary under the licence to hold these events to prepare and agree an Event Management Plan (EMP). The applicants highlight that Formula 1 would trigger the need to prepare such an Event Management Plan.
- 4.19 No information on traffic impacts associated the operation of the site for F1 are included alongside the application because the applicants have satisfied NWLDC that F1 could take place on the site without any improvements to the track and facilities at Donington Park. Derbyshire County Council has also accepted this position in a letter to North West Leicestershire dated the 16th December 2008.
- 4.20 Given this fact the baseline, or existing position is that such racing events of a scale similar to F1 can and do take place on the existing track and the physical development/alterations on the site will not introduce impacts on the local highways network dissimilar to other events or uses already permitted.

Officer Comments

- 4.21 In submitting their planning application and supporting ES the applicants have highlighted that in terms of absolute numbers of vehicles generated proposals would, at their peak (during the period October 2009 to January 2010 when work will be undertaken on the track, clubhouse, media centre and two of the hospitality suites simultaneously) generate 75 vehicles a day or roughly ten movements every hour given a working day of 8am to 6pm.
- 4.22 In addition, there would be a number of light vehicle movements mainly associated with the transport of personnel to/from site. Based upon the level of construction and activity, it estimated that between 45 and 65 personnel would be on site throughout the entire construction period. Therefore, it is considered that there would be on average 100 light vehicle movements per day, peaking at, 130 light vehicle movements during any one day.
- 4.23 The applicants submission highlights that vehicle movements associated with construction would be routed via the A453 and Junction 23A or 24, and from there to the M1 motorway and the trunk road network. Construction traffic would be restricted by the contract to avoid routes through Castle Donington and Melbourne/Swarkestone. These routes are controlled in any case by weight restrictions. Given this fact notable impacts from proposals are not expected to have a significant impact on communities in South Derbyshire.

- 4.24 Out side of 'events' day-to-day activity covers the administration and maintenance of the facilities, the motor racing museum, occasional use of the exhibition hall, the off-site airport car park, and 'track days'. The latter is the use of the track by clubs to experience driving round a racetrack or for drivers who have racing licenses to train. However, the applicants point out that many of the new buildings proposed replace existing facilities on site, with the exception of the pits and paddock which will be constructed in addition to the existing facilities. However the ES notes that the new pit and paddocks will only be used for major events with the existing pits and paddock being retained for track days. Given the above, coupled with the fact that the main entrances to the site are located in North West Leicestershire significant impacts from day to day activities are not likely to be significant post construction.
- 4.25 In terms of the operational impacts associated with the qualitative improvement to the site, the applicants note that the development of new facilities could lead to an increase in visitor numbers to the site of around 3% (2,400 people) during major events. The applicants do not feel that this increased capacity will lead to notable impacts on traffic generation alone. As such it is proposed that, as with all major events the applicants will undertake an Event Management Plan (EMP) to help control traffic impacts associated with hosting Formula 1.
- 4.26 Any EMP will be prepared in association with representatives from the four highway authorities that are affected by the procedures, that is the Highways Agency, and Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire County Councils. Other consultees include Leicestershire Police, North West Leicestershire District Council, and East Midland Airport.
- 4.27 A typical traffic plan will cover a number of issues including Pre-Event Traffic; Entry Routes; Exit Routes; Areas of Concern on the nearby highways network; Emergency Services, signing and communications and internal management.
- 4.28 The hosting of a Formula One Grand Prix will require the acceptance by the relevant authorities of a specific EMP that will put forward the measures needed to minimise disruption to other road and transport users. The procedures for the preparation and agreement of such a plan are already in place and have been used for events such as the MotoGP. The preparation of the Event Management Plan is outside the normal planning process.

Landscape

- 4.29 The applicants have submitted a detailed landscape character assessment of their proposals. This assessment includes an assessment of the impacts of the scheme from 12 different locations within South Derbyshire and one photomontage from a site located on Wilson Road between Wilson and Melbourne depicting how the site looks now and how it could look post development after 1 year and after 15 years.

Officer Comments

- 4.30 On the basis of the ES landscape impacts on Aston on Trent, Weston on Trent and Shardlow are likely to be insignificant because of intervening landform and existing vegetation cover between the settlements and the race circuit. The site will be visible from further a field in South Derbyshire, for example from the A514 between Ticknall and Melbourne of the B587 North of Melbourne, but will be viewed in the context of wider development in the Trent Valley including East Midlands Airport, Ratcliffe-on-Soar Power Station and other major infrastructure. Views from closer to the site are likely to be more notable with the potential for glimpsed views from a number of sites around Melbourne. However on the basis of the submitted

landscape assessment impacts will not be significant and can be largely mitigated over time through new planting.

Air Quality

- 4.31 The applicant has submitted an assessment of potential air quality impacts, in particular those associated with emissions from construction site plant and construction road traffic, the potential for dust generation during site works, along with any additional road traffic attributed to the operational phase of the proposal. NWLDC has designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) along the A6 through Kegworth and along the M1 between Loughborough and Long Eaton. In 2007 a “Detailed Assessment of Air Quality in North West Leicestershire” recommended that an additional AQMA be designated along Castle Donington High Street. The Donington Park Race Circuit itself is predicted to comply with National Air Quality Strategy objectives. In regard to each of the aspects considered the impacts are expected to be negligible and of no impact on South Derbyshire.

Officer Comments

- 4.32 The Environmental Protection Service raises no objection to the proposal on air quality grounds.

Economy

- 4.33 Whilst a large scale relocation of motor racing teams to the area may not be anticipated, it is hoped that over time motorsport related companies including the myriad of supply chain companies could be attracted.
- 4.34 The Donington Grand Prix has the potential to attract both visitor spend and inward investment to South Derbyshire, benefiting local communities through recreation and tourism related business development and employment creation.
- 4.35 The development of the new facilities at the track, along with other associated developments, will create substantial construction employment opportunities.

Officer Comments

- 4.36 'Transport Equipment' (which includes motorsport) is one of the East Midlands Development Agency's four priority sectors. They are identified as likely to make the greatest contribution to the East Midlands economy over the lifetime of the Regional Economic Strategy. This would bring new investment and highly skilled employment opportunities to the area.
- 4.37 The Regional Economic Strategy for the East Midlands identifies the need to “build on our cultural, sporting and tourism strengths” as a key challenge, indicating that the visitor economy is set to make growing contributions to the region's prosperity and productivity. It also says that sporting and tourism assets attract and retain skilled and talented investors, graduates and young people.
- 4.38 Tourism related business opportunities may include further new hotel development, with conferencing and exhibition facilities. As well as serving Airport and business-related visitors, these could contribute to the development of the National Forest & Beyond as a destination and raise its media profile both nationally and internationally, promoting increased numbers of overnight and international visitors throughout the year. On Grand Prix and other key weekends there will be an opportunity to promote longer stays through linked events and packages.
- 4.39 Some of the construction employment opportunities associated with the development could be targeted at local trainees **Page 6 of 7** the industry and seeking experience.

Similarly, Donington and the Grand Prix could also be used to attract young people into training and careers in the growing hospitality sector.

4.40 In summary therefore the development offers substantial economic opportunities for South Derbyshire in the fields of transport equipment, recreation and tourism and construction.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 None

6.0 Corporate Implications

6.1 The proposed development has potential implications for the following Key Aims of the Council's Corporate Plan:

- "Safer, Healthier Communities" insofar as noise disturbance and air pollution can present health implications
- "Rural South Derbyshire" in that the area of South Derbyshire most directly affected by the potential environmental impacts of the proposal is rural in nature
- "Prosperity For All" in that the proposal presents economic implications for South Derbyshire

7.0 Community Implications

7.1 The proposal has potential implications for the following themes of the South Derbyshire Community Strategy:

- "Healthy Communities" insofar as noise disturbance and air pollution can present health implications
- "A Vibrant Economy" in that the proposal presents economic implications for South Derbyshire
- "A Sustainable Environment" in that the proposal presents potential environmental implications

8.0 Conclusions

8.1 As set out in section 4.

9.0 Background Papers

Neighbouring authority planning application consultation NA9/2008/0028

"Regional Economic Strategy for the East Midlands"

East Midlands Development Agency 2006