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By Lisa Walton at 10:44 am, Feb 07, 2022

Dear Lisa

Thanks for explaining your reasoning to me and the need for clarification to assist the decision making process. You previously stated that the LPA was minded to permit the application but it was linked to the business of COSMOS, which is not my business. May I just clarify that in my application I was clear that the hut would be built within the Fuchsia Cottage Land holding. The COSMOS project was a community activity and is not a personal business. The first two statements in the Design and Access statement said:

- 1) The proposal is for the construction of 1 Shepherd's Hut Holiday unit within the landholding of Fuchsia Cottage, Lower Town, St Martin's, Isles of Scilly. The unit would provide holiday accommodation for 2 adults.
- 2) The application is designed to increase the availability of good quality accommodation on St Martins that will encourage visitors for a longer season during periods when the weather is less predictable, particularly for those interested in Autumn ornithology and the Cosmos Dark Skies Project.

You have asked me to make these points related to WC5. I had hoped this was the case and have copied below the references to WC5 from my application and related to the opening statements above. I think I have met the LPA requirements, I was merely pointing out that I don't own the COSMOS project and it would be false for me to claim I do. I intend to encourage, through advertising, the use of the hut to extend the period for visitors and believe the attraction of the Dark Sky experiences that COSMOS can provide would be attractive to potential visitors at that time of year.

I hope that the clarification of businesses does not reduce the value of my application. However, I did understand that you felt diversification was a significant issue also. It may be important to point out therefore that the Hut is not being built within the Fuchsia Cottage site, nor on its land lease. This will not have been made clear from my use of the phrase Fuchsia Cottage Land Holding. The Shepherd's hut project is an attempt improve the viability of my agricultural tenancy and will be built on my farm holding held under a separate lease (MRT 145 Land at Middletown&Lowertown). It therefore represents a diversification of activity for land use. I have, obviously, discussed this with the Duchy Land Steward and apologise if this lack of clarity has held up the planning application process.

This attempt to increase tourism to St Martins and extend the season, whilst also advertising two specific attractions to the island, Ornithology, and Dark Skies COSMOS are two drivers for the project. I also hope that the small addition to alternative holiday experiences will develop my own income opportunities as, along with many islanders, we seek to improve our earning potential to offset the ever-increasing cost of living on the islands.

Below are the statements against WC5 as requested and I trust that these, alongside the explanation above, will help towards a positive outcome. Please communicate with me if there is any further detail I can provide to assist you in the process.

Policy, Aims and Objectives	Planning Application: Statement of Alignment
<p>POLICY WC5 Visitor Economy and Tourism Developments</p> <p><i>(1) Proposals for new or upgraded tourism development will be permitted where they:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a) make a positive contribution to creating a sustainable, diverse and modern tourism economy; and • b) are located in sustainable and accessible locations; and • c) are appropriate to the site and its surroundings in terms of activity, scale and design; and • d) do not result in an unacceptable impact on the environment or residential amenities, in accordance with other relevant policies in the Local Plan; <p><i>(2) Proposals for tourism developments will be particularly encouraged subject to a) – e) above, and where it is demonstrated that they would:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a) extend the tourism season and increase productivity and wages in tourism; • b) support the promotion and interpretation of the islands' heritage; 	<p>This proposal aligns with the aims and objectives of WC5 by:</p> <p>(1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a) The proposal is for a new visitor experience, one that embraces the growing demand for experiences that are more closely aligned to nature, including a resurgence of interest and demand for camping. The facilities proposed will have minimum impact on the environment in which the hut is sited. • b) The proposed site location is both accessible and sustainable. • c) The hut is appropriate and sympathetic to the proposed location. <p>(2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a) The proposal for a shepherd's hut will provide for secure and comfortable accommodation that extends into the periods of less clement weather when there are many potential visitors who enjoy outdoor experiences such as campers, but for whom exposed sites are too uncomfortable. • b) By combining and advertising holidays aligned with access to the Cosmos project and a bespoke astronomic experience, it is hoped additional tourist will be attracted to the islands to experience the special 'Dark Skies' status and the opportunity to use the observatory adjacent to the St Martins Hall.

Regards

Terry Davis