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18th April 2011

Plans for children's activity centre in Littleton-upon-Severn are refused due to flooding concerns

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COUNCILLORS have refused planning permission for a business park in Littleton-upon-Severn to be turned into a children's activity centre.

Members of South Gloucestershire Council's development control committee spent almost two hours deliberating the application to convert the Whale Wharf Business Park into an activity centre.

Despite the committee seeking legal advice about whether it was appropriate to enforce a flood evacuation plan through a planning condition, councillors claimed the site was too dangerous to house 300 children because of flooding concerns.

Charlie Tull, the developer behind the plans, wants to convert the existing buildings into accommodation for children, plus staff and teachers, for adventure holidays.

Cllr Sandra O'Neil, a member of the committee, said: "This isn't a planning decision, this is a moral decision."

Simon Penketh, planning officer, told the committee that they had been advised to approve the development, and that a flood evacuation plan could be left to a planning condition, and assured members the plan would have to be approved by the council's own emergency planning department.

He said: "The plan has to be agreed. Until it's been agreed the site would not be occupied."

He added: "We should not be guaranteeing safety but we should be ensuring that ability to evacuate the site is in place."

However, councillors voted to refuse the application by a majority of eight votes to five.

Cllr Pat Hockey said: "I don't care what counsel says. We are not satisfied. Until we are satisfied we are not inclined to grant consent."

The committee decided there were inadequate measures to protect the children on site, a lack of highways improvements, and they were not prepared to make an evacuation plan a condition.

Mr Tull said he was disappointed by the decision and would be taking it to appeal.

He said: "Obviously I was very disappointed to say the least. It was surprising to see

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