

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE HELD ON 15TH JANUARY, 2019

Present: Councillor D McKenna (Chair) R Arthur, E Bell, S P Colborn, Mrs S Forster, G N Hepworth, Mrs S Pratt, K Shaw, B Taylor, Miss L Willis.

Apologies: Councillors Mrs B E Allen, Mrs J A Bell, Mrs K Brace, S Cudlip, D Cummings, Mrs V Cummings, Ms R M Gratton, Mrs L Kennedy, T Shepherd.

Officers: Mrs D Rickaby (Town Clerk), Mrs J Knight (Finance Officer) Ms A Rountree (Minute Taker).

Prior to commencement of the meeting the Chair advised members of this Committee and members of the public that in line with the amendment to 'the public bodies (admission to meetings) act 1960', which came into force in August, 2014, parts of this meeting may be recorded by photographic, video and audio means.

1. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Members were reminded prior to the start of the meeting of the need to disclose any interests, prejudicial or personal, in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27TH NOVEMBER, 2018

RECOMMENDED the Minutes of these meetings, copies of which had been previously printed and circulated to each Member, be approved and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

3. PLANNING ISSUES

a) Monthly List

RECOMMENDED the list of planning applications referred to all Councillors since the last meeting, namely 5571 to 5575 as circulated be noted.

4. TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS ISSUES

a) Neighbourhood Services – Highways

RECOMMENDED that Members note the information.

5. NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES TO NEW SEAHAM MEDICAL GROUP

Two Members stated that they had attended one of the consultation meetings on the changes to Seaham Medical Group and it is mainly the surgery that is changing and not the Walk-In Centre. A Member felt that the NHS had given a good report

and he could see positives and negatives on both sides and his only fear was that the Primary Care Centre would have less facilities.

There was some concern shown about patients being able to access Dr Dusads surgery at Eastlea. Another Member stated that there is a problem recruiting Dr's in the North East as a whole.

It was noted that the surgery at Eastlea will be a training practice and they feel that this will attract new Dr's to the area.

RECOMMENDED that Members note the information.

6. PROPOSED REMOVAL OF STREET LIGHTING

a) Removal of Street Light – Roselea, Stockton Road, Seaham

RECOMMENDED that Members note the information.

7. LAND QUALITY INSPECTIONS PROGRAMME – DAWDON COLLIERY INC. BLAST BEACH

RECOMMENDED that Members note the information provided from Durham County Council.

8. DERELICT BUILDINGS IN SEAHAM

Councillor Colborn stated that he had asked the Town Clerk to look into the current position of the building work within Seaham due to the third lane not going ahead at Seaton junction and also requested an update on the derelict buildings in the Harbour and also Bar Avenue at Deneside. The Cuddy has now been demolished which is a good thing.

A County Councillor stated that Mr Peter Coe, Durham County Council attended a Seaham Town Council meeting 3-4 months previously. Mr Coe gave a very in-depth report of where things currently stand and also the processes Durham County Council have to undertake to try and resolve the issues with the empty buildings. It was thought that Members understood that it was a lengthy legal process if DCC are looking at compulsory purchase order. The problems with CPO's is that there has to be a development plan put in place to be able to substantiate Local Authorities taking these powers as if there isn't a development plan in place then the CPO would fail. The whole purpose of inviting Mr Coe was for Members to understand that this was an ongoing problem and buildings that are going through the CPO process can take 7-10 years. A lot has been taking place in Seaham and a lot cannot be revealed due to commercial and legal issues and the Local Authority has been working very hard to try and resolve these issues with the existing empty buildings.

Councillor Colborn stated that the reason he brought this up was due to recently seeing a post on Seaham Have Your Say stating 'watch this space there is progress on the Lord Byron (Cuddy) and the Noah's Ark'. The next thing he saw on Seaham Have Your Say was that the Cuddy was in the process of being

demolished. Councillor Colborn stated that he is a Councillor on Seaham Town Council and he didn't know this was going on and if a constituent had approached him he would like to know what is going on and when it's going on and doesn't want to see this situation occurring on social media with people who are not elected officials of this Council informing people of what is happening as surely this should come from the Council and not a member of the public on social media.

A County Councillor/Town Councillor stated that these issues are not the remit of Seaham Town Council they are County Council issues. The problem was that the notice for demolition was served in August and the owners had a certain time period to act on the notice within the guidance that was given which they reneged on. Further action had to be taken against them and they were issued with another cut-off date which was the first week in January whereby if it wasn't demolished then legal action would have been taken against them. The owners had that time period to demolish the building and they don't have to notify the County Council when they are going to do it as the County Council have already given them an instruction to do it within a certain time period and as long as the building is demolished within that time period they have met the requirements of the demolition notice.

Councillor Colborn stated he understood that but wanted to know how an ordinary member of the public knew on December 3rd that progress was being made from this issue and then on the 18th December the Lord Byron (Cuddy) was being demolished. It may not be a Seaham Town Council issue but how does a member of the public know when we don't and how do they get information that Members around this table don't get.

A Member stated that it could be that members of the public have approached a County Councillor and asked them. Another Member stated that people do ask County Councillors as well as contacting Durham County Council themselves and at least one battle has been won and the Lord Byron has been demolished. A County Councillor has explained the lengthy process and the current Councillors may not be here when the next building is demolished but at least the Council knows things are in progress and going through the right procedures which have to be adhered to.

A Member stated that people may have been walking past as the works were taking place. Councillor Colborn stated that he was referring to December 3rd when a member of the public posted it on Seaham Have Your Say and in his opinion this wasn't right.

Another Member stated that she appreciated what County Councillors were saying that they don't always get to know exact dates but if they do get to know can this be shared with Seaham Town Councillors so they know what's going on. Another Member stated that if County Councillors do have this information then they do share it.

RECOMMENDED that the Town Clerk seeks advice from Durham County Council on receiving regular updates if possible on plans for derelict buildings.

9. **PRESS OPPORTUNITIES**

RECOMMENDED that there were no press opportunities from this meeting.