

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE HELD ON 14TH AUGUST, 2014

Present: Councillor Miss S Morrison (Chair) and Councillors Mrs M R Baird, B Burn Snr, B Burn Jnr, Mrs H Cahill, N R Page, I Paul, C Snowball, R Whitehead

Apologies: Councillors E Bell, Mrs J A Bell, S Cudlip, Mrs S Forster, K Younger

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. PLANNING ISSUE – BELLWAY HOMES – PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT DALTON HEIGHTS

The Committee was advised that Councillor S Cudlip had written to the Town Council to declare an interest in this matter and extend his apologies for his non-attendance. Councillor B Burn Jnr also declared an interest as he lived in the vicinity of the proposed development.

Members were reminded that details of this proposed development were initially provided to Members at the meeting of this Committee on 6th May of this year and subsequently to the Arts and Information Committee on 20th May, 2014 when representatives of Bellway Homes presented their proposal. This proposal was further discussed at the Arts and Information Committee on 25th June, 2014 when 5 delegates from Dalton le Dale Parish Council, together with a number of Dalton-le-Dale residents were in attendance. At that meeting it had been agreed that a working party should be set up consisting of representatives of both Councils, however all attempts to communicate with the Clerk of Dalton-le-Dale Parish Council had met with no response. A new Clerk had recently been appointed to the Parish Council and a meeting was being held within their parish this evening to discuss this proposal.

The full planning application had now been submitted by Bellway Homes and was now part of the Durham County consultation process. The County Council was not bound to consult with Seaham Town Council as the proposal was for the Dalton-le-Dale parish area however it did not preclude the Town Council from submitting views or objections and the purpose of this meeting was to formulate a response to this application.

The Ward Member for Deneside commented that the proposal would have a significant impact on the residents in that area of Seaham and asked whether the Durham County Councillors who serve on Seaham Town Council, could submit an objection to the proposal as Dalton Heights comes under the Deneside Ward of the County Council. It was agreed this would be done, however it was pointed out that Seaham Town Council would also need to formulate their own response to this application and it was suggested that the Town Clerk attend the appropriate

Planning Meeting when this application was being considered to enable the Town Council's views and objections to be conveyed verbally.

In the meantime an appropriate letter of objection would need to be submitted by Seaham Town Council to this application and the Deputy Town Clerk summarised a draft letter he had prepared which detailed the various areas of concern. In discussion the following comments were made which Members felt should be included in the letter:

- In relation to paragraph 3 about flooding in that area, a Member commented that some years ago there had been two or three sink holes of significant size that had appeared in that field and the Deputy Town Clerk was asked to carry out research to identify when these had appeared and the action that was taken at the time.
- In paragraph 12 of the planning application itself where it asks whether the site is within an area at risk of flooding, the applicants have stated 'no' which is incorrect.
- Where the access road is proposed necessitates loss of a hedgerow.
- It was also reported that there was a fault line running through the area which had been a significant factor in the decision taken for a number of houses at the top of The Avenue being demolished.
- Another point to raise in the objection letter was the impact this development would have on the wildlife.
- The County Durham Plan already identified other brownfield sites which would be suitable for housing development, and this site had not been specified.

RECOMMENDED

- (i) The Deputy Town Clerk investigate the previous occurrence of sink holes in the vicinity, as detailed.
- (ii) The Deputy Town Clerk contact Murton Parish Council to ascertain what their plans are in relation to this proposal.
- (iii) The Deputy Town Clerk amend the letter of objection as detailed, taking in the additional comments made and submit this to the Planning Department at Durham County Council.
- (iv) The Town Clerk write to the Planning Department at Durham County Council to ask to be advised when the application is to be heard and request that he be afforded the opportunity to attend the hearing and speak on behalf of the Town Council to convey its views and objection.