

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE HELD ON 7TH OCTOBER, 2014

Present: Councillor Mrs J A Bell (Presiding)
and Councillors B Allen, B E Allen,
M R Baird, E Bell, B Burn (Snr),
B Burn (Jnr), Mrs S Forster, R Meir,
Miss S Morrison, K Shaw, C Snowball,
B Taylor, R Whitehead and K Younger

Observers: Councillor Mrs G Bleasdale, Ms W Berry,
Ms J Brennan

Apologies: Councillors Mrs H Cahill, S Cudlip, I Paul

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 9TH SEPTEMBER, 2014

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. GENERAL ISSUES

a) County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority – Three Year Strategic Plan 2015/16-2017/18 Consultation

Prior to the consideration of this item, Councillors Mrs J A Bell and K Shaw declared an interest and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

The Committee considered the consultation document with regard to the Fire Authority's Three Year Strategic Plan 2015/16 – 2017/18. In discussion Members considered the pros and cons of different emergency services operating from the same premises and acknowledged that proposals one and two of the plan were specifically relevant to Seaham. It was decided that a suitable response highlighting that the Town Council were not opposed to any of the proposals and fully in support of proposal one to share buildings with the police and ambulance service.

A County Council Member raised the issue of whether it would be possible to have a defibrillator installed at the Town Hall for use in an emergency. The Deputy Town Clerk stated that a charity that provided such equipment had been approached but that no response had been received. He agreed to follow up on this request, make further enquiries with suppliers and request that somebody attend a future meeting to demonstrate the use of such equipment to Councillors.

RECOMMENDED:

- i) The Council submit a response that it is not opposed to any of the proposals and fully in support of proposal one in principle for the fire brigade to share buildings with the police and ambulance service.
- ii) The Deputy Town Clerk obtain the relevant information and costs for a defibrillator and arrange for a demonstration of the equipment to Councillors.

b) Removal of BT Phone Boxes

The Committee considered correspondence received from Durham County Council on behalf of BT which stated that BT intend to remove the two Seaham public telephone boxes sited at Burnhall Drive and Stockton Road due to low levels of usage. In discussion, Members noted that their surprise that the telephone box at Seaham station was not included in the list intended for removal and it was decided that the Town Council had no objections to the proposed removal of the two telephone boxes and does not wish to purchase them.

RECOMMENDED that a suitable response is sent stating that the Town Council has no objections to the proposed removal of the two telephone boxes and does not wish to purchase them.

c) Location of Temporary Army Recruiting Office on Terrace Green

The Committee considered a communication from Durham County Council Asset Management department which notified that an Army mobile recruiting office was to be placed on the Terrace Green on 27th October and 3rd November only. Photographic evidence of the site before each siting is to be taken to ensure the land is reinstated after use.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.

4. TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS ISSUES

a) Proposed Railway Station at Horden, County Durham

The Town Council representative to Coastliners, provided the following information concerning the proposed new railway station at Horden behind the industrial units on Kilburn Drive. Funds are in place and discussions are taking place with Northern Rail who currently operate the franchise. The new station will be accessed by passengers from Horden, Peterlee and Easington and the planning process is in motion and is expected to be granted by the end of 2014. Building work is expected to begin in 2015 with the station completed and operational in 2016.

In discussion, Members acknowledged that this could have a big impact on

rail users in Seaham and therefore capacity must be increased for passengers boarding at Seaham otherwise they might not get on the train which currently happens at time of high demand such as for a Sunderland AFC home match as at the moment only two 30 year old pacer carriages are utilised for the route. These carriages are to continue in use as at present there aren't sufficient funds to purchase new rolling stock for the route so the current carriages are to be refurbished.

The Town Council representative to Coastliners had also attended a stakeholder meeting with Grand Central that morning and had again raised with Sean English, Grand Central Chief Operating Officer, the request for them to include Seaham as a stop on their routes. Grand Central are now part of the Arriva group which operates in 14 countries across Europe. At present there are no plans to add new stations such as Seaham, their intention over the next few years is to concentrate on those stations they currently operate from for example they recently spent £75K on improvements at Eaglescliffe station.

In discussion, Members thanked the Council's representative for the comprehensive report and decided that it was imperative that Grand Central be invited to attend a future meeting of the Town Council to discuss the future possibility of Seaham station becoming a stop on their routes as no doubt there would be lobbying for Grand Central to stop at Horden once the new station was operational. Members also highlighted the need for improvements at Seaham station.

RECOMMENDED:

- i) The Council note the information now reported.
- ii) That Sean English, Chief Operating Officer for Grand Central be invited to attend a future meeting to update Members on the future plans of Grand Central and to further discuss Seaham being included as a stop on their routes.

b) B1287 East Shore Road, Seaham – Temporary Road Closure

RECOMMENDED the Council note the Order, previously advised during recess, made under the Road Traffic Regulation Act, 1984 to temporarily close a 500 metre section of the above road for a period of three days by means of a Notice under section 14(1), to allow resurfacing works to be undertaken.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

a) Proposed Dog Controls Seaham Beaches

The Town Clerk informed Members that he had recently been contact by Oliver Sheratt, Head of Neighbourhood Services at Durham County Council.

Mr Sherratt indicated that two thirds of the responses received were against the proposed controls and Durham County Council don't intend to proceed to implement the order however they are still keen to work with the Town Council to prevent any irresponsible dog owner activity. DCC will also use their Green Dog Walker scheme and increased warden patrols to raise awareness and educate users of the beach in appropriate conduct for the good of all. The situation will be monitored and if any issues or further evidence comes to light then they will revisit the issue.

In discussion, Members acknowledged that the Town Council had been fully in support of dog controls during the summer months on a certain part of the beach for the safety of residents especially children. Public opinion has proven to be against the controls and this is acknowledged. It was considered to be disappointing that a section of the beach could not be restricted for four months during the summer to help safeguard the health of those enjoying the beach especially children.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.

b) Seaham Beaches – Discarded Items & Cars on the Lower Promenade

The Committee considered a communication from Mr K Newton, Chair of Seaham Sea Angling club in response to the Council's request for information concerning the conduct of its members using the beach and with regard to those members of the club using their cars to access the lower promenade. The letter from the club stated that members of the club are requested to remove all waste and place it in the appropriate bins or take it home. The club have decided to put up notices as a reminder but wished to highlight that there are numerous people fishing from the beach or promenade who are not members of their club.

The club also stated that only those club members with a disability and who have applied for and received a vehicle permit from Durham County Council access the lower promenade using their cars. All other members are not permitted however again a large number of non-members take cars onto the promenade.

Finally, the club stated they are happy to work with the Town Council to ensure the beach is used appropriately and only authorised users access the lower promenade using their cars. Members of the club will be reminded of the issues raised.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.

6. PLANNING ISSUES

a) Monthly List

RECOMMENDED that the list of planning applications referred to all Councillors since the last meeting, namely 5309 to 5314 as circulated be noted.

b) Tommy Sculpture – Planning Application Update

At the request of a Member the Deputy Town Clerk provided an update on the current progress made with regard to the retrospective planning application for the Tommy sculpture to be permanently sited on the Terrace Green. Rumours have apparently been spreading throughout the Town that are completely untrue. The planning application is currently in progress however submission has been delayed due to the need for specifically detailed site plans being requested by the Planning department. The aim is for the sculpture to rest on a paved plinth with an appropriate plaque mounted on the plinth with a time capsule buried beneath. The Town Council is working with Mission 1101 to achieve this and also looking at the possibility for future enhancements such as lighting and a camera.

RECOMMENDED:

- i) The Council note the information now reported.
- ii) That John Elves, Architect be commissioned to provide the required plans to enable the application to be progressed as quickly as possible.

7. PRESS OPPORTUNITIES

RECOMMENDED contact the press with regards to the ongoing campaign to clean up the beaches.