

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE HELD ON 30TH JUNE, 2015

- Present: Mrs B E Allen (Chair) and
B Allen, Mrs J A Bell, B Burn Snr, S Cudlip
R Meir, Miss S Morrison, I Paul,
C Snowball, B Taylor, R Whitehead,
K Younger
- Apologies: E Bell, B Burn Jnr, Mrs H J Cahill, K Shaw
- Observer: Councillor Mrs G Bleasdale

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 2ND JUNE, 2015

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. TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS ISSUES

a) Neighbourhood Services - Highways

RECOMMENDED the Neighbourhood Services Highways Report for weeks commencing 8th, 22nd and 29th June, 2015, issued by Durham County Council, be noted.

b) Proposal to Remove Street Lights

The Committee considered correspondence from Durham County Council with regard to the proposed removal of 24 street lights from two locations in the town. The project has already been approved by the DCC Cabinet but responses/comments which may better inform the risk assessments were requested by 22nd July, 2015.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.

4. **ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

a) **Pollution of Coastal Waters**

The Committee considered correspondence provided by Mr Robert Latimer in relation to the need for Northumbrian Water to conduct improvement works to the Whitburn sewerage management system and that the cost of this is to be borne by Northumbrian Waters customers.

RECOMMENDED the correspondence provided by Mr Latimer, be noted.

5. **GENERAL ISSUES**

a) **Neighbourhood Protection Team Updates**

RECOMMENDED the Neighbourhood Protection Team Performance Report for Seaham for May 2015, be noted.

b) **Seaham Pier Refurbishment Update**

Pursuant to discussion at the last Full Council meeting held on Tuesday 16th June 2015 clarification has been obtained with regard to the scope of the refurbishment works currently being undertaken on Seaham pier. The work is essentially a flooding and coastal protection refurbishment scheme to stabilise the current structure. The brief doesn't include any ramparts or guard railing which, although technically possible, would be subject to additional funding provision and permission from the Victoria Group who own the pier. In discussion, Members wished to know if the pier would be open for public access.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) the update with regard to the refurbishment of Seaham Pier, be noted.
- (ii) further information with regard to public access to the pier once the works are completed be requested and reported back to this committee.

c) **Crime in Seaham**

The Committee considered correspondence received by Councillor Paul from four pupils at Seaham School of Technology. The letter indicated that the pupils had recently conducted an investigative project into the levels of crime within the Town and then provided their suggestions for ways to reduce crime. Members were informed that the school had been contacted to confirm receipt and to indicate that it would be distributed to all Councillors at the this meeting. In discussion, Members were pleased with the work of the school pupils and felt that it should be commended. It was also considered

appropriate to forward a copy of the letter to the neighbourhood police inspector and to extend an invitation for him to attend a future meeting of this committee to provide an update on levels of crime in the town and the current issues facing the police. It was also considered appropriate to invite the four pupils who had conducted the research to attend that meeting once the inspector's attendance was confirmed.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) the Council note the correspondence received.
- (ii) that an invitation be extended to the neighbourhood police inspector to attend a future meeting of this committee to provide an update on levels of crime in the town and the current issues facing the police.
- (iii) that an appropriate letter be sent to the pupils thanking them for their hard work and suggestions for ways to reduce crime in the town and that they be invited to attend the same meeting to hear the update from the neighbourhood police inspector.

6. PLANNING ISSUES

a) Monthly List

RECOMMENDED that the list of planning applications referred to all Councillors since the last meeting, namely 5351 to 5352 as circulated be noted.

b) Proposed Development of 135 no. Dwellings (C3 use class) with Associated Access and landscaping Works on land to the east of A19 and south of Dalton Heights, Seaham by Bellway Homes Ltd

Prior to the consideration of this item, Councillor S Cudlip declared an interest and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

The Committee considered correspondence from Mr S Timmiss, the Head of Planning and Assets at Durham County Council in relation to the above proposed development. The letter indicated that the application had been considered at committee and it was resolved to refuse planning permission.

RECOMMENDED the outcome of the planning application, be noted.

c) Proposed Wind Turbine at Hesledon East House Farm, Seaham

The Committee was advised of proposal by Redpath Energy Ltd of Haltwhistle, to site a wind turbine at Hesledon East House Farm, Seaham. Members had been advised by telephone that an exhibition of the proposal had taken place that evening between 5.00 – 7.30 pm at Dawdon Youth and

Community Centre. In discussion Members recalled that a previous application for a wind turbine to be sited here had been rejected on the basis that it would prevent the film studios project from going ahead as apparently it is not possible to make films with such equipment in close proximity. Members felt that although the film studios project still appeared to be delayed if there was still a chance that it would be realised then the installation of something that would prevent it should be opposed. A Member who had been able to attend the exhibition stated that he had been informed by the developers, that the height of the proposed turbine had been reduced in comparison to the height of the turbine in the original application years earlier, so that it would not pose a problem to the film studios project.

Members were also concerned that such a structure in this location could have a negative impact on the Heritage Coast which is an area of natural beauty.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) the information concerning the proposed wind turbine planning application, be noted.
- (ii) that further information concerning the film studios project be sought from Durham County Council.
- (iii) that the Town Council submit an objection at the appropriate time to the planning application for this proposal siting the reasons as discussed.

8. PRESS OPPORTUNITIES

RECOMMENDED the Council note that no press opportunities existed from this meeting.