

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE HELD ON 5TH SEPTEMBER, 2017

Present: Councillor R Whitehead (Chair), R Arthur, E Bell, Mrs J A Bell, Mrs K Brace, S P Colborn, S Cudlip, Mrs S Forster, Mrs R M Gratton, G N Hepworth, Mrs L Kennedy, D McKenna, T Shepherd, B Taylor, Miss L Willis.

Observer: Mrs G Bleasdale

Apologies: Councillors Mrs B E Allen, D Cummings, Mrs V Cummings, Ms S Pratt,

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 JUNE, 2017

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 5483 to 5494 as circulated be noted.

4. POSITION STATEMENT ON DEVELOPMENT OF BROWNFIELD SITES IN SEAHAM

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

A Member stated that 540 proposed new builds represents 5% of the 10,000 houses which are needed in the whole of County Durham in the next 5 years. He feels this will apply pressure to villages and towns to use green land as a result of the problems that are emerging from government initiatives to provide additional housing.

A Member questioned whether Durham County Council had carried out any investigations into how the county will cope with the influx of people into Seaham with regards to pressures on schools, doctors and highways. A Member stated that all of the questions on infrastructure are taken into consideration and information requested and assurances are given. County Councillors have some concerns with the building in some of the areas which have been indicated which are schools, doctors and traffic. All of these matters can become major permanent problems in the future and that is why the Town Council have taken a decision to purchase the Wembley Fields so that the playing fields can be protected. Although the land south of Dalton Heights is not part of the Town Councils remit it is still within the Seaham boundary. It is important that Bellway Homes are stopped from taking the land and turn it into profitable housing.

A Member stated that he had been approached by a few residents of Milton Close formerly Malvern Crescent with regard to flooding concerns. They have problems with flooding now and if more houses are to be built there will need to be major infrastructure in place to deal with the new housing. The area is often flooded following heavy rains. It was questioned whether the County Council can give an assurance that this will be taken on board and looked into seriously. A Councillor stated that this is an ongoing problem which he has been involved in as a Councillor for over 10 years and is fully aware that the field is often flooded. These are the types of problems which will be brought to the Developers.

Discussion took place around the traffic especially on a Sunday when the car boot is being held on the sea front. This has been raised at Durham County Council on many occasions as this causes havoc with the traffic. A County Councillor noted that an open day will be held soon with regard to the building of the new houses and these questions can be raised then.

A Member raised the question of whether there would be any council housing built. It was noted that there will be some affordable social housing built at Parkside. Council housing no longer exists and the homes will be built by Durham City Homes which is a separate organisation to the Council.

RECOMMENDED that members note the information.

5. PRESS OPPORTUNITIES

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