

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WHETSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Held at the Council Offices, Cemetery Road, Whetstone

26th October 2017

Present: - Mr. R.Simmons - Chairman
Mr. P.Cox
Mrs. P.Kenney
Mr. M.E.Jackson
Mr. L.M.Phillimore
Mr. M.Bradford
Mrs. S. Coe (Deputy Clerk)

Mr. D.Smith
Mr. M.R.Bounds
Mrs. A.M.Tyler
Ms. S. Tomlinson
Mrs. N.Howden
Mr. L.Breckon (Clerk)

3 Parishioners in attendance.

80. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from – LCC Cllr. Mr. D.Jennings – other meeting, Mr. A.Tanner – other meeting.

RESOLVED: To accept apologies received.

81. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT AND REMARKS

The Chairman welcomed Members and Parishioners to the meeting. He thanked Mr. D. Smith for deputising for him at last month's meeting.

82. DISCLOSURES OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

Mr. L. M. Phillimore declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Member of BDC Planning Committee and as a Member of Cosby Parish Council. Mr. M. E. Jackson and Mr. D. Smith declared a personal interest as Members of the Whetstone Allotment Association (W.A.A.).

83. APPROVE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF COUNCIL DATED 28th SEPTEMBER 2017

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meetings dated 28th September 2017 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

84. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF COMMITTEE AND WORKING PARTY MEETINGS

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Planning Committee held on 28th September 2017 be received.

RESOLVED: A verbal report on tonight's planning meeting be received from the Chairman of Planning Committee.

85. REPORTS FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

There were no tabled reports. BDC Cllr. Mr. L. M. Phillimore updated Members regarding the appeal that had been dismissed for the Croft Road application in Cosby. Appeals won in Countesthorpe showed that BDC and its Planning Committee were getting planning applications it dealt with "correctly" in how it processed them. Training of Members helped take the right decisions based on planning matters.

He had spoken to Highways on speed issues on Cambridge Road and had been assured that the speed limit needs to be 30 mph. The whole area needed re assessing including the possibility of yellow lines.

BDC Cllr. Mr. M. E. Jackson updated Members on the waste consultation that was currently out within the District.

86. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

a) Public Speaking Protocol – No requests had been received by the protocol deadline. The Chairman would allow the Parishioners present to add comments to the planning items later in the agenda under Chairman's Discretion.

b) The meeting was suspended to allow members of the public to make representation about any item not on the agenda (old parishioners time).

i) The Linden Homes path to "nowhere" was raised as being an issue now winter was coming. Many residents off Linden Homes and Strata Homes used the path to cross over Otter Way to access Badgerbrook School. The Clerk overviewed the history to date. Members asked if s106 monies, now that Strata Homes residents used the path could be utilised. A tarmac path so close to the brook bank may need planning permission and may be opposed by the EA. A breedon gravel path with wooden edges would be an alternative and the Clerk would add this to the list of projects being discussed when he meets the S106 officer at BDC. Alternatively, Council could precept the amount required as a new project going forward for next year.

ii) Motorbikes had been seen riding across Trinity Park. The Clerk would look at how best this could be prevented. There were 6 entrances onto the park, and not all could be easily gated.

iii) A bollard was missing along the Warwick Road cycleway. The clerk would inform LCC.

iv) St. Peters C of E Primary School had won more sporting glory, this time in Cross Country.

v) Travel Packs had not been issued by LCC to the residents of Linden Homes or Strata Homes. The Clerk would enquire as to where the issue lay.

87. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

None.

88. FINANCE

a) TO RECEIVE ACCOUNTS AND CONFIRM BALANCE SHEET

RESOLVED: That the accounts paid up to the end of September 2017 were confirmed. The bank reconciliation statement was signed by the Chairman on behalf of Council.

b) TO RECEIVE THE UPDATED EXTERNAL AUDITORS REPORT AND CERTIFICATE FOR WHETSTONE PARISH COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2017 AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2016.

The Clerk had tabled the email correspondence received with the updated audit report and overviewed the importance of this correspondence. The Clerk wished to thank the Deputy Clerk for her help in getting this retrospective acknowledgement.

RESOLVED: To accept the External auditors report and certificate.

89. PLANNING MATTERS – THESE APPLICATIONS ARE CLASSED AS MAJOR APPLICATIONS:

17/1295/OUT - Demolition of existing office buildings and re-development to provide up to maximum of 4675 sq. m building comprising industrial / storage & distribution units (Use Classes B1 (c), B2 and B8) with ancillary offices (Use Class B1 (a)) and trade counters and associated car parking (Outline) - Land Off Cambridge Road (Whittle Estate - Plot 3), Whetstone.

17/1176/OUT - Demolition of existing office buildings and re-development to provide up to a maximum of 78 dwellings and associated infrastructure with access via the adjoining residential development (Outline) - Land Off Cambridge Road (Whittle Estate - Plot 1) Whetstone.

17/1178/OUT – Re- development of car parking areas to provide up to a maximum of 85 dwellings and associated infrastructure with access to Cambridge Road (Outline) - Land Off Cambridge Road (Whittle Estate - Plots 4 & 5), Whetstone.

These applications are **outline** except for the access i.e. roads in from Strata and off Cambridge Road. As such detail may totally change.

Detail will become an issue but can only be dealt with at Reserve Matters stage.

The statement in the documents include:

Plots 2 and 3 undoubtedly occupy a prime position comprising the majority of the Estate's road frontage and are therefore key sites within the Whittle Estate. The redevelopment of these plots to allow for an alternative employment use is therefore considered to be fundamental to the ongoing success of the Estate and to enhancing the employment offer and the overall quality and image of the Whittle Estate. The redevelopment of Plot 1, and Plots 4 and 5 for residential use will facilitate the redevelopment of the redundant office buildings at Plots 2 and 3, for an alternative employment use.

This statement is not acceptable as it implies the housing outline applications are needed to be approved to allow the upgrade of the employment plots to be achieved. It implies planning gain which was outlawed under previous planning acts. Indeed plot 2 is now submitted as 17/1177/FUL as a full application, yet still has the same statement as the paragraph above.

It is therefore acknowledged that to attract the right type of employment to the site and upgrade the 1960's buildings and provision that the application to update plot 2 and 3 are welcomed.

The statement in the documents include:

In addition to pursuing pre-application discussions, the applicant submitted three separate requests for a screening opinion for each of the respective plots, which also considered any cumulative impacts arising from the three proposals, to ascertain whether an Environmental Statement would be required in support of the applications.

The Local Planning Authority provided a negative Screening Opinion (EIA is not required) in respect of all three proposals by letters dated 15 June 2016.

Council feel that the cumulative effect of these applications with the mixed use of employment and housing within the masterplan approach were worthy and needed the EIA's being completed. The decision not to pursue these is questioned, especially as at that time, Strata and Linden Homes were in the early phases of site set ups or building on site. It cannot be supposed that these applications will not have major impacts and effects on not only those sites, but the village as a whole.

Following on from the documents, some detailed commentary was received to the screening opinion request form Blaby District Planning officers confirming the requirements for any future planning application which are referenced by the applicant.

An example is the site should utilise a sustainable urban drainage system. These are not seen on the outline detail.

The only reference to Whetstone as a larger village on housing numbers is stated as:

Policy seeks 'at least' the specified number of units for each location and as such, does not preclude the consideration of other proposals for residential development where the target has been exceeded. Rather, each application will be considered on its merits, in terms of whether any harm arises that would outweigh the benefits.

While it is accepted that the housing numbers in the local plan are a minimum, these applications have to be taken as one block of applications as they have a cumulative impact on the village. And mitigation would also have to be taken as cumulative. The failings of Strata and Linden Homes to look at the cumulative impact on highways in the local area alone have created a local road network infrastructure that is creaking at the seams and fails regularly as these two mentioned developments come on line. Therefore, these combined applications looking to add housing to the mix have to mitigate the highways network with traffic calming measures in and around the immediate area.

The statement in the documents include:

It is confirmed in Section 5 of the report that Plots 4 and 5 falls wholly within an area designated as an 'Open Area of Importance for the Form and Character of the Built Environment' on the Blaby Local Plan Proposals Map. The associated Policy C10 states that planning permission will not be granted for development which would be detrimental to the form and character of these open areas. In this regard, it should be noted that the designation also includes land to the east of the site and land to the south, both of which benefit from planning permission for development for housing (Ref: 12/0279/OX) Linden Homes...And a church (Ref: 13/0869) respectively.

Rather, the large open areas of hardstanding and rough ground, together with associated cars, lighting and other structures are considered to detract from the appearance of the locality and streetscape. Indeed, it is noted that in determining the applications relating to the Linden Homes development, Officers considered that it would be difficult to justify that the car park and the scrubland, with no significant trees, performed a great benefit in terms of the open character of the areas. It was not considered that a reason for refusal could be sustained with regard to Policy C10.

We agree with these statements and accept that the carparks form part of the brownfield site. The use of these two areas for dwellings is not opposed but needs to be the right form of dwellings.

On outline style for plots 4 and 5, the large flat design shown in the outlines are not acceptable, either by design, height or mass. The use of flats is not needed and indeed we would see a natural extension of the Linden Homes style being wholly acceptable for these two plots. There are no issues regarding viability on plots 4 and 5. The use of five story flats is not acceptable. The Traffic assessment advises that the indicative scheme will generate a minimum requirement of 164 car parking spaces and that this standard is therefore met with the proposed provision of 167 car parking spaces to be accommodated as both 'in-curtilage', roadside and parking courts spaces. Talks of providing 3 additional spaces, but utilising on road parking, is not acceptable.

The plan also needs to state where the current cars that use the car parks will be parked in the curtilage of the Whittle estate. These car parks are daily 75% full, even with Babcock no longer on site. Again, traffic and highways plans are needed to ensure on road parking does not become an issue.

On outline style for plot 1, the mix is poor and clumsy. The use of large blocks of flats is not in keeping with the style of the neighbouring Strata development. We would expect planning officers to ensure that a detailed design had some connection with the drive though estate that you would travel through to access plot 1. These are design code principles and we ask that these be introduced and kept.

Regarding Sequential Testing, the statement in the documents include:

The purpose of the sequential assessment is to steer new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding and development should not be permitted if there are reasonably available sites that could accommodate the development proposed with a lower probability of flooding. The Sequential Assessment identifies 12 sites for consideration and finds that none of these sites offer sequentially preferable alternatives, primarily because these sites fall outside the settlement boundary and are therefore constrained by their countryside and/or Green Wedge designations. Some sites are also deemed unsuitable due to flood risk and access constraints. A number of sites are dismissed on the basis that planning permission has been implemented. It is therefore concluded that as there are no sequentially preferable sites, the proposals for the residential development of Plots 4 and 5 pass the sequential test.

The above statement is accepted regarding the plots on the Whittle estate. The following request is made: The planning officers when deciding that the EIA were not needed, must take this "approval" of these schemes, if suitable and then use the above statement regarding countryside and / or Green wedge to protect Whetstone from over exploitation. The village is now at saturation point and the road infrastructure, without improvement or addition, will see all roads become gridlocked as both these outline schemes and approved other schemes in Cosby and Countesthorpe and Blaby all use Whetstone as a through point to onward journeys, whether it be the City, Narborough, Enderby or Fosse Park.

The statement in the documents include:

Re: Planning Obligations Including Affordable Housing, it is recognised that the proposal is likely to generate a requirement for making a financial obligation towards infrastructure that can be reasonably related to the proposals, which may include contributions towards the following:

- i) Open outdoor space and play facilities;**
- ii) Sports facilities;**
- iii) Education;**
- iv) Waste and recycling, and**
- v) Sustainable transport.**

Missing is the need to add contributions for highways and road safety including safe crossings points for the area and also the review and implementations of 30mph speed limits on Cambridge Road as it is now partially residential and also a full review of the impact of these schemes throughout the village. If the mitigation is on the immediate area, i.e. within a mile, then from these sites, the whole of the road network in the village should now be assessed. The cumulative impact has to be considered.

Regarding other material considerations, Council **agree** the following:

That the concept of outline development with the approved access being confirmed, the proposals will enable the regeneration of this brownfield site, that seeks to maximise the efficient use of land, in a sustainable manner. The style of the outline residential development on plots 1, 4 and 5 are not agreed. The style on plot 1 should be similar to

the adjoining Strata homes site and plots 4 and 5 should mirror the Linden Homes site. This would allow for some sort of “design code” to be expected when detailed reserve applications are made and allow the village some comfort that the different developments are not a “mish mash” of styles.

That the proposals will afford a significant visual enhancement of this site, which occupies a prominent location fronting onto Cambridge Road. This applies to plots 2,3,4 and 5.

That as part of the Masterplan approach, the development will facilitate the regeneration of the Whittle Estate and the provision of significant new employment floorspace that will reinforce the Estate’s role as an important employment site within Whetstone.

We **challenge** the assumption that it will provide “much needed” residential accommodation including a significant proportion of affordable, as housing numbers in the Local Plan were met fully by previous approved developments, but accept a plan is needed for this site.

RESOLVED: That the three planning applications listed are not opposed regarding highways access.

That the proposed residential element of design are opposed as not being suitable for Whetstone within the immediate location that the site sits in. More thought is requested as to plot 1 with Strata Homes and plot 4 and 5 with Linden Homes.

The Chairman thanked the Clerk for his work on these complicated applications.

90. COMMITTEE AND WORKING PARTY MEMBERSHIP

Due to 2 newer Members not being present, it was agreed to defer till the next Council meeting.

91. CLERKS REPORT

The Clerk reported the following:

The Clerk showed the new plinths in the cemetery which had been installed. The Christmas carols would take place on Wednesday 20th December 2017. More details would be sent to Members. A new Member details list had been included in the agenda pack.

The Clerk had tabled for Members the Warner Close planning application refusal. The Clerk had begun discussions with the Vicar regarding the Closed churchyard and interment of ashes. Portable Appliance Testing had been completed.

The Clerk was meeting with BDC S106 officer Anne Pawley to see what did and did not meet criteria for spend.

BDC Cllr. Tanner had been asked and agreed to lay the wreath for BDC at the Remembrance Sunday parade.

92. CORRESPONDENCE

To receive correspondence report: RESOLVED: The list be received and noted. All correspondence has been copied to members.

a) WAA – Committee meeting minutes dated 27th September 2017 – received and noted.

b) WGNS – October update report from Whetstone Good Neighbours Scheme – received and noted.

c) Leics. Police – Email regarding parked vehicle on Bridgeway – noted.

d) BDC – Scrutiny Work Programme 2017 /18 and working group updates – noted.

RESOLVED: That the correspondence be received and actions noted.

With there being no further business, the Chairman thanked Members for their attendance and closed the meeting at 9.55 p.m.