

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE,
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, KING'S HOUSE, THETFORD,
ON WEDNESDAY, 12TH AUGUST 2009,
STARTING AT 7 P.M.

Present:

Councillor T J Lamb, Vice-Chairman in chair
The Mayor, Councillor Mrs P A Spencer

Councillors:

G P Balaam	J A Harding
R F W Brame	T J Jermy
M Brindle	D G Mortimer
Mrs M P Chapman-Allen	A Paines

In attendance: Mr M Ludford, Croxton Residents Association
(for item 174/09)

165/09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor T J Jermy declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 168/09(b) as an employee of Keystone Development Trust and was not present for the discussion or vote.

166/09A APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors S H Chapman-Allen (work-related absence), R G Kybird, Mrs P P Quadling, B J Skull, M G Spencer (work-related absence) and S N H Wright.

166/09B MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 1st July and 22nd July 2009, as duly received by the Council on 29th July 2009 under minutes 149/09(a) and 149/09(c) respectively, be confirmed as true records and signed/initialled by the Committee Vice-Chairman as Chairman of the meeting.

167/09 PROBITY IN PLANNING

RESOLVED that the receipt of guidance information, issued by the Local Government Association, be noted.

168/09 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

RESOLVED that the following Observations be forwarded to the planning authority (Breckland Council):

- (a) Plan No. 0530 Full

Application by Abbey Developments Ltd for erection of 4 detached dwellings, garages, new access drainage, landscaping and ancillary works on land off Nightingale Way.

The meeting was adjourned at this point to permit some residents present to express their views. When the meeting was reconvened, the following view resulted:

Observation

The Committee, having first heard the views of some residents present at the meeting, was opposed to this application on grounds of loss of open space. It wanted the planning authority to refer back to the original layout presented by Abbey Homes for the entire development and for heed to be paid to the reported County Wildlife Site status of the site. It on no account wanted this application to be determined under any delegated authority granted to officers.

- (b) Plan No. 0625 Full

Application by Keystone Development Trust (Mr Terry Jermy) for three-sided obelisk sculpture on land next to 54 Staniforth Road

Observation

No objection, with the proposal welcomed on aesthetic and educational grounds.

- (c) Plan No. 0658 Change of Use

Application by Mr Philip Williams of Liberty Christian Family Centre for retention of use for place of worship (class D1) at Liberty Centre, 5 Kelvin Place

Observation

No objection to the proposed modified conditions.

- (d) Plan No. 0711 Listed Building

Application by Mrs S E Lancaster for proposed replacement conservatory at 52 Castle Street

Observation

No objection, subject to neighbours' having none.

169/09

WITHDRAWAL OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

RESOLVED that withdrawal of the following applications, all relating to the Anchor Hotel site, be noted:

i) 3PL/2007/1316/Conservation Area

ii) 3PL/2007/1317/Full

Applications by Zog li Ltd for partial demolition, conversion & redevelopment, providing ground floor retail accommodation and 21 residential units

iii) 3PL/2007/1878/Full

iv) 3PL/2007/1879/Conservation Area

Applications by Zog li Ltd for demolition of buildings and redevelopment, providing ground floor retail units and 24 residential units

170/09

DEVELOPMENT BY KIER HOMES OFF BRANDON ROAD

RESOLVED that the following response to a site drawing received from Kier Homes be communicated to the company:

“Concerns were expressed at the proposed density and possible visual impact. Problems arising from ever-increasing car ownership were also envisaged at the Maine Street / Brandon Road junction, particularly during peak periods.

The Committee wanted to see the Natural England management plan for the SSSI before commenting further.”

171/09

CALLING-IN OF ABBEY BARNS PLANNING DECISIONS

RESOLVED that the submission by The Thetford Society to the Planning Inspectorate be commended.

RECOMMENDED that the Carnegie Room be made available to Breckland Council for the holding of the Inquiry Hearing on the basis of a three-day concessionary rate (for the period 10th -12th November inclusive @ £80 per day). This was on the understanding that there would be no refund in the event of the Hearing's being concluded in less time. The full Council would be asked to endorse this Committee view at its meeting on 30th September 2009.

172/09

CORE STRATEGY: EXAMINATION BY INSPECTOR

RESOLVED that the revised Policy CP10 wording now being proposed be noted without further comment, it having been made clear that the Inspector had yet to prepare his final Report.

173/09

PROPOSED THETFORD RENEWABLE ENERGY PLANT

RESOLVED that it be noted that the Business Development Manager of EPR Ltd would meet with the Committee, once the planning application had been submitted. There was deemed to be no need, in advance of that meeting, to complete the online questionnaire.

174/09

NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL: CROXTON ROAD CROSSING

Proposal drawings had been received from Norfolk County Council, which showed a Puffin Crossing and three refuges as safety measures. The Committee was not persuaded that all these could be justified, with the meeting adjourned at one point to permit the view of Mr Ludford, Chairman of the Croxton Road Residents Association, to be heard.

RESOLVED that Norfolk County Council be informed of the Committee's view, which was that the refuges be dropped from the scheme but that the Puffin Crossing be strongly supported as a 'stand alone' measure. Members could see refuges giving pedestrians too much choice when it came to crossing and were not persuaded that refuges would offer a sufficient degree of protection on such an, at times, busy stretch of road. They recognised that those disinclined to use the Puffin Crossing must be left to make their own choice to be tabled.

Although expressing strong support for a Puffin Crossing at the location indicated on the drawings, the Committee was nonetheless keen, before any final decision was taken by the highway authority, for there to be more widespread public consultation than had seemingly taken place to date.

The Committee also noted that it was not being asked that evening to comment on proposals for a shared-use scheme along the western side of Croxton Road. This was being referred to the Road Safety Committee for initial comment at a meeting now scheduled for 26th August 2009.

175/09

TREE PRESERVATION ORDER

RESOLVED that details received from Breckland Council, relating to TPO 2009, No. 31 (= groups of scots pine by Canterbury Way) be noted.

176/09

VARIATION OF PREMISES LICENCE: RED LION

A letter, dated 29th July 2009, had been received from the licensing authority (Breckland Council), advising Thetford Town Council, the owner of the Red Lion, that an application to vary the existing Premises Licence had been submitted.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk be authorised to write a letter to the licensing authority, expressing the Town Council's view that said application be refused and the status quo upheld in every particular. The letter would make it clear that the Council's Planning Committee was expressing strong opposition to any extensions to the periods during which alcohol might be sold and activities provided and/or performed. The Committee did not want any additional forms of entertainment to be permitted, expressing particular concern over the proposed occasional offer of so-called 'adult entertainment'.

Addressing the key factors/criteria, which the licensing authority had to pay heed to, the Town Clerk would point out in his letter that the Town Council had, over recent years, been greatly concerned on occasion at how the premises were being managed. By permitting alcohol to be sold during longer periods, the view was that crime and/or disorder and/or public nuisance would be more likely, with public safety compromised as a result. On the specific point of permitting 'adult entertainment', the view was that protecting children from harm could, as a consequence, be made more difficult at certain times.

Chairman