

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE,
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, KING'S HOUSE, THETFORD,
ON WEDNESDAY, 20TH JANUARY 2010,
STARTING AT 7 P.M.

Present:

Councillor R G Kybird, Chairman

Councillors:

G P Balaam
Mrs M P Chapman-Allen
T J Jermy
D G Mortimer

Mrs P P Quadling
B J Skull
S N H Wright

358/09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor T J Jermy declared a personal interest in respect of item 360/09(f) by virtue of being a member of the consultative group, which Peddars Way Housing Association had sought views and advice from.

359/09 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received on behalf of the Mayor, Councillor Mrs P A Spencer, and Councillors R F W Brame, M Brindle, S H Chapman-Allen (work-related absence), J A Harding, T J Lamb, A Paines and M G Spencer.

360/09 PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO CONSIDER

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

(a) Plan No. 0803 Full

Application by Mr B Beardon for construction of single storey dwelling at 21 Highlands.

Observation

The Committee deemed the proposed design to be bland in the extreme; it would not enhance the form and character of the estate.

Afternote

The Committee had commented on this application previously at its meeting on 9th December 2009 under item 336/09(a). What was before them now was an amended drawing, providing greater detail of the proposed dwelling.

(b) Plan No. 1196 Outline

Application by The Crown Estate for non-food retail development (Phases 4 & 5) at Forest Retail Park, London Road. This is a resubmission of what was previously submitted under reference 3PL/2009/0746* - subsequently withdrawn - and amounts to a wish to renew the outline permission granted under reference 3PL/2006/0851.

Observation

The Committee restated the comments passed on the previous application (its meeting of 2nd September 2009 referred), remaining concerned about the likely consequences of this entire area being devoted to retail activity, foreseeing a further threat to the town centre's 'viability' as a shopping destination and anticipating worrying levels of on-site traffic movement, not to mention site access and egress issues.

It urged yet again more thought to be given to a significant part of the 'Phases Four/Five' site area being used for the provision of a leisure facility."

(c) Plan No. 1202 Reserved Matters

Application by The Crown Estate for land between Mundford Road and Thetford Bypass: Revised details for construction of roundabout and business park

Observation

No objection, subject to due heed being paid to the need in places for appropriate, replacement hedging.

(d) Plan No. 1206 Certificate of Lawfulness

Application by Miss S Langley for running a florist business from home at 18 Mallow Road.

Observation

The Committee was not entirely clear about what the longer-term nature of the proposed business would be. It was prepared to support the judgement of the planning officer. If it could be confirmed that, based on information provided by the applicant, planning permission was not a requirement, then the Committee could see no reasonable grounds on which to object; however, if it transpired that planning permission would be a pre-requisite either now or at a later date, then the Committee would object to such a venture along the lines indicated in the supporting information presently to hand.

2010 Plan Sequence starts here

- (e) Plan No. 0001 Change of Use

Application by Mrs S Southwell for change of use to D1 and A1 (Dog training centre with small shop) at 6-13 Faraday Place.

Observation

The Committee was prepared to support D1, but not A1 use, with support for the former to be conditional on clearly enforceable noise control measures being in place.

The Committee did not consider any form of retail operation to be suited to this location.

- (f) Plan No. 0013 Full

Application by Peddars Way Housing Association for residential development of 66 dwellings inc. open space, landscaping, inc. demolition of 34 existing dwellings at Sweyn Close / Fulmerston Road.

Observation

Whilst generally supportive of the scheme in overall terms, the Committee expressed concern about what it perceived to be an 'over-concentration / over-clustering' of the apartments in the northern area of the site.

It applauded the provision of two parking spaces per dwelling.

- (g) Plan No. 0017 Full

Application by Mr Andrew Waterlow for first floor extension built over existing attached garage at 7 Scott Close.

Observation

No objection, subject to neighbours' having none.

361/09

DECISION AT VARIANCE

Application 3PL/2009/0973/Full: Proposed Extension to Tesco Store

A copy of the minute resulting from the meeting of the planning authority's Development Control Committee on 4th January 2010 had been included in the agenda papers.

In noting this, the Committee asked the Town Clerk to send a further comment to the planning authority, asking that the recycling facility referred to in the application be an explicit requirement written into any permission notice issued, with the applicant to have no 'room to manoeuvre'.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk so act.

362/09

RECOMMENDATION TO DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE
Application 3PL/2009/0977/Full: Former Thetford Cottage Hospital
Site

A copy of the papers to be considered by the planning authority's Development Control Committee at its meeting on 25th January 2010 had been included in the agenda papers.

The Town Clerk was asked to send a further comment to the planning authority, echoing the slight concern expressed by the Thetford Society over the proximity of one of the proposed dwellings to Thetford Snooker Centre.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk so act.

363/09

BRECKLAND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: CORE
STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROL POLICIES
DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT: Notice of Adoption

RESOLVED that documents received from Breckland Council be noted.

364/09

STREET LIGHTING POLICY: INTRODUCTION OF PART NIGHT
LIGHTING

Discussion of this item had been 'held over' from the Committee's meeting two weeks previously. The following documents, received from Norfolk County Council, had been included in the agenda papers:

- letter dated 14th December 2009
- letter dated 17th December 2009
- e-mail dated 18th December 2009
- relevant attachments.

The Committee's initial impression was that, whilst not an ill-conceived concept in general terms (reduction in what some would deem 'light pollution' etc), the particular proposals coming forward had perhaps not been thought through sufficiently. The approach was somewhat unrefined.

Whilst there appeared to be technical reasons for not being more selective in approach (it was seemingly a case of 'all lights or no lights' in a given location), the Committee was concerned at the prospect of certain areas ending up entirely unlit at one minute past midnight.

It urged the lighting authority (Norfolk County Council) to ensure that primary pedestrian routes would not be affected to the extent proposed, with Friday nights being cited as meriting a different approach. Public safety and crime prevention had to be at the forefront of the minds of those charged with taking the final decision.

The Committee looked forward to learning what the considered view of Norfolk Constabulary would prove to be on the proposals coming forward. It was by no means persuaded that cost-saving should in itself be presented as the key consideration.

The Committee noted the apparent involvement of Citizens Forums in 'informing' the proposals, but had doubts about the degree to which the monitoring of pedestrian movements in any of the towns scheduled to be affected could be said to have been subject to thorough - let alone accurate - assessment.

All that said, Councillor Mrs Chapman-Allen cited the Essex experience, which pointed to there having been a reduction in crime following the introduction of 'part night lighting'.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk report all the above comments to the lighting authority.

365/09 CROXTON ROAD: PUFFIN CROSSING

RESOLVED that the contents of the Notice being issued by Norfolk County Council be noted. The Town Clerk reported that the work was scheduled to start on 22nd February 2010.

366/09 ST MARY THE LESS: DELEGATED DECISION RECORD

RESOLVED that the document issued by Breckland Council be noted. This provided details of the approved course of enforcement action that would now be attempted.

Chairman