

Droitwich Spa Town Council

MINUTES of the meeting of the PLANNING COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber, St Richards House, Victoria Square, Droitwich Spa, on Monday 14 November 2016 at 6.00pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs C Bowden (Chairman)
Councillor R Murphy (Ex-officio)
Councillor Ms J Bolton
Councillor G R Brookes
Councillor A Humphries
Councillor T J Noyes

NON-MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors R G Beale, S Best, Mrs S Harris, A Laird, A Roberts, A Sinton and Mrs K Tomalin.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors Mrs A Hawkins and Mrs M A Lawley (committee members). An apology was submitted for Councillor R J Morris from Councillor Mrs Harris following the close of the meeting.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

County Councillor Mrs P E Davey, Worcestershire County Council:

Councillor Mrs Davey advised that with regard to Agenda Item 3 – Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 October 2016, and pertaining to the Public Questions, the word ‘confirmed’ should be deleted and replaced with ‘hoped’ with relevance to the revised response of the Highways Officers to Planning Application W/16/01978/PN, Droitwich Police Station. The Highways Officers had visited the site the following day (18 October 2016) and had not made any further comment. Information upon pre-application discussions that had included the Highways Officers related, inter alia, to the loss or otherwise of two of the parking bays for the disabled. With regard to Minute No 143 – Vehicle Activated Signs (VASs), she clarified that it was her intention to arrange for a permanent VAS and the Town Clerk was to arrange for a mobile VAS in the interim to be placed at the Lyttelton Road location identified. With regard to Minute No 140 – Appendix – Planning Application No W/16/02240/OU and with particular reference to the written comments of Councillor R J Morris reported by Councillor T J Noyes, there had been a clear plan for The Ridings Community Hall but that it did not proceed owing to objections from nearby residents to the facility.

Mrs B Meddings, Vice-Chairman, Hindlip, Martin Hussingtree & Salwarpe Parish Council:

Mrs Meddings advised upon the concerns of her parish council to Planning Application No W/16/02592/OU, Land between Roman Way and Copcut Lane, Salwarpe, William Davis Limited. She advised that the Parish Council was concerned that the first phase of dwellings on the Copcut Rise site have been built and are starting to be occupied but the Movement Of Vehicles Activation (MOVA) scheme appeared not to have been implemented and until then Variation of Condition 6 was not discharged, Condition 6 had been superseded in April 2015. This had resulted in considerable traffic problems at the Pulley Lane junction. An objection to the Application W/16/02592/OU was to be sent to Wychavon District Council in this regard.

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155 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor A Humphries declared an interest in Agenda Item 4(a) – Planning Applications, W/16/02093/PP, inasmuch as the applicant, a former Town Councillor, was a member of the same political party. Individual councillors confirmed that they knew the applicant.

156 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 17 OCTOBER 2016

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 17 October 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to:

- Public Questions, the word ‘confirmed’ to be deleted and replaced with ‘hoped’ with relevance to the revised response of the Highways Officers to Planning Application W/16/01978/PN, Droitwich Police Station;
- Minute No 143 – Vehicle Activated Signs (VASs), clarification that purchase of a permanent VAS would be sought by County Councillor Mrs P E Davey and that the Town Clerk was to arrange for a mobile VAS in the interim to be placed at the Lyttelton Road location.

157 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

RESOLVED

That the comments of the Planning Committee upon the planning applications received from Wychavon District Council, appended as a schedule to these Minutes, be approved.

158 AMENDED PLANNING APPLICATIONS

There were none.

159 DECISIONS OF THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY

Wychavon District Council, the Local Planning Authority, had issued fourteen approval notices, all but two of which accorded with the recommendations of the Town Council. The Town Clerk advised of the details of these two which were W/15/01814/OU – Land North of Pulley Lane and Newland Lane, Newland and W/16/01978/PN – Droitwich Police Station. No refusal notices had been issued.

With regard to W/16/01978/PN – Droitwich Police Station, Councillor G R Brookes had circulated a written report to all Town Councillors. He advised upon his concerns as Local Ward Member which he had expressed in an email to Wychavon District Council as early as 9 September 2016 but thereafter he considered that the correct procedures had not been followed. Matters raised included the lack of consultation with Droitwich Pharmacy and the absence of any comments from Worcestershire County Council Highways Officers. He outlined the sequence of events including the receipt of comments from the Town Council’s Planning Committee meeting on 17 October. The Committee noted the legal situation with regarding the probability of revocation of the planning approval. Councillor Brookes

queried matters regarding supporting procedures for individual planning officers at Wychavon District Council.

The Town Clerk advised that the response from Mr G Williams, Head of Housing and Planning for Malvern Hills and Wychavon District Councils to Councillor Brookes dated 25 October 2016 had been circulated to all Town Councillors and given that this related to the internal procedures at Wychavon District Council then perhaps the matter could be referred to the District Council for review. Councillor T J Noyes advised that all Town Councillors should look at the Planning Applications and identify any concerns as soon as possible. The Town Clerk reminded Members that given the timing of the Town Council's Planning Committee meetings and the requirement for the Local Planning Authority to turn around the planning applications within a set period, they should review the Weekly List of Planning Applications and as an individual register any concerns with the District Council, plus advise her and the relevant District Ward Councillor(s) accordingly.

Councillor A Humphries thanked Councillor Brookes for his diligence and proposed the following:

“That the Town Clerk be invited to write to the Highway Authority (Worcestershire County Council) and seek answers to the following questions in light of the decision taken by the Planning Authority (Wychavon District Council) to allow the above planning application despite and notwithstanding the objections received from interested groups and individuals in Droitwich: Was the Highway Authority aware, at the time it received notification of the above planning application that, if successfully granted, the following could occur: -

1. *That any vehicles (not just marked Police cars) could be lawfully parked in the designated area?*
2. *That any vehicles (not just marked Police cars) may enter the site in a forward's direction or reverse onto the site from the carriageway, crossing the pedestrian footpath as they do so?*
3. *That a vehicle of any size (not just marked Police vehicles) which the site can accommodate may be parked there, for example a parcel delivery or builders' van?*
4. *That whilst the planning permission refers to a total of 4 vehicles, it would not be practicable and highly unlikely that this number be enforced. Therefore, vehicles could occasionally be parked “solid” occupying the whole of the designated area.*
5. *That a vehicle (not just marked Police vehicles) could be parked in the entrance to the car park so as to partially block the footpath? (It is accepted that this is not necessarily a traffic offence as such).*
6. *That notwithstanding the suggestions made in this application that all vehicles (not just marked Police vehicles) may exit the site in a forwards or reverse direction as it would not be practicable and highly unlikely that these restrictions be enforced?*
7. *That notwithstanding the suggestions made in this application that all vehicles (not just marked Police vehicles) may exit the site by turning left or right (across the traffic stream) if they wish as it would not be practicable and highly unlikely that these restrictions be enforced?*
8. *That it is the opinion of the Planning Authority that the Highway Authority has raised no objections to the above planning application when, in fact, the Highway Authority have made no comment(s) to the planning application made to the Planning Authority?*

The Town Clerk advised that she had been in touch with Mr C J J Hegarty, Managing Director, Malvern Hills and Wychavon District Councils who had confirmed that the Local Planning Authority had not been notified of any proposed material change of use of the

Police Station and that office-based staff undertaking work of the nature proposed might not constitute a material change of use. Also, the planning permission pertained to the land and there was no restriction to marked police cars, it being ultra vires and unenforceable.

Individual councillors then expressed their concerns as to the safety of pedestrians and other highway users, the traffic congestion being considered excessive with bus-stops and health centre in the immediate vicinity, the underpass, schoolchildren using mobile phones etc. Councillor Brookes showed recent photographs of the traffic in the area. He also questioned the relationship between the Police and the Highways Authority, given that it was intended to locate the Safer Roads Partnership officers within the Police Station.

Councillor A Humphries then made a further proposal:

“That the Town Clerk be invited to write to the Planning Authority (Wychavon District Council) with the following request for information:

It is understood that it is no longer intended that Droitwich Police Station be used as a working Police Station rather it will be used in future to house 50 staff for the purpose(s) of enforcing road traffic violations. If this is the case does this not constitute a change of usage of the building when no application to change that usage has been made or seen? Also, if the usage of the building is to be changed in terms of the staff in it undertaking roles not covered by current usage, then does this not mean the above planning application has been made to use the front of the building for a purpose it cannot be used for – the parking of marked police vehicles in front of a building that is not an official Police building?”

The two motions proposed by Councillor A Humphries were seconded by Councillor T J Noyes.

Thereafter it was proposed by Councillor G R Brookes and seconded by Councillor Mrs C Bowden that Wychavon District Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to review the process and procedures pertaining specifically to the granting of planning approval for application reference W/16/01978/PN – Droitwich Police Station.

Upon being put to the vote all three motions were declared carried unanimously.

RESOLVED

1. That the Town Clerk be invited to write to the Highway Authority (Worcestershire County Council) and seek answers to the following questions in light of the decision taken by the Planning Authority (Wychavon District Council) to allow the above planning application despite and notwithstanding the objections received from interested groups and individuals in Droitwich: Was the Highway Authority aware, at the time it received notification of the above planning application that, if successfully granted, the following could occur: -
 1. That any vehicles (not just marked Police cars) could be lawfully parked in the designated area?
 2. That any vehicles (not just marked Police cars) may enter the site in a forward’s direction or reverse onto the site from the carriageway, crossing the pedestrian footpath as they do so?
 3. That a vehicle of any size (not just marked Police vehicles) which the site can accommodate may be parked there, for example a parcel delivery or builders' van?

4. That whilst the planning permission refers to a total of 4 vehicles, it would not be practicable and highly unlikely that this number be enforced. Therefore, vehicles could occasionally be parked “solid” occupying the whole of the designated area.
 5. That a vehicle (not just marked Police vehicles) could be parked in the entrance to the car park so as to partially block the footpath? (It is accepted that this is not necessarily a traffic offence as such).
 6. That notwithstanding the suggestions made in this application that all vehicles (not just marked Police vehicles) may exit the site in a forwards or reverse direction as it would not be practicable and highly unlikely that these restrictions be enforced?
 7. That notwithstanding the suggestions made in this application that all vehicles (not just marked Police vehicles) may exit the site by turning left or right (across the traffic stream) if they wish as it would not be practicable and highly unlikely that these restrictions be enforced?
 8. That it is the opinion of the Planning Authority that the Highway Authority has raised no objections to the above planning application when, in fact, the Highway Authority have made no comment(s) to the planning application made to the Planning Authority?
2. That the Town Clerk be invited to write to the Planning Authority (Wychavon District Council) with the following request for information:
- It is understood that it is no longer intended that Droitwich Police Station be used as a working Police Station rather it will be used in future to house 50 staff for the purpose(s) of enforcing road traffic violations. If this is the case does this not constitute a change of usage of the building when no application to change that usage has been made or seen? Also, if the usage of the building is to be changed in terms of the staff in it undertaking roles not covered by current usage, then does this not mean the above planning application has been made to use the front of the building for a purpose it cannot be used for – the parking of marked police vehicles in front of a building that is not an official Police building?
3. That that Wychavon District Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to review the process and procedures pertaining specifically to the granting of planning approval for application reference W/16/01978/PN – Droitwich Police Station.

160 SOUTH WORCESTERSHIRE DEVELOPMENT PLAN – NOTIFICATION OF CONSULTATION ON THE WYCHAVON AND MALVERN HILLS DISTRICT DRAFT SHOP FRONT DESIGN GUIDE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS (SEPTEMBER 2016)

The Committee was advised that to progress implementation of the policies within the recently adopted South Worcestershire Development Plan, the three South Worcestershire Councils (Malvern Hills District, Worcester City and Wychavon District) had arranged for formal consultation upon the above-mentioned SPD. A new SPD had been produced to update the guidance to reflect aspirations for shop front design and to reflect current South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) policies, and nationally, the National Planning Policy Framework as well as current planning advice, with the aim of achieving attractive shopping streets that appeal to both locals and visitors. The overall aim of the SPDs was to explain the vision for the design of shop fronts and signage, including the installation of signage, lighting and security measures to retail units, catering, financial and professional service businesses located within the historic shopping areas. No comments were made thereon.

161 SOUTH WORCESTERSHIRE DEVELOPMENT PLAN – ADOPTION OF SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS (SPD)

It was noted that the following SPDs had now been adopted.

- Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
- Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

162 WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 (AS AMENDED) (DISTRICT OF WYCHAVON – DROITWICH) (PERMITTED PARKING AREA AND SPECIAL PARKING AREA (WAITING RESTRICTIONS AND STREET PARKING PLACES) CONSOLIDATION ORDER 2004 (VARIATION) ORDER 2016 [PROHIBITION OF WAITING ON BLACKFRIARS AVENUE, SPA ROAD, MANNING ROAD, BURRISH STREET, AND MILLER STREET, DROITWICH]

The information was noted, the Town Council had supported the making of the Order (See Minute No 19, 6 June 2016).

163 WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – ROAD TRAFFIC ACT 1984 (AS AMENDED) (DISTRICT OF WYCHAVON - DROITWICH) (PERMITTED PARKING AREA AND SPECIAL PARKING AREA) (WAITING RESTRICTIONS AND STREET PARKING PLACES) CONSOLIDATION ORDER 2004 (VARIATION) ORDER 2016 [REVOCATION OF DISABLED PERSONS' PARKING PLACE ON FARRIERS CLOSE, DROITWICH]

The details were noted.

The meeting ended at 6.58pm.

Chairman of Committee
12 December 2016

Chairman of Council
30 January 2017