

**Minutes of the Planning, Highways and Transport Committee held on Thursday 12th February 2015 in St James Church Rooms, Pottergate, Alnwick at 6.00pm**

**Present:** Cllrs R Roberts (Chairman), P Edge, D Farrar, M Harrington, P Holt, J Humphries, K Moore, A Shilton and A Symmonds.

**In attendance:** W Batey, Town Clerk; J Pibworth, Admin Assistant.

**P14/76 Apologies**

Cllrs W Grisdale, P Broom.

**P14/77 Declarations of Interest**

None.

**P14/78 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 15th January 2015 were approved and they were duly signed by the Committee Chairman.

**P14/79 Matters Arising**

**P14/68** (P14/50) Proposed New High School - Councillor Roberts advised that she had received a reply from Vivien Robinson (NCC) but this did not mention a meeting.

**P14/72** Parking issues - The Town Clerk advised that whilst in Alnwick for a meeting on February 11th between County Councillors and County Officers including a Conservation Officer to discuss the cobbles, they had also looked at a potential location for a cycle rack in the Market Place. A location at the end of Northumberland Hall was agreed. The Town Clerk advised that he would request details from NCC regarding the design.

The following decision notices had been received:

**15/00032/FELTPO** 3 Belvedere Terrace, Alnwick NE66 2NX Fell 1no. Swamp Cypress. - **GRANTED.**

**14/03633/FUL** 46 Bondgate Within, Alnwick NE66 1JD Proposal for internal and external and decorative shop front alterations - **GRANTED.**

**14/04084/LBC** 9 St Percy Terrace, Alnwick NE66 1AF Listed building consent for rear kitchen extension - **GRANTED.**

**P14/80 To Minute responses made since last meeting**

No responses have been made since the last meeting.

**P14/81 Core Strategy Consultation and the Council response**

The Town Clerk outlined the document he had prepared and circulated in respect of the Town Council's response to NCC's Core Strategy document. He felt that the Core Strategy document has become more generic so is less helpful. He identified some key points in the proposed draft reply:

Question 5 - this currently contained a very weak description of Alnwick and he would prepare additional text for this section.

Question 11 - the previous version identified 12 hectares allocated within Alnwick, as employment land, but the revised version does not have a number specified.

Question 22 - the previous version proposed 1,000 additional houses for Alnwick but the revised version proposes 1,020 houses. The draft response suggests that a small additional number of houses could be accommodated in Alnwick.

Councillor Farrar asked if this was in line with the information in the Neighbourhood

Plan. The Town Clerk advised that the Section Lead for Housing had revised the text to accommodate this.

Councillor Farrar advised that the reply should reflect concerns about the green infrastructure. He felt NCC were moving farther away from the requirements as Alnwick needs to have more green space.

Councillor Harrington felt it was very important that Alnwick had an increased number of houses as this would attract companies and retailers who use population as a factor for choosing towns for new sites.

Councillor Moore asked if some of the land was in Denwick. The Town Clerk confirmed that it was.

Councillor Humphries was concerned about supply and demand as without housing you don't attract industry.

Councillor Roberts thought that perhaps it was the type and size of houses that was not right and that instead of 4/5 bedroom houses 1/2 bedroom houses / flats were needed.

Councillor Harrington reiterated that Alnwick is a good commuter town and that it was key to get more housing which would attract more businesses and people.

Councillor Farrar commented that the reply could annotate the need for everything to be in proportion: housing - industry - green space.

Councillor Holt advised that recent information had suggested that the population of Alnwick would fall over the next 10 years and felt it was important that the Town Council knew the actual population of Alnwick rather than the registered number.

**RESOLVED: The Town Clerk to collate councillor comments, based on the discussion, and submit to NCC.**

#### **P14/82 Consultation on the NCC subsidised bus service review**

The Town Clerk informed councillors that comments needed to be submitted to NCC by March 26th 2015.

Councillor Farrar advised that a significant number of the bus services that run North, East and West from Alnwick are subsidised. The only ones not subsidised are those that run South from Alnwick. He also advised that none of the proposed alternative methods suggested using tourism as a criteria.

The Town Clerk advised that, as the information did not identify the level of subsidy made on each route, he would request detailed information from NCC.

Councillor Humphries advised that tourists do use the bus services. Councillor Roberts commented that many bus services did have summer / winter services.

Councillor Farrar asked if comments could be submitted outside the questionnaire. The Town Clerk advised that they could.

Councillor Moore asked if there were any transport user groups in the area. Councillor Roberts advised that she wasn't aware of any. She also suggested that the Town Council might want to make use of The Gazette to highlight the issue once more information had been received from NCC.

**RESOLVED: i) To contact the Gazette to highlight any issues once more information is received from NCC; ii) Councillors to bring comments to the next Planning meeting in March.**

**P14/83 Consultation on the NCC planning Review**

Councillor Farrar gave an overview of the document that had been circulated regarding the NCC Planning Review letter. He felt that there were a lot of discrepancies in the letter and that NCC used benchmarking when it suited them.

The Town Clerk advised that the letter from NCC gave a number of suggestions regarding the level to which Town and Parish Councils could be involved in the planning application decision process. The letter makes reference to the Deloitte report which makes several recommendations one of which is to review the triggers that result in applications being taken to committee. One such trigger occurs if a Town or Parish Council objects to an application, and this is being reviewed for removal.

The Town Clerk also advised that if all necessary planning training was carried out with Town and Parish councillors comments on planning applications would be appropriate.

Councillor Harrington felt that the Town Council need to be mindful of legal implications about their comments on planning applications.

The Town Clerk advised that NCC need to be inclusive and give feedback to T&PCs.

Councillor Symmonds commented that if objections by T&PCs were made solely on planning issues then they should be taken forward to the appropriate NCC Area Planning Committee. If not, officers should give feedback to the relevant Town & Parish Council.

Councillor Roberts suggested that the comments about limiting the number of objections submitted by Town or Parish Council be taken out of the draft reply.

Councillor Roberts also thanked Councillor Farrar for his work on this issue.

**RESOLVED: Town Clerk to email drafted reply to all councillors then submit to NCC by February 19<sup>th</sup>.**

**P14/84 Planning Applications**

The following applications were discussed and comments made as listed:

**15/00155/LBC The Olde Cross, 32 Narrowgate, Alnwick** Listed Building Consent to remove existing non original finishes to existing walls to expose original masonry and repoint using a lime sand mortar, existing fire places to be retained; underboard existing ceilings - **NO OBJECTIONS.**

**15/00241/FUL 10 Coopers Close, Alnwick** Proposed first floor bedroom extension over existing garage - **NO OBJECTIONS.**

**15/00265/FUL 30 Bondgate Within, Alnwick** Proposal to replace existing external self-service machine (HSBC) - **NO OBJECTIONS.**

**15/00269/FELTPO 1 Ravenslaw Gardens, Alnwick** Works to tree protected by TPO; Fell one lime tree and replace with sorbus aucuparia 'Joseph Rock' and sorbus aucuparia 'Cashmiriana' - **NO OBJECTIONS.** Councillors Farrar and Edge visited to the site and had identified that the tree had been pruned badly in the past so recommended replacement.

**15/00196/LBC 10a Haig Street, Alnwick** Renewal of 4no. casements windows with new casement windows including double glazing. Provision of 1no. new casement window with double glazing. Refurbishment of 2no. vertical sliding sash window. Renewal of timber flush door to match existing. (all timber) - **NO OBJECTIONS.**

**15/00345/FUL Thomas Percy Rc Middle School, Blakelaw Road, Alnwick NE66 1AZ** Construction of 15 no. dwellings consisting of 3 & 4 bed. properties and associated garages and landscaping.

#### COUNCILLOR COMMENTS:

Councillor Moore thought the artist's impression included with the planning application made the site look more spacious than it actually was.

Councillor Roberts advised that there seemed to be a level of non-compliance with regard to the amount of affordable housing included in the plans. The Town Clerk advised that NCC had stated affordable housing was needed on the site but that the applicant had advised NCC that this was not viable for them to include.

Councillor Harrington felt it was important to work with this planning application to move things forward.

Councillor Moore asked if the Town Council could approve with recommendations. Councillor Roberts advised that the current planning application had no affordable housing included at all.

Councillor Edge commented that NCC had stated that money could be offered to provide affordable housing elsewhere and asked if this was usual. The Town Clerk advised that it could be and that the site could be specified in Alnwick. Councillor Roberts was concerned that there may be no other site suitable for affordable housing.

Councillor Farrar reminded the committee that the need to provide affordable housing in development was a contractual obligation.

Councillor Holt felt that the applicant must have done their homework regarding what was possible on the site. She also said it was difficult to know what had gone on between the application and NCC.

Councillor Harrington advised that the builders will have priced the site and couldn't make the figures work out for them.

Councillor Farrar also felt that the entrance could be an issue due to the amount of traffic.

**- Alnwick Town Council support the application if affordable housing is made available. If affordable housing is not provided, we do not support the application. We also believe highways improvements are needed at the entranceway to ease congestion and make this application acceptable.**

#### **P14/85 Any Other Urgent Business**

None.

The meeting closed at 7.02 p.m.