

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

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

In attendance: Cllr G Castle, W Batey, Town Clerk; J Pibworth, Admin Assistant.

P14/86 Apologies

Cllr W Grisdale.

P14/87 Declarations of Interest

Councillors Roberts and Farrar declared an interest in planning application 15/00569/FUL as they knew one of the neighbouring owners.

P14/88 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 12th February 2015 were approved and they were duly signed by the Committee Chairman.

P14/89 Matters Arising

P14/79 (P14/72) Councillor Farrar asked if there was any update on the design for the cycle rack in the Market Place. Councillor Castle advised that it had been agreed that it would be stainless steel and that a number of design options would be sent out. Councillor Symmonds asked about its location. The Town Clerk advised that it would be located at the north end of Northumberland Hall.

The following decision notices had been received:

14/03222/PRUTPO Longknowe, Alnmouth Road, Alnwick NE66 2PT Tree preservation order application to remove a branch from one Cherry tree, crown raise seven Sycamores by four metres and removal of one damaged stem on Cypress - **GRANTED.**

14/04208/FUL The Olde Cross, 32 Narrowgate, Alnwick NE66 1JG Internal and external alterations to existing public house which is a Listed Building - **GRANTED.**

14/04209/LBC The Olde Cross, 32 Narrowgate, Alnwick NE66 1JG Internal and external alterations to existing public house which is a Listed Building - **GRANTED.**

15/00241/FUL 10 Coopers Close, Alnwick NE66 1BU Proposed first floor bedroom extension over existing garage - **GRANTED.**

P14/90 To Minute responses made since last meeting

15/00220/FELTPO 2 Springfield Meadows, Alnwick TPO application to fell Field Maple - **RESPONSE** Having visited the site we are not convinced that this tree is a Field Maple as suggested and are surprised with the conclusion to fell the tree. We suggest the Planning Authority visit and if necessary take independent advice to form an opinion, if this cannot be done we object to the application. In the event of removal being approved we would request a replacement tree is planted.

15/00220/FELTPO 1 Springfield Meadows, Alnwick TPO Fell 1 Oak Tree - **RESPONSE** Having visited the site we are surprised with the conclusion to fell the tree. We suggest the Planning Authority visit and if necessary take independent advice to form an opinion, if this cannot be done we object to the application. In the event of removal being approved we would request a replacement tree is planted.

P14/91 Consultation on the NCC subsidised bus service review

The Town Clerk informed councillors that at the last planning meeting it had been difficult to comment due to the lack of information about the routes. He advised he had spoken to Kirsten Francis from NCC who had informed him that, as this was a consultation on the process and criteria, no detailed information would be given out. She advised that NCC will then have discussions with communities which might be affected.

Councillor Farrar was still concerned about the criteria as a lot of the journeys covered both rural and town centre locations so it was difficult to determine the type of service they were categorised as. He also felt that the times of day of some of the services needed to be taken into consideration. His comments had been circulated to councillors.

Councillor Castle advised that he had chaired the meeting three years ago that had decided on the subsidies. He also advised that the length of the journey stretches the subsidy and that urban journeys get less subsidy than rural ones. He also informed councillors that bus companies need to give a 50 day notice period informing users of the termination of a service once any subsidy is withdrawn. He said that as there was less money, there needed to be a revised system.

RESOLVED: To submit comments to NCC regarding bus review.

P14/92 Consultation on the NCC planning Review

Councillor Roberts reminded the committee that the Town Council had been sent comments from NCC which had been circulated by the Town Clerk for review.

The Town Clerk gave an overview of the document that had been circulated. He advised that NCC had received 103 responses from Town & Parish Councils (T&PCs), out of a possible 150. He advised that the 57 pages of detailed comments had been categorised under 5 headings, that the document had been through Scrutiny and Policy Board and that the last stage was for it to go to the next NCC Council Meeting on April 1st.

He also advised that he had received an email from the Parish Clerk from Stannington Parish Council suggesting that each T&PC send a representative to the NCC meeting.

Councillor Farrar said that the whole process felt like a complete whitewash and was disappointed that it seems to negate engaging with any T&PCs at all.

Councillor Broom asked if it was NCC's idea to change the planning processes or was it a national decision. The Town Clerk advised it was just NCC. He also confirmed that NCC are in the bottom 30 authorities in the country for time taken to review planning applications and the proposals were seen as the way to improve response times.

Councillor Castle advised that he was a member of the Audit Committee which had had the report presented to them but told that they could not change it at all. He also advised it was the Policy Board that had decided to remove the automatic triggers from Town & Parish Councils or 5 objections from the public but that T&PCs would still be asked for comments. He also advised that it had been proposed that County Councillors would not be able to vote on applications in their own ward but could address the committee. He confirmed that he would be unhappy if officers make too many decisions without it going to any committee.

Councillor Castle also informed the planning committee that NCC were suggesting all planning meetings are held at 2pm and that the number of NCC Planning Committees was reduced from the current three to two - one for major developments and the other for other applications. 90% of planning applications that come to NCC compared to a national figure of 93%. He also advised that the report and its recommendations may be called in by the Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Farrar asked if County Councillors can still refer applications to the Planning

Committee. Councillor Castle advised that this was not necessarily the case. Councillor Castle has since advised that the County Council can still refer the application to the Planning Committee, contrary to his previous statement.

Councillor Humphries advised that he had attended the NCC Planning meeting in February and that it seemed to him that they were trying to deal with too many applications. He felt that some of the smaller planning applications could be decided by T&PCs. Councillor Castle advised that this would not be legal.

Councillor Roberts thought as the Town Council had been encouraged to attend the NCC meeting on April 1st they should have at least one representative there.

Councillor Harrington felt this might be unproductive as the Town Council might be able to have any input.

Councillor Symmonds felt that as attending the meeting was part of the democratic process he proposed that the Town Council send a representative.

Councillor Farrar asked if the Town Council could email the chair of the Scrutiny Committee to ask if the report was being called in.

Councillor Holt advised that she would go to the NCC meeting if possible but felt it was important that someone from the Town Council should attend as it would enable them to speak to other people in the same situation.

The Town Clerk advised that he would email councillor about attendance at the NCC Board Meeting on April 1st.

RESOLVED: Town Clerk to email NCC Scrutiny Committee chair to enquire about situation regarding Planning Review report.

P14/93

Planning Applications

The following applications were discussed and comments made as listed:

15/00463/FUL 32 Stott Street, Alnwick, NE66 1QA Proposed two storey rear extension and associated works - **NO OBJECTIONS.**

15/00550/LBC First Floor Lloyds Bank Chambers, 24 Bondgate Within, Alnwick, NE66 1TD Listed building consent to place a wall mounted single sided fibre glass sign - **NO OBJECTIONS.**

15/00512/FUL Land North East of Leisure Centre, Willowburn Avenue, Alnwick, NE66 2JH Construction of a retail unit with associated serving yard, and the provision of additional car parking including accessible parking.

Councillor comments:

The Town Clerk advised that the site would be used by Pets at Home at Willowburn.

Councillor Moore said that he understood that veterinary services were also going to be offered onsite.

Councillor Farrar felt that, because the new application had additional floor space, a new retail impact test should be done to determine whether it would affect the vitality of the town centre. He was also concerned about the additional traffic the site would create.

Councillor Humphries asked if the motor access was off the Sainsbury's roundabout and where the parking would be. The Town Clerk advised that the access was off the Sainsbury's roundabout and that 35 new spaces had been allocated on top of the ones

already designated for this site.

ALNWICK TOWN COUNCIL feel the decision must be based on an up to date town centre impact study which takes into account the increased floor space and the cumulative effect of other developments since the last planning application. We are also concerned about the possible congestion that this new development might now cause which, alongside the new school development, will add even more traffic to this part of the town.

15/00569/FUL 173 Allerburn Lea, Alnwick NE66 2QR. Proposed 2 storey rear extension over the existing single storey sunroom complete with first and second floor balconies. Councillors Roberts and Farrar left the room for discussions on this application and Councillor Harrington took the chair.

Councillor Humphries felt the proposed design was completely out of character and proportion for the location and that it would overlook other people.

Councillor Broom said that although the property was at the back of Allerburn Lea the proposed changes did seem out of proportion to other houses.

Councillor Symmonds felt that the Town Council should object as it was too big and totally out of proportion and felt that the inclusion of two balconies seemed excessive.

Councillor Harrington advised that planning permission could be granted without the balconies. The applicant could apply later for permission for the balconies having put the access doors in place as part of this application.

Councillor Moore said he supported Councillor Symmonds' comments.

- OBJECT as the proposed development is totally out of proportion and character with the neighbouring properties.

P14/94 Any Other Urgent Business

Councillor Moore reported that he was concerned about road safety during the road works on the A1. He felt that reflective material was needed on the concrete barrier as it was difficult to differentiate between the barrier and the road at certain times of the day.

Councillor Moore advised the committee that the Christmas sign was still attached to the outside of the RAFA Club. Councillor Castle asked it was a listed building. Councillor Moore confirmed it was and Councillor Castle advised that the sign needed to come down.

The meeting closed at 7.01 p.m.