

UNADOPTED

POLEGATE TOWN COUNCIL

PLANNING MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2007 in the Council Chamber, 49 High Street, Polegate at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Cllrs. T. Voyce (Chair), S. Barber, Mrs C. Berry, G. Carter, Mrs M. Piper, J. Rogers, Mrs J. Voyce and T. Wright

In Attendance: Cllrs. Mrs J Bigsby, R. Martin
Approx. 60 - 70 members of the public and 1 member of the press

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised residents that they would have an opportunity to put forward their comments later in the meeting. The committee was requested to accept an additional item to the agenda, election of Vice-Chair, and this was agreed by all.

7561 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs. Harmer and Mrs Scarborough.

7562 Declarations of interest

Cllr. Mrs Berry declared a personal interest in application no. WD/2007/1054/MEA .

7563 Election of Vice-Chair

The Chair called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair. A proposal was put forward that Cllr. Rogers be offered this position and this was seconded and agreed by all. Cllr. Rogers confirmed his acceptance of the position of Vice-Chair for the ensuing year.

7564 Minutes of the meeting held on 1 May 2007

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 May 2007 were adopted as correct and signed by the Chair.

7565 Matters arising from the meeting held on 1 May 2007

There were no matters arising.

7566 Planning applications

WD/2007/1054/MEA Land to the east of Shepham Lane, Polegate (Local Plan PW2 site). The construction of 260 dwellings, a new roundabout access onto Dittons Road, an emergency access and footway/cycleway onto Shepham Lane, internal access roads, footpaths and cycleways, open space areas and landscaping.

Members were advised that an objection had been received via e-mail. This was read for the benefit of members and the public. One letter outlining a different vision for large scale developments had also been received and this was shared with the committee and the public. In addition members were advised that it was believed a petition had been raised objecting to the proposed development but that it had not been handed in to the Town Council.

The Chair then pointed out to residents that the Town Council acted in the capacity of consultee only and that the determination of all planning applications was the responsibility of Wealden District Council. This is a difficult application for the planning committee to comment on as any development in the town has become very emotive. As always, councillors endeavour to represent the majority of residents within the town and the consensus of opinion is most definitely that major development is not wanted. To that end, the idea of a new settlement at Berwick is being explored and the Council fully supports the principle, albeit the concept is in its infancy.

The Town Council had previously expressed comments and concerns regarding a development on this site, not least in connection with access, increased traffic onto Dittons Road, availability of school places and lack of planning gain. However, this site is designated suitable for residential development within the non-statutory local plan and it is likely Wealden will approve the application, subject to agreement of the detail.

The Chair then proposed that Standing Orders be suspended to allow members of the public to address the committee and this was seconded and agreed by all.

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENDED

A resident then spoke and stated that she represented approximately 400 residents and listed their objections as follows:

- Unacceptable number of additional vehicle movements around the area
- Roundabout at Dittons Corner would be a major hazard, despite traffic calming, as it is located on a blind bend

- Already dangerous to access the Cophall roundabout from Hailsham Road
- Extra traffic using the A27
- Lack of parking in the town
- Medical/dentist facilities already overburdened
- No places available at local schools
- Sewer system unable to cope with existing housing
- no facilities for youth therefore increase in vandalism and anti social behaviour
- no police resources to deal with additional call outs

Another resident reiterated concerns and stated that the proposed development was in the wrong location for the amount of traffic it would generate particularly as most households had at least two cars. Dittons Road is already used as a rat run and is becoming busier all the time. More accidents would occur on the A27. Inadequate parking for shops and the rail station. Sewage already seeps into people's gardens from the drains and sewers cannot cope with additional housing.

Other comments included lack of bus services with nothing at all during the evenings or on Sundays. If the site does go ahead it will take five years to build and during that time approx. 20/30 lorries will be visiting the site daily. Protection of trees and hedgerows. The access onto the cuckoo trail is a hazard as Levett Road and Shepham Lane will become a rat run.

The Chair thanked the public for their input and reinstated Standing Orders.

STANDING ORDERS REINSTATED

The Chair then opened the discussion up to members of the committee.

Following discussion it was generally agreed that the response to Wealden was that there should be no major development in Polegate; that the preferred option was for a new settlement at Berwick subject to the A27 improvements, dual carriageway from Polegate to Middle Farm and that a list of comments and observations in respect of the development at Shepham Lane be submitted.

The comments and observations were read out for the benefit of members and the public prior to a vote on the above proposal being taken.

In favour: 7

Against: 1

(Cllr. Mrs Berry stated that she wished her objection to the development and the new settlement at Berwick to be recorded.)

Comments and Observations:

1. It is considered that the entire housing allocation of 30% should be retained on the site for the benefit of Polegate.
2. The affordable housing should be spread out more evenly on the site to avoid social housing pockets.
3. A bus service should be provided on the site, perhaps along the lines of the Cuckmere Community Bus, and a sum to be ring fenced for this purpose.
4. The bus service along Dittons Road should be improved.
5. Concern is expressed regarding the lack of educational facilities in the area, particularly as there is likely to be a 10% increase in demand with an anticipated increase in population of 805.
6. Council would like to see a condition imposed that no development should commence until the improvements to the A27 link are completed.
7. A condition to also be imposed that all lorries be routed via the bypass and not Hailsham Road until building completed.
8. There is no mention of street lighting for the site in the application. The Dittons Road area has been identified by police as a high risk area for crime and lack of street lighting would only exacerbate the problems.
9. Street lighting on Dittons Road and Pevensey Road should be improved.
10. Traffic calming should be extended along all of Dittons Road.
11. Concern expressed regarding the lack of a formal play area. A structured play area and additional kick-about area should be provided plus an additional facility for the older teens.
12. The proposals do not provide any incentives for people to shop in Polegate.
13. There will be an increase in noise and disturbance to surrounding properties.
14. All existing hedgerows and mature trees within the site should be subject to preservation orders.
15. It is formally requested that a special Wealden planning meeting be held at Hailsham to consider this application, rather than it become just another item on the regular planning agenda.

WD/2007/1014/F 36 Albert Road, Polegate. Demolition of existing bungalow and erection of two semi-detached houses with off-street parking.

OBJECTIONS:

1. Overdevelopment
2. Overshadowing of neighbouring property

WD/2007/1104/F 77 Heron Ridge, Polegate. Two-storey side extension.

NO OBJECTIONS

WD/2007/1012/F Units 1&2 Dittons Business Park, Dittons Road, Polegate. Alterations to external elevations of individual units for provision of additional windows, modifications to ramps and walkways. Removal of roller shutter door opening. As relates to the internal modifications I can confirm Wealden District Council issued a Certificate of Proposed Use confirming that the proposed internal refurbishment to create up to 10 office units to support small and medium sized businesses is lawful and does not require planning permission (application no. WD/2007/0722/LDP). Therefore this application relates to external modifications only.

NO OBJECTIONS

7567 Planning Decisions

WD/2007/0722/LDF Internal refurbishment to create up to 10 office units to support small and medium size business. Units 1 & 2 Dittons Business Park, Polegate.

7568 Correspondence

1. WDC invite to attend LDF Issues and Options Paper preview session on 14 June 2007 - it was resolved to book 4 places, if possible, and attendees to include Cllrs. Rogers and Voyce, the Town Clerk and the Assistant Town Clerk.

7569 Planning updates and general information

Members were reminded that no decisions could be taken on items raised under this heading and that it was a facility for sharing information only. Items could however be referred as agenda items for forthcoming meetings.

With reference to planning application no. WD/2007/0910/F, 31 Victoria Road, members were advised that the boundary dispute had now been resolved - noted.

The Honeypot Farm site is still unsightly with a caravan and plant still on the land. It was noted that members would like to see land revert back to agricultural use.

The slip road outside the shops at Millfields is in a poor state of repair and apparently two people have fallen at this site within the last three weeks; and the railing at the bottom of the tarmac running between Millfields and the Community Centre is missing causing a hazard for all users.

The sandwich boards outside Fox & Sons are making it difficult for users of the footway, particularly non-sighted residents.