

SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the proceedings of the **SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING** held at **6.30pm** in the **Council Offices**, Sedgefield, on **Monday 8th August 2016**



Present **Cllr. Mel Carr (Chairman)**
Cllr. Gloria Wills (Vice-Chairman) and
Cllrs. Allan Blakemore, Vanessa Carmichael, Lynne Dentith, Joanne Elliott, Alf Walton
and Dudley Waters

Officer Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies

Cllrs. David Brown, Mark Cant, Tim Jeanes, Chris Lines and Ian Sutherland.

2. Declaration of interest

None

3. Public Participation

The Chairman, Cllr Mel Carr, closed the meeting for the public to give their views and comments. Cllr Carr reminded members of the public about the rules for public participation.

Mr Tony Guest said that he did not know what the Council's recommended way forward with The Sedgefield Plan was going to be but reminded Cllrs that he had forwarded to the Town Council, ahead of their recent meeting with DCC Officers, a draft letter potentially for the Plan's Examiner. Mr Guest pointed out that DCC as the LPA does have the authority to over-ride decisions made by the Independent Examiner. He pointed out the Built Up Area Boundary is the cornerstone of The Sedgefield Plan and the community have very clearly expressed the view throughout the development of the Plan that brownfield sites should be considered first and these would provide enough space for the 300 houses. Mr Guest asked by DCC do not support these site preference survey results? Mr Guest concluded that the Sedgefield Village Action Group will continue to argue that a Neighbourhood Plan without a Built Up Area Boundary is not acceptable.

Mrs Julia Bowles pointed out that the Independent Examiner's Report does acknowledged that the public consultation that was undertaken in the production of The Sedgefield Plan

went over and above what was required and was in fact, in her opinion, participation and involvement. Mrs Bowles said she hoped the Town Council would continue public consultation in this spirit as the community want to be involved in this Plan.

Cllr Carr thanked the public for their comments and then re-opened the meeting.

4. Consideration of Recommended Way Forward For The Sedgefield Plan:

Prior to the meeting a Recommended Way Forward For The Sedgefield Plan Report had been circulated to all Cllrs for consideration. The Clerk read out this report for the benefit of members of the public in attendance at the meeting.

Cllr Gloria Wills proposed the Council proceed with Recommendation 2 in the report, ie to progress The Sedgefield Plan by taking a step back and reviewing Policy 1, starting with a Joint Workshop between the Town Council and DCC Officers on 17th August 2016 (9am – 12 noon) in order to undertake further public consultation and then resubmit to DCC for a further 6 week period of statutory consultation. Cllr Wills acknowledged that Neighbourhood Plans for both Tatenhill and Tattenhall had also had to deal with similar issues to those faced by Sedgefield, however, their cases were not exact and therefore Sedgefield's case needs to be considered on its own merits. She pointed out that there were no strategic area assessments on the areas within the Sedgefield Built Up Area Boundary and acknowledged this approach may have worked if there had been sustainable sites coming forward within 5 years. Cllr Wills said Mr Guest was correct in his earlier comment that as LPA DCC could make a decision on The Sedgefield Plan regardless of the Examiner's Report, however, DCC Officers have said they would not agree with Sedgefield ignoring the Examiner's comments. Cllr Wills said that too much had gone into The Sedgefield Plan to not refine it now. She felt that some of the Built Up Area Boundary could still be retained albeit in a different format as there is room to negotiate and find a compromise. Cllr Lynne Dentith seconded these comments.

Cllr Dudley Waters said that it would be a shame to limit the proposed workshop to just DCC Officers and Town Councillors and felt that people from the Plan's Steering Group should also participate and give the benefit of their experience. Cllr Joanne Elliott suggested that a pre-meet between the Town Council and the Steering Group could be a good way to get an idea of what would be acceptable. Cllr Gloria Wills said the purpose of the meeting was to find out what DCC were offering and then to involve the community. Cllr Lynne Dentith said it would be useful to have maybe one or two members of the Plan's Steering Group in attendance at the workshop to ensure there is a balanced approach to the discussion as they would bring with them extensive knowledge of the Plan's development. Cllr Allan Blakemore supported Cllr Dentith and said the Steering Group had spent over two years working exclusively on the Neighbourhood Plan before bringing it to the Town Council for

adoption. Cllr Blakemore said it was important to involve those who had the knowledge of The Sedgefield Plan and its evidence base as there was no doubt that the best possible compromise now needs to be found to ensure the Plan's progress and future protection for the Town. Cllr Vanessa Carmichael replied that a meeting with the Steering Group could take place after the workshop meeting. Cllr Mel Carr pointed out that by the date of the workshop meeting (17th August 2016) it was possible that there would be some indication as to the way the Eden Drive Planning Application Public Inquiry was progressing which may impact upon this process. Cllr Allan Blakemore asked why there is an objection to other people being invited to attend the forthcoming workshop, particularly those who had been involved in producing the actual plan? Cllr Alf Walton pointed out that before this agenda item the public present did not know the content of the Council's report and he suggested the meeting be closed in order to allow further public participation. Cllr Dudley Waters seconded this. Cllr Wills objected, however, the Chair closed the meeting to allow the public to comment.

Mrs Julia Bowles asked if the Town Council, in their recent discussions with DCC, had questioned the County's position to brownfield sites. Mrs Bowles said the developer for the old Community Hospital site say they can prove sustainability for their brownfield site. She also reported that Pactiv have objected to the old Community hospital site because they feel their site is usable. Mrs Bowles requested the Town Council bear these comments in mind when holding further talks with DCC.

Mr Mort Spalding reported that in October 2013 DCC had looked at the old Community Hospital site with a view to putting 47 executive houses on the 4.7 hectares of land there. DCC then changed their minds to move such housing to Chester le Street and this formed a key part of the former County Durham Plan which has subsequently been withdrawn. Mr Spalding concluded this showed that DCC originally considered the old Community Hospital site as being sustainable.

One lady thanked the Town Council for the opportunity to express views as it was hard to second guess what the Council were going to be discussing. She questioned the influence of DCC over The Sedgefield Plan and expressed her suspicions of their advice and as a member of the community she would like as many people as possible to be involved in the furtherance of the Plan.

Mrs Sarah Guest asked why there was a problem with having people from The Sedgefield Plan Steering Group and Sedgefield Village Action Group participating in the forthcoming workshop. Mr Guest pointed out that the Steering Group was originally appointed by the Town Council to oversee the production of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Mr Pattison expressed his disappointment at the number of Town Councillors not present at

the meeting.

Mrs Janet Spalding said while the Eden Drive Planning Application Public Inquiry will start on 8th August 2016 it could take several weeks or months after its conclusion before a decision is made. Mrs Spalding also reported that Avant Homes have not lodged a planning appeal.

One gentleman asked if it was possible to co-opt someone onto the Town Council in order to attend the forthcoming workshop. Cllr Carr replied that this was not possible.

Mr Tony Guest said he would be happy to volunteer and participate in the forthcoming workshop.

Cllr Carr thanked the public for their comments and re-opened the meeting.

Cllr Allan Blakemore proposed an amendment to Recommendation 2 in the report being considered, i.e. To progress The Sedgefield Plan by taking a step back and reviewing Policy 1, starting with a Joint Workshop between the Town Council, DCC Officers and a maximum of 3 members of The Sedgefield Plan Steering Group on 17th August 2016 (9am – 12 noon) in order to undertake further public consultation and then resubmit to DCC for a further 6 week period of statutory consultation. Cllr Dudley Waters seconded this proposal.

A vote then took place in relation to Cllr Blakemore's proposal with five Councillors voting in favour and three Councillors against.

RESOLVED:

To progress The Sedgefield Plan by taking a step back and reviewing Policy 1, starting with a Joint Workshop between the Town Council, DCC Officers and a maximum of 3 members of The Sedgefield Plan Steering Group on 17th August 2016 (9am – 12 noon) in order to undertake further public consultation and then resubmit to DCC for a further 6 week period of statutory consultation.

5. Cheques for Approval After 11th July 2016:

Details of cheques for approval on 1st August 2016 had been circulated to all Cllrs prior to the meeting. The Clerk circulated copies of cheques for approval on 3rd – 8th August 2016.

RESOLVED:

- i) All cheques were approved for payment.**
- ii) Cllrs Carrs and Wills plus the Town Clerk to duly sign the cheques.**

6. **Consideration of Current Planning Applications:**

A schedule of the current planning applications had been circulated prior to the meeting. Each application was then considered and the following comments were made (Note: number refers to the number on the circulated list):

1. **DM/16/01408/OUT – Outline application with all matters reserved for the erection of 3 no bungalows, Land to the West of 15-17 Wykes Close, Sedgefield:**

Cllr Gloria Wills asked if the old heated wall was to be removed as part of this planning application as this is a feature within the Conservation Area. Cllr Joanne Elliott reported that within the documentation for this application is a statement that the wall is to be maintained.

Cllr Allan Blakemore reported that a member of the public had expressed concerns regarding garages in this area and Livin asking that they be kept vacant. A response had been received from Livin in relation to this question, however, Livin at no time had said anything about this particular planning application. It was agreed that this did not have any impact upon the planning application being considered, however, if Cllrs would like this matter to be put onto a future Environment Committee meeting agenda they should inform the Town Clerk.

Cllrs did not have any objections to this application.

2. **DM/16/02052/FPA – erection of two storey side extension and single storey rear extension, 2 Weterton House Cottages, Sedgefield:**

Cllrs did not have any objections to this application.

3. **DM/16/02273/FPA – erection of single storey front and rear extensions and conversion of garage/store to habitable space, 16 Matfen Court, Sedgefield:**

Cllr Joanne Elliott pointed out the contradiction which is currently being faced in Sedgefield whereby parking is becoming more difficult but garages are being converted. Several Cllrs agreed with Cllr Elliott.

Cllrs did not have any objections to this application.

4. **DM/16/02310/FPA – erection of single storey extensions to the front and rear elevations, and replacement detached garage (resubmission), Glendale Bungalow, Thorpe Larches, Sedgefield:**

Cllrs did not have any objections to this application.

RESOLVED:

The comments on planning applications 1 - 4 above to be submitted to DCC Planners.

The Clerk then circulated to all details of two planning applications which had been published earlier that day by DCC as follows:

DM/16/01802/FPA – erection of aircraft hanger, Fishburn Airfield, Fishburn

DM/16/02550/FPA – replacement agricultural grain store, High Swainston, Wynyard

RESOLVED:

Cllrs to forward any comments on the above planning applications to the Town Clerk by no later than 23rd August 2016.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.08pm.