

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
HEDNESFORD COMMUNITY FORUM

WEDNESDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2014 AT 7.00 P.M.

HELD AT THE MUSEUM OF CANNOCK CHASE, VALLEY ROAD, HEDNESFORD

PRESENT: Adamson, G. (Chairman)
Pearson, A. (Vice-Chairman)

District Councillors:
Ball, G.D. Gamble, B.
Cartwright, Mrs S.M. Todd, R.

Other District
Councillors:
Mrs. D.M. Todd (Heath Hayes East & Wimblebury Ward)

County
Councillors:
Mrs C. Mitchell (Hednesford Division)

District
Officers:
I. Tennant, Head of Housing & Waste Management
M. Berry, Senior Committee Officer
Ms. K. McBey, PR & Marketing Officer

Also present:
Local residents x 2
Inspector P. Cooke, Cannock Local Policing Team, Staffordshire Police
Sergeant C. Higgins, Cannock Local Policing Team, Staffordshire Police
D. Ballett, Brindley Heath Parish Council and Friends of Hednesford Park

1. Apologies

No apologies were received.

2. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restriction on Voting by Members

Councillor Pearson declared a personal interest in relation to item 7c of the Agenda as it had been submitted by his son, Mr A. Pearson.

3. Notes

The Notes of the meeting held on 01 July, 2014, were agreed as a correct record.

4. Questions for Staffordshire Police

No questions had been submitted in advance of the meeting; however Inspector P. Cooke and Sergeant C. Higgins from the Cannock Local Policing Team were in attendance to take questions from the floor.

Councillor Pearson reported there had been recurring problems of cars being raced around the Tesco car park, and requested that the Police increase patrols of the area to try and resolve the issue.

Inspector Cooke replied that increasing visible patrols would have the effect of only tackling the problem at the specific time it was happening, whereas a more effective approach would be to identify the persons involved and target how and when the incidents were likely to occur. However, it was also planned to increase general patrols by the road policing team on arterial routes around Hednesford and the wider District.

Councillor Pearson then raised a general comment about residents having difficulties reporting incidents via the 101 non-emergency telephone number.

Inspector Cooke replied that the Police were originally installed as the first point of contact for the 101 service, however this had proved to be too resource heavy and was not having the desired impact, so civilian staff were being used instead to better manage it.

Councillor Cartwright reported that instances of drug dealing and taking were still taking place in the area.

Inspector Cooke replied that a targeted plan was being rolled out across the District to tackle this issue, supported by new anti-social behaviour legislation due to come into force from October 2014 which would give the police greater powers to deal with it more effectively.

Councillor B. Todd also reported that the use of 'legal highs' was a continuing problem in the area.

Inspector Cooke replied that the Police were aware of this issue and actively working with the Burton Addiction Centre and Staffordshire County Council's Trading Standards team to tackle it, however legislation was still required from central government in order to deal with it properly.

5. Questions for Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Services

No questions had been submitted in advance of the meeting.

6. Questions for Staffordshire County Council Highways Department

No questions had been submitted in advance of the meeting.

7. Questions for Cannock Chase District Council

7a. Councillor G. Ball – Update on Hednesford Town Centre

I. Tennant, Head of Housing & Waste Management, provided the following update on behalf of the Planning & Economic Development Services Manager:

“At the last Hednesford Community Forum it was noted that the Hednesford Town Centre Regeneration Programme was effectively complete. However, officers are still dealing with a small number of residual issues. An update on these issues can be found below:-

- The final unit on the Victoria Shopping Park has now been let to Marie Curie Hospice. As a consequence the scheme is now fully let and St Modwen is in the process of selling the development to an investment company who will take on responsibility for its long term management.*
- In contrast, some of the new units at the end of Market Street by the traffic lights are still available to rent. However, two lettings are in the hands of solicitors.*
- The Council have commissioned a survey to quantify the number of vehicles using the Rugeley Road Car Park, and their typical length of stay. This report shows that the car park is coping well with current levels of demand and no further changes to the parking restrictions are anticipated.”*

Councillor Ball raised that the mound of land which bordered the railway station and Anglesey Street car park was in need of tidying up.

Councillor Pearson replied that the District Council and Hednesford Town Council had put pressure on London Midland (as the owners of the land) to tidy up the site. Furthermore, the Town Council had also requested that it be given ownership of the land from London Midland, however this request had not been granted, despite the Town Council helping to keep the land maintained.

7b. Councillor G. Ball – Update on Hednesford Park

The following update was provided by Mr T. Walsh, Parks & Open Spaces Manager, in advance of the meeting:

*“**Procurement** – The Council is currently following the procurement guidelines and is using the County Councils e-tendering system. This means that there are 2 stages to the procurement - a Pre Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) and an Invitation to Tender (ITT). When PQQs are returned, the Council receives these from the County Council for evaluation. The ITT is sent to the Council in two parts for evaluation, firstly the quality aspects are scored and following evaluation of these then the prices are sent through for evaluation. We are currently looking at securing tenders*

for;

- **Hard works** – This is for the existing car park and extension tarmacing, extension from rear of extended car park to rear of skate park (existing) , laying of new main and secondary paths and replacement of the War Memorial path way.

The County Council e-tendering system was used. There were 8 PQQs returned in June 2014. Following evaluation five were invited to tender. The tenders were returned in August and these are currently being evaluated.

- **Pavilion Extension/Cafe** – The County Council e-tendering system was used. The PQQs are due back in September.
- **Skate Park** – The County Council e-tendering system was used. Three companies have returned a completed PPQ which is currently being evaluated. A presentation to and evaluation by young people will form part of the process when the ITT is returned.
- **Play facilities** - we have used ESPO (Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation) which is one of the largest public sector professional buying organisations. It operates on a not-for-profit cost recovery basis and is committed to delivering best value to customers, suppliers and local communities. Nine companies are interested in being involved in the play area development. We have had a site meeting with these companies to respond to clarifications. Companies will be required to give a presentation to children on their proposals and the views of children will form part of the evaluation process. Although this will increase the procurement timescale we feel that it will have enormous benefits to the community. “

7c. Mr A. Pearson, Local Resident – Land west of Pye Green Road, Hednesford

“Council ref: CH/11/0395 Case officer: Mr M Aqbal

Comments on the proposal to build on the land to the west of the Pye Green Road.

Developing the above land is something that I strongly object to however if no alternative building space can be sought I feel there are a number of issues that need to be considered;

The existing Road Network is not good enough at present to cope with the number of vehicles. Putting extra junctions onto the Pye Green Road would be catastrophic for the flow of traffic. Residents already find it both hard and dangerous to pull onto and out of drives. Any development would seriously need islands, one way systems and slip roads; otherwise the Pye Green Road would be a long queue of traffic.

- The Land used by many visiting birds, some local and some from overseas.

- The Land is a habitat for many aquatic species, some protected and is a vital habitat for many other woodland animals.
- There are many home owners and elderly people who find it difficult to get to libraries and council buildings to observe plans, and make comments accordingly (especially during the severe weather and holiday times) and do not have access to the internet, I don't believe residents have been insufficiently informed and know / understand the massive impact of such a project.
- There will be more pollution for local residents from the increase usage of fossil fuels, gas for heating, noise pollution, disruption and the existing aesthetics of the area will be devastated, especially for the home owners who will look directly onto the new development.
- There is a strong possibility of home that overlook the land will devalue due to the reduction of privacy.

The areas road network/s need to be dramatically improved and the new road network of the development (as agreed by council members at the council chambers during the voting process for the development of this land, this should recorded in the minutes.

I do feel in strong agreement with suggestions by council leaders;

- An island should be put into the Pye Green Road located at the Jubilee Junction.
- A new road from this island should lead into the new development.
- The new development should have through roads to ease congestion on existing overused roads and lanes.
- No houses should be built along the front/ edges of the field allowing current green spaces to be observed and privacy for existing home owners.
- New pond, green areas, and tree planting should be part of the development to sustain, preserve and develop natural habitats.

I do hope all of the above points will be considered seriously before you move forward.”

Mr M. Aqbal, Development Control Manager, provided the following response in advance of the meeting:

“Planning Application CH/11/0395 – Mixed use development involving – erection of up to 700 dwellings and associated infrastructure (Outline including access)”

Thank you for your email dated 10 August 2014, in respect of the above planning application, which has been forwarded to me for a response.

Firstly, I can confirm that the above outline planning application was submitted in November 2011 and was approved on the 24 June 2014. This was following a report being presented to Planning Control Committee. Please note that other details relating to appearance, scale and landscaping for the proposed development will be considered through future 'reserved matters' application(s).

In terms of background, the appropriateness and suitability of the site for development was subject to a rigorous assessment through the 1997 Local Plan Inquiry process. In considering the whole site's removal from the Green Belt during the 1995/1996 Local Plan Inquiry, the Inspector commented that it performed no Green Belt function and consequently recommended its deletion from the Green Belt. Consequently, it had been safeguarded for future development in the previous Local Plan.

Prior to the submission of the planning application a 'Development Brief' was also prepared for the site, which was also the subject of consultation. This set out the broad requirements in relation to the development of the site. As such, the principle of developing the site to meet the districts need is long established.

I note that you have made comments and objected to this planning permission on a number of grounds. However, as this planning application has already been approved I am unable to take any further action other than comment on the points you have raised.

Consultation

As part of the consultation on this planning application the Council sent out letters to over 250 nearby dwellings. As well as putting site notices up near the site and a press advert.

In terms of viewing plans and documentation associated with the application these were available to view at our offices or on-line. If for any particular reason such as disability or mobility a resident is unable to access plans then officers will arrange to visit residents, by appointment. No such requests were made for this application.

Highways implications

The access and highways implications were considered by County Highways Services and considered acceptable, subject to planning conditions and a package of off-site highway improvement measures.

Impact on wildlife and ecology

In considering the impact of the proposed development on wildlife and ecology we took advice from Natural England and the Council's Ecologist, neither had any objections to the proposal. Please also note that nearly half of the site will retain and provide areas of informal and formal open

space.

Impact on neighbours privacy

Based on the location of site, juxtaposition of the nearest neighbouring dwellings and the Council's spatial standards; residential development on the site will not result in any material overlooking or loss of privacy to existing neighbours.

Impact on property values

This is not a material planning issue therefore whether a proposal would decrease or increase the value of existing dwellings is not taken into consideration when determining planning applications.

Impact from pollution

In considering pollution matters associated with the development, which included noise, air quality and land contamination; the planning application was considered by the Council's Environmental Protection team who concluded that the proposal was acceptable, subject to certain recommendations and requirements for further information and assessments.

I trust this addresses the matters you have raised and if you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me."

Mr Pearson reported that he had sent in the letter to raise concerns about the proposed development and its likely negative impact on the local road network, particularly along Pye Green Road, but understood the need for it to take place if no other suitable land could be found in the District for the size of the development.

Residents and other Members present also raised strong concerns about the layout of the proposed development, highlighting access issues for residents and emergency services, as well as issues regarding infrastructure and social housing provision. It was also raised that widening the Pye Green Road and installing a traffic island similar in design to one already located in High Town would go some way to alleviating the likely traffic problems.

The Chairman advised that he had already spoken to Mark Keeling, the County Council's Community Infrastructure Liaison Manager about the current and future highways/traffic problems which would occur as a result of this development.

County Councillor Mitchell stated that she agreed with the concerns detailed and couldn't understand the view of the County Council Highways team that the development contained adequate roads provision, so would put pressure on them to get the issues resolved. Councillor Cartwright also stated that the same concerns would be raised via the Planning Control Committee.

8. Mid-Staffs NHS Foundation Trust Update

The Chairman drew attention to the update which had been provided by Deborah Neal, Interim Communications Support, Mid-Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust, in advance of the meeting:-

“Our Directors have concluded that as the Trust continues to be going through the Trust Special Administration (TSA) process, it would not be appropriate for them to attend the Community Forums. The Directors would like to assure local people that services at both Cannock Chase and Stafford Hospitals continue as usual and would encourage people to continue to use them as appropriate. If there are any questions on the day-to-day business of the hospitals, we would be very pleased to email you answers from the Directors.”

Statement from the Trust Special Administrators (TSAs):-

“The transition and integration planning phase of the TSA process has commenced, and will result in Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust (MSFT) services being managed by University Hospitals North Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust (“UHNS”) and The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Foundation Trust (“RWT”). Please note that post dissolution both Stafford Hospital and Cannock Chase Hospital will remain open and operational but with the services being managed by UHNS and RWT.

“The transfer of services as above will take place at the start of November 2014.

“All MSFT staff will transfer with their current pay and associated conditions to either the University Hospital of North Staffordshire NHS Trust or The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust under plans agreed between the Trusts to transfer the management of services, and staff have been informed of this.

“The majority of staff will remain in the same or comparable roles. Some staff will be asked to take on new roles to support RWT and UHNS in the delivery of the TSA model for clinical services at Stafford and Cannock hospitals.

“The hospitals will remain open as a result of the management of Stafford Hospital transferring to UHNS and the management of Cannock Chase Hospital transferring to RWT. Patients should continue to attend the hospitals as normal.”

The Chairman provided a further update as follows:

- Mid-Staffordshire NHS Trust to be formally dissolved at the end of October 2014;
- Had recently met with the Chief Executive of the RWT.
- Stoke and Stafford hospitals were going to be renamed as part of their transfer to the UHNS.
- Redevelopment work had already commenced at Cannock hospital,

which included demolition of the Middleton ward to make way for an endoscopy unit, and an increase in the number of outpatients' rooms from 30 to 60;

- Approximately 20,000 patients will be treated between New Cross and Cannock hospitals, which a half-hourly shuttle bus service being provided free of charge for them;
- Current Cannock hospital staff will be formally employed by New Cross hospital, but still work at Cannock;
- An increased range of services will be provided at Cannock hospital, including cancer care;
- Issues regarding car parking at Cannock hospital still needed to be resolved. The District Council was in discussion with New Cross hospital about the feasibility of building a multi-storey car park nearby.
- From 1 November 2014 all current Cannock hospital patients will be transferred automatically to New Cross hospital, however through patient choice, they will still be allowed to transfer to an alternative provider if preferred.

County Councillor Mitchell advised that some services may transfer between Stoke and Stafford hospitals and vice-versa, however there will still concerns about the provision of the maternity and accident & emergency units at Stafford hospital which had not yet been addressed by the Secretary of State for Health.

The Chairman reported that at present routine births were still being taken by Stafford hospital, but first time births were not. In respect of Cannock hospital, a leaflet explaining all the changes taking place will be distributed by the RWT to all households by the end of year.

Councillor Gamble asked for clarification to be sought about whether carers and/or family members of patients would be eligible to also travel for free on the shuttle bus service, and whether car parking charges would be levied on disabled/terminally ill patients and/or their carers/family members.

9. Agenda Items for Next Meeting

The Chairman reported that the next Forum was scheduled for Tuesday 02 December at The Aquarius, Victoria Shopping Park, Hednesford, and advised that any questions would need to be submitted on the forms supplied.

The meeting closed at 7:49pm

CHAIRMAN