

WOODBIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of an **on-line** meeting of the **PLANNING COMMITTEE** held on **TUESDAY 14th DECEMBER 2020** at 5pm

Councillors:

Present: Bale, Blois, Holdcroft, Miller, O’Nolan, Sanders, Sutton (except items 1-6) and Walsh

Absence without Apologies: C Mapey

In Attendance: Locum Town Clerk, Locum Deputy Town Clerk and no members of the public

Action

673. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

674. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Holdcroft declared a local non-pecuniary interest in planning applications DC/20/4778/FUL and DC/20/4779/LBC as a near neighbour.

No other members declared an interest in matters on the agenda.

675. TO CONSIDER REQUEST FOR DISPENSATIONS

There were no requests from Councillors with a Pecuniary Interest in an item on this Agenda for a dispensation.

676. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present.

677. TO AGREE AND APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 1st DECEMBER 2020

The Committee agreed and approved the signing of the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held 1st December 2020 as a true record.

678. TO NOTE INTENTIONS TO UNDERTAKE WORKS TO TREES IN THE CONSERVATION AREA

The Committee noted intentions to undertake works to trees in the conservation area.

679. TO COMMENT ON APPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING PERMISSION

The Council agreed their comments as set out below:-

Application No and Address	Committee Comments
DC/20/4778/FUL Quay House 1 Station Road	We recommend APPROVAL
DC/20/4779/LBC Quay House 1 Station Road	We recommend APPROVAL
DC/20/4519/FUL Land to the south of 47 Oxford Drive	We recommend REFUSAL. The new parking place adjacent to plot 2 has an access to the public highway in a position deemed to be unsafe to other road users.
DC/20/4551/FUL 6 Sandy Lane	We recommend APPROVAL
DC/20/4786/FUL 37 Grundisburgh Road	We recommend REFUSAL. This is the creation of a new dwelling which would otherwise not comply with planning policy.
DC/20/4879/FUL 47 Grundisburgh Road	We recommend APPROVAL

680. TO NOTE EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL DECISIONS ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS WHERE THOSE DECISIONS ARE CONTRARY TO THIS COUNCIL'S RECOMMENDATIONS MADE ON 22nd SEPTEMBER, 6th AND 20th OCTOBER AND 3rd NOVEMBER

The Committee noted East Suffolk Council decisions on planning applications where those decisions are contrary to this council's recommendations made on 22nd September, 6th and 20th October and 3rd November.

681. TO COMMENT ON THE SIZEWELL C CO LTD CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE SIZEWELL C DCO APPLICATION

The Committee thanked Councillor Sanders for his work on this matter and agreed to recommend to Full Council that their comments on the Sizewell C Co Ltd consultation on proposed changes to the Sizewell C DCO application should be:-

682. TO COMMENT ON THE DRAFT AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

The Committee agreed that their comments on the draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning document would be:-

- a) We note that this document is intended to apply across the whole of the East Suffolk Council area even though there is no comprehensive Local Plan for the whole of the area. As such it may fail to include some of the local nuances contained in the individual Local Plans.
- b) We note that “Needs for affordable housing have been identified through the Strategic Housing Market Assessments that were produced as part of the evidence base to inform the production of the two Local Plans”. This information is now some years old and we would argue that both time, and the impact of COVID19 with the overnight changes to working patterns (and unemployment) requires a re-assessment of the need.
- c) We note that the consultation document talks of the Housing Strategy increasing the overall number of affordable homes in Waveney by 150 units per annum and in Suffolk Coastal by 100 units per annum, whereas the Council’s Housing Development Strategy talks of only directly providing 50 affordable homes across the whole of East Suffolk. This may no longer reflect the actual housing need – it is fine providing “affordable” properties for purchase by a variety of schemes aimed at the lower waged, but the current state of the economy is a barrier to raising the entry-level deposits, and also affecting the financial viability of some developments and thereby reducing the number of affordable units being built.
- d) We note the definition of affordable housing in the NPPF and the Government’s intention to introduce “First Homes” and thereby further move the affordable homes market into the home ownership route, rather than maintain a significant proportion of rented affordable homes. We would expect this SPD to set out a minimum percentage of rented affordable homes to be provided, based on a new housing needs assessment which includes reference to an individual’s ability to finance any of the non-rented options.
- e) We note that it is proposed that the SPD will provide guidance on how an appropriate mix (size and tenure) of affordable housing is to be identified at the site specific level, within the scope of the Local Plan policies. This should have reference to a town/parish analysis of housing need rather than a District-wide analysis.

- f) We note that the SPD will also cover requirements for affordable housing on specialist housing developments (such as extra care accommodation) and that guidance will be provided on affordable housing provision in build to rent developments. These should be based on local analysis of housing need.
- g) We agree that that model Heads of Terms (i.e. the content of Section 106 agreements) and model clauses should be included in the SPD, and that upon adoption of the SPD we plan to use these heads of terms as a default in all s106 agreement but would like some town/parish council involvement in developing alternatives if specific and exceptional circumstances dictate otherwise.
- h) We note that the SPD will include guidance on the circumstances in which a commuted sum may be payable, how the amount will be determined and on the broad principles of how commuted sums will be spent but are totally opposed to the failure of the SPD to set out the Council's policy or programme on the spending of commuted sums. It is totally unacceptable for a commuted sum accrued by a development in X is not used to provide affordable housing in X but perhaps miles way. This has undertones of enabling the creation of wealthy areas at the expense of locals in need of affordable housing.
- i) We note that Local Plan policies WLP8.2 and SCLP5.10 provide for exceptional circumstances under which the requirement for affordable housing under the policies may be varied. Guidance on viability appraisals is set out in Appendix 5 of Waveney Local Plan and Appendix G of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan and that the SPD will set out the necessary steps where a 'variation' to the requirement is sought. Given the current economic situation whereby developers may wish to avail themselves of an opportunity to reduce their contributions, should the policies WLP8.2 and SCLP5.10 be strengthened ?
- j) We note that Paragraph 63 of the NPPF states that where vacant buildings are being reused or redeveloped the affordable housing contribution should be reduced by that amount. In the SPD it would be helpful to include the footnote to that paragraph, which reads "Equivalent to the existing gross floorspace of the existing buildings. This does not apply to vacant buildings which have been abandoned."
- k) We note that the Local Plans expect that affordable housing will be built to the same design standards as market housing. The SPD will provide guidance on design matters related to affordable housing including how this relates to other design related policy/guidance such as Building for Life 12. As it is an established fact that lower income families are inversely affected

by energy costs, provision should be made in the SPD and Planning Policy for all such properties to meet the highest thermal insulation rating and be heated by alternative methods such as ground source heat pumps.

- l) There should be a requirement, not merely an expectation, that all affordable housing should be linked to existing public footpaths or cycleways and that there should be a developer contribution to enable these connections.

- m) We note that the SPD will provide guidance on how local need should be identified, for example how local surveys or assessments should be carried out and what information would be needed. This guidance should include how frequently these surveys are to be undertaken.

683. CLOSURE

The meeting was closed at 5.48pm.

Councillor Miller
Chair