

## WOODBIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of an on-line meeting of the PLANNING COMMITTEE held on THURSDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2020 at 6pm

### Councillors:

Present: S Bale, Lady C Blois (items 483 and 484 only), G Holdcroft, S Miller, E O’Nolan, M Sutton

Apologies: C Walsh and R Sanders

Absence without

Apologies: C Mapey

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

*Action*

#### 478. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Walsh.

#### 479. MEMBERS AND OFFICERS WERE INVITED TO MAKE ANY DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY OR LOCAL NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS THAT THEY MAY HAVE IN RELATION TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA AND WERE ALSO REMINDED TO MAKE ANY DECLARATIONS AT ANY STAGE DURING THE MEETING IF IT BECOMES APPARENT THAT THIS MAY BE REQUIRED WHEN A PARTICULAR ITEM OR ISSUE IS CONSIDERED, AND TO DEAL WITH DISPENSATIONS AS REQUESTED BY INDIVIDUAL COUNCILLORS IN LINE WITH S33 OF THE LOCALISM ACT 2011

No members declared an interest in matters on the agenda.

#### 480. COUNCILLORS WITH A PECUNIARY INTEREST IN AN ITEM ON THIS AGENDA, WHO WISH TO REMAIN, SPEAK AND/OR VOTE DURING CONSIDERATION OF THAT ITEM, MAY APPLY FOR A DISPENSATION BY WRITING TO THE TOWN CLERK PRIOR TO THE MEETING. APPLICATIONS MAY ALSO BE CONSIDERED AT THE MEETING ITSELF SHOULD THE NATURE OF THE INTEREST BECOME APPARENT TO A COUNCILLOR AT THE TIME OF THE MEETING

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

**481. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no members of the public present.

**482. TO AGREE AND APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 6<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2020**

The Committee agreed and approved the signing of the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held 6<sup>th</sup> October 2020 as a true record.

**483. TO FURTHER COMMENT ON THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE PLANNING SYSTEM**

The Committee agreed their comments on the proposed changes to the Planning System would be:-

Question	Draft Response
Question 5 – Do you think Local Plans should be simplified	Proposed response: Local Plans should not be simplified
Question 6 Do you agree with our proposals for streamlining the development management content of Local Plans, and setting out general development management policies nationally?	We oppose the setting out of general development management policies nationally
Question 7(a). Do you agree with our proposals to replace existing legal and policy tests for Local Plans with a consolidated test of “sustainable development”, which would include consideration of environmental impact?	Disagree. The consideration of environmental impact should indeed be included, but strengthened, not simplified
7(b). How could strategic, cross-boundary issues be best planned for in the absence of a formal Duty to Cooperate?	In the absence of a Duty to co-operate, residents could have no way of being confident that the impact of a development “on the border” has been assessed by their authority
8(a). Do you agree that a standard method for establishing housing requirements (that takes into account constraints) should be introduced?	There should be no change to the method of calculation until the full impact of COVID19 has been assessed
8(b) Do you agree that affordability and the extent of existing urban areas are	We do not agree that affordability and the extent of existing urban areas are appropriate indicators of the

<p>appropriate indicators of the quantity of development to be accommodated?</p>	<p>quantity of development to be accommodated. There is little correlation between house prices and land availability. If that was the sole determining factor homes with sea views would be equally priced with those without. Other factors – regional prosperity, commutability, crime rate, second-homers, rental market – determine house prices, together with developers creating an artificial shortage through failing to immediately develop sites with planning permissions, with evidence to show there are extant permissions for 1m properties awaiting development..</p>
<p>9(a). Do you agree that there should be automatic outline permission for areas for substantial development (Growth areas) with faster routes for detailed consent?</p>	<p>No. There are concerns that the preparation of Local Development Orders proceeding in parallel with the local plan preparation, and local design guides will create overwhelming individual consultations for residents, and that there will be an inability on constrained planning departments to deliver quality plans.</p> <p>Questions must also be asked about the need for speed in the planning process. Demand, particularly for housing, does not occur overnight. The last unexpected and unplanned increase in housing demand was 1974, with the influx of Ugandans fleeing, or being expelled by, Idi Amin. Population numbers can be forecast some time ahead, and even if driven by commercial development (new offices/factories or even a new commuter railway station) there is adequate time to process the detail of the development at a comfortable pace to keep up with demand.</p>
<p>(b). Do you agree with our proposals above for the consent arrangements for Renewal and Protected areas?</p>	<p>No. The phrase “for pre-specified forms of development such as the redevelopment of certain building types” suggests a broad brush approach which isn’t suitable for each type of building being redeveloped. This is not what residents want nor our current towns/villages deserve.</p>
<p>(c) Do you think there is a case for allowing new settlements to be brought forward under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime?</p>	<p>No. Residents feel even more isolated from the planning process when the Nationally Significant label is attached to developments, and whilst it might be nationally significant for there to be development of the size/scale proposed, the case for its precise location needs to be established on more than availability of land.</p>
<p>10. Do you agree with our proposals to make decision-making faster and more certain?</p>	<p>We do not fully agree with the proposals to make decision-making faster and more certain as there is a lack of clarity about how the I.T. revolution will be</p>

	achieved. In addition, with the Government forecast to fail to meet its target of universal access to Broadband by 2025 there will be those whose technology does not enable them to access the proposed online planning process.
11. Do you agree with our proposals for accessible, web-based Local Plans?	We support this proposal. This is 2020 and there is increasing expectation that information such as this should be online.
12. Do you agree with our proposals for a 30-month statutory timescale for the production of Local Plans?	We do not support the proposed 30-month timescale for the preparation of a local plan as it does not provide sufficient opportunity for the residents to engage with and contribute to the process, and places too great a demand on the resources required to achieve meaningful engagement. We would however support a more frequent review of the local plan.
13(a). Do you agree that Neighbourhood Plans should be retained in the reformed planning system?	Yes
(b). How can the neighbourhood planning process be developed to meet our objectives, such as in the use of digital tools and reflecting community preferences about design?	Some form of support – funding or access to free online services – will be required, particularly for the smaller Parishes.
14. Do you agree there should be a stronger emphasis on the build out of developments? And if so, what further measures would you support?	We would welcome a speedier completion of largescale developments in order to reduce the impact of continued construction, but recognise that any measures to do so will be resisted by developers as they will result in market saturation and a consequential lowering of the housing market locally
15. What do you think about the design of new development that has happened recently in your area? [Not sure or indifferent / Beautiful and/or well-designed / Ugly and/ or poorly-designed / There hasn't been any / Other – please specify]	Developers have showed indifference to the concerns of local residents about the impact of new designs, styles, and building heights on the existing residential area. The designs have failed to future-proof the properties, being constructed to the (inadequately) low existing Building Regulations, with no consideration for higher standards of energy conservation, water re-use, or life-long living. The lack of minimum room (and garden) sizes has produced properties which, whilst cheap, are unsuited to family living.

	The size of properties being built is based upon developers' ability to sell rather than a properly-conducted LOCAL housing needs assessment. In a large District Council area, the local housing needs vary across the District.
16. Sustainability is at the heart of our proposals. What is your priority for sustainability in your area? [Less reliance on cars / More green and open spaces / Energy efficiency of new buildings / More trees / Other – please specify]	To see the (inadequately) low Building Regulations reviewed upward so that properties are built to passive house standards, with provision for life-long living. Creation of fully-joined up walking/cycling links to town centre/transport links rather than isolated short sections.
17. Do you agree with our proposals for improving the production and use of design guides and codes?	In principle we agree with the aims and ambitions but would need to see greater clarity as to the degree and realism of what is judged "effective" input from the local community before we can support this proposal whole-heartedly
18. Do you agree that we should establish a new body to support design coding and building better places, and that each authority should have a chief officer for design and place-making?	The vision of a new central government arm's-length body overseeing plan-making raises concerns and begs the question as to the future role of the Planning Inspectorate. Whilst increased funding for local authority planning departments is welcomed, it should not be concentrated on a chief officer post but spread to ensure that there are more planners overall and that there is greater employee retention than at present.
19. Do you agree with our proposal to consider how design might be given greater emphasis in the strategic objectives for Homes England?	Design in itself is worthy but greater consideration needs to be given to the implementation within the design of measures to enable "life-long" occupation, reduced energy and water consumption, and the provision of outside space.
20. Do you agree with our proposals for implementing a fast-track for beauty?	In one breath the earlier proposals promote greater public involvement in the planning process, and now they talk of standardised designs, and, although not specifically addressed as such, off-site pre-fabricated panel construction. If the public are to be involved in the design process the proposed 30-month local plan process is too short.
21. When new development happens in your area, what is your priority for what comes with it? [More affordable housing / More or better infrastructure (such as transport, schools, health provision) / Design of new buildings / More shops and/or employment space / Green space / Don't know / Other – please specify]	Housing which meets local need and is affordable to those on low incomes through the social rental market, which is designed so as to integrate with, and positively enhance existing development, and relieve, not add to, existing traffic, which reduces the average energy consumption in the locality, and reflects the need to conserve water.

<p>22(a). Should the Government replace the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 planning obligations with a new consolidated Infrastructure Levy, which is charged as a fixed proportion of development value above a set threshold? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]</p>	<p>Yes. This would provide greater clarity to a developer's obligations, and remove those developer-favourable conditions which have often seen S106 monies repaid to the developer</p>
<p>22(b). Should the Infrastructure Levy rates be set nationally at a single rate, set nationally at an area-specific rate, or set locally? [Nationally at a single rate / Nationally at an area-specific rate / Locally]</p>	<p>22(b) Locally – as every District varies in its starting point in terms of existing infrastructure.</p>
<p>22(c). Should the Infrastructure Levy aim to capture the same amount of value overall, or more value, to support greater investment in infrastructure, affordable housing and local communities? [Same amount overall / More value / Less value / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]</p>	<p>22(c) More value.</p>
<p>22(d). Should we allow local authorities to borrow against the Infrastructure Levy, to support infrastructure delivery in their area? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]</p>	<p>22(d) Yes – provided such borrowing is wholly spent in relation to the community's identified needs.</p>
<p>23. Do you agree that the scope of the reformed Infrastructure Levy should capture changes of use through permitted development rights? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>24(a). Do you agree that we should aim to secure at least the same amount of affordable housing under the Infrastructure Levy, and as much on-site affordable provision, as at present? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]</p>	<p>Yes</p>

24(b). Should affordable housing be secured as in-kind payment towards the Infrastructure Levy, or as a 'right to purchase' at discounted rates for local authorities? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]	Yes
24(c). If an in-kind delivery approach is taken, should we mitigate against local authority overpayment risk? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]	Yes
24(d). If an in-kind delivery approach is taken, are there additional steps that would need to be taken to support affordable housing quality? [Yes / No / Not sure.]	Yes – surely this would be achieved via the design guides.
25. (a)Should local authorities have fewer restrictions over how they spend the Infrastructure Levy? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]	Yes
25(b). If yes, should an affordable housing 'ring-fence' be developed? [Yes / No / Not sure.]	Yes

**484. CLOSURE**

The meeting was closed at 6.44pm.

Councillor Miller  
Chair