

**PRUDHOE TOWN COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Planning, Contract and Works Meeting held in The Spetchells Centre, Front Street, Prudhoe at 7:00pm on Wednesday 9 September 2015**

**PRESENT** Cllr Mrs J McGee (Chair), Cllr Mrs E Burt, Cllr Mrs C Cuthbert, Cllr Ms J Rose, Cllr Mrs N McGee, Cllr G McCreedy, Cllr A Piper, Cllr A Reid, Cllr K Graham, Cllr G Simpson (arrived 1903)  
In attendance: R Whinney (Clerk)

**1516/1031 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** Cllr A Gill, Cllr B Futers, Cllr G Price, Co Cllr Mrs A Dale

**1516/1032 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** None

Cllr G Simpson arrived at this point.

**1516/1033 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING CONTRACT & WORKS COMMITTEE HELD ON 12 AUGUST 2015**

It was **AGREED** to receive the minutes as a true record.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs E Burt Seconded: Cllr Mrs N McGee

**1516/1034 MATTERS ARISING.**

1516/1027 Humbles Wood Development – Play Feature: in response to Cllr G McCreedy, it was reported that a response was awaited from the developer.

1516/1024 NCC – Planning Protocols – Consultation: Cllr Mrs E Burt commented that evidence might be needed to support Cllr Mrs C Cuthbert's statement that a section 106 agreement "had been reneged on" in respect of the recent residential development at Mickley, and that there was a need for caution when making statements of this kind. Responding, Cllr Mrs Cuthbert stated that Mr G Robbie (NCC Principal Planning Officer, Urban and Rural Development Management) had appeared to indicate that the information was accurate. She and Cllr A Reid said that such an agreement had definitely existed in the case of this development. Cllr Mrs J McGee stated that affordability was relevant to the fulfilment of section 106 agreements, while Cllr Mrs Burt said that she believed a planning officer could re-visit a section 106 agreement with the developer. Members expressed interest in knowing whether a revised section 106 agreement would come back to county councillors for consideration. It was therefore agreed that efforts should be made to elicit further information on the case in question. Concluding the discussion of this matter, Cllr Mrs J McGee agreed that care should be taken when reporting information.

1516/1026 Former Prudhoe Hospital Site Re-development: Cllr Mrs J McGee noted that once the application process was completed, the Council would be notified of the decision. At that point the Council could enquire about the planning conditions and about the contents of the section 106 agreement.

1516/1029 Prudhoe Miners Race: Cllr Mrs J McGee noted that the Town Events Sub-Committee would hold a meeting regarding the races in the near future. Cllr Mrs Burt noted that the town-twinning visitors from Mitry-Mory, some of whom were competing in the races, would be arriving on Friday 25 September, and would be leaving for the airport soon after the end of the races.

1516/1030 Edgewell Cemeteries: The confidential item was received.

At this point, with the agreement of the Chair, Cllr Mrs Burt made a request for someone to come forward to host the Mayor of Mitry-Mory as part of the town-twinning visit referred to above, as she was, with regret, unable to do so.

**1516/1035 PLANNING MATTERS**

**1. Planning applications considered**

There were no planning applications to be considered.

## **2. Notifications of the Planning Authority in respect of planning applications**

### **(i) Decisions**

#### **General – Prudhoe Hall Ward**

##### **Planning Ref. 15/01717/FUL**

Proposal: Resubmission of application 15/01717/FUL — Alterations to existing car park with additional parking bays and provision of new parking area consisting of new sustainable car park surface and retaining structure

Location: Land Adjacent To Prudhoe Hospital, Moor Road, Prudhoe, Northumberland NE42 5BB

Applicant: Mr Kevin Scott, Northumberland Tyne & Wear Foundation NHS Trust, St Nicholas Hospital, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne & Wear NE3 3XT

Response date: 11 August 2015

Note: the Council had considered the previous version of this application at its July meeting, where it agreed to SUPPORT the application

##### **Northumberland County Council decided to GRANT permission**

[The Council had responded SUPPORTING the application, commenting that that the proposals represented a much-needed improvement over the existing parking provision at Ferndene]

#### **General**

##### **Planning ref. 13/03525/FUL**

Proposal: Residential development of 36 no. units including 30% affordable housing with associated landscaping and infrastructure

Location: Land south-west of Ovington View, Beaumont Way, Bewick Grange, Prudhoe, Northumberland

Applicant: Mr James Johnson for The Northumberland Estates, Estates Office, Alnwick Castle, Alnwick, Northumberland NE66 1NQ

Response deadline: 19 December

##### **Northumberland County Council decided to REFUSE permission.**

[In December 2013, the Town Council had responded OBJECTING to the application on the following grounds:

1. There is no scoping report for the development which would indicate the possible need for an Environmental Impact Assessment.
2. No Environmental Impact Assessment has been carried out.
3. The development was not an 'infill' development as was claimed in the application. In fact the site lies on the edge of the town in a location having high landscape value, treasured by the people of Prudhoe.
4. The Council has little confidence in the details given in the application, noting, for instance, the several references to the development being located in Ovingham.
5. In the Ecology report (1) there's no survey of breeding birds (2) the bat survey was conducted outside the activity period for bats (3) brown hare and hedgehogs, which are UKBAP priority species and also species of principal importance under s41 of the NERC Act 2006, could be present in or adjacent to the site. It also appears that information relating to badgers has been blacked out in the report.
6. There are concerns regarding water issues on the site which mean that the Council cannot support the proposed development. Properties in Ovington View have and continue to be affected by water flows emanating from the site. The Council understands that a watercourse on the site has been diverted at some stage: was permission sought for this? Also, recent climate developments have included more frequent serious rainfall events, increasing the probability of surface water flooding over the estimated 1 in 100 probability stated in the application. More information is required regarding proposed water attenuation measures on the site.
7. The coal mining report indicates concerns regarding mining, gas and land subsidence, with a moderate to high risk in each case. The Council considers such risks are too high to permit development of the site.
8. The proposed development does not fit in with existing housing.
9. The nearby bus stop (and therefore the bus service claimed in the report) does not exist.

10. Much traffic from the development would use Highfield Lane to access the town. This important highway already operates at full capacity and will not be able to cope with additional traffic flows.]

It was agreed to receive the above notifications.

### **1516/1036 FORMER POINTINGS DYEWORKS (BROCK HOUSE): GRANTING OF PLANNING PERMISSION**

Cllr Mrs J McGee stated that, like the Clerk, she had read of the granting of planning permission in respect of this development in the local newspaper. After the withdrawal of the previous application in respect of this site she had expected that a fresh application would be submitted. However, it now appeared that the latest plans had been approved as a permitted development. She noted that the existing premises were offices, and that the land on which they stood had been designated as employment land in the Tynedale Local Plan. She noted that the proposed housing would be affordable and that it was described as “within easy walking distance of the town centre!” Commenting, Cllr Mrs E Burt said that, as the site was close to Castle Lea this made it easier to change the land use to housing. Cllr Mrs McGee said that she was concerned at the lack of courtesy in letting the town council know, although she agreed with Cllr Mrs Burt that there was no statutory requirement for this to be done. She asked if there would be any contribution by the developer to sports and play provision, given the current lack of any such provision at Castle Lea.

**It was AGREED** to contact NCC, indicating that the Council considered that it would have been courteous to formally notify it of the decision regarding the residential development, to note the designation of the land as employment land as set out in the Tynedale Local Plan, and to ask whether or not (and if not why not) there would be any consequent contribution required of the developer towards sports and play provision.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs J McGee

Seconded: Cllr G Simpson

### **1516/1037 EDGEWELL CEMETERIES**

Cllr Mrs J McGee reported that the Cemetery Attendant had left NCC employment, and that it was anticipated that a recruitment process for a replacement post-holder would now commence. The Clerk suggested that NCC had implied that recruitment of a new post-holder might not commence until the current employment had officially terminated, as the attendant was now on holiday while their notice period expired. Cllr Mrs Burt suggested that she might contact the relevant NCC officer concerning this staffing matter.

The information was received.

### **1516/1038 HIGHFIELD PARK: PLAY IMPROVEMENTS**

#### **(a) Installation of new play equipment**

The Clerk reported that, at the conclusion of the play improvement works, the contractor had failed to clear away the debris left by the works, especially in respect of the new soft impact play surfacing. He had raised this issued with the contractor’s representative, and had also held a ‘snagging’ meeting at which this and other issues had been discussed. The Clerk noted that, for instance, the basket swing had been installed with insufficient ground clearance, but that this had been identified and the matter speedily put right. Cllrs Mrs E Burt and A Reid both suggested that NCC be requested to submit an invoice for the cost of clearing up the debris. Cllr Mrs Burt suggested that the Council could learn useful lessons from this experience, but all members present agreed that the new play equipment was proving very popular.

**It was AGREED** to liaise with the contractor expressing the Council’s dissatisfaction with (a) the state in which the play areas had been left at the conclusion of the works, and (b) the considerable delay in the time it had taken to complete the scheme

Proposed: Cllr Mrs J McGee

Seconded: Cllr Mrs E Burt

### **(b) Possible installation of benches**

Cllr Mrs J McGee reported that she, Cllr G McCreedy and the Clerk had attended at the Park to investigate this issue. Cllr McCreedy noted that a seat had been removed by young people and used as a ramp in the skate park, and suggested that some of the seats in the yard at the Youth Charity Shop could be installed in the play areas and skate park, potentially leaving some spare for any requirement at the Castle Dene play area.

**It was AGREED** that, subject to ensuring (a) the use of the appropriate paint (b) secure fixing of the seats, to seek quotations for installing seats as suggested, provided that funds were available in the appropriate budget heading.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs J McGee

Seconded: Cllr G McCreedy

### **1516/1039 AVIVA TOUR OF BRITAIN CYCLE RACE 2015**

Cllr Mrs J McGee stated that the town had done really well, and paid particular tribute to the great response by the local business community. Cllr Mrs E Burt agreed, stating that the Council had led from the front and everyone had joined in. She said that she was she was being interviewed by ITV on the day of the race, and that there had already been coverage on BBC Look North. She added that she had been into many of the shops to thank them for their efforts and the great pride that had been taken in the town. All present agreed that they were very much looking forward to tomorrow.

The report was received.

### **1516/1040 HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECOVERY CENTRES: PERMITS AND 'PAY AS YOU THROW'**

The letter and enclosures from NCC were received. Cllr Mrs J McGee commented that local councils had not been consulted on this matter by NCC. Cllr Mrs Burt stated that the proposals had been considered by the County Council's Local Services Committee, then by its Scrutiny Committee, and most recently by the full Council. She stated that the measures were not aimed at ordinary local residents, but at businesses which were disposing of debris to landfill. She noted that landfill disposal was very expensive. She noted that while one option was to charge, the second was to close waste disposal sites or reduce their opening hours. She said that action was required in service sectors such as this to ensure that schools and care homes remained open. She said that visits with small quantities of material would not be chargeable, noting that there was a charge-free allowance of 6 cubic yards per resident. She agreed with Cllr A Piper that fly-tipping was a problem in some local areas, but stated that this was not a significant current concern in Prudhoe. Commenting, Cllr A Reid suggested that the process by which the proposals had been brought into force was "flawed", but noted that cuts in services were "starting to bite", and that disposal centres in rural areas could be vulnerable to closure. While fly-tipping might increase initially, he felt that the situation would soon normalise. He added that the site operatives had been instructed to be "understanding" and he expressed the hope that the changes would have the desired effect. Cllr Mrs E Burt stated that if anyone spotted instances of fly-tipping, this should be reported. Responding to Cllr Mrs C Cuthbert, Cllr Mrs J McGee stated that the issue of waste disposal permits was a separate one, and that these could be applied for if they were required.

**It was AGREED** to receive the information.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs J McGee

Seconded: Cllr Mrs E Burt

### **1516/1041 CHRISTMAS EVENTS**

Cllr Mrs E Burt suggested, and Cllr Mrs Cuthbert agreed, that it would be good to try and build on the positive community spirit by encouraging those businesses that had expressed interest in installing festive window displays. She asked if the Events group might be interested in taking this idea forward, saying that she could provide the names of the businesses concerned. Cllr G McCreedy noted that the offer of a prize did not appear to have been the source of the motivation behind the recent 'Tour of Britain' displays. Cllr Mrs J McGee and Cllr G McCreedy agreed that the successful recent communications with businesses had been built on through the Council's work on street scene and events, and Cllr Mrs McGee added that the proposal for a road closure for the Lights switch-on would be

brought to the Ordinary Meeting for consideration. Cllr Mrs Burt suggested the possibility of “rumblings of discontent from traders” regarding such a road closure. Cllr Mrs McGee said that thanks should be offered to the Clerk and the Administrator for their work in helping spread information in the town, and Cllr Mrs Burt suggested that it would be valuable to have a de-brief following the cycle race, to absorb the lessons learned from the event.

**END OF MEETING**