

DRAFT Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council Incorporating the Meeting of the Planning Contract & Works Committee held in the Spetchells Centre, Front Street, Prudhoe at 7:00pm on Wednesday 8 March 2017

PRESENT: Cllr Mrs J McGee (Chair), Cllr G Price, Cllr Mrs C Cuthbert, Cllr Mrs N McGee, Cllr E Dobson, Cllr G McCreedy, Cllr A Gill, Cllr A Piper, Cllr Ms J Rose, Cllr B Futers, Cllr G Simpson. In attendance: R Whinney (Clerk)

1617/1093 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Cllr D Couchman, County Cllr Mrs A Dale

1617/1094 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST Cllr G McCreedy stated that he would take no part in the discussion / decision-taking in respect of planning matter **16/04430/FUL** in view of the fact that his daughter was an employee of the business making the application. Cllrs E Dobson, B Futers and A Piper all stated that they would leave following the extraordinary items.

1617/1095 EXTRAORDINARY ITEM: COUNCILLORS' CODE OF CONDUCT

The Clerk reported as follows:

- the Council had been contacted by a member of the public who had subsequently sent a written letter of complaint to the Council concerning the alleged conduct of a member of the Council;
- with the agreement of the Chairman of the Council, this matter had been forwarded to the Monitoring Officer at the County Council for his advice to be sought;
- the Monitoring Officer's advice was that the Council's Code of Conduct, adopted by the Council under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, would not apply in the circumstances as alleged: the Code of Conduct applies "when a member of the Council acts, claims to act or gives the impression of acting as a representative of the Council..."
- this advice had been conveyed both to the complainant and to the subject of the allegations, and to all other councillors;
- the meeting was advised that all local councils are covered by the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, under which any matters relating to councillors' conduct are referred to the Monitoring Officer, as had occurred in this case.

The Clerk noted that the Code of Conduct was tabled at the meeting for inspection should anyone wish to do so. In response to the Chairman of the Council, he noted that the advice received from the Monitoring Officer indicated that the matter could be referred to the police: it was not suggested that this course of action be pursued by the Council, but the complainant had been informed that this course of action was open to them.

Cllr A Piper stated that from comments made to him by members of the public, the Council was in a state of disrepute, and that no-one had any confidence in the Council. Cllr Mrs J McGee stated that she had heard similar comments, but said that no-one should prejudge the issue. Cllr A Gill stated that the alleged acts concerned one member of the Council, who was not acting under the jurisdiction of the Council, and the Monitoring Officer had advised that the Council had no power to act. Cllr B Futers stated that he had learned about the matter as allegations reported on social media, in which medium he had no interest. He stated that he had never felt that there were times when as a councillor he could 'take his hat off' and stop being a councillor. Cllr Mrs McGee stated that the alleged acts had not been committed on behalf of the Council. Cllr G Price stated that the matter should be held in abeyance, and that any further action should be taken by individuals. Cllr G Simpson stated that his 'gut instinct' lay in another direction, but he agreed that the matter was not about the Council, though the Council had done everything it was supposed to do, and that the matter had not been pushed under the carpet: everyone had said the right things.

The report was received.

1617/1096 EXTRAORDINARY ITEM: SOCIAL MEDIA PROVISION

Cllr Mrs J McGee stated that the proposal was for a Facebook page which would enable the Council to provide information only. The Council's contact details would be provided so that questions could be

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asked by email, telephone, etc. The Council needed to be getting out to the public what they were doing. Cllr G Simpson stated that he was surprised that the matter had not been actioned, as it had been approved by the Council on a previous occasion, but Cllr Mrs McGee and Cllr Mrs Cuthbert both stated that the previously agreed proposal had been to research the matter. Cllr E Dobson stated that the proposed page was not intended to be one on which debate could take place.

It was AGREED to create a Facebook page on the basis and for the purpose stated above.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs J McGee Seconded: Cllr G Simpson

It was agreed to approve a motion, that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the press and public be excluded for consideration of the following items, in accordance with Section 68 of the Council's Standing Orders

Proposed: Cllr Mrs J McGee Seconded: Cllr E Dobson

1617/1097 EXTRAORDINARY ITEM: SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

It was AGREED to agree to invoke Standing Order 79, permitting the suspension of Standing Order 36, to allow the following matter to be considered.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs J McGee Seconded: Cllr E Dobson

1617/1098 EXTRAORDINARY ITEM: HUMAN RESOURCES – TOWN COUNCIL ADMINISTRATOR: JOB EVALUATION

The Clerk left the meeting at this point.

The matter was discussed, and it **was AGREED**, by a margin of seven votes for to three against, that the offer made to the Administrator in respect of the re-grading of the post should be made with an implementation date of 25 June 2016, and that this offer should be communicated to the post-holder.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs C Cuthbert Seconded: Cllr A Piper

The Clerk returned to the meeting at this point.

Cllrs E Dobson, B Futers, and A Piper left the meeting at this point.

1617/1099 PLANNING MATTERS

(i) Planning Applications Considered Prudhoe Hall Ward — Planning Ref. 17/00401/COU

Proposal: Proposed change of use to be from open space to my private garden, there is no building work as I will be using it solely as the purpose of my private garden

Location: 28 Moorlands, Prudhoe, Northumberland NE42 5LS

Applicant: Miss Kay Jobling (address as above)

Response date: 2 March 2017

It was AGREED to respond Objecting to the application, on the grounds that the open green spaces on this and other estates had been designed to provide amenity, and that the loss of this space (and others like it on the estate) should be avoided.

Proposed: Cllr A Gill Seconded: Cllr G Simpson

General – Castlefields & Low Prudhoe Ward — Planning Ref. 16/04430/FUL

Proposal: Proposed Extension to the existing HGV and LGV Maintenance Workshop, and associated Administrative Office, to provide one extra vehicle work station, for maintaining the applicants' own vehicles in connection with their work activities

Location: Northumbrian Roads, Dukes Way, Low Prudhoe, Northumberland NE42 6PQ

Applicant: Mr Stephen Atkinson (address as above)

Response date: 27 March 2017

It was AGREED to respond Supporting the application

Proposed: Cllr G Price Seconded: Cllr Mrs C Cuthbert

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(ii) Planning Notifications Received – Decisions General – West Wylam Ward — Planning Ref. 16/02081/OUT

Proposal: Outline application for development of up to 30 no. residential dwellings, including all ancillary works, with all matters reserved apart from access

Location: Land South of Broom House Lane, Station Road, Prudhoe, Northumberland

Applicant: Mr Guy Munden, The Northumberland Estates, Estates Office, Alnwick Castle, Alnwick Northumberland NE66 1NQ Response date: 20 July 2016

Northumberland County Council decided to GRANT permission

[The Council had responded Supporting the application in principle. The Council considered that there was no reason to object to the application given that planning permissions (which are still 'live') had previously been given for larger developments on this site. However, the Council stated that its support was subject to:

(i) proper provision (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems) being put in place to deal with the acknowledged presence of water on the site

(ii) noise attenuation measures being put in place, particularly in respect of the residential streets Cranleigh Grove and Neale Street, to limit the impact of the development on other residents.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs J McGee Seconded: Cllr Mrs E Burt]

West Wylam Ward — Planning Ref. 17/00016/FUL

Proposal: Proposed to extend the rear of the garage to create a laundry off the kitchen; first floor bedroom extension above the garage, with ensuite

Location: 10 Low Close, Prudhoe, Northumberland NE42 5HZ

Applicant: Mr Kevin Altenroxel (address as above) Response date: 8 February 2017

Northumberland County Council decided to REFUSE permission

[The Council had responded Supporting the application]

It was AGREED to receive the notifications.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs J McGee Seconded: Cllr Mrs C Cuthbert

(iii) Pre-Planning Applications Received General – Castle & Eltringham Ward Planning Ref. 17/00069/PREAPP

Proposal: Proposed residential development circa 25-30 units

Location: Land West of Horizon Products, Prudhoe, Northumberland

Applicant: Horizon Products Response date: 7 March 2017

In response, the Council noted that the area marked '4' on the location / site plan was covered by the planning matter reference 15/03750/OUT, in respect of which outline permission had been granted for the construction of 50 no. dwellings by the Planning Authority - notwithstanding the comments in this and previous versions of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. The meeting agreed that it was not in favour of the application for the following reasons:

- The impact on the existing residents of the development which had already been agreed
- Concerns regarding the drainage of the 3 sites nos. 1, 2, and 3 marked on the location / site plan
- The site adjoined the railway line, and lay no great distance away from the site of a serious landslide which had occurred only a few years previously, causing a blockage of the railway line: there were therefore sound reasons for concern as to the stability of the land at this location
- The site was stated to be a greenfield site, and any development would lead to a loss of bio-diversity.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs N McGee Seconded: Cllr G McCreedy

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Pre-application consultation**General – Prudhoe Hall Ward****Planning Ref. 16/00097/PREAPP**

Proposal: Construction of one single storey detached dwelling with double garage

Location: Land at Stanley Brae, Durham Riding, Prudhoe, Northumberland NE42 5NX

Applicant: Mr Phil Morton

Response date: 21 March 2017

In response, the Council considered that it could find no reason to object to the proposals as stated, though it was suggested that greater detail would be needed for a proper judgment to be made. Therefore, it was agreed that no substantive comment could be made at this point.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs J McGee Seconded: Cllr Mrs C Cuthbert

1617/1100 PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

The Clerk stated that the planning enforcement information that had been received indicated that Stephanie Forster was the Planning Enforcement Officer assigned to deal with the part of the county that included Prudhoe. However, it seemed useful to take the opportunity to advise as to the planning enforcement process, and in particular as to what did, and did not, constitute a breach of planning control. Cllr Mrs Cuthbert report that she had used the process, and that it did work.

It was agreed to receive the information.

The meeting closed at 2030 hours.

END OF MEETING