



BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Planning and Development Committee held in the Council Chamber at Arms Everytne House on Thursday 26th September 2013 at 6.30pm.

Present:

Also Present:

S E Rickitt - Town Clerk (Democratic Services)

L Forsyth – Committee Clerk

Invited Guest:

Mr Graham Garnham

058/13/01: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr G Thompson.

059/13/02: DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS & THE GRANT OF ANY DISPENSATIONS

Councillor B W Elliott declared an interest in the applications regarding the Former Wellesley School site (13/02986/FUL) and Beach House, Beachway (13/03083/VARYCO).

060/13/03: MINUTES FROM THE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 26th SEPTEMBER 2013

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) commented that he was still awaiting an update regarding the car park at Ridley Park, however

commented that he believed that initial suspicions may be reflected in the lack of contact.

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) commented that he had received confirmation that the modular buildings at the Horton Grange School were placed there as of the 23rd August 2013, which would represent a completion date of Easter 2014.

The Minutes of the Meeting were moved by Councillor J R Potts and seconded by Councillor R Parker.

The Minutes of the Planning and Development Committee held on the 26th September 2013 were **AGREED** as a true record and signed by the Chair.

061/13/04: MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising that were not to be covered in this Meeting of the Planning and Development Committee.

062/13/05: REVIEW OF TOWN CENTRE PLANNING REGIME

Councillor G T Knox welcomed Mr G Garnham to the Meeting.

Mr G Garnham provided an outline of his previous experience within the area noting that he had been involved with Planning and Development at Blyth Valley Borough Council for 26 years and had maintained an interest in Blyth. It was further commented that he had spent roughly an hour on the day of the meeting looking at the developments.

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) commented that he had instigated contact with Mr G Garnham.

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) agreed to provide Mr G Garnham with an outline of the Town's boundaries. **Action: SER**

Mr G Garnham commented that he was seeking clarification of what is expected. It was also noted that his main work is as a planning inspector and that he holds a healthy knowledge of current planning legislation and national planning issues.

Mr G Garnham commented that he also had knowledge of County Council working and was up to date on proceedings including upcoming policy meetings.

It was outlined that regarding the planned Town Centre work to be conducted, that it would be the role of Mr G Garnham to provide advice

and policy concepts and place the findings within local, regional and national frameworks.

Discussion was also held regarding specific buildings in Blyth including the former Hedley Youngs building, Woodcocks and the new Wetherspoons in the former Wallaw cinema.

Mr G Garnham commented that he was impressed that Blyth Town Council has insured free parking throughout the town.

The environmental assets of the town were also discussed including the Market Place and the riverside. It was commented that the seaward connections are a strong asset.

Mr G Garnham also commented on the need to reflect modernising policy, for example the move away for A1 developments.

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) commented that at present, the Town Council has no qualified planning input and that he had been covering this roll. It was noted that it was envisaged that the proposed working arrangement would involve conducting the preliminary work needed for the potential development of a Neighbourhood plan.

It was further commented by the Committee that this work would allow for the Town Council to propose areas which need addressed by Northumberland County Council, decide if there was scope for a Neighbourhood Plan, help inform decisions regarding what Blyth Town Centre should be and where we currently are.

Councillor G T Knox provided an outline of how this process would workm commenting that it was his personal view that the development of this role would lead to further supporting Northumberland County Council with its work in the best interests of Blyth. It was therefore commented that it was crucial that the work was of the highest quality.

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) commented that it is hoped that as the produced documents become available from the aforementioned projects that this could assist in re-energising the business sector within Blyth.

Councillor J R Potts provided an outline of his view regarding the developments. It was commented that the Neighbourhood Plan represented a very large project which would require a referendum. An outline was also provided concerning the developments and previous engagement related to the Mary Portas review, the creation of Blyth Town

Team, Chamber of Trade and the Grimsey report. It was commented that the focus for this would be the Town Centre and that such a process may result in the redrawing of this area subject to the findings of schemes such as the benchmarking project.

Councillor A Gibbs-Barton commented that it was his hope that this represented more of an expansion rather than abandoning of areas. It was further noted that the recent developments throughout Blyth still represented a short distance and thus should be seen as an expansion.

Councillor G T Knox commented that accessibility issues were changing the Town Centre, citing the development of the new Morrison's supermarket as such an example.

Councillor A G Barton commented that it is important to recognise that Blyth still has a large amount of commuters using public transport to gain access to the Town and that he was sure that the findings would demonstrate such and be reflected within the developments.

Councillor K Nisbet commented on the retail flight from Morrisons commented that people were no longer going into the traditional Town Centre and that pro-activity was needed to bring people back in.

Discussion was also held regarding the Morrisons Car Park and current restrictions.

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) also initiated talks regarding whether the current Town Centre should be amended for planning purposes.

Councillor G T Knox commented as to whether it would be possible to investigate plans for a covered market.

The Mayor, Councillor R Parker outlined previous proposals for regeneration in Blyth commented that he would like to see something developed on Bowes Street in order to bring back nightlife to the Town Centre and compliment the Keel Row shopping centre.

Mr G Garnham commented that he was seeking how much engagement Blyth Town Council sought or whether it was merely seeking a desk study.

Councillor K Nisbet commented that engagement with Steve Bradley, Calum Reid should be the starting point for engagement and would provide a useful insight.

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) commented that he would provide a list of the relevant contacts within NCC. **Action : SER**

Councillor K Nisbet also outlined the need for contact with ARCH.

Councillor G T Knox commented that as long as strong contact was made that the wider the engagement the better.

Councillor A Gibbs-Barton commented that potentially for the future that second shopping areas be considered in order to address areas which may struggle.

Mr G Garnham provided an outline of his experience regarding Neighbourhood Plans. It was commented that the largest that had been conducted was in Thame in South Oxfordshire which is a small Town than Blyth. It was further supported that this did represent a comprehensive document to be used to guide local development.

Mr G Garnham also stated that he must comment that it is and would represent a major piece of work. It was further noted that this would need to be related to the core strategy document, which it was his understanding is in its finalisation stage.

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) commented that he would be keen that a part of the report dealt with what exactly a Neighbourhood Plan would consist of and the recommendation of Mr G Garnham.

Mr G Garnham commented that it was his belief that the undertaking of such a project in the future would require a diverse team.

Councillor G T Knox commented that at present that such a project was possibly beyond the resources of the Town Council however commented on the need to keep an eye on the responsibilities of the Council.

Councillor J R Potts enquired as to whether Blyth would be at a disadvantage if it did not have a Neighbourhood Plan.

Mr G Garnham commented that issues have arising due to the areas such as a lack of 5-year supply of housing and the stagnation of housing markets outside of the City of London.

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) provided an outline of the Heritage walk about which had taken place the week before. It was noted that he was seeking to develop a working arrangement with Northumberland County Council conservation Officers in order to assist business owners and other sectors within Blyth.

An outline was also provided regarding potential to joint fund a conservation officer dedicated to Blyth within a broad and open remit.

Discussion was also held regarding the potential for further joint working in the development of a Conservation Area Advisory Group. It was outlined that this would represent an embryonic organisation with a quarterly meet of key stakeholders within Blyth.

The former Hedley Youngs building was also discussed.

It was also noted that should Blyth follow up on the joint funding of a Conservation Officer that this would assist with the seeking of grants and also support the conduction of a review into Blyth's conservation areas.

The potential for leaflets and heritage trails of the 20th Century military heritage of the Northumberland Coast was also discussed.

Councillor J R Potts commented that he had found the walking tour useful noting that Blyth has a large stock of very good buildings and that enhancements have been made with support from support grants. It was also outlined that there may be potential for a tie in with the history of such buildings.

Councillor G T Knox commented that some buildings within the Town are in a very poor state of repair and potential issues and methods for addressing this.

The Committee held further discussion regarding the Benchmarking Scheme. Councillor G T Knox provided an outline of the scheme and commented that this was currently led and ran by Northumberland County Council. Councillor J R Potts commented that this would address the lack of qualitative and quantitative data and would represent a good start for further and future development.

The Committee then went on to discuss the Grimsey Review. It was commented that a key issue was car parking and how people park. This led to discussion of Northumberland County Council's civil enforcement strategy.

Councillor G T Knox commented that it was Labour Party policy within the County to deliver free parking throughout the County.

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) commented regarding the difficulties surrounding private enforcement.

Councillor J R Potts outlined the areas discussed within the review such as rates and overheads, noting that this was a government led policy.

063/13/06: PLANNING APPLICATIONS

6.1 From the Weekly Lists issued by Northumberland County Council for the weeks of 30th September, 7th and 14th October 2013.

WEEKLY PLANNING APPLICATIONS

7th October 2013

13/02941/ADE Advertising Consent: Installation of 3 internally illuminated fascia signs – Lloyds Pharmacy, 4 Delaval Terrace, Blyth, Northumberland, NE24 1DJ – **No Comments.**

Councillor B W Elliott left the room for this application.

13/02986/FUL Substitution application relating to plots 198, 199, 203 resulting in 3no additional dwellings – Land of the Former Wellesley School, Links Road, Blyth, Northumberland – **No comments.**

13/03077/HPA Proposed rear extension to property – 5 Larch Grove, Blyth, Northumberland, NE24 3XU – **No comments.**

13/02985/FUL Erection of 59 two-storey 2,3 and 4 bedroom dwellings with associated works – Dismantled railway, East of Edendale Avenue, Malvins Road, Blyth, Northumberland – **No comments.**

14th October 2013

13/02914/FUL Construction of 4 timber frame, low energy dwellings, together with associated in-curtilage car parking and landscaping – Blyth North Area, Housing Office, Brierly Road, Blyth, Northumberland, NE24 5PP – **No comments.**

- 13/03018/FUL Replacing flat roof over first floor extension with a pitched roof – 32 Ridley Avenue, Blyth, Northumberland, NE23 3BB – **No comments.**
- 13/03038/FUL The reconfiguration of the drive thru lane and car park to provide a side-by-side order point with the construction of a new island for signage and reconfigured kerb lines including associated works to the site. The installation of a Goal Post Height Restrictor and 2 no Customer Order Displays (COD) and associated canopies. Reconfigured signage suite with additional signs – **No comments.**
- 13/03039/ADE Advertisement Consent: Reconfigurations of signage suite with the retention, relocation and additional signage. The suite comprises 6 freestanding signs and 1 side-by-side directional sign – McDonalds, Cowpen Road, Blyth, Northumberland, NE24 5TR – **No comments.**
- 13/03093/FUL Two storey extension – 14 Dewberry Close, Blyth, Northumberland, NE24 3XJ – **No comments.**

Councillor B W Elliott left the room for this application.

- 13/03083/VARYCO Variation of condition 6 of 12/03788/FUL (Division of existing dwelling into 2 no. residential dwellings (retrospective) – Beach House, Beachway, Blyth, Northumberland, NE24 3PG – **No comments.**

Councillor B W Elliott returned following this application.

6.2 Other applications which have to be considered before the next scheduled meeting of this Committee.

No further applications were received by the time of the Meeting.

064/13/07: GYPSY, ROMA, TRAVELLER TRANSIT SITE

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) commented that he had received no update regarding the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller transit site from Northumberland County Council.

Councillor J R Potts enquired as to whether there was a deadline for this project. **Action: SER**

065/13/08: TOWN CENTRE BENCHMARKING

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) commented that the exercise has largely been completed in Blyth, with the retail market, car parking and football audits completed, as have the face-to-face surveys. The online surveys and business surveys are being returned. The consultant reported that "Blyth is well ahead of the game".

066/13/09: CENTRAL LINK ROAD

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) commented that there were no updates regarding the Central Link Road.

067/13/10: HOUSING AND GREEN BELT CORE STRATEGY

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) reminded the Committee that the draft document is available on the County Councils website. If any members wish for a printed copy, they should contact the Office.

It was noted that a future meeting of the Committee will consider a detailed response.

Councillor A Gibbs-Barton commented that he would be seeking a copy of the report.

The Committee held a discussion on affordable housing, commenting about difficulties in relations with developers in order to provide such housing.

Councillor B W Elliott commented that such considerations were normally a condition to development noting that he had concerns regarding its enforcement.

068/13/11: ITEMS FOR INFORMATION AND URGENT MATTERS

The Town Clerk (Democratic Services) commented that he had met with the Port of Blyth (Martin Lawlor). It was noted that the port is seeking

further engagement with Blyth Town Council and would be interested in presenting an annual report to the Town Council.

069/13/12: DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was **AGREED** that the next scheduled Meeting is on Thursday 5th November 2013 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber at Arms Everytyne House. This Meeting may give initial consideration to the Core Strategy response and whether Blyth should be a *primary destination*.

MEETING CLOSED AT 8.30 pm

Date:

Signed:

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:

Cllr G T Knox (Chair)
Cllr J R Potts (Vice-Chair)
Cllr A Cartie
Cllr B W Elliott
Cllr A Gibbs-Barton
Cllr K Nisbet
Cllr R Parker (Mayor)
Cllr G Thompson
Cllr A Turnbull

COPY TO ALL COUNCILLORS