

EAST DORSET DISTRICT COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 5th September, 2007 at 10.00 a.m.

Present:

Councillor Derek Burt - Chairman
Councillor Spencer Flower - Vice-Chairman

Present: Councillors Lucy Clark, Alex Clarke, Queenie Comfort, Mike Dyer, Stewart Hearn Anne Holland and John Little.

Also in attendance: Councillor Michael Simper.

160. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Janet Dover, Sally Elliot, Pat Hymers, David Packer, George Russell and Don Wallace.

161. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

162. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8th August, 2007 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

163. Presentations by the Public

A petition was presented which had been signed by 85 residents of Golf Links Road, Ferndown in support of opposing further construction of Flat Blocks along Golf Links Road.

Speaking on behalf of the signatories, Mr D Pollington raised three principle concerns. First was their belief that Golf Links Road could not sustain additional traffic volume that any further increase of development would bring. Second were concerns over the capacity of the existing sewerage system and surface water drainage, particularly following recent flooding of the area. And third, Golf Links Road is within an area of special character and residents believed that this had been ignored in planning permissions previously granted for the area.

In response, the Head of Planning and Building Control commented that the petition opposed the further construction of blocks of flats in Golf Links Road. It was a position that could not be supported by the Council as it conflicted with national and local planning policy.

The fundamental principle remained that each planning application for the redevelopment of a block of flats in Golf Links Road, or for that matter anywhere else, would need to be assessed on its particular planning merits and having regard to the policies at that time.

National planning advice, in particular contained in Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing sought to make the best use of previously developed land within urban areas. This principle is accepted in the East Dorset Local Plan (which pre-dates this PPS but which had regard to the predecessor Planning Policy Guidance Note which gave similar advice).

Golf Links Road is also within a “Special Character Area” which is covered by Policy BUCON6 of the Local Plan and which advised “in the Special Character Areas defined on the proposals maps and insets, development or redevelopment must respect those features or characteristics which are key to maintaining the environmental quality of the area.” However, the supporting paragraph (paragraph 6.134) advised “..... it is important that they (*that is the Special Character Areas*) should be protected because of their intrinsic quality and their local importance, although this protection will be less comprehensive than that given to the Conservation Areas themselves. For example, there is no presumption against redevelopment, so long as it respects those features and characteristics which are important for the quality of the area.” In addition the Council had approved Supplementary Planning Guidance 27 in October 2005 which informed the Policy affecting the area within which Golf Links Road lies.

Part of Golf Links Road lies within 400 metres of internationally designated heathland and here the Council, reflecting the current Interim Heathland Strategy 2006, might well resist applications on the advice of Natural England. The redevelopment of sites beyond 400 metres would also be informed by Natural England’s advice.

The Resident’s Association representatives have also recently met with officers from this Council and Wessex Water plc and drainage matters would not give rise to any redevelopment embargo.

In the context of the likely policies to arise as a result of work on the Council’s proposed local development framework documents, there was again no prospect of a simple embargo for flat redevelopment in Golf Links Road due to the importance attached to national planning policy at a local level.

The Inspector, in reviewing the submitted policy for the Special Character Areas, said:

*The policy lays too much emphasis on copying the **existing** form and appearance of the streetscene. The policy needs to be redirected to allow for developments that do not match what is there, but which does not unacceptably harm the features that give the areas their special character. I am not in a position to define which of the areas should be retained. What is needed is a much more rigorous assessment of those areas worthy of this special protection. Those few that would justify this special treatment should be individually identified. The plan should set out their particular characteristics worthy of special protection, so that a clear basis for decisions is set out.*

Overall, therefore, whilst the Council notes the position of the Golf Links

Road Residents Association and those who have signed the associated petition, it was not possible to support the request.

Members RESOLVED that the above response be forwarded to the signatories of the petition.

Voting: Nem. Con.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

164. Members' Allowances

The Chief Executive submitted a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Members considered the report of the Independent Panel on Members' Allowances which they agreed subject to an amendment of Special Responsibility Allowance, which resulted in the base budget for 2008/09 being increased by an additional £3,600 to £8,100.

RECOMMENDED that the existing Scheme of Members' Allowances be amended from the 1st October 2007 as follows:

- a) the level of Basic Allowance payable be as recommended by the Independent Panel at £3,600;
- b) Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) be as detailed in the Panel's report with the addition that the Chairmen of the Scrutiny and Policy Development Sub Committees be paid a Special Responsibility Allowance equivalent to the basic allowance x 0.5;
- c) Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) be paid to the Independent Chairman of the Standards Committee equal to the basic allowance x 0.5 with other independent members' allowance being £200 per year plus appropriate travel and subsistence expenses;
- d) Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) be paid to the Chairman of Council equal to the basic allowance;
- e) no Member to receive more than one SRA;
- f) allowances payable to be updated annually on 1 April based on payment for one day per week x the LGA daily rate minus a public service reduction of 50%;
- g) the rate for travelling to be set at the Inland Revenue mileage rate currently 40p per mile for cars and amended in line with the Inland Revenue rate from time to time;
- h) subsistence to be based on the reimbursement of receipted expenditure and subject to the maximum limits set out in the Officers' Scheme;
- i) co-optees' allowance be £200 per year plus appropriate travel and subsistence expenses;

- j) carers' allowance be paid on the receipt of invoices.
- k) any Member may in writing to the Chief Executive agree to forego any part of their entitlement to an allowance;
- l) no allowances shall be paid to any Member who has been suspended; and
- m) that the revised scheme does not include the provision for pension for Members.

Voting: Recommendation a) 6:1 (1 abstention)
Recommendation b) – m) unanimous

DELEGATED BUSINESS

165. Amendments to Capital Programme

The Chief Executive submitted a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Members were advised of the additional funding required to complete the disabled access improvement work and alterations to the Moors Valley Country Park toilets.

RESOLVED that the Capital Programme be amended as set out in Paragraph 8.1 to this report be approved.

Voting: 6:2

166. Proposed Heathland Development Plan Document - Issues and Options

The Chief Executive submitted a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'C' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Members were requested to support that the Proposed Heathland Development Plan Document, Issues and Options, be approved for consultation.

RESOLVED that the draft Issues and Options document be approved as the basis for consultation under Regulation 25, for the Dorset Heathlands Joint Development Plan Document.

Voting: 7:0 (1 abstention)

167. Release of Restrictive Covenant on redevelopment of Flight Refuelling site, Wimborne

The Chief Executive submitted a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'D' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Members were asked to approve the terms for the release of a restrictive covenant on redevelopment of the Flight Refuelling site, Wimborne.

RESOLVED that Members approve the release of the restrictive covenant affecting the Flight Refuelling site, Wimborne, on the terms

detailed in this report.

Voting: unanimous

168. Verwood Hub Consultative Group Minutes

The Chief Executive submitted a report for information, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'E' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Members noted the minutes of the Verwood Hub Consultative Group Meetings held on 2nd and 23rd August, 2007 and considered a request to purchase a computerised booking system for the Verwood Hub.

RESOLVED that Members approve the allocation of £25,000 from this year's capital programme to fund a computerised booking system for the Verwood Hub Community Centre.

Voting: 6:0 (2 abstentions)

169. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that in view of the nature of the business to be transacted it is likely that if members of the public were present during the following items there would be disclosure to them of 'exempt information' as described in the categories indicated and they be therefore excluded from the meeting in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

DELEGATED BUSINESS

170. Moors Valley Country Park - Catering Concession

Exempt Information - Category 3 (Personal financial or business affairs)

The Chief Executive submitted a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'F' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Members were asked to agree an extension to the concessionary period up to 30 September 2017.

171. Business Rates for Write-Off Consideration

Exempt Information - Category 2 (Identification of an individual) and Category 3 (Personal financial or business affairs)

The Chief Executive submitted a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'G' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Members considered a request to write off uncollectible debts over £10,000.

The meeting ended at 12.10 p.m.

CHAIRMAN