

THAME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Thame Town Council held on 15 November 2016 at 6.30pm in the Upper Chamber, Thame Town Hall

Present: Cllrs B Austin, D Bretherton, D Butler, N Champken-Woods, P Cowell, M Deacock, N Dixon (Deputy Mayor), D Dodds, M Dyer, L Emery (Town Mayor), H Fickling, C Jones, P Lambert, A Midwinter, M Stiles and T Wyse.

Officers

G Hunt, Town Clerk

G Markland, Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Officer

A Oughton, Committee Services Officer

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from District Councillor Matelot Green.

2 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Cllr Stiles declared an interest in Item 5 as a resident living close to the proposed development and did not take part in the discussion or vote on this item.

3 Civic Announcements

Cllr Emery had attended a number of events over the last couple of months and felt it impossible to single out any one in particular as she had enjoyed them all.

4 Public Participation and Public Questions

Dr Paul Winson spoke against planning application P16/S3525/FUL as a resident who lived close to the proposed development. Dr Winson stated that he also spoke on behalf of his neighbours who were unable to attend the meeting.

Dr Winson objected to two aspects which should have been given due attention in the application and had not; on-site parking provision and traffic implications. The application was for 41 apartments with only 14 parking spaces. With the majority of occupants aged from 60 upwards it was unlikely that they would want to 'give up using their vehicles' therefore where would the extra 20-25 vehicles park? One option would be Waitrose car park but this is already at capacity with Waitrose recently withdrawing free parking for businesses along Greyhound Walk to free up more space. Added to residents parking needs would be spaces for visitors, health visitors, doctors, home help and ambulances. It was therefore likely that the proposal would lead to more on-street parking in the local area.

The second point related to traffic movement, especially along Greyhound Lane which was already congested on busy days such as Tuesdays, special days and the days leading up to Christmas. To add to the congestion Waitrose delivery lorries parked along Greyhound Lane. These two points should have been addressed in the previous application. The villain of the situation being the Highways Department at the County Council who had failed to put together an adequate assessment of the traffic needs not only for this application but also when considering other applications in the town.

Mr Simon Cater, the agent for Churchill Retirement Homes spoke for the application. He had read the Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Officer's report on the planning application which

provided the history of the site and therefore would concentrate on addressing the recommendations in the report.

The gables on the roundabout in the previous application were overcomplicated and through discussion with the District Planning Authority were now less fussy. The room sizes of all the apartments met the national space requirements. The design of the link element, roof definition and entrance had been used to articulate the break-up of the building mass. The cladding would be grey in colour.

With regard to the poorly defined entrance, Mr Cater responded that normally internal access for residents is close to the parking. The issue of light into the development had been looked at in some detail with sun diagrams produced to aid the design but not included with the application. The communal laundry room had been removed as each apartment now benefited from integral laundry facilities. The well-being room had been replaced with a guest suite.

In response to the point made regarding insufficient parking spaces, a number of transport surveys had shown that within a short period of moving into retirement living developments in sustainable areas people did give up using their vehicles.

The height and mass of the development had been reduced to that previously submitted and overall the number of apartments had been reduced by four.

5 P16/S3525/FUL – Thames Valley Police, Greyhound Lane

The Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Officer presented his report on the planning application for the Police Station site in Greyhound Lane. The report provided the background on the previous application and subsequent Appeal. The resubmitted application had largely addressed a number of issues through pre-application discussion with the District Planning Authority. However, the opportunity to include the Town Council in the discussions had been missed. Had the Town Council been involved some of the issues may have been addressed or at least a better understanding of the design input at an early stage.

Members raised concern about the lack of parking provision and suggested that residents may decide to purchase a permit to park in the Cattle Market car park which is not far from the proposed site. If this were the case the capacity of the Cattle Market car park would be reduced which in turn would lead to a detrimental effect on the vibrancy of the town centre. The applicant was arrogant to suggest that residents / visitors could use the Waitrose Car Park which was already at capacity.

It was felt that the design was both monolithic and institutional and would have a detrimental effect on the Conservation Area. There was a lack of privacy to some of the ground floor apartments and concern as to the amount of light to apartments facing the Waitrose building. The Town Council had been badly let down by the County Council Highway department, stitched up by the Planning Inspectorate and sold out by the District Planning Authority. Much of the discussion of the application had taken place behind closed doors without any regard to the Thame Neighbourhood Plan.

It was noted that the land owner of the site was Thames Valley Police and Members agreed that a letter be sent to the Crime Commissioner to voice the concerns of the Town Council.

RESOLVED to:

Strongly object to the planning application and Recommend Refusal
1. Featureless appearance of the gables

2. *Inadequate size of some of the rooms*
3. *Inappropriate design / cladding / roof definition of the link element*
4. *Poorly defined entrance*
5. *Lack of light into some ground floor flats*
6. *Lack of communal areas*

As such it contravenes design policies in the Local Plan which are an integral part of the Thame Neighbourhood Plan.

In addition Members stressed

7. *Insufficient parking provision based on new evidence*
8. *Overdevelopment – too many apartments leading to lack of amenity space*
9. *Detrimental effect on the Conservation Area with overbearing elevations*
10. *Detrimental effect on the vibrancy of the town centre through parking displacement impact*
11. *Insufficient buggy space*

6 Report from County Councillor N Carter

Cllr Carter addressed some of the comments raised by the Town Council during the discussion of Item 5 and largely agreed with them. Cllr Carter was a consultee on the planning application and was grateful for the opportunity to hear the Town Council's views before formulating his response which would be as robust and forthright as that of the Town Council.

Cllr Carter expressed his apologies for the lateness of his report which was now with the Town Clerk for distribution to Councillors tomorrow. It was a five page report covering areas of public health, day-time support services, school places, libraries, the unitary debate, transport, broadband and social care. One thing not included was the closure of the Buttermarket to traffic for the foreseeable future due to sewer problems.

7 Reports from South Oxfordshire District Councillors

Cllr Champken-Woods drew Members attention to the District report previously circulated and in particular the changes to waste recycling from 3 November when green wheelie bins would only be emptied if recycling in them was loose or in clear sacks. Contractors would leave a bin hanger on any bins containing black or coloured sacks explaining the problem.

The District Council had awarded a total of £648,000 in grants to communities of which Thame Town Council had received the largest sum of £250,000 towards the redevelopment of the cricket pavilion.

Cllr Dodds reported that Monday 7 November had proved to be a very testing day. An accident on the A34 had led to gridlock around Didcot and the surrounding area including the Council Offices and waste depot. Cllr Dodds reminded everyone that he was no longer the Cabinet Minister responsible for Waste.

8 Notices of Motion

There were no Notices of Motion.

9 Members Questions (under Standing Order 11)

Cllr Lambert stated it was not so much a question as a request to Councillors to think carefully before using 'reply all' to emails. He reminded Members that a forum was available via the Town Council website for informal discussion.

10 Minutes

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 20 September 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

11 Policy & Resources Committee

The minutes of the meeting on 1 November 2016 were noted.

12 Community, Leisure & Recreation Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2016 were noted. The Town Clerk drew attention to Item 29: Music in the Park. Since the meeting the Town Clerk had received further representations and had agreed to look at these in a measured way, in consultation with the Community Services Manager and come back to Council, if necessary, at a future date.

13 Planning & Environment Committee

The minutes of the meetings held on 6 September 2016, 27 September 2016, 18 October 2016 and 8 November 2016 were noted.

14 Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Committee

The minutes of the meetings held on 27 September 2016 and 8 November 2016 were noted.

15 External Audit

Members received the External Auditor's Certificate and Report for 2015-16 and reviewed the Issues Arising Report. It was noted that it had been agreed with DCK Beavers Ltd that relevant changes to the presentation of the FRSSE accounts would be made next year to avoid repetition of the one minor issue raised.

16 Schedule of Meetings

After a brief discussion Members agreed that the Budget Working Group meeting scheduled for Tuesday 3 October 2017 should be moved to Tuesday 10 October 2017 at 5pm. All other dates on the Schedule were agreed.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The Schedule of Meetings 2017-2018 was agreed with one change, that the Budget Meeting on Tuesday 3 October 2017 be moved to Tuesday 10 October 2017 commencing at 5pm.***

Post meeting note: The Full Council meeting scheduled for Tuesday 23 May 2017 is not required and will be removed from the Schedule of Meetings.

17 Standing Orders

Now that the Mayor's Allowance is discussed and agreed at budget setting and the Schedule of Meetings is agreed at the calendar year end that Standing Orders 7.0(h) and 7.0(i) which requires their review at the Annual Meeting of the Council be deleted.

RESOLVED that:

- i) Standing Orders 7.0 (h) and 7.0 (i) be deleted.***

18 Thame Music Festival

Following the support expressed for the proposed Thame Music Festival at the Community, Leisure and Recreation Committee and in response to the request from Jon Littler for a Councillor representative to sit on the Music Festival Organising Committee, Cllr Deacock put his name forward.

RESOLVED that:

- i) Cllr Deacock be nominated as representative to the Music Festival Organising Committee with Cllr Wyse as substitute / support.***

The meeting concluded at 7.57pm

Signed
Chairman, 17 January 2017