

ALSAGER TOWN COUNCIL

PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD IN ALSAGER INSTITUTE
ON TUESDAY 28TH FEBRUARY 2017

Present: Councillor R Fletcher (Chairman)

Councillor S Bishop
Councillor M Gruse
Councillor S Helliwell
Councillor D I Hough
Councillor C Pletscher
Councillor H Robinson
Councillor J Smith
Councillor R Tyson
Councillor P Williams

D W Dingle (Acting Town Clerk)

Neil Jones (Cheshire East Council)
Richard Middlebrook (Head Alsager School)

1 Member of the Press
6 Member of the public

The Vice Chairman Councillor R Fletcher informed the Committee that he would be acting as Chairman for the meeting in the absence of the Chairman.

The Chairman read out the fire action procedure in the event of discovering a fire in the building.

16/182 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C V Burgess and T E S Jones.

16/183 Declarations of Interest

Councillor D I Hough declared his interest as a member of Cheshire East Council and a member of their Strategic Planning Board, he further declared that he would not be providing an opinion or voting on any application, including Agenda item 8, that he considered may be the subject of determination by the Strategic Planning Board.

Councillor R Fletcher declared his interest as a member of Cheshire East Council, and in particular, planning application 17/1049C where the applicants were close personal friends. As a result, Councillor R Fletcher confirmed he would be vacating the Chair and the room in the consideration of this application.

Councillor H Robinson declared her interest as a neighbour of planning application 17/0631C.

16/184 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting dated 7th February 2017 were referred to and Councillor S Helliwell referred to Minute 16/171 and asked that the following be added to the preamble to the Minute. “that the PCSO’s confirmed that they do attend and patrol the Linley Lane area of Alsager” which was accepted. Further reference was made to Minute 16/180 by Councillor S Helliwell which was not accepted. It was:-

Resolved: That, the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning, Environment and Community Services Committee dated 7th February 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to “that the PCSO’s confirmed that they do attend and patrol the Linley Lane area of Alsager” being added to the preamble to Min. 16/171.

16/185 Matters Arising

At the invitation of the Chairman the Acting Town Clerk made reference to Minute 16/180 and referred to the letter received from the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire dated 23rd February 2017. It was confirmed that to date this was the only response received in relation to Minute 16/180.

At the suggestion of the Chairman it was agreed that the item be placed on the agenda for the next meeting of Committee.

16/186 Public Participation

At the invitation of the Chairman Matt Helliwell informed the meeting that the Alsager Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group had set up its website and this was now accessible to the public.

Sylvia Dyke made reference to White Moss Quarry and its operational workings. Sylvia went on to inform the Committee of the difficulties in the White Moss Quarry liaison panel obtaining a copy of the Quarry’s “Monitoring Report”

Resolved: That, a copy of the “Monitoring Report” for White Moss Quarry as referred to be requested from Cheshire East Council as Planning Enforcement Authority.

16/187 Planning Applications

The Planning, Environment and Community Services Committee considered Planning Applications registered with Cheshire East Council as follows:

Week ending 10/02/2017
Week ending 17/02/2017
Week ending 24/02/2017

Resolved: That, the Planning, Environment and Community Services Committee’s formal comments on all applications registered with Cheshire East Council up to week ending 24th February 2017 be forwarded to the Planning Officer, Cheshire East Council. (Appendix A)

The Acting Town Clerk made reference to an email received from Mr C J Howard dated Thursday 2nd February 2017 regarding the presence of asbestos and its removal as part of the re-development of the former MMU site. The response from David Wilson Homes dated 23rd February 2017 was referred to which was circulated to committee members. It was agreed the response detailing the Asbestos Advisory notes be forwarded to Mr C J Howard.

Resolved:- That, the Asbestos Advisory Note be forwarded to Mr C J Howard.

The Acting Town Clerk made reference to a recent response from the Planning Authority with regard to the “Bond of Surety” at White Moss Quarry. In relation to Minute 16/143 the reply from David Malcolm “Head of Planning” Regulation was read out following which it was agreed that the matter be the subject of an agenda item at the next meeting.

16/188 Decisions List

The Chairman referred to the circulated decisions list as received from the Planning Authority, Cheshire East Council up to week ending 24th February 2017.

Resolved: That, the Decisions List be received and noted.

16/189 Bank Corner Proposed Highway Improvement

The Chairman introduced Neil Jones, Principal Highways Engineer with Cheshire East Council and referred to the potential Shared Surface Improvement Scheme for Alsager Town Centre as proposed by Renew Land Developments. It was confirmed that the scheme design had previously been circulated to all members of the Committee and that the draft scheme was being presented to the Town Council for comment. In outlining the scheme Neil explained that White Moss Quarry Renew Land Development were in pursuit of their appeal for the development of 400 houses on the site of White Moss Quarry, and in this context the views of the Town Council are being sought prior to further consideration by the Strategic Planning Board. Neil went on to explain that the applicant “Renew Land Development” may choose to include or otherwise, the scheme as part of the appeal which will be by way of Public Enquiry. It was explained that the proposed scheme was a hybrid shared space scheme with the emphasise on a scheme of environmental improvement to the Town Centre. The main design considerations being to ease congestion by way of better traffic management, pedestrian safety and floorscape improvement.

The Chairman suspended Standing Orders to enable the members of the public present to engage in the consultation.

The following questions regarding the Scheme were asked by the Chairman: -

What is the white stripe down the centre of Crewe Road and Sandbach Road North demarcation?

Are the loading Bays on the site of the current Bus Stops referring to passengers being loaded?

There have been complaints about too many crossings in the centre of Alsager you are proposing an additional one?

Are you confident that all the shared space areas are all in Council ownership?

Are you confident you can get round the covenant that states that the parking area outside the former Bands Shop can only be used for parked vehicles?

Are you aware of the Holmes report that claims that 63% of people have had a poor experience with shared space schemes while 35% actively avoid them?

Could this impact on the local shops?

For information, when you first suggested a shared space scheme over two years ago in a residents survey, over 80% of replies were against a shared space scheme for Bank Corner.

In responding to the above Neil further explained that a number of the existing traffic signals were being removed to assist traffic flow in the reduction of congestion and it should be noted that traffic flows through Alsager would only continue to increase. During the debate both members of the Committee and members of the public held the following views: -

That the scheme as presented offered little to the Town Centre shops and did not provide the necessary improved pedestrian safety to the young, elderly, disabled and people with mobility problems. The scheme in isolation to the wider place of Crewe Road was cited as a concern as the problems of congestion still exist elsewhere along Crewe Road and Lawton Road. There was concern expressed by members of the public that the proposed scheme was not any better than what we have already with the only perceived benefits being visual improvements. It was suggested that the existing problems should be sorted out first those including outstanding TRO's and highway drainage works. Reference was made to the Alsager Highway Study and its recommendations of individual improvements to Highways junctions.

Reference was further made to Alsager being a Key Service Centre in the emerging Local Plan and in this respect does the proposed scheme take this into account and the developing pattern of planning applications and permissions. It was recognised that the scheme does provide improvements to cycling and cyclist safety but getting to the scheme and from the scheme present many highway safety for cyclists. The issue of shared surface was raised and it was understood issues exist and that the reduction in proposed kerbs heights do present safety concerns.

Sylvia Dyke was concerned that the developers "Renew Land Developments" had requested that as part of the appeal process for the development of 400 houses on the White Moss Quarry site the shared surface improvement scheme had been proposed and this was an injustice.

Following the debate it was: -

Resolved: i) That, Neil Jones be thanked for his attendance with a recognition that the scheme was proposed by Renew Land Developments and not the Highways Authority Cheshire East Council.

ii) That, the proposed scheme does not offer the benefits to the Town Centre in terms of pedestrian safety to the young, elderly, disabled and mobility impaired.

iii) That, the scheme does not offer benefits to the shop keepers and other commercial high street frontages in the Town Centre.

iv) That, the Town Council acknowledges this is a hybrid shared space scheme and more of an environmental improvement scheme.

v) That, the Town council requests the Highways Authority to discourage wherever possible the passage of HGV's through the Town Centre.

vi) That, the Town Council wishes to see "Accessible to All" environmental improvements to the Town Centre being brought about by Cheshire East Council as the Highway Authority.

vii) That, the Town Council writes to Cheshire East Council Planning Authority expressing its concerned that the developers "Renew Land Developments" had requested that as part of the appeal process for the development of 400 houses on the White Moss Quarry site the shared surface improvement scheme had been proposed and this was an injustice

16/190

National Funding Formula – Alsager Schools

The Chairman introduced Richard Middlebrook, Head of Alsager School and referred to the National Funding Formula for schools and in particular its potential impact for Alsager schools. At the invitation of the Chairman, Richard made reference to the following documents that were circulated: -

- Alsager Town Council Briefing Notes 28/2/2017
- Alsager School – National Funding Formula Consultation – key points
- Impact of National Funding Formula (NFF)

Richard made specific reference to his presentation, wishing to draw out two particular items: -

- 1) NFF, its consultation and potential impact.
- 2) Cost pressures facing all schools and Alsager Schools current situation.

Richard made reference to the briefing note on the NFF consultation and potential impact as follows: -

- Still at consultation phase – ends 22/03/17.
- Affects every school in England.
- Implemented in 2 phases to reduce impact -1.5% as from 01/09/18 – year 1 = £75,000. Remainder -2.9% as from 01/0/919 – year 2 = £151,000 per year
- Based around the principles of "equality of opportunity for all; encouraging social mobility; justice: fairness"
- % based on 'core' funding has been reduced (by 8%) and given to 'pupil' or 'additional' factors to support these principles.

- A huge amount of lobbying is going on – please do your bit.

Together with the briefing note on Cost Pressures and our current situation as follows: -

- These cost pressures were the same in every school – NAO = 8% savings (if you include our NFF impact = 10.5%) by 2019.
- All these salary ‘on costs’ are unfunded. Each employee is getting more and more expensive to employ each year for doing the same job.
- The DfE sees Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) as a way of schools saving money – centralised services, staff working across multiple sites, economies of scales etc. This is true but it would not make the savings needed.

Richard went on to outline the school’s response to the NFF consultation and the key points together with the Impact of National Funding Formula “If Alsager School was geographically somewhere else”.

Councillor S Helliwell referred to and read out an updated email received from Debra Wind, Ministerial and Public Communications Division on behalf of the Secretary of State in response to Councillor S Helliwell’s email dated 29th January 2017 regarding the New National Funding Formula.

Following a debate and questions and answers, it was: -

- Resolved:
- i) That, Richard Middlebrook be thanked for his attendance and presentation to the Town Council.
 - ii) That, as a result of the NFF Consultation and Potential Impact as explained the Town Council supports Alsager School’s NFF Consultation Key Points as their response to the Consultation.
 - iii) That, the Minister for Education together with Local MP Fiona Bruce be informed of the response of the Town Council to the NFF Consultation which concludes on the 22nd March 2017.

16/191 Neighbourhood Planning

The Chairman referred to the agenda item and requested any member of the Alsager Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group to provide an update of their work to date. Councillor H Robinson informed the Committee that work was progressing well and the next meeting of the Steering Group was to be held tomorrow 29th February 2017.

Resolved: That, the position be received and noted.

16/192 Statement of Representations Procedure: Schedule of Proposed Main Modification to the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy – Proposed Changes (March 2016 Version)

The Chairman made reference to the above statement recently received from the Cheshire East Council as Planning Authority. The subject matter, representatives and representation received was outlined together with the location of documents for inspection.

The six week period for representations was noted with the closing date of Monday 20th March 2017.

Reference was made to the Cheshire East Council “Spatial Planning Update February 2017 for Town and Parish Councils” where it was agreed that four places be reserved at the meeting to be held on 22nd March 2017 at Westfields, Sandbach.

Resolved: i) That, the Statement of representative’s procedure; - Schedule of proposed Main Modification to the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy - proposed changes (March 2016 version) be received and noted.

ii) That, four places be booked for the Spatial Planning Update to be held on 22nd March 2017 at Westfields, Sandbach.

16/193

Highways Issues

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor S Helliwell read out a letter of complaint from a resident in Ivy Lane, Alsager, regarding illicit and discourteous parking in the vicinity of Excalibur School.

The Acting Town Clerk informing the Committee of recent reports of Highway flooding in Lodge Road and Moorhouse Avenue, Alsager.

Resolved: i) That, the contents of the letter read out by Councillor S Helliwell be noted.

ii) That, the reports of Highway surface water flooding in Lodge Road and Moorhouse Avenue be reported to the Highways Authority.

iii) That, the letter of complaint regarding illicit and discourteous parking in the vicinity of Excalibur school be forwarded to Excalibur School and Police.

16/194

Licensing Issues

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor S Helliwell reported an “application for a variation to a premises licence” by Ian Cooke in relation to 6, Crewe Road, Alsager, ST7 2ES, now known as Six Bar and Grill. It was reported that the application seeks to remove Condition 7 of Annex 2, Extend the Licensable Area, and Amend Licensable Activities to Supply Alcohol, Late Night Refreshment, Live Music and Recorded Music Monday to Thursday 11.00 to midnight, Friday and Saturday 11.00 to 00.30, Sunday 11.00 to 23.30.

Following a debate it was:-

Resolved: That, the Town Council objects to this Application and cites the four grounds for objections Prevention of Crime and Disorder, Public Safety, Prevention of public Nuisance and Protection of harm to children.

16/195

Members Item – Councillor J Smith – Bronze Age Barrows Update

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor J Smith gave the following update to the Committee. It was explained that the identified Bronze Age Barrows site was an important historical site and about as far north as the “Beaker Folk” travelled. In the sites future management, a Steering Group had been set up involving Councillor P

Williams from the Town Council, Councillor R Bailey from Cheshire East and other members who were working to attract Lottery Funding to keep the barrows under the site and enable well managed outreach access to the site. The Steering Group was meeting on a regular basis and the planting of native species of trees was being investigated in securing the site for future generations.

Resolved: That, the update be received and noted and Councillor J Smith be thanked.

The meeting commenced at 7.15pm and concluded at 9.24pm.

Councillor R Fletcher
Chairman