**MINUTES OF THE PLANNING MEETING OF WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HALL, FORE STREET, WELLINGTON ON MONDAY 6th JANUARY at 6.30PM**

**PRESENT**: Councillor Lloyd

Councillors J Hunt, J Thorne, W Battishill, V Stock-Williams, S Pringle-Kosikowsky, A Govier, M McGuffie, M Lithgow

Kathryn Hemensley (Town Clerk)

Denise Todd (Somerset West and Taunton Planning Officer)

There were 5 members of the public and two members of the press in attendance.

**174. APOLOGIES**

Reasons for non-attendance were given and approved, from: -

Councillors C Booth, R Henley, N Smith and D Bradley.

**175. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Lithgow declared an interest as a member of Somerset West and Taunton Council’s Planning Committee and therefore reserved the right to vote differently at SWT’s Planning Committee meeting as different facts could be placed before him. He also declared an interest as he had received representations from a constituent in respect of planning application (43/19/0075), Bagley Road development.

Councillors Lloyd and Stock-Williams declared an interest as above, as substitute members for SWT’s Planning Committee.

Cllr Lloyd noted that she would be attending the next Planning Committee in her substitute role. She also declared an interest in planning application (43/19/0106), Jurston Farm as she had visited the site’s show-home in her Mayoral capacity.

Councillor Govier declared a prejudicial interest in application (43/19/0075), Bagley Road and therefore would not participate in the debate, but would leave the room for that agenda item. Cllr Govier also declared an interest in planning application (43/19/0106), Jurston Farm as he had visited the site’s show-home as a representative of the Council.

Councillor Thorne declared an interest in planning application (43/19/0103), Sylvan Road as one of the objectors was a personal friend. He also declared an interest in planning application (43/19/0106), Jurston Farm as he had visited the site’s show-home as a representative of the Council.

**176. PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME**

(a) Mr Jones spoke to explain the background to his planning application at agenda item 4c (43/19/0100) (amended scheme to 43/19/0078).

**177. APPLICATIONS TO BE DETERMINED BY TOWN COUNCIL:**

Councillor Lloyd advised the meeting that application (43/19/0107) extension to 81 Oaken Ground had been withdrawn from the agenda **(Item 4b**) as the client’s revised plans had not yet been received by SWT.

*It was noted that the Planning Officers’ reports had only been received late that afternoon for the other two applications for Council decision. Councillors instructed the Clerk to feed back to the District Council that this was wholly unsatisfactory, and that urgent improvement was required in the passing over of information necessary to make informed planning decisions.*

1. Erection of single storey side extension at 3 Wayside, Pyles Thorne, Wellington (43/19/0102)

**RESOLVED** to approve the planning application, subject to conditions set out in the Planning Officer’s recommendations.

**(b)** This application was **WITHDRAWN**.

**(c)** Erection of first floor rear extension at 47 Oakfield Park, Wellington (43/19/0100) (amended scheme to 43/19/0078).

**RESOLVED** to approve the planning application, subject to conditions set out in the Planning Officer’s recommendations.

**178**. **TO CONSIDER WHAT COMMENTS TO MAKE ON THE FOLLOWING APPLICATIONS THAT WILL BE DETERMINED BY SOMERSET WEST AND TAUNTON COUNCIL OR SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL:**

**(a)** Change of use of land to domestic at the side of 21 Sylvan Road, Wellington (43/19/0103)

**RECOMMENDED** to refuse the application for the following reasons:-

* The application was felt to compromise road safety
* The fence is over-large as well as being in a vehicular blind-spot
* The area is generally an open-plan estate, and this application is out of keeping
* It was surprising that the application had been allowed to proceed with the current proposals given the severe appearance of the proposed fencing
* The County Highways team object to the application due to their strong concerns
* It was noted that local residents have objected on grounds of road safety

1. Variations of Condition Nos 02 (approved plans) and 04 (highway works) of application 46/12/0007 at Blackdown Garden Centre, Wellington Road, West Buckland (46/19/0038)

Following extensive discussion the matter was put to the vote, which resulted in a tie. The Mayor therefore cast a deciding vote to support approval.

**RECOMMENDED** to support approval of the application to prevent prolonging the delay in completing outstanding works, but to draw the planning officer’s attention to the following comments:-

* The original planning conditions were not discharged, and this was not enforced by the former Taunton Deane Borough Council. Had this been the case there would have been no need for a further application.
* It was suggested that the original required works had not been completed simply because the applicant wished to avoid costs, even though they had benefitted from the extra trade for years.
* The current amendments to traffic calming measures constituted an inferior plan to the original plans.
* The access to the garden centre is a particularly dangerous stretch of road, extremely prone to accidents. Therefore the compliance team should ensure any road safety conditions are adhered to and discharged as soon as possible.
* Traffic in this area has increased considerably and continues to do so. There is a perceived opportunistic attempt to reduce traffic safety measures by using the recent reduction in the highway speed limit as a get-out clause.
* The Council wish to prevent the application from dragging on forever, and are willing to accept the revisions on the grounds that the Highways Team have now deemed the traffic scheme acceptable.
* There was concern that the original landscaping requirements had a five-year time-span and it was unclear from feedback from Somerset West and Taunton if the lanscaping condition had ever been discharged. If it had, it was unlikely that any new works would benefit from the mitigation of soft-landscaping.
* It was specifically requested that the Planning Officer consider imposing new conditions relating to the provision of a new landscaping scheme.

Councillor Battishill joined the meeting at this point.

**(c)** Installation of 3 No. dormer windows, various internal and external alterations and formation of driveway at Longforth Farm, Lillebonne Way, Wellington (retention of part works already undertaken) (43/19/0105/LB)

**RECOMMENDED** to support approval of the application subject to conditions set out in the Listed Building Officer’s recommendations, noting the following:-

* The proposed works represent a visual improvement to the property
* There had been no objections to the proposals

*It was noted that the Documentation had been poorly presented with a ‘cut and paste’ section making reference to* ***‘Bath and North East Somerset’.*** *This was considered a further example of underperformance by the Planning team.*

**(d)** Application for approval of reserved matters following outline application 43/14/0130 for the erection of 190 No. dwellings, formation of pedestrian and cycle routes, public open space and associated works for Phase 3 at Jurston Farm, Wellington (43/19/0106)

The Mayor advised that Robin Upton from WYG Planners was present to answer any queries Councillors might have. The Mayor suspended Standing Orders to enable Mr Upton to explain about the phasing numbering. Standing Orders were then reinstated and the meeting was then reconvened.

**RECOMMENDED** to support approval of the application subject to conditions set out in the Planning Officer’s recommendations, noting the Council’s praise for the Developers for the considerable thought and attention to detail which had been incorporated into the plans.

**(e)** Approval of reserved matters following outline application 43/17/0002 for the erection of 205 dwellings with public open space, landscaping, drainage and associated and ancillary development on land to the west of Bagley Road, Rockwell Green, Wellington (43/19/0075)

The Mayor suspended Standing Orders to enable 3 members of the public to speak about this application.

Mrs Blatch gave out copies of a plan relating to the development area adjacent to their home.

Mr Blatch expressed his distress that the newer version of the plans meant there would be 11 homes abutting their property. The ‘buffer’ was insufficient and his property would be immediately overlooked by high density housing, which he explained would be a significant intrusion to his privacy. Not only had there been an increase in the number of homes in this area from the original plans, but their orientation had changed so that they now faced directly toward his property, and were far too close for comfort

Mrs Blatch spoke to express her confusion and disappointment about the layout and its intrusion on their home. She further noted that the Highways team had requested access right round the play area which had turned it into an island. She felt this to be unsafe with parked vehicles, constant traffic and the need to cross a road to access or leave the recreational area. Mrs Blatch was very concerned that hedges and trees had disappeared from the latest plans and she had been advised that the developers intended to remove these existing plantings, which did not seem right. She also queried why only the larger homes had garages, which she suggested was discriminatory to those purchasing smaller homes. Her final point was that the street scene shown in the drawings bore no relation to what the development would actually look like.

Diana Land spoke to state that the new plans show the hedges gone but that the outline planning permission made reference to the existing hedges remaining in place. She wished this to be brought to the attention of the Planning Team.

Suspended orders were reinstated and the meeting reconvened.

Councillors discussed the application.

**RECOMMENDED** to support approval of the new plans subject to the following comments and certain requested amendments:-

* It would be objectionable if the earlier planned electric car-charging points were removed, simply because Somerset West and Taunton do not have a policy requiring this. It appeared that the developers no longer intended to install charging points. Councillors felt the developer should ‘do the right thing’ by planning for the long-term future of these homes, and playing their part in supporting the reduction of the town’s carbon footprint.
* It was a paramount concern that a robust requirement should be placed before the developers, obliging them to revise their plans for the area abutting the Mr and Mrs Blatch’s home, specifically regarding the orientation of the new homes as well as the density of housing along their border.
* For the sake of the environment and local ecology a specific request was made for an increase in the retention of hedging and trees.
* A rigorous traffic-calming scheme would be required to maximise road safety.
* On a positive note it was pleasing to see that the developer had made provision for dog-waste and litter bins for the development.

**(f)** Application to carry out management works to one oak tree included in Taunton Deane Borough (Wellington No.1) Tree Preservation Order 2011 at Nash Drive, Wellington (TD1087) (43/19/0108/T)

It was noted that the tree reference numbers in the report did not correspond to the tree references on the drawing, which itself was rather basic. It was not crystal clear whether there would be work to one tree or two, as both were mention in the detailed arboricultural report, nor what exactly this work might be.

**RECOMMENDED** to support approval of the application subject to the Tree Officer’s recommendation, noting however:-

* The tree in question was a beautiful mature oak tree and an asset to the ecological environment, supporting both energy capture and biodiversity.
* Works should be to the absolute minimum required to support healthy continuance of the tree.

**179. TO NOTE/DISCUSS PLANNING APPEALS**

**The following were noted:-**

**(a) Appeal lodged.**

Erection of walls to the front and side and fencing to the side and rear of 61 Gillards Close, Rockwell Green, Wellington (retention of part works already undertaken) (43/19/0018)

**(b) Planning Decision overturned.**

The appeal was allowed and planning permission granted for the development proposed at 20 The Brambles, Wellington TA21 9PS, in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 43/19/0076, dated 27 August 2019, subject to the conditions detailed in the appeal decision. (Appeal Ref: APP/W3330/D/19/3240539)

**The meeting ended at 7.00 pm**

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Councillor Janet Lloyd

Mayor