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MINUTES

PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Date: **Tuesday, 20th February 2024**

Place: **Council Chamber, Town Hall, 61 Newland Street, Witham, CM8 2FE**

Present: Councillors

P.	Barlow	(Chairman)
J.C.	Coleman	(Vice Chairman)
E.	Adelaja	(Arrived 6.10 pm)
J.M.	Coleman	
L.	Headley	
T.	Hewitt	
R.	Ramage	
A.	Sloma	
G.	Kennedy	(Planning Officer)
S.	Smith	(PA to the Council)

And two members of the public.

209. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr J. Martin. Cllr E. Williams was absent.

RESOLVED That the apologies be received and approved.

210. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning and Transport Committee held on 5th February 2024 confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

211. INTERESTS

Cllr T. Hewitt declared a non-pecuniary interest at Minute 214 – Tackling Speeding in Witham, as he was a frequent user of Maltings Lane.

212. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

A member of the public raised concerns regarding speeding and the safety of pedestrians in Hatfield Road. He also mentioned that there was a lack of dropped kerbs, which meant those on mobility scooters and those with prams having to walk in the road.

The other member of the public present concurred with the previous points raised, but also explained that there was extreme speeding by Maltings Lane and considered more 30mph signs were needed.

213. NORTH ESSEX PARKING PARTNERSHIP PROPOSAL FOR ON-STREET PARKING CHARGES

An email was received from Braintree District Council regarding the proposals to revoke the limited waiting restrictions in Newland Street along with details of the numbers of tickets issued over the past year.

The Planning Officer explained that Witham's County Councillors and others had instigated the official 'called in' procedure regarding this proposal.

A document was tabled by Cllr Phil Barlow specifying reasons to oppose the proposal.

Members discussed the proposal at length and detailed their concerns. They highlighted the negative economic impact this could have on the town and residents and raised concern over the lack of transparency that has been demonstrated in the proposal being put forward

RESOLVED To oppose the North Essex Parking Partnerships decision to charge for the free parking spaces in Witham High Street.

RESOLVED To start a petition in opposition to the proposal for residents to sign.

RESOLVED To write a letter to the Braintree District Council Scrutiny Panel to ask them to review their existing agreement with the North Essex Parking Partnership.

214. TACKLING SPEEDING IN WITHAM

It was agreed to bring this item forward in light of the interest by the attending members of the public.

It was also agreed to take the Local Highways Panel Meeting Minutes with this item.

A report was received. The Planning Officer suggested that as the uptake had been so low for a town-wide Community Speed Watch, each ward should set up its own one as residents would be more likely to volunteer for a local area.

Members discussed problem areas for speeding in Witham and the following were agreed to be causes for concern which could benefit from Speed Indicator Devices and Community Speed Watch:

- Spinks Lane, at either end
- Guithavon Road, by river

- Spa Road
- Church Street
- Maldon Road, by the crossing
- Hatfield Road, by Jack and Jenny
- Maltings Lane
- Rickstones Road
- Collingwood Road
- Avenue Road.

It was considered that 20 mph zones should be requested for Allectus Way, The Grove and Humber Road estates and all areas around schools.

Members' attention was drawn to the Local Highways Panel Minutes and the extract which related to funding a proposed Vehicle Activated Sign in Rickstones Road. It was noted that funding would be withdrawn as the Town Council had funded its own device. Members were disappointed with this decision as the WTC device would be used throughout the town where speeding was an issue, not just in Rickstones Road. Members therefore considered funding for the sign in Rickstones Road should be reinstated.

Cllr T. Hewitt declared a non-pecuniary interest, as he was a frequent user of Maltings Lane.

Whilst this matter was being discussed, Councillor Adelaja arrived at the Meeting.

RESOLVED To receive and note the information.

RESOLVED To try to recruit local community speed watch teams.

RESOLVED That advice be sought from the Local Highways Panel representative regarding the installation of a Speed Indicator Device to be used in rotation on the above detailed roads.

RESOLVED To promote Extra Eyes and Vision Zero through social media.

RESOLVED To await contact details regarding the 20 mph on residential roads and to continue to explore the purchase of a Tru-Cam.

RESOLVED That the Local Highways Panel representative be asked to ensure that funding for the Vehicle Activated Sign in Rickstones Road be reinstated.

215. **PLANNING OFFICER'S REPORT**

The Planning Officer explained that she had been notified by Essex County Council that Application ESS/51/21/BTE for the continuation of mineral extraction and ancillary use without compliance had been granted.

She said that Braintree District Council had just sent details about an Essex County Council consultation relating to on-street electrical vehicle charging points. She had been told erroneously that the consultation closed at the end of February 2024 but when she checked the date was end of March. She urged Members to respond to the link below -

<https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/sustainable-travel-planning-team/18a76e64>

Members agreed that major infrastructure would be involved but it would be a great opportunity if funding was received. It was considered that different streets would need different solutions but thought that rather than trunking it would be better to use existing street furniture to provide electric charging points. Cupper Close, Speedwell Close and Calamint Road would be appropriate roads to benefit for on-street electrical vehicle charging points. ¹

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

216. PART 1 APPLICATIONS

There were no Part 1 applications.

217. PART 2 APPLICATIONS

24/00045/FUL

The Grove Garage, Newland Street, Witham

Change of use of car sales office and forecourt to rental vehicle premises (sui generis) including demolition of sales office and forecourt. Proposed modular office building and car wash bay, car parking (including rental vehicle storage) and associated works

Members raised concerns about the boundary wall and the impact on neighbouring amenities through the potential for excessive noise and disruption from the proposed car wash. They also wanted clarity regarding the type of car wash.

RECOMMEND REFUSAL on the grounds of bulk and siting of the car wash which would be on or form the boundary and the potential to impact on neighbouring amenities.

24/00247/TPOCON

Croft House, 10 Bridge Street, Witham

Notice of Intent to carry out works to trees in a Conservation Area

The Tree Warden had advised that this tree had been well maintained in the past and recommended no objection.

NO OBJECTION Subject to the advice of the District Council's Landscape Officer.

24/00277/TPO

Communal Area, Whitehall Court, Newland Street, Witham

Notice of intent to carry works to trees protected by Tree Preservation Order TPO – 26/90

The Tree Warden had made a site visit and considered that a 2m reduction is too much and that a one metre reduction would be appropriate.

RECOMMEND REFUSAL on the grounds that a two metre reduction would be excessive and a one metre reduction would be appropriate and subject to the advice of the District Council's Landscape Officer.

¹ To give Members an opportunity for further discussion, this matter will be on the next Agenda.

218. REVISED PLANS

There were no revised plans.

219. DECISIONS

The decisions on Planning Applications pertaining to Witham were received.

RESOLVED That the decisions be received and noted.

220. PROPOSED STOPPING UP OF HIGHWAY AT THE VICTORIA PUBLIC HOUSE, POWERS HALL END, WITHAM

A Notice of Rescission was received along with a report.

The Planning Officer explained that the Victoria Pub was now a private house and the owner wished to use part of highway land to enclose and use as a car park. The Department of Transport had said that the only grounds to object to the proposal was on the grounds of loss of visibility. They asked that we contact the agent to seek a compromise.

The Planning Officer had made a site visit and recommended that if the proposed wall was set back so that it ran from the old pub sign across the site to the beacon, this would leave sufficient sight lines and an opportunity for vehicles to pull in if confronted with an on-coming vehicle.

RESOLVED That the Planning Officer contacts the agent explaining that if the wall to the car park was set back so that it ran in a line from the old pub sign to the beacon, which would improve visibility on the bend and allow for motorists to pull in if confronted with an on-coming vehicle, Members would find that an acceptable compromise, along with some form of S106 payment to make up for the loss of public amenity.

221. REPLACEMENT MINERALS LOCAL PLAN REVIEW

Details of the public consultation relating to the Replacement Minerals Local Plan Review were received.

The Planning Officer explained that four sites around Witham had been included.

Whiteheads – A54

The Planning Officer explained that this proposed site was adjacent to the agricultural reservoir dug a number of years ago. The site is approximately 10.22 ha and it is proposed for 0.4 million tonnes of sand and gravel extraction. She explained that the boundary hedgerow was a priority habitat, a pond and two trees protrude into the site one of which is a candidate for a veteran tree which would be an irreplaceable habitat.

Members considered that the proposed site was not acceptable.

RESOLVED That the Town Council would oppose this site.

Colemans Farm – A50

The Planning Officer explained that the proposed site would be an extension to the existing site. The size of the site would be 24.25 ha and it is proposed to extract 0.93 million tonnes of sand and gravel which would be transported to the existing site for treatment. The proposed site is adjacent to the River Blackwater with a number of priority habitats close to the eastern boundary. The mineral extraction within this location would significantly alter the setting of the River Blackwater valley and because of the close proximity to the river there would be potential for pollution. Substantial buffers would be required next to the water course and the central woodland. The site is approximately 75 m to the north of Appleford Bridge which is Grade II Listed and there would be potential for impact on its fabric and probability of vehicle strikes. A modified access would be required as two HGVs would be unable to pass satisfactorily. The site itself was very good quality agricultural land with overhead electric lines and high pressure gas mains.

Colemans Farm – A52

The Planning Officer explained that the site is promoted as an extension to an existing mineral site (Colemans Farm Quarry) and is located to the south of the Colemans Farm Quarry. The site area is approximately 4.13 ha and is proposed for 0.11 million tonnes of sand and gravel extraction which would be transported to the existing Colemans Farm Quarry plant site, where it will be washed, graded and stocked prior to export off site. Mineral extraction of the site would significantly alter the setting of the River Blackwater and the surrounding character and there was potential for pollution and groundwater being affected.

Colemans Farm – A84

The Planning Officer explained that the site is promoted as an extension to an existing mineral site (Colemans Farm Quarry) and is located north east of Colemans Farm Quarry. The site area is approximately 18.4 ha and is proposed for approximately 0.69 million tonnes of sand and gravel extraction which would be transported to the dedicated plant site which serves Colemans Quarry where it will be washed, graded and stocked prior to export off site.

The site is close to the River Blackwater which is lined with willow and poplar trees which is a strong local feature of the landscape. There would be potential pollution which could affect the Blackwater Estuary Special Protection Area. Substantial buffers would be required next to the river as water quality must not be affected and it is within a drinking water safeguard zone. There was also a scheduled monument within the site.

Members discussed the merits and drawbacks of each site. They ultimately concurred that site Colemans Farm – A50 was the most preferable and that site Colemans Farm – A84 was the least preferable out of the options provided.

RESOLVED That the Colemans Farm site A50 was the most preferred site and site A52 the next. The Town Council would oppose site A84.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 7:25p.m.

Councillor P. Barlow
Chairman

GK/SS/26.2.2024