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MINUTES

PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Date: **Tuesday, 29th March 2022**

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

Present: Councillors

J.	Goodman	(Chairman)
P.	Barlow	(arrived 6.08 pm)
S.	Hicks	
C.	Lager	
M.	Lager	

Also in attendance

Cllr.	R.	Playle	(Essex County)
	N.	Smith	(Town Clerk)
	G.	Kennedy	(Planning Officer)
	C.	Strachan	(Assistant RFO)

And five members of the public,

254. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Atwill who was travelling abroad, and Jay, Kilmartin, Livermore and Rajeev who were unwell.

RESOLVED That the apologies be received and accepted.

255. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning and Transport Committee held 14th March 2022 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

256. INTERESTS

Councillors C. and M. Lager declared non-pecuniary interests in application 22/00427/LBC – Chipping Hill Bridge, Witham as they live close to the bridge and use it regularly.

Councillor Goodman declared a non-pecuniary in application 22/00427/LBC – Chipping Hill Bridge, Witham as he is a regular user of the bridge.

Councillor Hicks declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute 257 – Questions and Statements from the Public, as he knew several of the residents who were present.

Later in the Meeting at Minute 258 – Land adjacent to the Former Chipping Hill School Premises, Councillor Barlow declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Trustee of the Witham United Charities which owns almshouses adjacent to the school site.

Later in the Meeting at 22/00724/COUPA – 15 St Nicholas Close, Witham, Councillor Hicks declared a non-pecuniary interest as he regularly used the Chinese Takeaway.

257. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Councillor Hicks had declared an interest.

Irene Howard from Bellfield Close spoke about her concerns regarding the development of the Bellfields site as the boundary was just twelve feet from her window. She believed residents would suffer from loss of light and privacy, increased parking problems and traffic movements, noise and disturbance as well as loss of green space and trees. She said that the site was designated as a greenfield site in 2010 and in 2016 as visually important space. She understood the importance of school provision but a new school building on the Bellfield site would be inappropriate.

Steve Loeber from White Horse Lane said that the area of the former Chipping Hill School was densely developed with narrow lanes and a one-way street. The only access to this site would be via White Horse Lane. There would be increased traffic during construction and he asked where the construction workers would park? He said that once the new school was built where would parents be able to drop-off their children? There would be congestion in White Horse Lane and Bellfields Close and the road network would be unable to cope.

Councillor Barlow arrived at the Meeting.

Liam Barrow from Bellfield Close said that his garden backed onto the existing school. He said that he had made three police complaints as pupils shout profanities at the back of the school. He was concerned that the value of his home would be affected by this development.

Councillor Playle, Essex County Councillor for Witham Northern, said that he had met with the Chief Operations Officer of the Keys Co-operative Trust. The consultation was in relation to an increased capacity at the school and he understood that proposed plans would be available in six weeks' time. He declared an interest as his parents lived in Church Street and he had been unaware of the proposals despite being the Essex County Councillor for this Ward. He said that the land was contaminated and queried whether the high cost of decontamination was best use of money. He added that he had suggested to the Academy Trust that they should write to all residents who might be affected by the proposal.

Mr John Palombi from White Horse Lane and the Witham and Countryside Society said that this was the first he had heard about the proposals for Bellfields. It was a wild field area and to decontaminate the land would require a large amount of soil to be removed. He wished to speak on application 22/00427/LBC – Chipping Hill Bridge. Whilst he was content with the proposals he drew Members' attention to the graffiti on the coping stones which date from WW1. Unfortunately air pollution had resulted in deterioration of the graffiti and he suggested that the stones be removed into the custody of the Town Council for preservation.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their comments.

258. LAND ADJACENT TO THE FORMER CHIPPING HILL SCHOOL PREMISES

Members spoke of the history of the site and how it had been used since Chipping Hill School had moved onto the Maltings Lane estate. It had been thought that the Bellfields site, which had been badly contaminated by industrial processes, would be given to the Town Council as a wildlife site but this had been thwarted by this proposal.

Councillor Barlow declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Trustee of the Witham United Charities which owned alms houses adjacent to the former Chipping Hill School. He explained that the charity owned the current access to the school which would be totally inadequate for more vehicles and construction plant. It was considered that access onto Braintree Road would be sought and other applications requiring such access had been turned down in the past.

Members were informed that the Bellfields site was green open space and one of the few sites for slow worms. It was agreed that the consultation had been flawed with Members being unaware of the process.

Members agreed to take note of residents' concerns and keep a watchful eye for the planning application.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

259. HEDGE AT IVY CHIMNEYS

An email was received from a member of the public raising further concerns regarding the hedge at Ivy Chimneys.

Members agreed that the concrete fencing posts gave the impression that the temporary fencing was permanent. It was agreed that a copy of the email should be sent to the Planning Officer at Braintree District Council so they can take into consideration the aspect of the hedging variety to provide habitat for small birds.

RESOLVED That the email be received and forwarded to the Planning officer at Braintree District Council.

260. PLANNING OFFICER'S REPORT

The Planning Officer had nothing to report.

261. PART 1 APPLICATIONS

22/00521/HH

Albemarle House, Guithavon Road, Witham

Two storey rear extension

NO OBJECTION

CC/BTE/12/22

Witham Adult Community Learning Centre, Spinks Lane, Witham

Installation of new heating plant (air source heat pumps)

NO OBJECTION

262. **PART 2 APPLICATIONS**

22/00476/TPO

25, Collingwood Road, Witham

Notice of intent to carry out work to tree protected by Tree Preservation Order 18/76

Members were informed that this application had been withdrawn.

22/00427/LBC

Chipping Hill Bridge, Chipping Hill, Witham

Like for like repairs to the brick parapet, stone coping and cutwaters at Chipping Hill Bridge. Replace timber deck, post and rails in Ekki on the Chipping Hill Footbridge.

Councillors Goodman, C. Lager and M. Lager had declared interests.

Members wished for a weight limit to be applied to this historic bridge.

NO OBJECTION to the application but Members would wish to see a weight limit applied to the bridge and that those coping stones which have WW1 graffiti be removed and preserved by the Town Council.

22/00499/TPO

Assembly Hall Adjacent to Bridge Hospital, Hatfield Road, Witham

Notice of intent to carry out works to tree protected by Tree Preservation Order 19/02

The Tree Warden had made a site visit and suggested that whilst the work to fell the Lawson Cypress would be reasonable, a replacement tree should be planted. He suggested a fastigiata tree be planted by the railings.

Members asked that permission be sought from the Tree Warden for his comprehensive report to be sent to the District Council with the Town Council's response.¹

NO OBJECTION subject to a replacement tree being planted and the advice of the District Council's Landscape Officer.

22/00559/FUL

Elm Cottage and Land between Comingmak and Newton, Maldon Road, Witham

Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of 5 x 4 bedroomed three storey detached dwelling houses, with associated access and parking

¹ Mr Waight has given his permission for the report to be included.

NO OBJECTION subject to renewable energy measures such as heat pumps and solar panels being included and retention of hedges on the boundaries.

22/00542/HH

The Victoria PH, Powers Hall End, Witham

Single storey extension to enclose open rear passage, together with internal alterations, alterations to external finish, change of doors and windows to UPVC and erection of brick boundary wall with gate and timber fence

Members considered that the proposed boundary wall and fence would detract from the street scene and cause problems with visibility. There was a suggestion that the land to be enclosed could be highways land.

RECOMMEND REFUSAL on the grounds that the boundary wall and fence would be detrimental to the street scene, affect visibility spalls and that the land to be enclosed could be highways land.

22/00724/COUPA

15 St Nicholas Close, Witham

Notification for Prior Approval for a Change of Use from Takeaways, Betting Offices, Pay Day Loan, Shops or Laundrettes (Sui Generis Uses) or a Mixed Use combining use as a dwelling house (Class C3) with a Betting Office, pay Day Loan, Shops or Laundrettes (Sui Generis Uses); to Dwelling houses (Class C3), and for the operations reasonably necessary for the conversion – Change of use from Hot Food Takeaway (Sui Generis) to Dwelling house C3(a).

Councillor Hicks declared a non-pecuniary interest as he had regularly used the Chinese Takeaway.

Members were concerned that the parking provision might be on highway land.

NO OBJECTION

263. REVISED PLANS

There were no revised plans to consider.

264. DECISIONS

The decisions on Planning Applications pertaining to Witham were received.

RESOLVED That the decisions be received and noted.

265. PARKING IN RICHARDSON WALK

An email was received from a resident seeking assistance to obtain a resident's parking permit.

Members were sympathetic with Mr O'Brien's plight and wondered whether there would be an opportunity for additional land to be used for parking and suggested that he pursue this way forward as a permanent solution. It was agreed that contact should be made with Essex County Councillor R Playle seeking his help in obtaining a resident's parking permit.

RESOLVED That the email be received and Mr O'Brien advised of solutions to his parking problems to include contacting Essex County Councillor R. Playle seeking his assistance with the North Essex Parking Partnership.

266. A12 NOTES

Notes from the A12 Meeting held 9th March 2022 were received.

Members welcomed the energetic progress and the proposal to replace the narrow section of Whetmead with a larger area of nature reserve. This would be considered by Town Council at its Meeting on 11th April 2022.

RESOLVED That the Notes be received and information noted.

267. SPEED SURVEYS

A report was received regarding speed surveys.

Members agreed that a formal request should be made for a speed survey in Maldon Road and Rickstones Road.

RESOLVED That speed surveys be requested for Maldon Road and Rickstones Road.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 7.30 p.m.

Councillor J. Goodman
Chairman

GK/31.3.2022