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MINUTES

PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Date: **Monday, 24th July 2023**

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

Present: Councillors

P.	Barlow	(Chairman)
J.C.	Coleman	(Vice Chairman)
E.	Adelaja	(Arrived 6:30pm)
J.M.	Coleman	
L.	Headley	
J.	Martin	
R.	Ramage	
A.	Sloma	(Arrived 6:20pm)
G.	Kennedy	(Planning Officer)
S.	Smith	(PA to the Council)

Also in attendance: Cllr S. Ager

Two members of the public were present.

49. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs T. Hewitt and E. Williams.

RESOLVED That the apologies be received and approved.

50. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning and Transport Committee held 10th July 2023 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

51. INTERESTS

Cllrs R. Ramage and J. Martin declared non-pecuniary interests in regards to minute 62 – Braintree District Council – Licensed Taxi Consultation, as they are part of the Braintree District Council Licensing Committee. Cllr J. Martin also declared a non-pecuniary interest on application 23/01794/TPO – 2 Tudor Close, as the property is close to her address. Cllr J.C. Coleman declared

a non-pecuniary interest at minute 65 – Rivenhall IWMF – Consultation, due to a potential work conflict.

52. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

A member of the public addressed the meeting regarding minute 63 – Closure of Ticket Offices at Railway Stations. He explained that the closure of ticket offices at Witham train station would have a detrimental impact on its residents, especially those who experience sight and mobility difficulties. He informed members that the offices were scheduled to close before Christmas 2023 and that once they did certain discounts and travel options would be unavailable on the ticket machines. He explained that the existing staff provided help, advice and services that the machines simply could not and the loss of these would ultimately cause confusion and complications for many passengers.

53. PLANNING OFFICER'S REPORT

The Planning Officer reported that a letter had been received from Magnox about a request to extend planning permission to allow regional waste imports into the interim storage facility at Bradwell resulting from essential decommissioning work at Sizewell A and Dungeness A.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

54. PART 1 APPLICATIONS

23/01323/HH

20, Sauls Avenue, Witham

Single storey front and side extension

NO OBJECTION

55. PART 2 APPLICATIONS

23/01627/TPO

Cedar House, 21a Collingwood Road, Witham

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

The Tree Warden had advised that the eucalyptus tree did have shallow roots and could damage drains, and therefore recommended no objection.

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

23/01706/TPO

37, Barwell Way, Witham

Notice of intent to carry out works to trees protected by Tree Preservation Order 5/75

Members were informed that the Tree Warden had advised that these trees should not be felled but managed.

RECOMMEND REFUSAL on the grounds that these healthy trees form an essential barrier between The Grove development and the Industrial estate, are subject to a TPO and play an important part in mitigating climate change and could be managed as

in the past by pollarding and subject to the advice of the District Council's Landscape Officer. The Town Council would like to comment they would not be opposed to a crown reduction, or similar works.

23/01794/TPO

2 Tudor Close, Witham

Notice of Intent to carry out works to trees protected by Tree Preservation Order 8/2000

The Tree Warden had advised that to cut back one side of the trees would cause them to be unbalanced.

Cllr J. Martin declared an NPI due to potentially knowing the applicant.

RECOMMEND REFUSAL on the grounds that the proposed work would cause the trees to become unbalanced and that the applicant should liaise with the owner of the trees so that crown reduction can be undertaken; and subject to the advice of the District Council's Landscape Officer.

56. REVISED PLANS

There were no revised plans to consider.

57. DECISIONS

The decisions on Planning Applications pertaining to Witham were received.

RESOLVED That the decisions be received and noted.

58. A12 CHELMSFORD TO A120 WIDENING SCHEME – COMPLETION OF EXAMINATION

Notification of completion of the examination was received.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

59. RIVENHALL PARK PHASE 4 – 23/01288/DAC & 20/02060/OUT

Members were asked to consider and comment on the Design Code for Rivenhall Park.

The Planning Officer gave a presentation of the salient points which included key outward facing frontages to aid way finding and parking courts to serve limited number of dwellings. Members noted the different widths of roadways, layout to include shared footpaths and cycleways for the main route and short stretches of on-street parking for visitors with landscaping. It was noted that the bus egress from the estate had not been approved and a bus loop might be required. Members were pleased that garages would be of sufficient size to allow for parking and storage. Comment was made about potential ownership of the sports field and pavilion.

RESOLVED That the details be received and Members approved the Design Code.

60. 21/00031/OUT – LAND AT BURGHEY BROOK FARM, LONDON ROAD, RIVENHALL

A letter was received from Rivenhall Parish Council complaining that the District Council had granted planning consent for the above application with the existing planted tree bund screen being completely removed. The Town Council had considered this application in May 2021 and recommended no objection subject to, inter alia, more screening to the Rivenhall side of the boundary to mask the views of the industrial units.

It was noted from the application that landscaping would be retained/improved where possible around the perimeter of the site. Members were informed that as part of the District Council's Planning Officer's report it had been stated that wider landscaping buffer would inevitably be required and more detailed landscaping to be included at the Reserved Matters stage.

RESOLVED That the letter be received and information noted.

RESOLVED That the Town Council informs the Planning Authority that they would like the bund to be retained.

RESOLVED That a reply be sent to Rivenhall Parish Council explaining that the Town Council would wish to see the bund and landscaping retained to mask the view of the industrial units from Rivenhall End.

61. NATIONAL HIGHWAYS – A12 CHELMSFORD TO A120 ROAD WIDENING SCHEME – SURFACE WATER QUALITY MONITORING WORK

An email was received from Ardent in relation to water quality monitoring work in Witham.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

62. BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL – LICENSED TAXI CONSULTATION

Details of the above consultation was received and Members noted that in light of Minute 29 a response had been made.

Cllrs R. Ramage and J. Martin both declared an NPI at this item as they were both on the Braintree District Council Licensing Committee.

RESOLVED That the details be received and a formal response made.

63. CLOSURE OF TICKET OFFICES AT RAILWAY STATIONS

Details of the consultation to close ticket offices at Railway Stations were received.

Members reiterated the point that the removal of this service would disadvantage many passengers, especially those who were not easily able to use the ticket machines. They commented that the exclusive use of ticket machines was not a suitable option for not only those who were visually impaired or disabled, but they were unable to give travel and discount advice unlike members of staff.

They commented that the lack of staff at the entrance of the station would leave it vulnerable to vandalism and anti-social behaviour causing safety concerns for passengers. They were informed that there would be 'roaming staff' members on the platforms but this raised accessibility concerns,

as the lifts to access the platform were notoriously out of use.

RESOLVED That the Planning Officer would send a letter to Transport Focus detailing the Town Councils concerns.

64. SPEED SURVEYS

Members were informed that there was no funding through the Local Highways Panel to finance the proposed speed survey for Cut Throat Lane.

Members commented that they found it unacceptable that Essex County Council could not accommodate this small request in their budget considering it was ultimately their responsibility to ensure any highway issues be investigated.

RESOLVED That the Local Highways Panel be informed that as it was their responsibility for funding the survey the Town Council would not be prepared to do so and in any event there was no budget.

65. RIVENHALL IWMF – CONSULTATION

A leaflet was received regarding the above consultation and following contact with the company a consultation event was being planned for Witham.¹

Cllr J.C. Coleman declared an NPI at this item due to a potential conflict of interest.

Members were informed that it had always been a Town Council, District Council and a Rivenhall Parish Council policy to oppose the incinerator from both an environmental view and the number of vehicle movements.

RESOLVED That the information be received and that the Witham consultation date be distributed when it is received.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 7:07 p.m.

Councillor P. Barlow
Chairman

GK/SS/25.7.2023

¹ The Planning Officer has since been informed that the Witham consultation will take place on Friday 18th August, 1- 4pm at Witham Spring Lodge Community Centre.