

**HUNTINGDON TOWN COUNCIL****PLANNING COMMITTEE**

A meeting of the Planning Committee was held at Huntingdon Town Hall on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2023 at 7pm.

Present: Councillors: A Blackwell; K Brockett; D Cole (via Zoom); M Fearon; S Gifford; G Hunt; M Kadewere; P Kadewere; B Luckham; A McAdam (Chairman); S McAdam; A Norton; P Pearce; T Sanderson; J Taylor and K Webb

In attendance: District Councillors J Harvey and N Hunt and 3 Members of the public.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors: M Baker; J Cole and P Kennington.

2. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

It was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED** to elect Councillor D Landon Cole as the Vice Chairman of the Planning Committee for the local government year 2023/24.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllrs S McAdam and T Sanderson declared an interest under Item 9 (Centenary House) as Members of Huntingdonshire District Council's DMC who were meeting on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> June to discuss the application.

4. **PUBLIC ADDRESS**

The Chairman asked if any Members or members of the public wished to speak. A request was made from District Councillor Hunt, and it was therefore proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED** to adjourn the meeting.

District Councillor Hunt referred to item 8 on the agenda, the request from the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) for Huntingdon Town Council to become a member. It was suggested that whilst the campaign worked brilliantly to protect, promote, and enhance rural spaces, there was concern surrounding the opposition to future solar farms. District Councillor Hunt advised that he was unsure of the benefit to Huntingdon Town Council to become a member and urged Members to consider this when debating the request.

With no further comments or questions, thanks were given to District Councillor Hunt and it was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED** to reconvene.

5. **MINUTES**

Members had before them copies of the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2023 (M3) (attached). It was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED** to approve and adopt these minutes which were signed by the Chairman.

*Clerk's Note: Councillors Fearon, Hunt and Taylor abstained from voting due to not being Councillors at the time of the meeting.*

6. **LAND ADJACENT TO 17/19 GLEBE ROAD**

Members had before them documents relating to a proposal from Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) to sell land adjacent to 17/19 Glebe Road. The Mayor asked Members if there were any comments or questions.

A Member had submitted comments regarding the proposal in advance of the meeting, which had been shared with Members. The comments raised concerns regarding antisocial behaviour, environmental impact and that selling the land in question didn't fall in line with HDC policy or Huntingdon's Neighbourhood Plan.

Members agreed with the comments and advised that if HDC agreed to sell the land in question, conditions should be put in place to protect residents from noise and light pollution. It was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED** to object to the sale of 17/19 Glebe Road and the small land sales consultation questionnaire would be completed and submitted to HDC to confirm this, highlighting the reasons behind the objection.

*Clerk's Note: the questionnaire was completed and submitted to HDC on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2023.*

7. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS PANEL**

Members had before them a report regarding the future management of planning applications submitted to Huntingdon Town Council as a Statutory Consultee.

The Town Clerk ran through the report, advising Members that the subject of managing and commenting on planning applications was topical across the country, with many Councils realigning their processes of submitting comments. This was in a bid to save on Member and Officer time during the evenings where very small applications didn't warrant a meeting.

Members debated whether it was necessary to hold Planning Application Panel meetings in line with pre-covid arrangements, whether to continue with the current process, or whether to amend the process as recommended in the report by making

applications for comment more accessible to members of the public online, but only calling a meeting of the Panel if an application required more in-depth discussion.

Members asked whether they could independently visit sites ahead of submitting comments, and it was confirmed that this could be beneficial where Members felt they needed a better understanding of the application in question.

One Member suggested that the recommendation in the report should be trialled, but another Member felt strongly that Planning Application Panel meetings should resume after the forthcoming planning training session scheduled for 13<sup>th</sup> July 2023. Another Member highlighted that if Planning Application Panel meetings were to resume, they needed adequate time allocated so not to overrun into other scheduled meetings.

With no further comments or questions, it was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED** to resume meetings of the Planning Applications Panel following the planning training on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

## 8. **CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT RURAL ENGLAND**

Members had before them a request from the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) for the Town Council to become a member.

A Member advised that they welcomed the work of CPRE but had concerns about the reference to opposing solar farms within the letter. Another Member questioned what the benefit to the Town Council was to become a member and shared the concerns about opposing solar farms. It was noted that protecting the environment was high on the Town Council's agenda anyway and that becoming a member of CPRE wouldn't necessarily add value to the Council's existing efforts. With no further comments it was therefore proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED** for the Town Council not to become a member of CPRE.

## 9. **CENTENARY HOUSE**

*Clerk's Note: Ahead of discussions relating to this item, Councillors S McAdam and T Sanderson left the room as District Councillors representing on HDC's Development Management Committee (DMC).*

The Chairman advised that she would be attending a meeting at Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> June to give comment on the planning application for Centenary House on St Mary's Street in Huntingdon. The Chairman asked Members to give comments as to what they wished her to report to the DMC regarding the Town Council's views on the development.

Members agreed that whilst the Town Council supported the building plans, the proposed height of the building should be lowered to make the development more sympathetic to the neighbouring landscape. It was noted that St Mary's Street was very narrow and that reducing the development would be beneficial for the safety of pedestrians and road users.

With no further comments, it was agreed that the Chairman would report to the District Council's DMC that the Town Council would support a reduction in height of the proposed development due to safety and visibility implications.

10. **LOCAL PLAN**

Members had before them a Local Plan Update and an Easy Read Survey regarding Huntingdonshire District Council's (HDC) Local Plan. The Town Clerk advised Members that the supplementary papers before them had been received the day before the meeting and may be useful for discussion and consideration. Members were advised that the next deadline for comments on the Local Plan was 5th July and that Members should send any comments and suggestions to the Town Clerk electronically so that a collective response could be submitted.

It was noted that the Call for Sites deadline had passed, but that any comments submitted would go towards forming what the future of Huntingdon would look like.

The Town Clerk reminded Members of the desire for the land north of the A141 to be designated for development, with 50 acres of land to be allocated for sports provision. A boundary change for the town could then be requested to allow for future expansion. It was suggested that this could be submitted as a Call for Sites despite the deadline passing.

With no further comments, it was confirmed that Members needed to submit any comments on the Local Plan to the Town Clerk in advance of 5<sup>th</sup> July.

11. **DATE AND AGENDA OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting was advised to take place on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

**CHAIRMAN**