

PLANNING FORUM

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 14 October at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs Compton, Copping, Harris, Mrs Hodgetts, Gill, Kent, Mrs Leddy and Tamlin

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Short (Vice-Chairman of the Council)

OFFICERS: Mr J Archer (Head of Planning)
Mr N Bishop (Parks Cemeteries and Crematorium Manager)
Mr C Elliott (Commissioning Director)
Mr J Smith (Highway Management).

REPRESENTATIVES OF TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS:

Barford, Sherbourne & Wasperton Joint Parish Council - Mr A Roberts
CLARA - Mr E Mallinson, Mrs C Throwther
Coten End and Emscote Residents' Association - Mr J Hodgetts, Mr N Pitchford
Council for the Protection of Rural England - Mr M Sullivan
Cycleways - Mr R MacQueen
Hatton Parish Council - Mr D Ogram
Newbold Comyn Area Residents' Association - Mrs H Jordan
Ramblers' Association - Mr S Wallsgrove
Warwickshire and West Midlands Association of Local Councils - Mr A Moore
Warwick Society - Mr R Higgins
Warwick Town Council - Mr A Ayers, Mr J Holland

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

RESOLVED that Councillor Tamlin be appointed Chair of Forum for the ensuing year.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED that Councillor Evans be appointed Vice-Chair of the Forum for the ensuing year.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 February 1999, having been printed and circulated, were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

(1) DELEGATION ARRANGEMENTS FOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Mr Archer updated the Forum on the delegation arrangements for planning applications. The Council had sought to improve the scheme of delegation and consultation had taken place with Town and Parish Councils on amendments to the scheme. These amendments came into effect on the 1 October 1999 and would be kept under review to see if further improvements to the scheme could be made.

RECOMMENDED that the report be noted.

(2) EXTENSIONS TO DWELLINGS IN RURAL AREAS

Councillor Mrs Compton asked whether the Head of Planning had been able to produce a leaflet which offered guidance on the Council's policy to extension to dwellings in the rural area. Mr Archer said that the Planning Department had produced a series of leaflets, although the 'extensions to dwellings in rural areas' leaflet had not yet been one of those that had been produced. It was, however intended to produce such a leaflet in the New Year.

RECOMMENDED that the report be noted.

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(3) THE LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

Mr MacQueen expressed Cycleways disappointment that the local transport plan did not meet the national cycling strategy targets. Mr Elliott informed the Forum that the local transport plan was an interim plan and issues that had not previously been picked up in the Local Transport Plan could be fed in to the five year plan. Members should remember that the Local Transport Plan was a Warwickshire County Council document and organisations would be in a position to influence its proposals through their own consultations with the County Council.

RECOMMENDED that the report be noted and the Forum receive a comprehensive report on cycling issues at its next meeting.

(4) LOCAL AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Mr Higgins asked if any further action had been taken concerning the air quality and its impact on historic buildings in both Royal Leamington Spa and Warwick.

Mr Elliott said that the Health and Control Committee had received a presentation which had confirmed that pollutants were present which were in excess of government recommendations. The matter was now being looked at further and information would be available for the next meeting.

RECOMMENDED that the report be noted.

5. WARWICKSHIRE STRUCTURE PLAN

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Mr Sullivan raised a number of issues in respect of the Warwickshire Structure Plan and the Warwick District Local Plan Review.

Mr Archer indicated that the District Council had been pleased with the recommendations for the Warwickshire Structure Plan arising out of the Examination In Public. The Panel's views largely reflected the concerns expressed by this Council. The main recommendations of note were that District Councils should decide the location of new housing, that the potential for drawing back the area of Green Belt around Baginton had been rejected and the County Council had been asked to clarify its policy in respect of the expansion of Coventry Airport.

Housing levels overall had been retained at the submitted levels and were not likely to mean major new areas of development compared to the existing plan.

Warwickshire County Council were due to consider the recommendations of the Panel and the District Council was awaiting the County Council's response.

RECOMMENDED that the report be noted.

6. PLANNING FOR REAL AT EMSCOTE ROAD, WARWICK

The Forum considered a report from the Coten End and Emscote Residents' Association regarding the recent Planning for Real exercise, commissioned by Warwickshire County Council, concerning the Emscote Road area of Warwick.

Mr Smith reported that the County Council had been invited to attend this meeting although no one had been available due to a prior engagement. However, the County Council had spoken to Mr Smith and informed him that the Neighbourhood Initiative Foundation had produced a report arising from the Planning for Real

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exercise at Emscote Road and this has been sent to the Chairman of the Residents' Association. This report included some analysis of the results although it was accepted that no definitive action plans had yet been produced. Mr Smith had met with the County Council in June when the County Council had agreed to summarise the issues that needed actioning.

An action plan had recently been produced and Mr Smith undertook to provide a copy to the Residents' Association. In addition, the County Council was intending to hold a meeting in the area during November to discuss the issues raised with residents. Although no specific action had been taken arising out of the exercise, the concerns raised had been taken into account in planning issues.

Mr Archer reported that the Coten End study was still alive had achieved the major objective of the residents in removing the through traffic flows from residential streets. He stated that he would be interested to see how the outcome of the Planning for Real exercise linked in with the policies of the study.

Mr Elliott reported that the Planning for Real exercise for Warwick town centre had been widely publicised in the Warwick area although it had to be accepted that its outcome would take time to implement. The Chair accepted that Planning for Real exercises could give the expectation of quick fixes when this was not always possible.

RECOMMENDED that the report be noted.

7. HEATHCOTE HOME FARM DEVELOPMENT

The Forum considered an item from the Whitnash Society concerning the Heathcote

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Home Farm development in Whitnash. Unfortunately, Mr Yarwood from the Whitnash Society had been unable to attend the meeting due to illness.

RECOMMENDED that consideration of this item be deferred until the next meeting of the Forum.

8. JEPHSON GARDENS SCHEME/PACKINGTON PLACE/THE PARADE

The Forum considered an item from the Leamington Society requesting information on the progress of the Jephson Garden scheme. Mr Bishop reported that the Jephson Garden Scheme had been awarded £2.89m of lottery money for the scheme. On the 21 September 1999, the Council's Leisure Committee had agreed the contract with Heritage Lottery and a project team had been set up to run the scheme. It would also be necessary to set up a design team. Tenders for the work were due in December 1999 and it was anticipated that work would commence in January 2000 with a completion date likely to be December 2002. The project team would produce a monthly newsletter reporting progress and would be required to submit monthly reports to Heritage Lottery.

The Leamington Society requested information regarding the situation of the market in Packington Place which they did not consider to have been entirely successful. Mr Archer accepted that there had been less than the expected number of stalls attending the relocated market. The Council had tried to find the most suitable alternative site and it was thought that the regeneration of the Old Town may facilitate the market moving to a better location.

The Leamington Society also asked whether any consideration be given to enforcing a 20 mile per hour speed limit in Leamington town centre. Mr Archer indicated that the Town Centre Action Plan had identified proposals to limit town centre traffic speeds, although no firm decision had yet been taken on the implementation of this proposal.

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RECOMMENDED that the report be noted.

9. CAR PARKING/PARKS AND GARDENS

The Forum considered a report from the Central Leamington Residents' Association on the difficulty for residents parking in Leamington Town Centre. There was concern that the forthcoming car parking strategy would, as a result of higher car parking charges, encourage more commuters to park in town centre streets. Mr Archer reported that the car parking strategy was due to be published in November and groups would be consulted on the draft proposals. It would be appropriate for comments on the merits of the plan to be fed in at that time to enable them to be considered as a whole.

The Central Leamington Residents' Association also reported that they considered there to be a marked deterioration in Leamington's parks and gardens. Mr Bishop acknowledged that when Glendale took over the contract 19 months ago, there were operational difficulties which could be expected with a new contractor. However, the Leisure Committee had considered Glendale to have submitted the best tender and they were monitoring the contract at their every meeting. Mr Bishop accepted that contract planning had caused problems, although officers were working with Glendale and he considered that good progress was being made.

RECOMMENDED that the report be noted.

10. CYCLE ROUTES IN DEVELOPED AREAS

The Forum considered a report from Cycleways enquiring what progress had been made with developer funded cycle facilities within and outside the

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developed areas. Mr Archer said that developer funding was sought for cycle routes and much had been achieved in implementing parts of routes that would eventually link together. However, if lack of cycling facilities was the only outstanding matter on a planning application, it would be necessary to demonstrate a clear need arising from the application itself if a refusal on this basis alone was to be justified. A new local plan would be published for consultation next year and cycling issues should be taken into account in the plan. However, he reported that a comprehensive report on cycling facilities in the district would be brought to the next meeting of this Forum and it was considered that this would be a better time to discuss further the issues raised by Cycleways.

RECOMMENDED that the report be noted.

11. PLANNING PERMISSION FOR AGRICULTURAL DWELLINGS

The Forum considered a report from Barford Sherbourne and Wasperton Joint Parish Council concerning the erection of agricultural buildings in rural areas which did not normally require express planning permission. Mr Archer said that the Council could in theory remove permitted development rights for agricultural buildings but, in the light of government guidance, felt it would be extremely unlikely for any such approach to be agreed by central government, as it would have to be. Controls over agricultural development had increased in recent years, with a notification process now in place for certain forms of development in respect of which the Council could exercise some control over design and location, but this was still some way from full planning control.

RECOMMENDED that the report be noted.

PLANNING FORUM (Continued)

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Forum will be held on Thursday 17 February 2000 at 7:00pm.

(The meeting ended at 9.50 pm)