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MINUTES

PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Date: **Monday, 8th July 2024**

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

Present: Councillors

P.	Barlow	(Chairman)
J.C.	Coleman	(Vice Chairman)
E.	Adelaja	
J.M.	Coleman	
L.	Headley	
J.	Martin	
G.	Kennedy	(Planning Officer)
S.	Smith	(PA to the Council)

And one member of the public.

41. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T. Hewitt, A. Sloma and E. Williams. Councillor R. Ramage was absent.

RESOLVED That the apologies be received and approved.

42. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning and Transport Committee held 24th June 2024 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

43. INTERESTS

Councillor P. Barlow explained that he had received advice that as he had less than £25,000 in National Grid shares and less than one hundredth of the total issue of shares, he therefore did not need to declare a pecuniary interest in Minute 51 – The Great Grid Upgrade and that as a result, he mistakenly had left the chamber the last time this matter was discussed.

44. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

The member of the public commented that work had now started on the Hatfield Road footpath and it looked as though the bad section near the Redrow estate had now been repaired.

45. PLANNING OFFICER'S REPORT

The Planning Officer had nothing further to add regarding the work on Hatfield Road.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

46. PART 1 APPLICATIONS

24/01323/HH

52 Armond Road, Witham

Single storey rear and side extensions

NO OBJECTION

24/013834/HH

3 Stoneham Close, Witham

Erection of 2no. front dormers, 1no. front roof light and 3no. roof lights

NO OBJECTION

47. REVISED PLANS

24/00697/REM

Phase 4 Land North East Of Rectory Lane Rivenhall Essex

Application for the approval of Reserved Matters (Access, Appearance, Landscaping, Layout, Scale) for 225 dwellings (including 69 Affordable Homes); public open space (including sports pitches and facilities, equipped area for play, parkland and other greenspace); an all-vehicle access from Evans Way, a bus turning loop on-site; cycle and pedestrian connections to Rickstones Road; sustainable drainage systems; landscaping; and associated infrastructure and development pursuant to outline planning permission 20/02060/OUT granted 05.01.2023 and as varied by application 23/01901/VAR for: Outline application with all matters reserved for up to 230 dwellings including affordable homes; public open space including sports pitches and facilities, neighbourhood equipped area for play, parkland and alternative natural greenspace, vehicular access via Forest Road and Evans Way, a bus, cycle and pedestrian connection to Rickstones Road, sustainable drainage systems, landscaping and all associated infrastructure and development.

Members agreed that the original decision should stand but a concern was raised that on new housing developments in Colchester solar panels had been integrated into the roofs of houses. These panels are prone to issues, were apparently not eco effective and if they become faulty the whole roof would have to be removed. Comment was therefore made deterring the developer from any panels being imbedded into any of the proposed properties.

NO OBJECTION subject to the affordable housing having equal provision of EV charging points, as well as providing EV charging points in the visitor parking bays and sports pavilion parking area; and solar panels being provided on the sports pavilion but would recommend refusal for the bus gate element. The Committee would also like it noted that there was a lack of highways and transport infrastructure in Witham to accommodate this new development. Members asked that if the application is considered by the Planning Committee that a Town Councillor attends the Meeting to give our representations.

24/00696/REM

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RECOMMEND REFUSAL for the bus gate element. The Committee would also like it noted that there is a lack of highways and transport infrastructure in Witham to accommodate this new development.

48. DECISIONS

The decisions on Planning Applications pertaining to Witham were received.

RESOLVED That the decisions be received and noted.

49. TACKLING SPEEDING IN WITHAM/20s PLENTY

An update was received regarding the speeding issue in Hatfield Road.

The Planning Officer suggested that there was a good case for a Vehicle Activated Sign at Hatfield Road and suggested that the Local Highways Panel might consider funding this sign and rotating it with a previously proposed camera for Rickstones Road.

RESOLVED To contact Essex County Councillors Ross Playle and Derrick Louis to request assistance in the purchase through the Local Highways Panel for a Vehicle Activated Sign in Hatfield Road to rotate with the proposed sign in Rickstones Road.

50. THE GREAT GRID UPGRADE

Councillor P. Barlow had declared a non-pecuniary interest.

Members commented that the government planned to establish Great British Energy that will produce and manage energy sources and supply; the national grid was a private venture that was not taking into account the significant disruption that the pylon scheme will cause to communities, and it had not calmed or helped improve the concerns of residents in Witham or neighbouring areas.

Members considered that serious concerns and objections had not been adequately addressed. They understood the need to connect green energy but this was at a cost to towns and communities inland; and a softer approach with compromise was necessary. There was a duty to strive towards net zero goals and to decarbonise the electricity grid. In recent years, Witham had gone backwards with the installation of a gas power generation plant in our town centre. This was not the way to a greener society, pylons may be necessary, and likewise tunnelling.

However, a clearer dialogue and understanding of the view of the community by the national grid was needed and compromise should be made to get the best result for communities. Questions on why modern pylons were not suitable had not been answered. Modern pylons are sleeker and have less visual disturbance on the landscape.

RESOLVED To raise objection and call on the Secretary of State to view this matter from a position of government policy regarding Great British Energy to ensure the most cost-effective solution for the taxpayer, to ensure energy bills do not rise further, and to protect green and blue spaces on land and at sea.

51. A12 WIDENING

In view of the time, it was agreed to defer the remaining items on the Agenda to the next Meeting.

RESOLVED To defer this item to the next agenda of the Planning and Transport Committee.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 7:30p.m.

Councillor P. Barlow
Chairman

GK/SS/9.7.2024