



Town Hall | 61 Newland Street | Witham | CM8 2FE  
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## MINUTES

### PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Date: **Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> November 2024**

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

Present: Councillors

P.	Barlow	(Chairman)	
J.C.	Coleman	(Vice Chairman)	arrived 6.10 pm
R.	Ramage		
E.	Williams		
G.	Kennedy	(Planning Officer)	
S.	Puckey	(Open Spaces Admin Assistant)	
L.	Bamigbele	(PA to the Council)	

Councillor Jack Robertson, two members of the public and one member of the press were also in attendance.

Cllr Barlow explained that the meeting was not quorate but it was agreed that because Cllr J C Coleman was on his way and stuck in traffic, the statements from the public would be received prior to the Meeting officially being opened.

#### **171. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

One member of the public wanted to support the letter regarding the concern about speeding and reckless driving on the Avenue in Minute 180(b). He was disappointed that Witham did not have speed activated signs which were present in some surrounding villages and was sceptical that there was not enough evidence to support this. It was explained that Essex Highways require evidence of 75% or more vehicles travelling at excessive speed and that this criterion was not met in Witham. The resident was informed that Witham Town Council was currently looking into the feasibility of funding one sign themselves.

No other comments were made.

Cllr Coleman entered the Chamber at 6.10 pm

#### **172. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Adelaja, J.M. Coleman, Headley and Martin.

**RESOLVED** That the apologies be received and approved.

**173. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning and Transport Committee held 11<sup>th</sup> November 2024 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**174. INTERESTS**

No interests were declared at the time but later in the Meeting Councillor J. C. Coleman declared a non-pecuniary interest in regards to Minute 182 as members of the youth club would potentially benefit from a road crossing between Asda and the Skate Park on Spa Road

The statements from the public were heard at the start of the meeting and summarised briefly for Cllr J.C. Coleman

**175. PLANNING OFFICER'S REPORT**

The Planning Officer had no report.

**176. PART 1 APPLICATIONS**

**24/02370/HH**

**Howzat, Spinks Lane, Witham**

Proposed loft conversion with a new dormer to front with associated internal alterations. 3 no. roof lights to rear and 2 no. roof lights to side elevations. New proposed garage to rear of property

**NO OBJECTION**

**177. PART 2 APPLICATIONS**

**24/02387/HH**

**Gueth Cottage, Maldon Road, Witham**

Two storey side extension, single storey front and rear extensions

Members were informed that the Council had offered no objection to a similar application in the past but Braintree District Council had refused on the basis of scale, design and appearance. Members were further advised that the building was in a conservation area but the proposed two-storey extension was set back from the main dwelling and there are no windows on the flank wall so there will be no overlooking issues.

**NO OBJECTION** subject to tree protection being put in place

One member of the public left at 6.17pm

**24/02406/HH**

**20, Powers Hall End, Witham**

Demolition of existing garage and erection of a single storey side/rear extension

Members were informed that while the request stated this was in a conservation area, the dwelling is in fact close to, but not within, the area. Members were also advised that the extension would be set back from the main dwelling and there would be no overlooking issues. Members felt this was in keeping with the area.

**NO OBJECTION** subject to tree protection being put in place

**24/02431/TPOCON**

**The Well, 1 Penhaligon Court, Guithavon Street, Witham**

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

Members were informed that the Tree Warden had made a site visit and said that the tree could be pruned back from the cables. He said that there was no evidence that the tree roots had damaged the brick structure as it could have failed through the weight of the soil. He therefore recommended refusal on those grounds. Members discussed the need to prune the tree and that the ivy could also have affected the integrity of the wall.

**RECOMMEND REFUSAL** on the grounds that the tree could be pruned and there was no evidence that the wall was damaged by the tree roots but recommended that the ivy be removed, and subject to the advice of the District Council's Landscape Officer.

**24/02287/TPO**

**Communal Area, Whitehall Court, Newland Street, Witham**

Notice of intent to carry out works to trees protected by Tree Preservation Order TPO – 26/90 T8 – Mulberry Tree – Crown reduction by up to 1m and general tree maintenance

The Tree Warden had advised that this was regular maintenance and recommended no objection subject to the reduction being limited to one metre.

**NO OBJECTION** subject to the reduction being limited to one metre and the advice of the District Council's Landscape Officer.

**178. REVISED PLANS**

There were no revised plans.

**179. DECISIONS**

The decisions on Planning Applications pertaining to Witham were received.

**RESOLVED** That the decisions be received and noted.

**180. TACKLING SPEEDING IN WITHAM/20s PLENTY**

- (a) Members were informed that Cllr Barlow was attending the next Essex Supporters of 20's Plenty zoom meeting on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December. <sup>1</sup>

The Planning Officer explained that she had started the process to obtain a vehicle activated speed sign for Hatfield Road with two quotes received and written support requested from Essex County Councillor Louis. It was noted that this would be a long and complicated process. Members stated that their preference would be for a sign that could be moved to different locations, to prevent it becoming “part of the furniture”, but agreed that the first step was to have at least one sign in Witham.

**RESOLVED** That the information be received and noted.

- (b) A letter was received from a member of the public concerning another accident at the junction of The Avenue and Avenue Road. Members agreed that the junction in question was frustrating and a hazard particularly at certain times of day but there was no obvious solution.

**RESOLVED** That the letter be received and the issue be referred to Essex County Councillor Playle and the Local Highways Panel and that a copy of the letter be passed on to Special Sergeant Simon Jesse.

**181. PUBLIC NOTICE – NO WAITING RESTRICTIONS**

A Public Notice regarding No Waiting Restrictions for Conrad Road, Hemmingway Road, Munro Road, Virgil Road and Blake Road were received.

Members were pleased with the notice and noted that this was the culmination of a number of consultations over several years. Members felt that, while some parking spaces would be lost and that some people would not be happy, the new scheme was needed and should provide some relief to local residents. Members stated that it would be important to ensure the new measures were enforced by police.

**RESOLVED** That the Public Notice be received and that these proposals receive the full support of the Council.

**182. PEDESTRIANS CROSSING SPA ROAD TO THE SKATE PARK**

Observations were received from Special Sergeant Simon Jesse regarding a potential new pedestrian crossing on Spa Road to the new Skate Park due to the increase in pedestrians, particularly children, crossing the road following their own “line of desire” between the supermarket and the park rather than using the existing crossing further away. Members were further informed that SP Sgt Jesse had recorded speeding on Spa Road.

Councillor J. C. Coleman declared a non-pecuniary interest as a youth club leader who uses the rugby club.

Members discussed this issue at length, noting that it was a dangerous road to cross and that a crossing would also benefit the football and rugby club, events such as the fireworks and circus

<sup>1</sup> This meeting has been deferred to 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024

as well as residents of Blunts Hall Road. It was recognised that it would be an expensive proposal to install an additional crossing but a central bollard could be a compromise. It was agreed that this issue should be taken forward for consideration.

**RESOLVED** That Essex County Cllr Louis be contacted to consider putting this issue forward for consideration by the Local Highways Panel on safety grounds.

**183. ONE HOUR PARKING IN NEWLAND STREET**

An email was received from the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) regarding its proposals to introduce payment parking in Newland Street. Members were informed that the Partnership had suggested the installation of a parking machine for those unable to use an app.

The email was discussed at length and Members agreed that the app was not inclusive. An email was read out from a resident who did not have a smart phone and did not know what an app was. Members considered the installation of one machine on a half mile stretch of road to be expensive to implement and ill thought out. Questions were raised about asking residents to walk up to half a mile to get a ticket, especially as the road is on a slight hill and it was thought some residents would have reservations about using a credit card if no payment was to be taken and would be put off if they only intended to stop for few minutes anyway. Members unanimously agreed that obtaining a ticket, even if it was free, would be a disincentive to use the High Street and would be another nail in the coffin of a small town whose shops were already struggling. Witham's shops were trying to compete with on-line retail and out-of-town stores and it was agreed that they did not need any additional hinderance. Furthermore, Members considered that the proposal still went against one of NEPP's core principles which was not to adversely affect trade and no evidence had been provided to show that local businesses had been consulted on the proposals. Members were keen to hear what the Scrutiny Panel at Braintree District Council would decide when considering the district's future with NEPP.

Members felt very strongly that there was a need to make Witham more attractive to potential shoppers and that ticketing and charging would be a disincentive to stopping in the town and lead to the local economy dying.

**RESOLVED** That Witham Town Council would strongly reject the proposal and demand the status quo was retained with 1 hour free parking without a ticket with no return within 3 hours.

**184. CALL FOR SITES FOR THE LOCAL PLAN**

Additional sites had been put forward as part of the Call for Sites process.

Members felt that site, WITS2428, close to Olivers Nursery, was on a winding road with poor visibility for access and that the land was known for poor drainage. This site was also south of the A12 and Members considered that the A12 should form a natural barrier to Witham. The area is a distance from the town and would therefore have poor coalescence. Access to the town could only be by car.

Members discussed site WITN2552 at length. Members preferred the larger size of the plot which had greater potential for community benefit. It was felt that in theory the site was a good idea, being next to an existing estate but regrettably there were some strong concerns about the access with traffic issues already on Rickstones Road and heavy traffic on the B1018.

Site RIVE2420 was considered to be too small a site and too close to Rivenhall village, encroaching on to the green wedge that separates Witham from Rivenhall.

Members recognised that sites were needed for housing to ensure young people could afford to live in the area, however it was emphasised that it needed to be in the right place. Members felt that instead of piecemeal development, more thought needed to be given to larger areas of development with appropriate road infrastructure to allow for increased traffic with plenty of areas for parking and that well-thought-out development, could bring benefits to the whole community.

**RESOLVED** That site WITS2428 be rejected on the grounds of poor access, poor coalescence with the town and being south of the A12 which forms a barrier to the town.

**RESOLVED** That WITN2552 be rejected primarily on the grounds of site access on to the already heavily congested B1018.

**RESOLVED** That site RIVE2420 be rejected on the grounds of being too small for any real benefit and encroaching into the green wedge between Rivenhall and Witham.

As time was running short, Members agreed to swap agenda items 15 and 16.

**185. INTEGRATED PASSENGER TRANSPORT MEETING**

Details of the Integrated Passenger Transport Meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2024 were received. Members were informed that Cllr Barlow had registered his attendance and would be raising the issues of a direct bus service from Witham to Broomfield Hospital and the withdrawal of Saturday services from the Honeysuckle Road estate.

**RESOLVED** That the details be received

**186. 24/01976/FUL – BIOMASS AT BAIRDS**

Email correspondence was received regarding the above application. Members noted that the letter stated the fuel was not being sourced from Canada, however they still had strong environmental reservations and maintained their objection to the proposal. Members were open to visiting the site and taking Dallol up on their offer to meet.

**RESOLVED** That the Planning Committee maintain their objection to the proposal but take Dallol up on their offer to meet to understand more about the application.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 7.21 p.m.

Councillor P. Barlow  
Chairman  
GK/SP/26.11.2024