

MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT 8.15PM ON MONDAY 9TH JANUARY 2017 AT THE CIVIC HALL, POYNTON.

PRESENT

Chairman: Cllr Mrs S Horsman

Cllrs: L Berry, L A Clarke, Mrs S-J Gilmore, C Gorst, T Holbrook, Mrs R Horsman-Johnson, Mrs J Sewart, M Sewart, G King, L Podmore, G Smith and Mrs N Wylie

Opening Prayer

55. Questions to the Mayor

There were no questions to the Mayor.

56. Apologies for absence

Cllrs M Beanland, I Hollingworth, H Murray, Mrs T Lorde and Mrs J Saunders.

57. Declarations of disclosable pecuniary or other interests

None.

58. Approve previous meeting minutes

It was proposed that the resolution for Item 51 is amended to note that this includes Poynton.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 14th November 2016, subject to the amendment, are approved as an accurate record (NC)

59. Mayor's Engagements/Announcements

As attached.

RESOLVED: That the report is received (NC)

60. To receive and consider the precept for 2017/18, as recommended by the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 19th December 2016

The Deputy Clerk spoke on the precept for 2017/18, as recommended by the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 19th December 2016.

The provisional precept figure for 2017/18 is £429,313; this is a 7.83% increase over the current year. For a Band D household this is £74.15 a year or £1.43 a week. The justification for the increase is as follows:

- The withdrawal of the precept support grant by CE.
- The revaluation of the Civic Hall which has doubled the business rates.
 - The Town Council are taking action to assess an appeal to the business rates.
- The future provision of the Neighbourhood Policing Team to ensure that there is contingency for viable options that are currently being explored to ensure that Poynton remains a safe environment.

It was noted that £21,000 of the increase have been due to circumstances beyond the control of the Town Council. The Clerk and Deputy Clerk have worked hard to limit the increase of the precept to 7.83%.

It was proposed that the precept for 2017/18, as recommended by the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 19th December 2016 is approved.

RESOLVED: That the precept for 2017/18, as recommended by the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 19th December 2016 is approved (NC)

61. In accordance with Standing Order 76, to receive and approve amendments to the Town Council's Standing Orders, as recommended by the Management and Establishment Committee on 9th January 2017

All members have received the amendments to the Town Council's Standing Orders, as recommended by the Management and Establishment Committee on 9th January 2017. The document has been improved to remove duplication and ensure the document is easier to navigate. Page numbers will be inserted once the document is finalised. The following reminders from the Working Group were highlighted:

- That the five minute speaking time per person per agenda item is adhered to.
- That the agendas should include an item, as agreed previously, requesting if the meeting is being recorded.

RESOLVED: That in accordance with Standing Order 76 the amendments to the Town Council's Standing Orders, as recommended by the Management and Establishment Committee on 9th January 2017 are received and approved (NC)

62. Receive and consider an update from Cllr Lee Podmore on Inspector Stephen Pratt's initial views on the Local Plan and its impact on Poynton together with an update on the Poynton Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Podmore provided the following verbal update on Inspector Stephen Pratt's initial views on the Local Plan and its impact on Poynton together with an update on the Poynton Neighbourhood Plan:

As Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan steering group and with fellow councillors having participated in the Local Plan discussions and correspondence, I would like to take this opportunity to brief members on the recent developments in both the Neighbourhood Plan process and the Inspectors interim findings for the Local Plan.

Poynton Town Council in conjunction with a number of local resident volunteers have spent the last two years preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for Poynton. During this process various surveys, exhibitions and focus group workshops have been held involving the residents of Poynton to try to build a comprehensive and evidence based Neighbourhood Plan. From this it is clear that the overwhelming majority of respondents would like a previous developed land first approach to development with 83% of respondents to the survey against building on the Greenbelt. The steering group have come up with proposals and lodged this with CE in September 2016; the pre-submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan. These proposals state a largely previous developed land based approach to development in Poynton over the next 15 years.

This plan has been out for the statutory six week consultation with the residents and other interested parties and has met with positive reviews from the residents on the whole, including from CE. The main issues raised by respondents to the plan are the sites proposed by CE at Sprinks Farm and Hazelbadge Road together with the proposed development at Poynton Sports Club. The developers unsurprisingly have other issues with the plan.

The Steering Group are now refining the plan based on the responses received and will be meeting with CE to discuss concerns raised by respondents and to ensure the plan complies with guidelines and can be submitted to CE.

Whilst this work has been on going, the Local Plan examination has also been progressing. At the recent planning committee meeting a report was read out by our advisor Mr. John Knight on the Inspectors views so far and further modifications for Cheshire East's Local Plan. This five page report sets out further "homework" for CE, to ensure the plan is sound and legally compliant, with the Inspector appearing to judge that, subject to minor modifications, the Plan would be legally sound and compliant.

The Inspector asked CE to review the figures for windfall developments throughout CE (the Town Council with Cllr Clarke's help have been raising this point of concern) as the developments are significant, need reviewing and can be included within the housing supply figures. It also appears that the three

sites proposed by CE for development, Sprinks Farm, Hazelbadge Road and Chester Road, are all to be included for development.

In conclusion, despite a number of councillors attending meetings with CE and also Cllr Clarke, Cllr Podmore, Mr John Knight and David Rutley MP attending and speaking at the Local Plan hearings, where we put forward our concerns about the plan with particular emphasis on the Greenbelt first approach, flooding and lack of infrastructure, it appears that the Inspector is not recommending changes to the proposed Local Plan which would address the concerns of both Poynton councillors and residents.

One of the core planning principles as set out under the National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF) is for a plan to be “plan-led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings...to be based on joint working and cooperation.” The NPPF also has as the core principles the “protection of the greenbelt, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it.” Also to, “encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed, provided it is not of high environmental value.” It is apparent that CE have failed to address these core principles and have disregarded the evidence and alternative proposals devised by the Neighbourhood Plan group, also ignoring the comments and suggestions made by the residents both during the consultation stage and at the hearings.

With this apparent disregard by CE to follow the NPPF core principles and to take heed of the views of the residents of Poynton, it is up to us as locally elected councillors to decide what action we would like to take to try to make the residents voices and concerns heard.

Cllr Podmore requested members to consider how the Town Council should respond to the Local Plan. Should it be that either the Town Council accept the outcome and allow CE to proceed with their proposals or that the Town Council represent the people of Poynton ensuring that CE know that this Plan is not based on what local people want or need. Cllr Podmore reminded members that councillors are elected by the people of Poynton to serve the people of Poynton and not elected by CE to serve their purposes.

A member noted their support for Cllr Podmore’s report and further noted that those present at the public enquiry at Macclesfield Town Hall will recall when one of Cheshire East’s officers provided false information to the Inspector, stating that only 20 additional houses had been built in Poynton since 2010. The figures the Town Council has compiled show this is clearly false. When objections were raised from the floor by members of the public they were threatened with expulsion from the hearing. It is hoped that all four Poynton CE Town Councillors vote against the Local Plan. This is an extremely disappointing outcome. There has been no response to how Poynton residents are to travel in and out of Poynton with the current roads already solidly congested. There has been no attempt to appraise/plan a highway strategy for Poynton. As in other areas, employment sites have later been allocated to

housing and this is the concern for the land assigned as such in Poynton which in future may also be re-zoned for housing. The process has been flawed, there has been a failure to engage and short meetings have been held at inconvenient times with an evident lack of consultation.

What can be done?

Perhaps some kind of judicial review. False information was given at the enquiry despite the efforts of the Town Council. Town Council members offered to show Cheshire East's Planning staff the relevant sites in Poynton and also repeatedly provided detailed information on developments in Poynton to date. There has been no attempt to appraise a highway strategy, as has happened in other towns. The Town Council have been awarded a grant to carry out a Movement Study. This is the result of an application by the Town Council to another organisation because CE have failed to complete a highway strategy. Another possibility is to write to David Rutley MP to pursue the matter.

Another member noted that perhaps the Town Council will be unable to prevent development of the greenbelt in Poynton but to channel efforts in a way that the Town Council may be able to mitigate the effect of the development on the greenbelt. This is by stating conditions in the Neighbourhood Plan which, when it is approved, will become a legal document and developers will have to take note of the document. For example, to specify play, cycling and walking areas. Also to state the condition that Poynton insists the Brownfield development is completed first.

It was noted that the Town Council have many times stated that Brownfield development is completed first but this has not been taken on board by CE. Also CE have increased from 27,000 units to 36,000 units. At 27,000 units there was enough planning permission for 10 years. However at 36,000 units CE cannot demonstrate a 5 year plan and the fear is that the greenbelt will be at risk of development.

It was noted that a judicial process although not impossible could be cost prohibitive and members were requested to consider if there is any lawyer that may be willing to offer their assistance on this matter to the Town Council.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk write to David Rutley MP requesting a meeting with him to discuss ways to take the matter of the Local Plan forward and to discuss how the issue can be escalated further than at Cheshire East level (NC)

63. Receive and adopt the minutes of Standing Committees

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Management and Establishment committee meeting held on 3rd October 2016 and the resolutions contained therein be adopted by full Council (12 for, 1 abstention)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Facilities, Infrastructure and Economic Development committee meeting held on 24th October 2016 and the resolutions contained therein be adopted by full Council (12 for, 1 abstention)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning and Environment committee meeting held on 31st October 2016 and the resolutions contained therein be adopted by full Council (11 for, 2 abstentions)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes committee meeting held on 31st October 2016 and the resolutions contained therein be adopted by full Council (11 for, 2 abstentions)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Community, Order and Public Safety committee meeting held on 7th November 2016 and the resolutions contained therein be adopted by full Council (12 for, 1 abstention)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning and Environment committee meeting held on 21st November 2016 and the resolutions contained therein be adopted by full Council (12 for, 1 abstention)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes committee meeting held on 28th November 2016 and the resolutions contained therein be adopted by full Council (12 for, 1 abstention)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning and Environment committee meeting held on 5th December 2016 and the resolutions contained therein be adopted by full Council (11 for, 2 abstentions)

64. Consider and agree any communication messages arising from this meeting

The following communication messages were agreed:

- That the Town Council will be contacting David Rutley MP regarding the Local Plan.
- The civic award and youth awards presented to three award winners.
- That the Clerk and Chair of the F&GP committee produce a press release once the precept has been submitted to CE.

A member clarified that councillors are able to vote for acceptance of committee meeting minutes at the full Town Council meeting even if they were not present for that committee meeting providing that the minutes have previously been approved by the relevant committee. Abstaining due to absence is only required for approval of the minutes at committee level.

The meeting concluded: 9pm