

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT 8PM ON MONDAY 16TH JULY 2012 IN THE MAIN HALL, CIVIC HALL, POYNTON.

PRESENT

Chairman: Cllr Mrs S Horsman, Town Mayor

Cllrs G Bartos, M Beanland, L A Clarke, C Gorst, A Hall, Ms R Horsman, P Hoyland, B Lewis, H Murray, Mrs J Sewart, M C G Sewart, Alex Smith, G Smith, R E West

27. Apologies for absence

Cllrs Mrs J Saunders, G King

28. Absent

Cllr N Cowan

29. Declarations of Interest

Cllr R E West declared a general personal interest on the basis that he is Chairman of the Northern Planning Committee, while Cllr P Hoyland did the same, on the basis that he is a member of the Strategic Planning Committee.

30. Poynton Council Annual Trader Award Scheme

The Mayor brought Councillors' attention to Cllr Hoyland's report and recommendations on this Scheme, as included in the agenda pack. If there was to be any debate on this issue, the Mayor recommended that this be postponed until after the main agenda item concerning the draft Town Strategy for Poynton.

RESOLVED: That consideration of this item be taken after the main agenda item concerning the draft Town Strategy (NC)

31. Draft Town Strategy for Poynton

A significant number of members of the public were present in the Hall for the meeting.

The Mayor asked Cllr Howard Murray to explain to those present the background to the draft Town Strategy, to put it into perspective, and to

explain the process going forward, which included a four week public consultation. Members of the public were then permitted a total of 20 minutes to put their various points across. Not all the names or points could be clearly heard or noted. Mrs Warrington of Hilton Road asked for an explanation of the difference between 'green field' and 'Green Belt', which Cllr Clarke provided. Tim Lilley of Lindisfarne Drive was reassured that the Town Council would keep residents informed of developments concerning the Town Strategy. Tony Penny, also of Lindisfarne Drive, said that he did not want a huge expansion of the village, which would destroy it. Dennis Brown of Alderley Close spoke of the impact of 950 houses at the redeveloped Woodford site, and the potential for yet further development on that site. Cllr Murray explained that while some of that location fell within Poynton's boundaries, much of it was in Adlington. Jane Evans of The Coppice talked of the need to retain young people in Poynton.

Michael Kingsley of Woodleigh, Poynton, had submitted two letters dated 16th July via the Town Clerk (attached), and copies of these were made available to Councillors at the meeting. In answering a list of four questions posed by Mr Kingsley in one of these letters, concerning the Woodford/Poynton Relief Road, Cllr Clarke said that Questions 1, 2 and 4 were for Cheshire East Council to answer, while he said that Councillors did agree with the point he made in Question 3. A Poynton resident, and member of the Stakeholder Panel, who wished to remain anonymous, had sent an e-mail to the Clerk dated 13th July (attached) concerning the status of the draft document. Another resident, from Glastonbury Drive, submitted his written views to the Clerk at the meeting (attached).

Following the time limit set for members of the public to speak, the Mayor then invited Cllr Clarke to lead on this issue. He told those present that the Town Council's Planning Committee, which he chairs, had met on 25th June 2012, and had substantially amended the first Cheshire East draft, which in his personal view was much improved as a result. Councillors wanted to protect and preserve Poynton's environment. In recent decades our population had tripled, a bypass had been promised, and yet there had been no improvements to the road infrastructure.

Cllr Clarke referred to the current draft Town Strategy, and said there was no point in going through it line by line, nor to debate the various points Cheshire East Planning Officers had made concerning the document (Adrian Fisher letter of 16th July is attached). He did want to provide some clarification however on the issue of low density housing, the reference to which on page 9 of the document was ambiguous. He proposed to replace the current wording with the following:

"Consider designating areas of existing low density housing in addition to those already identified around Poynton Park and Towers Road, in order to protect the character of these places. Possible low density housing areas that could be protected include Chester Road (between Fountain Place and the railway station) and Clifford Road".

RESOLVED: That the draft Strategy be amended as set out above (NC)

Cllr Clarke then proposed that the current document be regarded as a provisional draft, and that a small group of Councillors be delegated to negotiate a final draft for consultation purposes with Cheshire East Council. Cllr Hall said that the draft needed to reflect the opinions of the general public. Cllr Clarke agreed, adding that it would take some time to arrange a meeting with Cheshire East, but that in the meantime comments could be sent to the Clerk. There was no guarantee that these could be taken forward, but they will be considered. Cllr M Sewart expressed the hope that Councillors had listened to all the views expressed earlier in the meeting.

Cllr Mrs Sewart asked that the word “subsidisation” in the third bullet under ‘Strategy: Transport’, be replaced by “subsidies”. She also asked that the fourth sentence in para. 1.9 be amended to read “Identified as most in need of improvement were traffic levels in the town, transport links to nearby towns and villages, outdoor sports and leisure pitches and job prospects and employment opportunities.”

RESOLVED: That the draft Strategy be further amended as set out above (NC)

Cllr Hoyland said that a number of issues had been raised at the Planning Committee meeting of 25th June, including the section in the Strategy concerning infrastructure (pages 21 and 22). It was important to discuss and debate this section, and to get the priorities right. Cllr Hall agreed, adding that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) mentions protection of the Green Belt, and yet this is not reflected in the rest of the document. He was also concerned about the potential total of 2,800 new homes across seven sites, identified as A to G in the document. Cllr Clarke said that Cheshire East had to put consideration of these various sites in the Strategy document, following a legal precedent in Norwich, where the council had refused to consider a number of sites. He felt it unlikely that all the sites identified would be considered suitable for development.

Cllr Hoyland said that at least having considered sites A to G this afforded Poynton some protection, otherwise there could be a greater risk of appeal by developers.

Cllr Hall made the general point that our infrastructure need to be improved before any site were developed – this point was echoed by Cllrs Murray and Clarke.

Cllr Murray felt that we were fairly close to the points listed by Cheshire East under cover of Adrian Fisher’s letter to the Clerk of 16th July (attached). We were trying to make sure that we are not seen as unreasonable - the Strategy needed to have credibility and acceptability.

Cllr Clarke again proposed that the current Strategy document, subject to the amendments outlined above, be accepted as a provisional draft, for further

negotiation with Cheshire East. Cllr West made the point that the Councillors delegated to take this forward need to be selected with care, in order to avoid any personal and prejudicial interest.

RESOLVED: That Cllrs L Clarke (Chairman), Mrs J Saunders, Mrs J Sewart and G Bartos be given delegated authority to negotiate the present provisional draft of the Poynton Town Strategy with Cheshire East Planning Officers, with a view to agreeing a final draft for consultation purposes (NC)

32. Poynton Council Annual Trader Award Scheme

Cllr Hoyland took Councillors through the recommendations contained in his report on the above Scheme. Cllr Mrs Sewart asked who would pay for the prizes? Cllr Hoyland said he didn't know yet – this was a new initiative, and there were a lot of variables. Cllr Mrs Sewart asked if outside funding would be applied for. Cllr Hoyland replied that para. 10(c)(3) stated that part funding would be sought. A budget of £2,000 had been approved to get the Scheme off the ground, with the hope that in future it would be cost neutral, but meanwhile there was a lot of learning involved.

RESOLVED: That the series of recommendations contained in Cllr Hoyland's report on the Annual Trader Award Scheme be approved (NC)

The meeting concluded at 9.05 pm