

(6) PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Questions have been submitted, and responses provided, as follows:-

(1) From Councillor Ray Jenkins, Chairman of Down Ampney Parish Council to Councillor RL Hughes, Chairman of the Planning and Licensing Committee

'Down Ampney - the community I represent - has been badly let down by the CDC's planning system.

Could the Chairman please explain to my residents why his committee deferred the planning decision on Broadway Farm at the meeting in April specifically to allow for a dialogue to take place with the developer (which he knows duly took place on 23rd April at CDC offices) only to have that same application come back to the committee in May with a recommendation for permission and the Case Officer stating that no engagement had taken place?'

Response from Councillor Robin Hughes

'The public record of the resolution made at the April Planning and Licensing Committee is provided by the formal Minutes, which were confirmed by the Committee's Members at the subsequent Committee Meeting of 9th May 2018.

The Minutes clearly state that a decision in respect of the Broadway Farm application (ref. 17/03826/REM) was deferred "for reasons relating to the lack of adherence to the Parish Council's Design Statement and in particular, the use of red brick; lack of footpaths within the site; and the proximity of the proposed properties at the northern boundary to Linden Lea".

The reasons for the Committee's deferral of the application did not therefore require officers to engage further with the Parish Council. Similarly, it is a matter of the public record provided in the updated Officers' report, presented to the May Committee, that the Case Officer had discussed the issues listed in the Minutes with the applicants' agent and that "The applicants' agent has advised the case officer that the applicant does not wish to submit amended plans for this application and that they intend to lodge an appeal against non-determination". This was confirmed by the agent's email dated 3rd May 2018 attached to the Additional Pages issued to the Committee Members prior to the Meeting.

In this context, it was quite timely and appropriate for the Case Officer to again present the application to the May Committee Meeting to provide an update of her actions. The Case Officer also, very helpfully, reproduced for Members in the same Additional Pages, the minutes of the meeting held on 26th April between the applicant and the Parish Council, which was unilaterally facilitated by the Ward Member, Councillor Fowles.

On this basis, I am satisfied that there was no lack of clarity in the Committee's understanding of the Case Officer's actions to meet the requirements placed upon her as a result of the resolution at the April Meeting. Equally, the Committee was fully aware of the meeting that the applicant had separately engaged in with the Parish Council.'

(2) From Councillor Geoff Tappern, Vice-Chairman of Down Ampney Parish Council Planning Sub-Committee to Councillor RL Hughes, Chairman of Planning and Licensing Committee

'The history of the Broadway Farm development in Down Ampney over the last five years is characterised by a lack of information of the pre-application meeting with the developer provided to the Parish Council and local residents and no real opportunity for engagement with Sanctuary (until it was too late). This is a game changing development in our community, representing as it does a 20% increase in housing in our village which should never have been permitted.

Would the Chairman agree that this is not in keeping with the objective of the 2011 Localism Act which required local authorities to be more accountable and transparent to local residents who fund the CDC through their Council tax?'

Response from Councillor Robin Hughes

'The starting point for any questions about this development is, of course, the outline planning permission that was granted by the Appeal Inspector in 2016 (ref. 15/01567/OUT). At the Appeal, the Parish Council, together with this Council, put its concerns before the Inspector who disagreed with them and concluded that permission should be granted.

Pre-application advice was subsequently sought by the applicant in Spring/Summer 2017 prior to the submission of the Reserved Matters application, during the process of which officers were informed by the applicants that engagement had been initiated with the Parish Council and the wider local community. From that point onwards, it was for the applicants to decide how much further engagement they wished to undertake and, as such, this Council has no powers to impose that engagement.

As ever, the Council is required to determine planning applications on their merits, having regard to all relevant policy considerations, and I am entirely satisfied that the process of determination in this case was appropriately undertaken, fully transparent and properly accountable, as the public record of the Schedule of Applications and Minutes of the April and May Planning and Licensing Committee Meetings show.'

Notes:

(i) If a questioner is present at the Meeting, he will be entitled to ask one supplementary question in relation to each question submitted - which must arise directly out of either the answer given or the original question.

(ii) The Member to whom any supplementary question is addressed will try and answer any supplementary question at the Meeting; but if this is not possible, then the Member will answer as much as possible at the Meeting and then provide a full response within five working days. If, for any reason, a full response cannot be provided within those five days, then a holding response will be sent to the questioner, along with the reason for delay and a likely timescale for the full response.

(END)