

**UNADOPTED
POLEGATE TOWN COUNCIL**

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2009 at St John's Church Hall, Polegate at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Cllrs. T. Voyce (Chair), Mrs C. Berry, G. Carter, J. Harmer, R. Martin, M. Piper, J. Rogers, T. Wright.

Also present:- Cllrs Mrs J. Bigsby, Mrs J. Voyce, A. Watkins

95 members of the public

8807 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs. S.Shing, S. Barber.

8808 Declarations of interest in any items on the agenda

There were none.

8809 Minutes of the meeting held on 11 August 2009

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 August 2009 were adopted as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

8810 Matters arising from the meeting held on 11 August 2009

There were none.

8811 Planning applications

WD/2009/2180/MEA Honey Farm, Eastbourne Road, Polegate. 520 Dwellings together with a One Form of Entry Primary School incorporating Community Uses, A Convenience Store and Doctors Surgery.

The chair addressed the meeting as follows:

We are here to make our recommendations with regard to additional information for the outline planning application on behalf of Pelham Holdings Limited for up to 520 dwellings on the site known as PW1. It will be for Wealden District Council to make the decision.

For anyone who is not aware of the history of this site, I will give a brief bullet point history:

- Planning permission was refused by WDC for two outline applications on behalf of Pelham Homes for 1000 and 2000 homes respectively, including employment development in September 2006
- A new application was submitted by Pelham Holdings Ltd in October 2008 for up to 520 dwellings as above
- WDC Development Control South sub-committee meeting of 4th December 2008 resulted in the application having all matters reserved except for access
- The holding direction is to enable highways agencies to obtain additional information
- Access details and a draft Travel Plan are now before us for comment
- If highways are satisfied with the additional information, WDC will determine the application

- It is not expected to be on the WDC sub-committee agenda until 10 December at the earliest
- If highways are not satisfied, the direction will remain, the applicants will be asked for further information and we could all be here again in a few months time

It is well documented that Polegate has been identified as the favoured core focus for Major development in the Local Development Framework, South East Plan, WDC non-Statutory local plan and also within the consultation document commissioned on behalf of The Eastbourne Hailsham Triangle. However, PTC has formulated its own Masterplan for Polegate, in which it has opted for any imposed development to be located on land south of The bypass, in order that it would be sustainable and would integrate with the existing Settlement. The site is not included as being suitable for development.

PW1 is a visually prominent site in close proximity to an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the South Downs National Park. This application is a t risk of creating an island Of development in isolation from the rest of the Town with grave concerns that the Pedestrian/cycle access routes will do little to minimise this division from the Town Centre Whilst causing unnecessary inconvenience to inhabitants of existing, currently quiet, Residential streets.

There has been much interest in this application. The Committee will endeavour to take all Public comments into account. May I remind members of the public that PTC will give Recommendations on this application only. It is for WDC to make a decision.

It was noted that 23 letters of objection had been received and 1 petition containing 140 signatures from residents of Brookside Avenue, Albert Road, Victoria Road, Diplock Close and Brook Street.

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENDED

The following comments, concerns and objections were raised by 12 members of the public.

- School education authority has no money or intention to provide the school mentioned.
- The NHS has no money to complete any new surgery in this area. Sovereign harbour are still awaiting for theirs.
- The footpaths mentioned are unnecessary and any time saved with the new routes would be minimal.
- Polegate cannot absorb the amount of houses that are being requested.
- The roads cannot take the volume of traffic that will be generated by the extra cars from the development of 520 houses, 520 to 1040 cars extra. Already Cophall roundabout cannot cope with the volumes of traffic. Families don't want to car share they want the independence and convenience of using their own car.
- It is not clear if a bridge is on the application or not. Sketches of the bridge on the Wealden website make no mention of the bridge. The information is difficult to find and download and the resident felt that people affected by the Pelham plans were being excluded from finding out more details.
- An application in outline has to include means of access in **detail**. The means of access in detail on the submitted plans are two T-junctions on the main trunk road and detailed plans of flat pedestrian crossings with signals and paths through to Brookside Avenue. But these will not be permitted by Highways Agency or ESCC (East Sussex County Council) until and unless the link road is built – which neither is proposing to

build. The only other access shown is a temporary one and leads from Cophall with no pedestrian or cycle way.

- Residents affected are unsure whether there is an application for a foot and cycle bridge to Brookside Avenue or not. An email from Clair McIntyre at Wealden does not clear this up she wrote "copies of the additional plans are on the file which indicate the provision of a footbridge as part of the application (although they have not included this within the red application line)."
- "The applicants indicate that the intention is to provide a footbridge to satisfy County and Highways Engineers. The additional information that was submitted did not specifically refer to the footbridge as this was the only element of the information submitted."
- There are no scale drawings of any bridge and it is not named in the application description.
- The development would be an eyesore
- The bridge would enable pedestrians and cyclists to see into all of the front windows of the three nearest homes including the 1st floor bedrooms of two of them.
- The users of the bridge would be able to see into the side private gardens of the nearest homes.
- If the bridge is to be enclosed it will be it will be illuminated at night, the lights will be intrusive and will shine into bedrooms.
- The users of the cycle/pedestrian bridge will create noise and disturbance especially in the evening and at night made worse by the materials that it is proposed will be used for construction.
- The access into Brookside Avenue that has been suggested up to date involves the loss of many of the trees that form the vista and will cause a visual impact on the skyline and landscape.
- There is potential of flooding in the local area and how housing would adversely affect this current issue.
- Children on this development would have no where to go and nothing to do which could increase anti social behavioural problems in the town. There are no facilities for these children.
- Parking in Polegate is already a major problem and further traffic wishing to park (commuters) would cause an increasing problem in town.
- The walking times quoted on the application by the consulting engineers are incorrect.
- The routes planned would not be used; most people would see the shortest distance (up Brook Street) and take that option.
- This would disturb a quiet residential area and create a rat run through this area.
- This area of land is currently farmland any houses would cause problems with the flood plain. Water from this area would flood into Polegate as there are already problems in this area.
- There is no extra sewage facility for all these houses. The infrastructure is not good enough to cope.
- It encroaches on our beautiful downland and is out of place.
- The wildlife in this area would be adversely affected and the trees area wildlife habitat
- The travel plan is difficult to understand and figures had been plucked from the air.
- There was now no chance of the Folkington link road and nothing was planned by authorities on completing this. With budget cuts etc looming there would be no Dr Surgery, no school and no link road.
- The development would be visible from the South Downs, which had recently been made into a National Park.
- The A22 was being urbanised as the plans had included 3 storey building next to the road.

- There are problems with the A22, no link road and the problems on the railways. If this area was urbanised we could end up with a supermarket and business park there as well.
- There are huge technical inaccuracies in the supporting documentation.

Mr Norman Baker MP

Mr Baker commented on the large bag of opposing letters he had received and that he had received none in favour of the development. He commented on the fact that there is a holding on this application which has not yet expired. It expires in November 2009. WDC are obliged to consult on this application and this holding can be renewed. He commented on a letter dated 21st August from the Highways agency with their reason for holding. The reason for the uncertainty of the link road the original application relied on the Folkington link road. There was a possibility that if the developer Wealden District Council, ESCC and Highways agency could revise the application not relying on the link. If they submit on grounds for holding this could be the motivation for the application for the bridge. The developers may be trying to convince WDC that the bridge is an alternative to the link road. It is ludicrous. They will not pay and highways won't pay and so they have to think of an alternative for the link road. The development is alien, intrusive and a botch job and would change Brookside and other surrounding areas adversely. It would create an *island* separated from the rest of Polegate. This is not a healthy idea. The bus companies are not compelled to provide a bus service and even a subsidised one is not guaranteed, as County are not obliged to maintain one. There are requirements for a new Drs surgery, however Tower Mill had been considered as a more appropriate location and this development could cause problems and we could end up with two surgeries or none! Mr Baker commented on the lack of capacity on the rail and road systems. He reported that he would be writing to WDC to object to the plans himself. Mr Baker reported that barristers were expensive and he had looked into a firm who gave free independent advice, which they may be able to provide for residents of Brookside Avenue and possibly Polegate Town Council. The company was Birmingham based and he would give details of this to Polegate Town Council.

STANDING ORDERS WERE REINSTATED

Cllr T Voyce asked if any County Councillor wished to make any comment. No comment was made.

Cllr T Voyce then asked if any District Councillor wished to make any comment.

Cllr Roy Martin stated that he had listened to all the comments and he agreed with everything that had been said by the residents of Polegate.

Cllr Voyce reminded the Committee:

- IF the Highways Agencies are satisfied with the additional information relating to traffic, trees and access arrangements, WDC will determine this application, probably at the sub-committee meeting in December.

- PTC is free to comment on any part of the application, although there is little point re-iterating what has already been said unless it can be improved on.
- This is an outline application only and details of design, layout, landscaping etc will be submitted at a later stage in the decision process
- Transport studies carried out jointly between WDC, Highways Agency and ESCC Highways Dept have confirmed that major growth at Polegate would be dependant upon substantial improvements being carried out to the A27 trunk road to the west of Polegate, as well as the improvement of existing trunk road junctions around Polegate.
- It has since been confirmed that the A27 Wilmington improvements are still at a very early stage of development and are not yet in the Department of Transport's programme, 2016 should be considered the absolute earliest the scheme could be delivered, if at all.

A discussion took place with all councillors commenting on their objections to the application. The Comments were –

Any development at PW1 would cause severe traffic problems the Cophall roundabout area will not be able to cope with the extra traffic.

The proposed footbridge is too intrusive and would cause a loss of privacy.

Highways consider Brookside Avenue to be sufficient to take the extra foot traffic councillors disagreed.

In the Polegate Master Plan this site is NOT considered as suitable. It is too isolated. Any residents will be so isolated in the development that they are unlikely to use the town for shopping.

The application is worded that a new primary school would be built but the developers would only be providing the land. The building work etc is determined by the funding available from the Education authority, who have no plans to build there in the near future. The education authority have commented that the area is deemed unsuitable for a primary school. This in reality means that children would need to apply to local primary schools which are already at capacity.

The National Park status and the area of outstanding natural beauty will be adversely affected by any development in the area PW1.

Any development in the area PW1 would split the town in two.

The development was originally dependant on the developers providing a link road and substantial improvements to the A22/A27 junction with a travel plan.

A travel plan booklet in each new home does not guarantee that residents there would car share/walk etc. Most residents want the independence of using their own car.

Water services have not been upgraded to cope with the extra housing.

Cllr T. Voyce (Chair) proposed that the following objections were submitted to Wealden district Council in respect of this application.

The proposal was seconded by Cllr T. Wright.

A vote was taken and unanimously elected the following objections:

OBJECTIONS:

WD/2008/2180/MEA

Honey Farm, Eastbourne Road, Polegate

1. The PTC Masterplan does not include PW1 as a suitable, sustainable site for development. PW1 is also not considered to be of benefit to the regeneration of Polegate High Street due to its isolation.

2. The application is in outline only and the majority of important issues, including design, would become reserved matters, thereby receiving limited input from Polegate Town Council and local residents.
3. The development is on a visually prominent site and would:
 - represent an unacceptable and unjustified form of development
 - have a detrimental effect on the countryside
 - be clearly visible abutting an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
 - be visible from the South Downs National Park
 - cause additional problems of light pollution
 - erode the green belt surrounding the Town
 - erosion of wildlife habitats
4. 520 dwellings on two parcels of land is considered to be overdevelopment. PTC also queries the density variance over the site and the suggestion that the roof layout has been amended when it does not appear to have been.
5. There is only a land allocation for a one year entry primary school, convenience store, medical centre etc. The LEA would be required to fund the provision and have indicated 520 units to be insufficient for a dedicated school. A package of proposals from the applicant to ensure these facilities are brought forward is absent.
6. Pelham Holdings favour dual use of the primary school, ie community use outside of school hours. PTC prefers a separate community facility. It would also not wish a share of the section 106 agreement funding from the Land East of Shepham Lane to be used to provide this, as there is a demonstrated shortage of leisure facilities in Polegate North.
7. There is insufficient infrastructure to support this development and no proposals are in place to provide supporting infrastructure in the foreseeable future.
8. This application is subject to a holding directive to permit further consideration of the deliverability and timing of the proposed west of Polegate trunk road improvement scheme. There is still no approved timetable within which the Highways Agency must deliver this and therefore this application should not be considered until such measures are guaranteed.
9. Transport studies carried out jointly between WDC, Highways Agency and ESCC Highways Dept have confirmed that major growth at Polegate would be dependent upon substantial improvements being carried out to the A27 trunk road to the west of Polegate, as well as the improvement of existing trunk road junctions around Polegate. This application's Transport Assessment is flawed and unreliable and does not demonstrate that the additional traffic volume, including construction traffic, will be adequately catered for.
10. The development will result in:
 - adverse affects on road safety
 - unacceptable levels of traffic resulting in congestion, associated noise and pollution in particular the de-trunked road Hailsham Road - Station Road
 - increased on-street commuter parking around Polegate railway station
11. The proposed crossings on the A2270 would cause unacceptable traffic congestion. The area around Polegate and beyond is already grid locked at peak times and any further congestion would encourage waiting traffic to rat run through Polegate High Street and quiet residential streets.
12. This application puts forward the wholly unacceptable and bizarre proposal of a Draft Travel Plan to manage increased traffic movements by limiting vehicle usage. However, it fails to demonstrate that road improvements, formerly identified as essential to address

increased volumes of traffic and minimize the effect on the Town's roads, will be satisfactorily mitigated by a leaflet.

13. The proposed pedestrian/cycle accesses via Brookside Avenue are contrary to secure design as recommended by the police and would create potential corridors of anti social behaviour and compromise the security of nearby homes. Residents in the vicinity of the footbridge will suffer loss of privacy and quiet enjoyment of their properties contrary to the Human Rights Act (1998). Both roads and pavements forming the access corridors are extremely narrow, congested with parked vehicles and therefore unsuitable for additional large volumes of pedestrians and cyclists.
14. There are already two adequate routes into the Town centre along Hailsham Road in the north and Eastbourne Road/High Street in the south. The measurements of distance from mid point in the proposed site to the High Street in the Design and Access Statement, even via new access points, are questionable, as is the time it would take in practice to walk from one to the other.
15. It serves to underpin the fact that a development in the PW1 location would be unsustainably disconnected from the main body of the Town and necessarily vehicle dependent.

Items 8 – 15 demonstrate this application to be unsustainable and undeliverable for reasons of highways objections.

The chair also commented that Wealden District Council had given an extension to object to the application and would be accepting objections for the next few weeks.

The meeting was suspended for a 15 minute break.

Cllr Mr Harmer left the meeting.

The meeting resumed to discuss the following plan:

WD/2009/1724/F 4 Romney Road, Polegate. Increase in Roof Pitch of Single Storey Rear Extension Approved under WD/2009/1287/F.

Councillors discussed the application and the following objection was unanimously agreed.

OBJECTIONS:

1. Overdevelopment
2. Unnecessary increase in size

8812 Any other plans received prior to meeting

None received.

8813 Delegated Applications

None

8814 Details of Planning decisions

Application **TM/2009/0245/TPO** to remove two Hawthornes within Tree Preservation order No. 20, 1994 14 St Mary's, Lynholm Road, Polegate, BN26 6JZ
Granted permission

Application **WD/2009/1452/F** replacement of existing timber framed bedroom window and lounge doorway/window combination. Flat 6, Hawthorn Court, Black Path, Polegate, BN26 5BB

Granted permission

Application **WD/2009/1549/F** demolition of existing building and erection of two commercial buildings with entrance signs.
Bay Tree Farm, Bay Tree Lane, Polegate, BN26 6QN
Granted permission

Application **WD/2009/1828/LDP** Proposed loft conversion including rear and side roof extensions.

28 Hailsham Road, Polegate, BN26 6NL

The proposed loft conversion would not constitute development as defined by section 55 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

The associated proposed rear dormer and side hip to gable roof extension would constitute permitted development by virtue of Class B, Part 1, Schedule 2 of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended)

Application **WD/2009/1640/F** Conversion of existing bungalow to form two 2 storey dwelling houses including first floor addition and new roof. Construction of off street parking and highway access.

36 Albert Road, Polegate, BN26 6BS

Granted permission

8815

Correspondence

A letter had been received from the Planning Inspectorate regarding Order FPS/G1440/6/2 under the Highways Act 1980, Public Path Creation Order 2006.

The order sets out the width of the route reference to a point A on Victoria Road and points B and C on Brook Street.

The order was read out as received and the decision:

The order is confirmed subject to modifications set out in the Formal Decision.

8816

Planning updates and general information

The Town Clerk informed the councillors that a copy of the Parish Planning Minutes was available in the office should they wish to have a copy. Copies were requested by Cllr Mrs M piper and Cllr Mr G Carter.

A discussion took place on the Cophall waste transfer station and the fact that Wealden had had no objections to the plans when they had been submitted from ESCC and that Polegate Town Council also had no objections to these plans previously.

Cllr T. Voyce wished to express his thanks to Cllr J. Voyce for collating the plan application as it had been very time consuming and thanked Carol, Lin, Jo, Terry and helpers for making the whole planning meeting run smoothly.