

UNADOPTED

POLEGATE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Special Council meeting held on Thursday 2nd August 2007 in St John's Church Hall, Polegate at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Cllr. John Harmer (Deputy Mayor), S. Barber, Mrs C. Berry, Mrs J. Bigsby, M. Cunningham, J. Harmer, Mrs D. Joy, R. Martin, Mrs M. Piper, J. Rogers, Mrs J. Voyce, T. Voyce and T. Wright

Approximately 180 members of the public

7632 Election of the Town Mayor

The Deputy Mayor called for nominations for Town Mayor. It was proposed that Cllr. J. Rogers be elected to the position. This was seconded and there being no further nominations, it was resolved unanimously to elect Cllr. J. Rogers as Town Mayor.

7633 Declaration of Acceptance of Office

The Mayor read out the declaration of acceptance of office.

7634 Apologies for Absence – Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. S. Shing

7635 Declaration of interest in any items on the agenda – Cllr. R. Martin declared a prejudicial interest in item 5 on the agenda by virtue of his position as District Councillor sitting on the Planning Committee at Wealden District Council – Development Control South.

7636 Response to LDF Issues and Options Paper

The Mayor proposed that standing orders be suspended in order to allow members of the public to address Council. This was seconded and agreed.

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENDED

Approximately 15 members of the public took the opportunity to make their comments known to Council.

Comments received from members of the public included:

- a) Concerns that the Wimpey Homes and Gladedale developments were included in the questionnaire, when the former development was currently under consideration at Wealden District Council and the latter had gone to appeal.

- b) Concerns that any development should incorporate a reasonable number of low cost affordable housing. Does 'affordable' mean for sons and daughters or does this mean 'social housing' part owned by housing associations?
- c) Strong concerns regarding available infrastructure and dangers of building on flood plain in the light of recent experiences in the other parts of the UK.
- d) A plea from that the whole LDF strategy should be 'thrown out' which received strong support from the floor.
- e) Concerns that developers are not building houses of worth to a community but are simply motivated by profit to build high density units.
- f) Concerns that large developments will bring an increase in crime and anti-social behaviour to the town.
- g) Suggestions that the lack of housing in the UK is a problem caused by immigration policies.
- h) Recognition that the best way forward is to work with planning authorities rather than simply say no to any form of development.
- i) Concerns that infrastructure always comes after development causing social problems in the medium term.
- j) Concerns that Polegate shouldn't be viewed as just a retirement town; some controlled development is desirable so that children of residents will have homes in the town in the future.
- k) Concerns over the adequacy of local reservoirs to meet the increased demand for water, particularly as this area is regularly subjected to drought orders.
- l) Concerns that plan to downgrade services at the DGH will lead to inadequacy of local medical facilities if any sizeable expansion of the town occurs.
- m) Concerns over parking resources in the town which are already stretched to the limit and will be further exacerbated if there is an influx of new residents.
- n) Concerns that not enough brownfield sites are being considered for development.

The Mayor thanked all those who had made their views known and all those who had taken the trouble to attend the meeting.

STANDING ORDERS REINSTATED

The Mayor summarised the comments received from the floor and reiterated that recent suggestions that 10,000 homes would be built in the area were an exaggeration. Over the next twenty years the government have required that 8,000 new homes be built in Wealden as a whole. This would mean that although Polegate may well be identified as a potential site for some development by no means would the entire new housing requirement be imposed here.

Polegate Town Council are not the arbiters of where and how development might take place but a consultee and should work with the planning authorities to

achieve a reasonable outcome rather than simply respond with a blanket 'no' to any development.

Following discussion regarding the possible response from Council to Wealden District Council on the LDF Issues and Options Paper it was suggested that this should be deferred to allow consideration of the results of the recent public survey due to be completed on the 8th August.

It was proposed, seconded and agreed that the meeting should adjourn until 07:30 pm on Thursday 9th August 2007 to determine:

- a) Council's response to Wealden District Council on the LDF Issues and Options Paper
- b) A response to Wealden District Council on the LDF Issues and Options Paper on behalf of the residents of Polegate.

The Mayor declared the meeting adjourned.