

UNADOPTED

POLEGATE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Special Council meeting held on Thursday 9TH August 2007 AT 49 High Street, Polegate at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Cllr. John Rogers (Mayor), Mrs C. Berry, Mrs J. Bigsby, G. Carter
Mrs D. Joy, R. Martin, Mrs M. Piper, Mrs J. Voyce, T. Voyce
and T. Wright

3 members of the public

7647 Apologies for Absence – Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. S. Barber, M. Cunningham, J. Harmer and S. Shing

7648 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.

7649 Minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on 2nd August
The minutes were agreed as a true record and signed by the Mayor

7650 Matters arising from the Special Council Meeting held on 2nd August 2007
There were no matters arising

7651 LDF Issues and Options Paper

a) to determine the response to Wealden District Council from Polegate Town Council

Council considered the various options set out in the LDF Issues and Options Paper produced by Wealden District Council (WDC). It was agreed that Council would consider the options for housing developments first and then look at the options for business parks.

Option 16a – Area to the North West of Polegate – between A22 and A27(T).

It was considered that if this area is developed then a separate community would evolve that would be connected to the main town of Polegate in name only and would most likely become a dormitory suburb with people travelling out of the area to work and shop. It was difficult to see where any real planning gain for the town would emerge if this option was chosen for housing development. Although development in this area would be

least intrusive for Polegate as a whole it was not difficult to envisage this type of development spreading towards Hailsham creating a conurbation. This would impact on the greenbelt around Polegate which Council believes is important to maintain and could also blight the views from the South Downs which are shortly to achieve national park status.

It was proposed, seconded and agreed that Council should recommend to WDC that no housing development is sited in the area know as 16a.
Cllr. Mrs C. Berry opposed the motion.

Option 16b Area to the North West of A22 Polegate bypass and Cophall Roundabout and 16c Area to the North East of Cophall – Polegate.

It was considered that these areas are important green belt amenities for Polegate and that no housing development should be contemplated.

It was proposed seconded and agreed that Council should recommend to WDC that no housing development is sited in the areas know as 16b and 16c.

Cllr. Mrs C. Berry opposed the motion in respect of housing development in area 16c.

Option 16d Area North East of Polegate/South of Polegate Bypass

It was considered that this option was viable in that any housing development here could easily be integrated into the existing community causing little disruption to the town.

It was proposed seconded and agreed that Council should recommend to WDC that it considered housing development sited in the area know as 16d to be a viable option.

Option 16e Area North of Dittons Road – Polegate

Despite recent applications from developers in respect of this area it was considered that there were too many issues with roads and infrastructure for development to be viable. Problems that were cited included poor sewerage facilities, the dangers of siting an access roundabout on Dittons Road in close proximity to a 'blind' bend and the fact that the area is too far out of the main centre of Polegate.

It was proposed and seconded that Council should recommend to WDC that no housing development is sited in the area know as 16e.

Council were divided on this motion with an equality of votes in favour and against. That being the case the Mayor elected to use his casting vote and the motion was therefore agreed.

Option 16f Area between Lower Willingdon and Polegate

Council were strongly opposed to any form of housing in this area. First, development would exacerbate the existing traffic problems on the A2270 main road to Eastbourne, second development would erode the green belt 'gap' between Polegate and Willingdon and would encourage the development of a conurbation.

It was proposed seconded and agreed that Council should recommend to WDC that no housing development is sited in the area know as 16f.

Option 16g Polegate Town Centre and Station Redevelopment Area

It was considered that development of the town centre could be viewed as an opportunity to create a 'vision' for Polegate. This might include complete redevelopment of the existing 'Centre' with the aim to regenerate the shopping facilities in and around the High Street. Concern was expressed over the potential for siting housing within the town centre which is already struggling to cope with existing lack of parking. It was considered that regeneration of the retail businesses in Polegate High Street would be preferable to housing developments in the town centre.

It was proposed seconded and agreed that Council should recommend to WDC that no housing development is sited in the area know as 16g but that opportunity to regenerate the retail businesses should be explored.

Option 18j Berwick Station new Settlement

It was considered that the proposal to make a major new settlement at Berwick was very sustainable especially as it has an existing station with good links to London and Brighton. Development at Berwick would take place over 15 to 20 years. This could result in good planning gains for the settlement and surrounding communities and would go a long way to getting essential upgrades to the A27 trunk road.

Some concerns were expressed that Berwick was seen as an easy option for delivering the housing requirements for the area but it was also recognised that planners had an ideal opportunity for developing a well integrated settlement that could really benefit the hamlet and the surrounding communities.

It was proposed seconded and agreed that Council should recommend to WDC that the area know as 18j would be a suitable location for a new settlement.

Cllr. Mrs C Berry opposed the motion. Cllr Mrs J Bigsby abstained

Option 18h Summer Hill New Settlement (midway between Polegate and Hailsham)

It was considered that any new settlement proposed for this area would not be acceptable as it would encourage the development of a conurbation between the two towns.

It was proposed seconded and agreed that Council should recommend to WDC that the area known as 18h would not be considered a suitable location for a new settlement.

Cllr. Mrs M Piper opposed the motion.

Following on from the discussions surrounding the various options for housing developments some discussion ensued concerning the provision of 'social' or 'affordable' housing. It was recognised that community should be community minded and provide housing development that meets the needs of all sections of society. However, it was also recognised that any provision for social or affordable housing should go hand in hand with a local housing needs analysis.

Council then considered the various options for the siting of business parks in the area.

Option 16e Area North of Dittons Road Polegate

It was considered that this area would not be suitable for the siting of a business park. Concern was expressed regarding the flow of heavy traffic to and from such as site unless access was restricted to the Jubilee Way roundabout off the main bypass.

It was proposed seconded and agreed that Council should recommend to WDC that the area known as 16e would not be considered a suitable location for the siting of a business park.

Option 16a, and 16c Areas around Cophall Roundabout

It was considered that option 16a would be a suitable location for a business park as it would be in close proximity to the junction of the Eastbourne/Hailsham and Lewes/Brighton main roads. However, development of a business park at this location could only be considered if a section 106 agreement was in force to ensure that a new road known as the Folkington Link was built.

It was proposed seconded and agreed that Council should recommend to WDC that the area known as 16a would be considered a suitable location for the siting of a business park providing a section 106 agreement was in force to ensure that a new road known as the Folkington Link was built.

Council then considered the proposal that a business park should be sited in the area known as 16c. After some debate it was proposed seconded and agreed that the area known as 16c would not be considered a suitable location for the siting of a business park.

- b) to determine the response to Wealden District Council on behalf of Polegate residents

Council considered the data from the questionnaire responses that had been received from residents which was on display in the Council chamber. Overall the response had been good with approximately 12% of residents returning their questionnaires and offering constructive comments.

It was proposed seconded and agreed that Council should write to David Phillips, Head of Planning and Environmental Policy at Wealden District Council advising him of the findings of the survey and enclosing copies of the graphs and supporting documentation together with such detailed comments as had been received.

Council then discussed the recent survey that had been circulated by Cllr. S Shing. Disappointment was expressed that neither Cllr. Shing nor District Councillor Mrs O Shing had attended either of the meetings to discuss the response to the LDF Issues and Options paper, particularly as these meetings were of great importance to the residents of Polegate.

There being no further business the Mayor declared the meeting Closed.