

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of Sandy Town Council held in the Council Chamber at 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 11th November 2019 at 6.30pm

Present: Cllrs P N Aldis, P Blaine, S Doyle, A Gibson, J Hewitt, A M Hill, W Jackson, T Knagg, R Lock, C Osborne, M Pettitt (Chairman), P Sharman, and S Sutton

Absent: Cllrs M Scott and N Thompson

In attendance: Mr. C Robson (Clerk), CBC Cllr S Ford and four members of the public.

Action

1 Apologies for Absence (119-2019/2020)
Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs M Scott and N Thompson. Central Bedfordshire Cllrs C Maudlin and T Stock had also sent apologies.

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2 Declaration of Interest and requests for dispensations (120-2019/20)
Councillor Gibson declared a personal interest as she had worked for the applicant 30 years earlier.

3 Public Participation Session (121-2019/20)
Four members of the public were present and all wished to speak on matters to be considered in agenda item 4.

Cllr N Aldis raised a question from a member of the public as to whether the Council grit its car park on Saturdays. The Clerk confirmed that the Council does not currently do this due to no weekend staffing, but that he would look into whether plans could be put in place for bad weather weekends.

4 Planning Application (122-2019/20)
Members considered the following application submitted for comment by Central Bedfordshire Council

29.10.19	CB/19/03487/ FULL 29 St Neots Road Sandy SG19 1LE	Demolition of office and replacement with 5 apartments, 4 houses, smaller office and parking at 29 St Neots Road, Sandy, SG19 1LE. Near neighbours 27c,33,54,56,56a,56b,58,58a,60,60a St Neots Road. 1,2,50,51,52,59,61 Banks Drive, Sandy notified.
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The Chairman invited Members of the public to speak on the matter.

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A resident spoke on the matter to inform Members that she moved into Banks Drive in 2002. Following this, it was discovered that the land her house was built on was contaminated. For a long period of time they were advised not use their back garden due to concerns over the health implications the contaminated land may pose. The resident stated that she felt strongly that any future development should be subject to a full contamination investigation, as it is possible other areas of the site are contaminated.

A resident spoke to say he had some personal objections due to safeguarding of his child. His main concern was the scale of the development and the height of flats included in the planning application. It was hoped that the original house would remain, however the proposals show it is to be knocked down and a very large property is to be installed in its place.

Concern was expressed by more than one resident about the impact the development would have on traffic flow at the junction to Banks Drive. It was stated that the entrance has existing visibility problems and issues with people parking on the road at the junction. More properties will increase these issues. Residents felt that the buildings may obscure vision at the junction and make it more hazardous and increase the chance of an accident. It was felt that access to the current housing would become more problematic as a result of the positioning of the development and the increased traffic movements.

A resident pointed out that Banks Drive was not adopted and asked when CBC would be adopting this. He also asked whether the planning applicant would need the permission of the Banks Drive residents to use the access road as they weren't adopted by Highways. It was confirmed that CBC had not yet adopted the roads. Again, concern was expressed over the impact the development would have on parking, which is already congested.

Residents did not feel that the number of parking spaces provided by the development were realistically adequate for its scale. It was stated that there were already issues with cars parked on the estate's roads and more vehicles linked to the development would compound this further.

A resident commented that another block of flats in the estate had caused issues with noise and parking, which was inadequate. Concern was expressed that the same issues would arise with the proposed development.

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The Chairman thanked the residents and reminded all Members of the public present that they could, and should, make their objections known to Central Bedfordshire Council via the Planning portal of CBC Cllr Simon Ford.

Members went on to consider the application and commented as follows;

A Member asked if the parking issues identified would be considered in CBC's current review of restrictions along streets off St Neots Road. It was not thought that it would be due to Banks Drive not being adopted.

Concerns were raised over the impact the development would have on parking in the area and the number of spaces which were provided within the development. It was felt that the office which was to remain on site may create additional parking needs which haven't been sufficiently accounted for. However, it was noted that following pre-application advice with CBC, the number of parking spaces had been increased and the development does meet the minimum requirements. A Member commented that the number of parking bays did appear sufficient.

The height of the proposed flats was also raised as a concern by some Members given comparison to current buildings. Other Members commented that there was little difference in the height of the proposed building and a three-storey house down the road. It was not felt that objecting to the height of the building would be sustainable.

A Member commented that it is a brownfield site which is considered suitable for redevelopment. Improved landscaping at the front of the site facing St Neots Road will be kept, which is a positive.

Members discussed the contamination of land and the history of the site, commenting that the site of the proposed development was not in an area of land previously used for landing and loading so contamination was unlikely. However, Members agreed that it should be investigated.

A Member commented that it needs to be understood that this application must be considered in the context of the current planning regulations. While there may be aspects of the development that are not liked, there must be suitable planning reasons to object to the application which would be properly considered by CBC.

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Members agreed that the Council should draw attention to the concerns raised, especially the significant parking issues and there should be an investigation of the contamination reported on a house in Banks Drive.

A Member commented that they were concerned that the proposed office could at some point be developed into a tenth house. At present the development does not hit sc106 contribution triggers, but if a tenth house had been included as opposed to the office, it would have done.

It was proposed and seconded that the Council does not object to the planning application but that it does raise a number of concerns it would like to be considered by the Planning Authority.

Councillor Ford commented that he has spoken with the residents who have expressed concerns and will be flagging up the traffic issue with CBC.

RESOLVED to make no objections to this application but that the Planning Authority are asked to address the following concerns;

- That a full contamination study is carried out considering previous contamination on the wider site.
- That the Highways Authority review the access to the site and address current road safety issues reported by residents, including parking next to junctions and along the access road.
- That a parking study should be completed to ensure that the development will not make existing parking issues in the area worse due to an increase in vehicles and insufficient spaces.

5 Chairman's Items (123-2019/20)

The Chairman expressed his thanks to all those who attended the Remembrance Parade on Sunday 10th November 2019. The morning's remembrance was very successful and participation in the parade and the number of residents attending had increased yet again. Residents of Sandy had once again shown their commitment to marking this important day.

6 Date of Next Full Council Meeting (124-2019/20)

Monday 9th December 2019