

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Development Scrutiny Committee of Sandy Town Council held in the Council Chamber at 10, Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 23 September 2013 commencing at 6.45pm.

Present: Cllrs Aldis (Substitute for Cllr Sutton), Jackson, Osborne, Pettitt (Chairman), Scott, Sharman and White.

Absent: Cllrs Ali, Lynch, Maycock and Sutton.

In attendance: Four members of the public and the Town Clerk.

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Lynch, Maycock and Sutton.

2 Declarations of interest

- i) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests - None
- ii) Other Interests – Cllr Osborne drew attention to the fact that his daughter was employed at the RSPB in respect of items CB/13/02916/FULL and CB/13/02320/FULL. Cllr Sharman drew attention to his membership of the RSPB and the fact that he was a volunteer there in respect of items CB/13/02916/FULL and CB/13/02320/FULL.

3 Planning Applications

Applications submitted for comment by Central Bedfordshire Council were discussed and comments agreed as shown below.

02/09/13 63/13	CB/13/02916/ FULL RSPB The Lodge Sandy SG19 2DL	A wind energy development comprising the erection of one wind turbine, with a maximum overall height of up to 100m together with access tracks, crane pad area, electricity sub-station, temporary construction compound and amended vehicular access on land at RSPB, The Lodge, near Sandy
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Two members of the public addressed the council about this application. The first noted that the RSPB's justification for the proposed 100 m wind turbine rested on its desire to reduce its carbon footprint ie to reduce carbon emissions not for economic reasons.

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The member of the public noted that Ecotricity already offered electricity from wind turbines for sale and all the RSPB needed to do was to purchase its fuel through Ecotricity. He further asserted that CBC had carried out a survey on the Greensand Ridge denoting it a sensitive area on which no more than two wind turbines should be placed. The Ridge already had two turbines; the proposed new turbine would be visible and would detract from the Greensand Ridge. Finally he drew attention to discrepancies between some comments in the RSPB report and its conclusions, asking why the RSPB found it acceptable to permit the killing of any birds or bats.

The second member of the public drew attention to possible television reception problems which were not fully explored in the RSPB's report. He noted that it was difficult to predict the effect because wind turbines moved but referred to an OFFCOM report asserting that 16,000 home might be affected not because of proximity to the turbine but because of the angle between the turbine and the nearby transmitter (1180m away). Part of Sandy and all of Biggleswade could be affected. Also the resident had objections to the visual aspect of the proposed development which would be discernible from miles around. The land on which it was to be placed had been purchased because it would increase heathland which the RSPB then described as significant and it was agreed that there was insufficient Bedfordshire heathland remaining. It was a vital habitat for birds, but the land has not been restored to heath and the RSPB have thereby suppressed relevant data. The member of the public said that turbines attract bats so more will be killed than shown in the RSPB data. Ecotricity had said they will mitigate for damage to bats by reducing the cut off speed of turbine between sundown and sun, this would reduce the efficiency of the turbine. The member of the public also objected to the proposed development because of the potential disturbance effect on the local populations of hobbies and nightjars, it was not clear how susceptible they were to wind turbines.

The Chairman thanked the members of the public for their contribution and reminded the meeting that the Town Council could only comment on material planning considerations. Some of the issues raised did not fall into this category and therefore could not be taken into consideration.

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Members discussed the application and a range of varied views were put forward concerning the visual impact on the Reserve and the Greensand Ridge as a whole. It was noted that the RSPB held an exhibition over 12 months ago on the proposed development and had been questioned on the impact of the turbine by the Town Council on previous occasions. Since then there had been a further long period of consultation and more public exhibitions.

RESOLVED to make no objections to the proposed development.

Cllr Aldis did not vote as he did not wish to predetermine his position as a Central Bedfordshire Councillor. Members of the public were advised that the application would be considered further at Central Bedfordshire Council's Development Control Committee later in the year and Sandy Town Council's comments would be passed on to CBC. The public would be free to make representations at that meeting.

06/09/13 64/13	CB/13/02320/ FULL Mr P Bradley RSPB Gatehouse Shop The Lodge Sandy SG19 2DL	Creation of 3 Wildlife Ponds with associated drainage at The Lodge, Potton Road, Sandy, Beds.
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RESOLVED to make no objections to the proposed development and to welcome the increased biodiversity which the ponds would provide.

12/09/13 65/13	CB/13/02021/ MW Mr J Glen Bridge Farm Bedford Road Sandy SG19 1ND	Creation of a lake as a wildlife habitat, by mineral extraction, for the enhancement of the site at land at Bridge Farm, Bedford Road, Sandy, Beds. Near neighbours Ivel Cottage, Girtford Bridge, Sandy notified.
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RESOLVED to make no objections to the proposed development and to welcome the increased biodiversity which the ponds would provide.

4 Late Planning Applications

None

5 Planning Application CB/13/01874/MW - former Plant Site, New Road, Sandy

The above mentioned planning application was reconsidered in the light of clarification of information on the number of HGV traffic movements likely to be associated with the site.

RESOLVED that Sandy Town Council would continue to propose no objections to the proposed development provided that the traffic movements did not exceed 40 per day. The committee also suggested that all HGV vehicle movements to and from the site should be via New Road and the A1 only.

6 Minutes of previous meeting

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of meeting of the Development Scrutiny Committee held on Monday 12 August 2013 as a correct record of proceedings.

7 Items for Information

The committee noted that recent planning applications referring to the High Street at Beeston and 38 Bedford Road Sandy had been granted.

The Town Clerk agreed to invite a representative of the Planning Department to come to a Town Council meeting to explain the current planning policy on parking at new/existing developments.