

**AXBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Draft Minutes of the Planning and Licences Committee held on**  
**Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2017 at the Town Hall, Axbridge**

**Meeting Commenced:** 6.45pm

**Meeting Concluded:** 7.15pm

**Present:** Councillor Wells (Chairman), Taylor (Vice-Chairman), Bridgeman, Gould, Ham, Kendall and Page (from minute P92/17) together with Mrs Brice, Town Clerk and 7 members of the public.

**P89/17 Apologies for absence**

**RESOLVED:** that apologies from Councillor Myerson (ill-health) be received and approved.

**P90/17 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Taylor – declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in relation to planning application 02/16/00030 (relating to the erection of up to 80 dwellings on land to the South of Houlgate Way) (minute P/17 refers), living adjacent to the site, and would leave the meeting should the application be considered.

**P91/17 Minutes of the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2017**

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2017 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

**P92/17 Public Participation** – Mr Ryves addressed the Committee on application 02/17/00032 relating to works to a Horse Chestnut Tree at 21 Chestnut Avenue and Mr Wookey spoke on the amended plans received in relation to application 02/16/00030 for the erection of dwellings on land to the South of Houlgate Way.

**During public participation Councillor Page joined the meeting**

**P93/17 Planning Applications (Part 1)**

Members considered the following applications:

Application No. 02/17/00031/CW  
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (As Amended)  
Applicant: Mr W King  
Proposal: Installation of folding doors to the South Elevation  
Location: 29 High Street, Axbridge, BS26 2AF

**RESOLVED:** that Sedgemoor District Council be advised that Axbridge Town Council has no observations to make on the above-mentioned application.

Application No. 02/17/00032/JAB  
Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (As Amended)  
Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation Order) Regulations 1969  
Applicant: As agent (Hi Line SW Ltd)  
Proposal: Horse Chestnut (T3) crown reduce by 3m to previous pruning points  
Location: 21 Chestnut Avenue, Axbridge, BS26 2BS

**RESOLVED:** that Sedgemoor District Council be advised that Axbridge Town Council has no objection to the above-mentioned application.

The Chairman, with members approval, agreed to move consideration of application 02/17/00030/SH relating to Land to the South of Houlgate Way to later on in the meeting (minute P96/17 refers).

**P94/17 Outline Planning Application 02/17/00022 – Mendip View, Cheddar Road, Axbridge**

The Clerk advised that there was no update on this application.

## **P95/17 Planning Decisions and Correspondence**

No planning decisions were reported. Members noted correspondence regarding Hinkley Point drop in sessions and a skills event on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017 to showcase Hinkley Point C careers for young people.

**At this juncture, Councillor Taylor, having declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in this application, left the meeting.**

## **P96/17 Planning Applications (Part 2)**

Members considered the following application. Amended plans and documentation had been received.

Application No. 02/16/00030/SH

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (As Amended)

Applicant: Hannick Homes & Developments

Proposal: Outline planning permission (appearance layout, scale, landscaping reserved matters) for theerection of up to 80 dwellings (40% affordable dwellings) and creation of access.

Location: Land to the South of Houlgate Way, Axbridge, BS26

Sedgemoor District Council had advised that this application had been significantly amended, following receipt of amended plans and documents, referring to up to 53 dwellings, including affordable housing, and associated changes. The Town Council had been given the opportunity to make any observations on the amended plans.

Members discussed this matter.

### **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:**

- 1) That Sedgemoor District Council be advised that Axbridge Town Council reiterates its earlier objections to this application (as set out in the responses dated 16<sup>th</sup> October 2016, 15<sup>th</sup> December 2016, 11<sup>th</sup> April 2017 and 31<sup>st</sup> May 2017 and endorsing the comments made in the letter submitted by Mr and Mrs Camp sent on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2017) (attached for easy reference); and
- 2) That Axbridge Town Council makes the following additional objections, comments and concerns:-

#### Amended plans and documentation

This is not, in fact, an amended application. Whilst the covering letter from Sedgemoor District Council suggests that the application has been amended to show a proposed development of up to 53 dwellings (instead of up to 80) the "revised" plans within the Design and Access Statement still incorporates the remaining 27 dwellings, simply re-packaging the application to show two planned phases of development.

This site is outside the development boundary and is neither community led, nor has the support of the community. It cannot be regarded as "infill" development. The "revised" application has not addressed any of the objections raised by the Town Council, which still stand.

#### Piecemeal submissions

The Town Council has raised its concerns about the handling of the planning application in previous correspondence with Mr Rickard, former Chief Executive at Sedgemoor District Council. It is the Town Council's view that the piecemeal fashion in which the planning application and its technical documentation has been submitted and subsequently amended over the past 14 months has meant that local people have not been able to properly engage with the planning process or understand what is being applied for, or what the most recent information is. As of today, whilst an amended Design and Access Statement is available online, reflecting the lowering of the number of residential units being applied for from 'up to 80' to 'up to 53', the planning statement and planning application forms still refer to the original application for up to 80 residential units. This is clearly unacceptable. The Town Council is of the view that the application should be completely withdrawn and resubmitted once all of the technical documentation has been updated to reflect what is actually being applied for.

### Axbridge Affordable Housing Policy 2017-18

The proposed development is contrary to Axbridge's Affordable Housing Policy, which was adopted on 06 June 2016, prior to the original submission date of the planning application.

### Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan

The Town Council feels the changes made to the scheme since its original submission are sufficient to warrant a new planning application being submitted. It is felt the reason the planning application has been varied is because the applicant is aware of the ongoing Neighbourhood Plan process and wishes for the planning application to be determined without taking this into due consideration. The Council feels the determination of the planning application ahead of the Neighbourhood Plan process being completed would be premature.

### Housing Needs Assessment

The applicant suggests that the planning application will help meet local housing needs. However, it is not clear to the Town Council the extent to which it will do so. The planning application form (which, as noted above, still suggests that up to 80 residential units are being applied for) does not state the size of the residential units being applied for, either for private housing or social rented housing - with all units indicated as 'unknown'.

### Planning application 02/17/00022 Mendip View, Cheddar Road

This site for the current application for 20 dwellings (five of which would be affordable) is under consideration by Sedgemoor District Council. This site is at least partly on brownfield land within the development boundary (and wholly within the extension of the development boundary as suggested by Axbridge Town Council during the boundary review). This application has not been taken into account, cumulatively alongside Houlgate Way, which would change the housing need.

### Inaccuracies

The Design and Access Statement still refers to Axbridge being a village, at the entrance to the "Cotswold" AONB.

### Acceptability of outline planning application

The Town Council does not consider that an outline planning application is suitable in this location due to the proximity of the development site to the Axbridge Conservation Area, Listed Buildings and the Mendip Hills AONB. It also appears that the submission of an outline planning application is contrary to Sedgemoor District Council's Core Strategy, which states that P4 sites should only be released "in exceptional circumstances and full and detailed planning applications would normally be expected".

If Sedgemoor District Council is of the view that an outline planning application is acceptable in this location, then it is the Town Council's view that it should be supported by parameter plans as well as a Design Code to govern the layout, height and appearance of the development, as these aspects are fundamental when considering whether residential development is acceptable in this location.

No parameter plans (e.g. land use parameter plan, maximum building heights parameter plan, access and movement parameter plan) have been submitted. Instead the applicant's Design and Access Statement (DAS) states in loose terms that "most dwellings are two storey" and provides only an illustrative masterplan for which permission is now being sought.

Furthermore, no Design Code has been submitted alongside the outline application to govern the appearance of the development. Again, the DAS speaks in loose terms about the appearance of the buildings being varied "to reflect the architectural traditions of Axbridge ensuring the development retains a strong sense of place that reflects the local character".

### Time taken to determine this matter

Axbridge Town Council continues to be extremely concerned regarding the handling of this application and how long it has remained, and continues to remain, undetermined. It is Axbridge Town Council's understanding that

applications should be determined within 8 weeks in usual cases, in 16 weeks for more complex matters and within a year should an application be the subject of an appeal. It is Axbridge Town Council's view that keeping this application in abeyance for 60 weeks gives rise to planning blight, which is unacceptable to the local community.

Conclusion

To conclude, the Town Council's earlier objections as set out in the responses of 16<sup>th</sup> October 2016, 15<sup>th</sup> December 2016, 11<sup>th</sup> April 2017 and 31<sup>st</sup> May 2017 still stand, together with the objections, comments and concerns as set out above.

**P97/17 Date of next meeting** – to be confirmed.

-----  
Chairman

-----  
Date