



Regulatory Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at East Dorset District Council offices
Furzehill, Wimborne on Thursday, 18 August 2016.

Present:

David Jones (Chairman)
Steve Butler, Barrie Cooper, Beryl Ezzard, Paul Kimber, Mike Lovell, David Mannings,
Daryl Turner, Margaret Phipps, Peter Richardson and David Walsh.

Officer Attending: Maxine Bodell (Economy, Planning and Transport Services Manager), Phil Crowther, David Northover (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and Chris Stokes (Principal Planning Officer (Development Manager)).

Public Speakers:-

Ian Evans, Hurn Parish Council – minute 56
Andrew Brown, Applicant – minute 56

(Notes: These minutes have been prepared by officers as a record of the meeting and of any decisions reached. They are to be considered and confirmed at the next meeting of the Cabinet to be held on **Thursday, 15 September 2016.**)

Apologies for Absence

52 Apologies for absence were received from Pauline Batstone, Ian Gardner, Mervyn Jeffery and Mark Tewkesbury.

In the absence of the Vice-Chairman, Pauline Batstone, it was

Resolved

That Daryl Turner be appointed Vice-Chairman for the meeting.

Code of Conduct

53 There were no declarations by members of disclosable pecuniary interests under the Code of Conduct.

With reference to minute 56, David Jones confirmed that he had no disclosable pecuniary interest to declare but was a member of Christchurch Borough Council and had been Chairman of their Planning Control Committee at which this matter had been discussed. He had played no part in that discussion and had not formed a view on this so would take part in the discussion and vote.

With reference to minute 56, Margaret Phipps confirmed that she had no disclosable pecuniary interest to declare but had attended Hurn Parish Council meetings at which this matter had been discussed but had not formed a view on this so would take part in the discussion and vote.

With reference to minute 56, Mike Lovell, having not attended the meeting held on 9 June 2016 when consideration of this item had been deferred, took no part in the debate of the application and withdrew from the meeting.

Minutes

54 The minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2016 were confirmed and signed.

Public Participation

55 Public Speaking

There were no public questions received at the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 21(1).

There were no public statements received at the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 21(2).

Petitions

There were no petitions received at the meeting in accordance with the County Council's Petition Scheme.

Planning application 8/16/0126 - To provide an Improved roundabout east of the existing roundabout at the junction of Christchurch Road, Parley Lane and Avon Causeway, located on the B3073, Hurn Roundabout, Christchurch

56 Further to the Committee meeting held on 9 June, when consideration of planning application 8/16/0126 proposing the relocation of Hurn Roundabout, Christchurch had been deferred pending a site visit, the Committee considered a further report by the Head of Economy seeking planning permission for an improved roundabout east of the existing roundabout at the junction of Christchurch Road, Parley Lane and Avon Causeway, located on the B3073, Hurn Roundabout, Christchurch.

Prior to consideration of the application at the meeting, the Committee had visited the site to see at first hand the current situation, what the proposal entailed and to have a better understanding of what it was designed to achieve. At the site visit, officers pointed out the proposed route of the new carriageways; where the roundabout was to be located; how the scheme was to be engineered and what junction improvements were being planned; how trees and vegetation would be managed; how visibility would be improved; where street lighting would be situated; and where pedestrians and vulnerable road users would be able to cross the roads.

As a consequence of the deferral and the concerns raised by the Committee at that previous meeting, some significant amendments had been made to the original scheme.

With the aid of a visual presentation, photographs and plans, and taking into account the provisions of the Update Sheet, officers described in detail the planning application and its benefits, and highlighted the changes made following the meeting on 9 June 2016. Those features seen by members on their site visit were highlighted, in particular, the new configuration of the road, where the roundabout would be situated and how the left turn access onto Avon Causeway from the access road was now to be accommodated.

The Update Sheet set out late representations received from Hurn Parish Council, whilst welcoming the amended left turn access arrangements and the inclusion of bollards on the access road, considered there was a need for a pedestrian crossing on Parley Lane and for Blackwater Junction improvements to be completed in advance of these proposals.

A late representation received from Christchurch and East Dorset Councils Partnership broadly supported the application and welcomed the proposal to now site the access onto Avon Causeway further from the crossing, but expressed concern that the scheme was of urban design and was out of keeping with the rural character of the conservation area. They considered that any improvements should reflect the rural setting, be smaller in scale and less obtrusive and lighting to be used should be sensitive and unobtrusive. They were content that the removal of undergrowth and saplings would be beneficial to the conservation area in the medium to long term, that the Grade II listed Riverside Cottages would benefit from their own access road, but

considered traffic management to be necessary there. On this basis, they had no objection to raise.

Officers repeated that the purpose of the application was to help reduce congestion on the strategic road network through the northern part of Christchurch. In reaching a decision, they suggested that members weighed the impact on the character and amenities of the area against the need for improvements to be made to the strategic road network in order to increase economic growth in the area. As such, officers recommended the granting planning permission.

Although this scheme was being promoted as beneficial in its own right, some members had previously been concerned that congestion would not be alleviated until the Blackwater Junction issue was remedied, a view shared by the Parish Council. In response officers explained that whilst funding was available for the Blackwater Junction improvements, its design and implementation was pending. In the meantime, the Hurn roundabout scheme could take place in its own right and so the Committee was asked to consider the application on its merits.

The Solicitor, in conjunction with the Chairman, clarified the procedure governing deferred meetings and public speaking and the involvement of members who had not attended the meeting on 9 June 2016. Consequently Mike Lovell declared that he would take no further part in the meeting and withdrew. It was confirmed that the Committee could ask questions in order to gain a better understanding on which to base their decision and that debate should be confined to the merits of the application's material considerations, the amended scheme and critical aspects of the application.

Councillor Ian Evans, Hurn Parish Council, was advised that as there had been an opportunity for public speaking at the previous meeting, he should limit his address to the amendments which had been made to the scheme. The Chairman appreciated that Mr Evans had not necessarily been made aware of this but, in order to meet the provisions of public speaking on deferred matters, was asked to respect this.

Councillor Evans expressed concern that the proposals would change the appearance of the rural setting of the village, would be detrimental to it and would not necessarily contribute to easing congestion. He was of the view that the Blackwater Junction improvement works were the key to easing congestion around Hurn village and he questioned the financial worth of the scheme too.

On this latter point the Chairman reminded the Committee that the funding of the scheme should have no bearing on members' assessment of the application and this was confirmed by the Solicitor. The test was whether the application conformed to the Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework, which, in officers' view, it did.

Andrew Brown, the applicant, explained that as a consequence of the issues raised by the Committee in June 2016, significant amendments had been made to the design of the scheme. Accordingly, provision had now been made for a left hand manoeuvre to be able to be made from the access road and by siting this junction further westwards from the Toucan crossing. Lighting was being designed to ensure that it had a minimal effect on residential dwelling, whilst still complying with necessary regulations. Horse warning signs were also to be installed at two locations. He had plans to show how the horse crossing signage would be managed but the Chairman took the view that no new information should be circulated to members because this could have been provided prior to the meeting, Mr Brown had given a full explanation of their operation and doing so would not increase members' understanding.

Mr Brown also confirmed that the request by the Parish Council for a pedestrian crossing in Parley Lane would be considered as part of the normal process for such requests during September 2016. He concluded that the scheme had been assessed as being strategically important in contributing towards managing congestion in that area and was essential in improving the flow of traffic.

Some of the Committee considered that it would help their understanding if they had the opportunity to clarify points raised with those addressing the Committee, including the applicant. As it stood, there was no provision for this and some felt that their ability to question was being compromised and that the public speaking protocol should be reviewed to allow for this. The Solicitor advised that whilst there were clear parameters in which public participation operated, in order that meetings were managed properly and transparently, the Chairman had the discretion to allow a specifically focussed issue to be clarified by a public speaker to enable the Committee to come to an informed decision. He felt this mechanism was satisfactory.

The Committee asked a series of questions about the scheme including consultation undertaken, siting and operation of the horse crossing, how congestion would be reduced, illumination and how parking would be managed in the access road to account for those wishing to use the airport. In response officers explained the scheme had been designed on predicted traffic flows, projected congestion forecasts and traffic growth. Officers would consider the concerns about the operation of the horse warning signs and the need for parking restrictions on the access road.

Members noted that the assessment of the scheme had been based on: information from traffic engineers about predicted traffic flows and projected congestion forecasts, taking into account traffic growth; airport and business park growth; what other attractions were in the vicinity; and the advent of the Parkfield School soon being situated within the airport grounds.

Councillor Phipps, as local member for the Commons Electoral Division, considered that the scheme, as designed, would be detrimental to the village's rural setting and make it look urbanised. Having sympathy with the points raised by the Borough and Parish Councils, she felt unable to support the application. She considered that not enough attention had been paid to the heritage of the area and the effect on other listed buildings, that this should have formed part of the environmental assessment and that the views of English Heritage should have been sought. Officers confirmed that the consultation process had fulfilled obligations to comply with development in a conservation area. She felt that the proposal would do little to address congestion and that management and removal of trees was detrimental to the rural setting. Overall she was of the view that a more low key improvement scheme would achieve all that was necessary and that the scheme should be reviewed again in that light. Accordingly, she proposed that that the application be refused.

Another member was of a similar view that congestion would not be addressed without the necessary improvements to the Blackwater Junction.

Having had the opportunity to debate the application fully, the Committee recognised that whilst this scheme would not necessarily resolve congestion in its entirety, the advice of traffic engineers on how the scheme would alleviate projected congestion should be accepted and that its construction would benefit economic growth for South East Dorset. It was noted that the Christchurch and East Dorset Partnership had raised no objection in principle and that amendments to the application had been made to address the issues raised by Committee at their previous meeting.

On being put to the vote, the proposal made by Councillor Phipps was lost. Having considered the original recommendation, the Committee having no grounds to refuse the application in planning terms, agreed that planning permission be granted, subject

to conditions. Councillors Phipps and Richardson asked for their dissent to be recorded.

Resolved

That planning permission be granted subject to the conditions set out in paragraph 8 of the Head of Economy's report.

Reason for Decision

The reasons for granting planning permission were summarised in paragraphs 6.13 – 6.16 of the report.

Questions from County Councillors

57 No questions were asked under Standing Order 20(2).

Meeting Duration: 11.30 am - 12.55 pm