



## **MINUTES**

of a meeting of the **Planning Committee** held on **Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2021**, online *via* Zoom Meetings, Lewes at 6.30pm.

**Present:** Cllrs; S Catlin (*Chairman*); R Handy; J Lamb; I Makepeace; M Milner; S Sains and K Wood (*not appointed to the Cttee*)

*In attendance:* S Brigden (*Town Clerk*) and Mrs E Tingley (*Committee Admin*)

**PC2020/14** **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Apologies were noted from Cllr J Baah who had a family commitment and Cllr W Maples who had a conflicting commitment.

**It was resolved that:**

**PC2020/014.1** Apologies for absence from this meeting are noted

**PC2020/15** **MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** There were none.

**PC2020/16** **MINUTES:** The Minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> February were received and agreed as an accurate record.

**PC2020/17** **QUESTION TIME:** Cllr Milner asked that the Committee discuss a joint response in relation to the Chandlers Wharf Planning Application after the main business of the meeting.

**PC2020/18** **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:** There were none.

**PC2020/19** **PELLS CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL (SDNP/20/05799/FUL:** The meeting welcomed Mark Marsh (Raven Housing Trust – Applicant), Ms Nadine James and Mr Edward Ledridge (Montague Evans – Agent) Ms Deborah Twitchen (*Chair, Landport Residents Association*) and Ms Annie Rowe, a local resident.

Mr Marsh began the presentation explaining that Raven Housing Trust had been successful in their bid to purchase the former Pells Primary School site with completion of the purchase in January this year. The site was currently occupied by property guardians who had been in situ since the school closed. This provides an on-site presence to ensure that the building remains safe and secure. Raven are a housing association based in Redhill, Surrey and currently have around 6,000 properties across Surrey and Sussex. They provide a range of housing from Social and Affordable Rent to Shared Ownership and Temporary Accommodation. They are committed to the Government's target of achieving Net Zero Carbon by 2050. The Pells project would be used as a pilot project for achieving Net Zero Carbon. Their approach to providing heating and hot water would be via a ground Source Heat Pump. In addition to this they were hoping to construct the site using Modular Housing to improve the efficiency of the new homes to cut down on construction waste and also cut down deliveries to the site. If this was not achievable, they would look at other modern methods of construction.

Ms James then explained that the application proposes the redevelopment of the former Pells School and seeks the same use of the brownfield land to assist the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) to achieve their housing targets. The Scheme would deliver 32 affordable residential units – 18 affordable rent units and 14 shared ownership units – comprising 18 residential flats and 14 two storey houses. The site would deliver

46 car parking spaces and a policy compliant provision of cycle storage. A high quality landscaping scheme would run throughout the site and trees along Landport Road would be retained.

Councillors then gave feedback on the presentation:

- How would the feedback from consultees be adapted?
- Would there be a revised planning application or would alterations be made to the existing application?
- There is disparity regarding the number of housing units and car parking spaces being made available.
- Why might Modular Housing not be achievable?
- How would the 32 housing units be allocated?
- Could the architecture of the scheme be changed to make the development look more exciting?
- To achieve a Zero Carbon Transport Policy could the possibility of a car club be discussed.
- 'Walking times' from the site to the town were optimistic and should be re-examined.

Ms James advised Members that a meeting had taken place with the SDNPA just before the Easter Break, however there would need to be further meetings to discuss feedback/objections from neighbours and consultees.

Members felt that the application was still a 'work in progress' and requested that they be advised of any amendments made to the application.

Members expressed that they were disappointed that there would not be a revised application and felt that the presentation had given no new information or material difference regarding the application and therefore re-iterate their comments made at their meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2021, which were recorded as:

Councillors considered details of the application and expressed views as:

*General points*

- The Committee deplored the loss of the school; considered to demonstrate a particular lack of foresight given the prospects of development in Lewes and the present shortage of school spaces.
- The application was described as 'lazy' and did not demonstrate any understanding of the area.
- It was recognised that there were some positive elements on the application. It did not propose the maximum possible density and included thoughtful details such as Ground-source Heat Pump installations. Current residents in Landport would be happy to see extra housing.

*Transport; parking etc*

- There were concerns regarding vehicle access onto the development site and pressure on Kingsley Road. All construction traffic would have to drive through Landport as the site is located the bottom of the estate, and there was a threat to mature trees if the recreation ground access was used.
- There were many tradesmen currently residing in Landport, therefore many trade vehicles taking up street parking provision. There were only 46 parking spaces allocated for the new development. Could a car share scheme be introduced or could new developments have a restriction on the number of cars permitted? It was considered that a share scheme so close to the town centre could be a beacon project. New residents were considered likely to park in the recreation ground car park.
- In the transport assessment document 'walking times' from the site to key areas in the town were tabled. These were considered to be theoretical: completely unrealistic, and the product of a 'desk-exercise' based upon assumptions and without any local knowledge. This should be challenged and the transport

document re-examined.

- Statements in the document regarding the previous school-generated traffic are considered fallacious. The school had generated a large pedestrian volume but not a large number of vehicles.
- Only 20% of the allocation parking on the development would have electric vehicle charging points, which is inadequate.
- Public transport should be encouraged.

*Housing provision and design*

- Councillors agreed comments recorded by the South Downs National Park Authority’s Senior Planning Policy Officer, regarding the proposed tenure; mix of sizes, and types of home, in that this site has potential to make a much needed contribution to meeting local housing need, in particular for affordable housing. However, the proposal has yet to demonstrate that it is responding to local community needs.
- Policies in the Lewes Neighbourhood Plan and the SDNP Local Plan had not been adequately recognized, and several key factors ignored. The currently published Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HEDNA) shows local need for smaller and medium sized dwellings and Lewes District Housing Register identified the greatest need (74% of registrants) is for 1 or 2 bedroomed homes, yet the plans do little to address this, and policies requiring recognition of the needs of older people had been ignored.

These views would be submitted to the SDNPA planning officer concerned with the application.

**PC2020/20**

**MISCELLANEOUS PLANNING ISSUES:**

**SDNP/16/01310/FUL MORRIS ROAD**

There was discussion regarding an application to discharge a condition attached to development consent. Members had spent some time assessing this matter and considered that the original condition should stand.

The condition originally stated:

*“The development shall not be occupied until details for the surfacing and lighting of the path linking through to Chandlers Wharf have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The path shall then be constructed and completed to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority before the development is occupied and thereafter retained as a public thoroughfare at all times.”*

Members, aware of local feelings of irritation that the route was obstructed by a locked gate, were also aware that there was a distinction between a public thoroughfare and the actual right of way to use it. They considered that the condition was applied for good reasons and should stand; but they ask the landowner to open the access for public use, acknowledging that it may be blocked periodically, for short periods, to prevent ‘prescriptive rights’ arising.

There being no other business, the Chairman thanked everyone for their valued contributions and closed the meeting.

*The meeting ended at 7:25pm*

Signed: .....

Date: .....