

THAME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Thame Town Council held on 20 September 2016 at 6.30pm in the Upper Chamber, Thame Town Hall

Present: Cllrs B Austin, D Bretherton, M Deacock, M Dyer, L Emery (Town Mayor), H Fickling, C Jones, P Lambert, A Midwinter and T Wyse.

Officers

G Hunt, Town Clerk

G Markland, Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Officer

A Oughton, Committee Services Officer

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Butler (Holiday), Champken-Woods (Holiday), Cowell (Business), Dixon (Unwell), Dodds (Unwell) and Stiles (Holiday).

2 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Public Participation and Public Questions

Mr Rawlings, Assistant Planning Director and Mr Ullathorne, Chief Executive of Rectory Homes spoke for planning application P16/S2407/FUL – The Elms, 32 Upper High Street. Mr Rawlings thanked the Town Council for the opportunity to speak and to answer concerns raised by both Councillors and residents on four key issues; the impact on local roads, the impact on existing health facilities, density and non-compliance with the Thame Neighbourhood Plan.

The vehicular access remained the same as the previously approved planning application on the site. It was felt that by the nature of the proposed development there would be fewer traffic movements. As residents moved into the scheme perhaps with a car they may find in time they did not need it and the number of cars would diminish. The majority of journeys would not place during peak times and it was intended that two pool cars would be on site for residents to use.

Research into similar developments suggested that most residents already lived in the area of the new scheme and were already using the existing health services and with the extra care facilities on site residents were less likely to be burden on existing health services. Although there were other similar developments in Thame offering accommodation for the elderly this scheme would be the first of its kind to offer 24 hour care on site.

With regard to density the numbers of dwellings had increased from the approved planning application but the proposed development would have a 7% smaller footprint, be of a specialist nature but would still retain the contemporary style of architectural as the approved scheme.

Rectory concur with the comments made in the Planning Report produced for the Town Council by West Waddy with regard to non-compliance, the District's inability to provide a 5yr land supply which diminished the weight attached to the Thame Neighbourhood Plan. The scheme responds to an established need in this sector, it opens up new public open space, with cycle and pedestrian links and will result in less traffic movement.

Mr Ullathorne confirmed that if this planning application is approved the original s106 agreement, would be honoured with the same level of funding contributions towards the redevelopment of Elms Park and the County Council.

4 Minutes

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 16 August 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

5 P16/S2407/FUL – The Elms, 32 Upper High Street

The erection of an Extra Care housing development (Use Class C2) comprising apartments, houses and a communal residents' centre with basement parking and storage areas and creation of new public open space, provision of new vehicle access from Elms Road and a new pedestrian / cycle link onto Upper High Street with associated infrastructure works and landscaping.

Mr Divall, Planning Partner at West Waddy presented the report provided to the Town Council with advice on the merits of the planning application P16/S2407/FUL. The report detailed the background to Thame, an overview of the Neighbourhood Plan housing strategy, the merits of the current application and set out any potential conflict with the Neighbourhood Plan.

Cllr Dyer stated that much had been made of the National Planning Policy Framework and the SODC Local Plan in the arguments for the proposed scheme. The most recent adopted plan was the Thame Neighbourhood Plan which was in accordance with both the NPPF and SODC Local Plan and should be the guiding principle for the Town Council.

The lack of a five year land supply was a very real issue but was one for the District Council and the Planning Inspectorate to consider. The NPPF stated that where there was no five year land supply there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development. These points were matters for the District Council and not for the Town Council to determine. To do so would be effectively to roll over and abandon the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan did not evidence any significant need for retirement homes or extra care facilities and that there would need to be a significant change in circumstances to justify this scale of development. Concern was raised as to the applicant's projections on calculated need over a six mile radius around Thame which cannot be seen as being Thame specific.

The benefits did not outweigh the harm from the increase in the number of dwellings on the site, no allocation for affordable housing, increased traffic movement and the uncertainty over the s106 funding agreement.

RESOLVED that:

RECOMMEND REFUSAL

- 1. Overdevelopment***
- 2. Level of harm to the heritage of the site, in particular to The Elms***
- 3. Lack of affordable housing on site***
- 4. Increase in the height of the roofs to accommodate lift shafts***
- 5. Poor Design – particularly blank elevations to the north block and community facility***
- 6. Impact on existing health facilities in the town***
- 7. Increased traffic movements – particularly during the construction phase***
- 8. Class C2 – the proposal is a commercial venture***
- 9. Lack of evidence of need for this type of facility***

It was agreed that the Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Officer would expand on the bullet items in formulating a full recommendation to SODC.

Post Meeting Note: The full response was submitted to SODC on Thursday 22 September 2016, a copy is attached to the minutes.

6 Rycote Meadow

It was noted that the Council had declined an approach from a developer to buy Rycote Meadow for the following reasons:

- the land is within a flood zone and does in fact regularly flood
- the land was transferred to the Town Council for community use
- the land is identified for improvements as part of developer funding from Site F which will enable the land to be fully accessible to the public with footpaths linking the new housing development
- any development would be against policies ESDQ1 and ESDQ9 of the Thame Neighbourhood Plan, which specifically protect this open space and provide for riverside walks
- the evidence base for the Thame Neighbourhood Plan identified a shortfall of Public Open Space within Thame
- the land itself is subject to significant easements relating to water and gas mains.

7 P16/S2874/FUL – Land South of Wenman Road

Site C2 – Bellway Homes. A planning application was received on 22 August 2016 for “Removal of conditions 4 – Secured By Design and 22 – Code For Sustainable Homes on planning application P14/S1619/O.”

Members noted that as a response to the above planning application was required by 15 September 2016, the Town Clerk had authorised the response, as drafted by the Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Officer, to be submitted.

8 Skate Park

Following the successful outreach project which ran for eight weeks Sports for Streets were seeking funding to extend the project into a second phase to enable outreach work to develop level one users to level two users.

Members were in agreement that the skate park was a great facility for the town and the outreach project was a good way to educate and inform users of the Park.

RESOLVED that:

- i) Funding for the second phase of the outreach project at a cost of £2,000 be met from General Reserves.***

The meeting concluded at 7.20pm

Signed
Chairman, 15 November 2016