



Working in Partnership



Planning Applications Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1UE, on 9 October 2019 at 5.00pm

Present:

Councillor Sharon Davy (Chair)

Councillors Steve Saunders (Deputy-Chair), Lynda Duhigg, Tom Jones, Christoph von Kurthy, Imogen Makepeace, Laurence O'Connor, Nicola Papanicolaou, Jim Lord (Substitute) and Emily O'Brien (Substitute)

Officers in attendance:

Jennifer Norman (Committee Officer, Democratic Services)

Joanne Stone (Solicitor, Planning)

Christopher Wright (Specialist Advisor, Planning)

55 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2019 were submitted and approved, and the Chair was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

56 Apologies for absence/Declaration of substitute members

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Graham Amy, Sean MacLeod and Sylvia Lord. Councillor Emily O'Brien declared she was acting as substitute for Councillor MacLeod for the duration of the meeting, and Councillor Jim Lord declared he was acting as substitute for Councillor Sylvia Lord for the duration of the meeting.

57 Declarations of interest

There were none.

58 Petitions

There were none.

59 Written questions from councillors

A written question had been received from Councillor Johnny Denis in his capacity as a Lewes District Ward Councillor. The question and response was read aloud by the Chair to all those who were present during the meeting:

Written question received from Councillor Denis:

Resident and Parish Council concerns were recently made known to me about a particular planning application LW/19/0602, a variation of an earlier consent LW/16/0703.

This application is contentious in that neighbours and the Parish Council have opposed it and have asked for it to be called in. I have attempted to call it in but on querying officers about this application I was told that it was de minimus (trivial); or that it did not constitute a significant enough change (minor change), or be considered a new application, and that, therefore, it could not be looked at by this committee.

I would like to know if this committee is content with the current scheme of delegation or whether the thresholds for consideration by committee are appropriate to balanced decision-making and whether extending what can be considered might better allow voice for community concerns.

Response read aloud by the Chair:

“Lewes District Council’s scheme of delegation governs which applications can be dealt with under delegated powers. An objection from a Town or Parish Council, or a District Councillors request to have the application determined by committee is not an automatic trigger to committee.

Part 9 of constitution sets out that an officer with an appropriate sub-delegation can approve an application provided:

- no member of the Council has requested the application to be determined by the Committee within fourteen days of the weekly list relating to the application, providing that such request is based on valid planning reasons and that the Chair of the Committee agrees to take the matter at the meeting;

I am advised that officers are content with the current position for the following reasons:-

- It allows for appropriate cases to be determined by officers provided they comply with planning policy.
- It also prevents the committee being put in a position where although they may sympathise with objectors, there are no planning grounds to go against the officer recommendation.
- Equally, it ensures that objectors are not given false hope that an officer’s recommendation to approve will be overturned by committee in cases where there are no valid planning reasons to do so.
- To some extent maintains the committee agenda to manageable size.

- The current scheme also allows for oversight by allowing the chair of the committee to review the decision not to place the matter before the committee for determination.
- It helps ensure that appropriate development proposals that accord with our development plan are approved without delay as required by the NPPF.

Given the above assessment and commentary I am advised that the existing scheme of delegation and its application are appropriate and there are no changes recommended.”

A supplementary question from Councillor Denis was received by the Committee requesting that a comprehensive guidance document in relation to acceptable reasons for refusal, approval and the calling-in of planning applications be assembled by Officers for residents of Lewes District.

The Chair responded that Councillor Denis’ suggestion was an excellent idea and requested that Officers assemble a comprehensive guidance document and in relation to acceptable reasons for refusal, approval and the calling-in of planning applications, and distribute the guidance to Lewes District Councillors and all town and parish clerks within the District. Officers agreed.

60 LW/19/0517 - Land adjacent to The Rough and Vernons Road, Newick, East Sussex

John West (Applicant) spoke for the proposal. Ben Caulkett (Neighbour), David Marchant (Neighbour) and Sarah Cox (on behalf of her mother, who lives adjacent to the proposed development) spoke against the proposal. Councillor Roy Burman spoke in his capacity as the Lewes District Ward Councillor.

Resolved:

That planning application LW/19/0517 for approval of REM - approval of reserved matters - LW/18/0048 (Elevations, internal layouts, parking spaces, final access location) and approval of details reserved by condition 12 of application LW/18/0048 be refused for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development would, by reason of the scale, bulk and footprint, constitute over development of the site to the detriment of visual amenity and the character of the locality, contrary to saved policy ST3 and policy CP11 of the Lewes District Local Plan, and having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. The proposed development would, by reason of the design and external appearance, have a detrimental impact on visual amenity and the wider street scene, contrary to the aims and objectives of saved policy ST3 and policy CP11 of the Lewes District Local Plan, and having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. The proposed development would, by reason of the scale and siting, give rise to overlooking, loss of privacy and loss of light, to the detriment of the residential amenity of neighbouring residents, contrary to saved policy ST3 and policy CP11 of the Lewes District Local Plan, and having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework.

61 Date of next meeting

Resolved:

That the next meeting of the Planning Applications Committee that is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, 30 October 2019, commencing at 5:00pm at a location yet to be confirmed in Seaford, East Sussex, be noted.

The meeting ended at 6.15pm.

Councillor Sharon Davy (Chair)