

**MINUTES OF THE PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC RELATIONS
COMMITTEE MEETING OF ONGAR TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ON THURSDAY 6th April 2017 AT 7.15pm**

PRESENT:

Councillors: J. Reynolds (chairman) M. Dadd C. Feetham
L. Mendosa *J. Battersby *P. Keska

*Non committee members

Officers: E. Gough (Acting Deputy Clerk)
Public: Four members of the public
Press: One member of the press

277/16 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Browning, Freeman, Bolden, Bicknell and Birch.

278/16 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPIs), Other Pecuniary Interest and Non Pecuniary Interests under the Council's adopted Code of Conduct.

Cllr Reynolds declared a Non Pecuniary interest for item 291/16.

279/16 Public participation session on items previously notified to the clerk.

Two members of the public addressed the meeting with objections to item 282/16 (iii).

280/16 To agree the Planning & Environment and Public Relations minutes of the 23rd March 2017.

The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd March 2017 were reviewed and agreed as a true record and signed by the chairman.

281/16 Clerk's Report – on items of information that are not an agenda item.

Planning Applications for information only:-

EPF/0596/17 - Ms K. Sullivan, 43 Cloverley Road, Ongar
Certificate of lawful development for a proposed rear dormer window in a loft conversion.

EPF/0601/17 – Mr R. Miller, Brew House, Church Lane, Ongar
Application for approval of details reserved by condition 7 'Foul and Surface Water' and condition 16 'Large scale plans' of planning permission EPF/0035/16 (Proposed demolition of existing outbuildings and the erection of one new dwelling).

Three letters of objection received regarding planning application EPF/0518/17.

282/16 To consider current Planning Applications:-

RESOLVED NOT TO OBJECT to the following applications:-

i) EPF/0581/17 – Mr Welford, 9 Shakletons, Ongar

Rear first floor infill extension.

ii) EPF/0582/17 – Mr Baldry, Scout Hut, Love Lane, Ongar

Erection of a 2.4m high security fence around boundary to include vehicle access gate and personnel gate.

RESOLVED TO OBJECT to the following application:-

iii) EPF/0518/17 – Mr Carlton, 19 High Street, Ongar

Change of use from hairdressers (use class A1) to pizzeria restaurant and takeaway (use class A3) with extraction unit to rear.

Summary of Objection

Strongly object and support all the traders' and residents' concerns. The following planning considerations and application of EFDC Local Policies are our reasons to believe this is an inappropriate change of use from A1 to A3 in this location:

1. **It is contrary to EFDC Local Policy TC6 There is a demand for A1 and no evidence for more demand for A3**
 - There are no vacant A1 shops in Ongar
 - This is not being advertised locally or on the internet as A1
 - There is no 'identified community need' for another Restaurant/ takeaway in Ongar
 - Ongar needs to retain A1 to remain a viable centre
 - There are already 16 restaurants, takeaways, cafes and pubs in Ongar south of A414 and several others north of A414 and in nearby villages
2. **There is inadequate parking for customers and the proposed 4 staff.**
 - There are only 5 parking spaces limited to 1 hour for all 5 shops and launderette
 - The rest of the street has yellow lines
 - The nearest public car park is approx ½ mile away in the Ongar town centre.
 - Lack of parking facilities would encourage abuse of the existing restrictions causing traffic flow, pedestrian and residents' frontage issues.
 - **The application is incorrect stating that the premises has 2 car spaces (at the rear)**
 - Businesses and residents of the flats above have only limited undesignated parking in the rear service road (also used for access for deliveries)
3. **The change of use would be contrary to EFDC Local Policy DBE9 part (iv) with Loss of Amenity detrimental to the existing amenities of the flat owners above and neighbouring resident**
 - At present there is **no commercial activity after early evening in the immediate vicinity**. The proposal is to open until 11pm
 - A3 use as proposed would cause noise especially in the evening and late at night for flat owners and adjacent residential area.
 - A3 use would cause cooking smells and fumes, which may be pungent.
 - Detrimental to quiet enjoyment of gardens to the rear
4. **Food Waste Bins and Food Smells for a Restaurant and Takeaway in the locality where Rats are known to live by the river would cause a Health Hazard issue for existing residents in the neighbourhood and shopkeepers**
 - Existing shopkeepers do not put any waste food outside even in closed containers
 - A contracted pest controller already has to put down poison monthly to try to prevent rats invading shops and flats.

283/16 To note the decisions of EFDC on recent applications

None received.

284/16 Permission under section 115A-K of the Highways Act 1980 to install and maintain planters

Cllr Battersby updated the committee from the liaison meeting with Ongar in Bloom group. The Permission form from ECC requires to be signed and returned before any planters/plants can be purchased.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Dadd and seconded by Cllr Mendoza to sign the Permission form granted by Essex County Council to install and maintain planters in the footway (copy attached).

Unanimous vote received.

285/16 Basons Lane

The complaint received from a member of the public with regard the plastic banner advertisements outside the Budworth Hall was noted. The committee agreed that the temporary signs were necessary to advertise groups/events in Budworth Hall.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Reynolds and seconded by Cllr Feetham to approach the management of Budworth Hall to ensure that all advertising be regularly updated as and when an event commenced or ended.

Unanimous vote received.

286/16 Damaged fence surrounding old allotment site, High Street, Ongar

ECC advise that the case has now been passed to the Enforcement Team who are carrying out further investigations. Cllr Reynolds requested that this item remain on forthcoming Planning, Environment and Public Relations committee meeting agendas until the matter is resolved.

287/16 Metal barrier on bridge at Basons Lane

No further update. This item to remain on forthcoming Planning, Environment and Public Relations committee meeting agendas until the matter is resolved.

288/16 EFDC Local Development Planning

A report from Cllr Mary Dadd, on progress with regard to the development of the new Local Plan for EFDC and in particular any aspects effecting Ongar was received and noted (report attached).

289/16 Neighbourhood planning

290/16 Community Land Trusts

291/16 Community Grants

292/16 Items for next Agenda

The above four items were deferred due to lack of time.

The meeting closed at 8.04pm.

Signed:

Chair of the Planning & Environment and Public Relations Committee

Date:

Report on Working Party on the Local Plan for Planning on 6.4.2017.

Publicity

March Ongar News gave good coverage; Save Ongar Leisure Centre has gained momentum with a petition and local radio coverage. OTC are publishing updates on the notice boards.

Ongar Leisure Centre

1. My presentation was well received on the 9th March at Cabinet and I had previously represented the WP in discussions with Council Leader Chris Whitbread (accompanied by Paul Keska), Derek Mac Nab, David Coleman, Jim Nolan which were all very honest discussions. Mary had also been to Ongar Leisure Centre Forum when the new team from Places for People were introduced and spoke honestly about their contract.

Problems we have are complex but include the following:

- EFDC planning dept have already admitted started to make plans on closing Ongar and opening a new one in North Weald. Their official line still remains that a final decision will not be made for a few years. I have a quote carefully worded by Derek McNab to Eric Pickles
- Ongar Leisure Centre is expensive to maintain because of its age, so really needs refurbishing or rebuilding
- The demand is high at Ongar Leisure Centre but everyone active only collected limited statistics. PFP will no longer operate a waiting list for classes so will not be able to determine actual demand
- PFP and Jim Nolan admit the contract for Ongar Leisure Centre is only for Maintenance and running for 5 years. After this time there will be no maintenance and the decision for running the Leisure Centre will revert to EFDC
- The PFP investment is only for new IT, new branding, general painting and decorating, replacement of worn flooring and some new (moveable) gym equipment. I was sent a copy of this in the glossy brochure produced for EFDC which also clearly states that Ongar Leisure Centre is likely to close
- There is a clash of interests among district councillors, including the district Councillor for Shelley, who is also a Parish Councillor for North Weald, where he also lives.
- I have copies of the Land Registry Title which indicates that there were covenants and reversionary clauses. These appear to have been amended so that EFDC can sell the land in 5 years' time. I have not seen the original document which rumour has it that land or the cost of a swimming pool was bequeathed for the benefit of Ongar, although there is likely to be some truth in this from what documents I have seen and heard
- Since my meetings with the planners and Derek McNab David Coleman and Jim Nolan, I was assured by Cllr Philip and David Coleman that they would be looking at their strategic assessment of leisure facilities in EFDC again.
- Today I had a long conversation with Nick Boulter of Sport England who is now involved in this process. 4 Global through Sport England have been appointed to carry out a new investigation using Govt recommended evidence based procedures to look at the strategic need for leisure facilities in EFDC based on supply and demand and market segmentation. I have a contact

name for 4 global and have been advised that they are just beginning their site visits.

- He assures me that there will be proper consultations during the process, including: management of leisure facilities, clubs, local town and parish councils, local communities and Sport England. This is despite Cllr Philip categorically telling Christine and me at our meeting before the Liaison Committee that they will not be consulting first tier councils about the plan again!
- He has also promised to keep me informed of how things are progressing.
- Our concerns remain because: should the report agree with EFDCs existing approach, if the land is re-designated for housing, the price of that land will significantly increase in value making it unviable for another body e.g. a Community Asset group or Ongar Academy to take over the building. We would also lose the parking for the Health Centre and Youth Club. When Shelley is expected to grow significantly there will be increased need for a community amenity not less.
- The WP aim is therefore with the permission of this Planning Committee to officially carry on a campaign to save our Leisure Centre where the netball girls have started with their social media cover and petition, by making more representations to EFDC and other bodies as appropriate.

M Dadd

Neighbourhood Planning

The WP would like to put display material on a stand at the Annual Town Meeting to raise awareness of Neighbourhood Planning

M Dadd