

# **DRAFT MINUTES FOR THE PLANNING COMMITTEE**

# **MONDAY 15TH FEBRUARY 2021 - HELD REMOTELY USING ZOOM**

Present: Councillors G Allen (Chair), P Allford, S Collinson, R Hendriksen, J Hodgson, C Luker and V Trow.

Apologies: Councillors P Paine.

In Attendance: S Halliday (Governance and Projects Manager).

### **1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

### **To receive apologies and to confirm that any absence has the approval of the Council.**

Cllr Allen read out a statement about how the meeting would be conducted, recorded and live streamed on social media.

It was resolved to accept the apologies.

*The Committee will adjourn for the following items:*

### **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no members of the public present.

*The Committee reconvened.*

### **2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

### **To update on any matters arising from the minutes of 25th January 2021.**

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of proceedings by Committee members at Full Council.

Item 7 – resolved by Full Council. An email has been circulated requesting that Councillors draft the Asset of Community Value application form as they are best placed to understand the community importance of the three facilities. Officers will assist by checking the applications for consistency, sourcing the supporting papers as required, and submitting to South Hams District Council.

### **3. PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

### **To make recommendations on the following planning applications:**

*Note: Cllr Hodgson observes and does not vote on any applications which would potentially be discussed at a Development Management Committee meeting at SHDC.*

3a) 0167/21/FUL – Proposed demolition of part of retail outlet, conversion to ground floor offices & workshop, and creation of 2 x 2 bedroomed flats on first floor, and associated access. Site to the rear of 25 Fore Street, Totnes.

Support. The Planning Committee would request that:

* electric car charging points are installed in the parking spaces and in the garages; and
* that the road surface of Mill Tail is made good following use by works vehicles.

3b) 4281/20/HHO – Householder application for demolition of existing garage and conservatory, raising height of roof and construction of new extensions. Robinswood, Jubilee Road, Totnes, TQ9 5BW.

Cllr Allford declared a personal interest.

Support.

3c) 0267/21/FUL – Replacement of existing skatepark with new, enlarged skatepark. Borough Park, Borough Park Road, Totnes.

Cllr Hodgson declared a personal interest.

Support. The Planning Committee is delighted to see this application finally come forward.

3d) 4284/20/HHO - Householder application for erection of first floor side extension. 1 Gills Nursery, Totnes, TQ9 5DG.

Cllr Hodgson declared a personal interest.

Support.

3e) 4092/20/FUL and 4093/20/LBC - Listed Building Consent for proposed additional utility buildings comprising two additional poly tunnels, small glass-covered laundry drying area and partially enclosed barn. Bowden House, Totnes, TQ9 7PW.

Cllr Hodgson declared a personal interest.

Support.

3f) 0235/21/FUL and 0236/21/LBC - Listed Building Consent for change of use of ground floor from Class E(c)ii Professional services to Class E(e) Medical services. 8 The Proctors House, High Street, Totnes, TQ9 5RY.

Support.

### **4. STANDARD OF NEW BUILDINGS**

### **To consider writing to the local MP and others about local concerns about the standards of building in new properties, referencing the South Hams District Council Full Council motion on the adoption of the Healthy Homes principles if approved.**

### Cllr Hodgson updated on the Healthy Homes motion passed at the Full Council of South Hams District Council last week. It was **AGREED** that Cllr Luker would revise the draft letter to reflect this development (see attached).

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that Totnes Town Council writes to South Hams District Council supporting their recent motion on Healthy Homes, raises the Council’s concerns about the standard of building in new developments, and that a copy of this letter is sent to the local MP and shadow Minister for Housing.

### **5. TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT FORUM**

**To note the minutes of the Traffic and Transport meeting held on Wednesday 27th January 2021.**

Noted.

### **6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

### **To note the date of the next meeting of the Planning Committee – Monday 15th February 2021 at 6.30pm.**

Noted.

Sara Halliday

Governance and Projects Manager

Draft letter to about Standard of New Buildings

Draft letter:

Dear  XX,

We are writing to you as the Planning Committee of Totnes Town Council. Our concerns are about the standard of finish with new houses. We believe that the poor standard of finish is a result of the way in which developers are allowed to employ their own building inspectors. Previously this was a responsibility of the local planning authority.

The problem has been highlighted over the past year in Totnes at a number of local new housing developments. The Baltic Wharf development now sees houses covered in scaffolding and plastic sheeting with the owners being moved out for up to 6 months. All of this being a result of water ingress. At the end of last year another new development at Court Farm saw stone facing falling off the houses due to incorrect fixings. Follaton Oak development has also seen a continuous stream of scaffolding being erected to correct construction faults. This pattern seems to repeat itself with every new housing development.

All of this, to say the least, is extremely inconvenient to the owners hoping to enjoy their new and quite expensive new homes.

It seems that developer profits are taking priority over providing properties fit for purpose. Therefore, we are asking you to take up this matter with the appropriate Minister with a view to reinstating the responsibility of building regulations and standards to local planning authorities.

It would seem that house buyers have less protection than when buying any other goods or service. Consumer protection would enable a complete refund or replacement of a faulty or not fit for purpose item. With houses owners just have to be satisfied with a guarantee, even though that may mean moving out for several months. It does not seem we are building houses for the future, just trying to achieve a numbers target.

We assume that this is a national problem and needs serious urgent attention.

For information we detail below the excellent motion that South Hams District Council approved this month which establishes a number of guidelines to cope with both quality and residents wellbeing for private & social housing.

Yours faithfully,

Totnes Town Council Planning Committee

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South Hams District Council motion:

.***1. This Council supports the adoption of the Healthy Homes principles and notes:***

*•   The powerful evidence which demonstrates the link between people’s homes and their health, wellbeing and life chances.*

*•   That the COVID-19 emergency has reinforced the need for healthy environments which provide space for recreation, children’s play and walkable streets.*

*•   That well-designed homes that meet all our citizens’ needs over their lifetimes can radically reduce costs to NHS and social care budgets.*

*•   That people have a basic right to live in environments free from unacceptable pollution.*

*•   That homes must be affordable to heat and built to as near zero carbon standards as possible.*

*•   That current government policy to deregulate planning is creating thousands of  substandard homes through conversion of existing buildings into homes through permitted development.*

*•   That this council is determined to create the highest quality places for residents which will be a fitting legacy for future generations.*

***2****.****This Council agrees (or to the extent that the below concern Executive functions, recommends to the Executive) to****:*

*•   Adopt the Healthy Homes Principles so that:*

*•   all new homes must be safe in relation to the risk of fire;*

*•   all new homes must have, as a minimum, the liveable space required to meet the needs of people over their whole lifetimes, including adequate internal and external storage space;*

*•   all main living areas and bedrooms of a new dwelling must have access to natural light;*

*•   all new homes and their surroundings must be designed to be inclusive, accessible, and adaptable to suit the needs of all;*

*•   all new homes should be built within places that prioritise and provide access to sustainable transport and walkable services, including green infrastructure and play space;*

*•   all new homes must secure radical reductions in carbon emissions in line with the provisions of the Climate Change Act 2008;*

*•   all new homes must demonstrate how they will be resilient to a changing climate over their full lifetime;*

*•   all new homes must be built to design out crime and be secure;*

*•   all new homes must be free from unacceptable and intrusive noise and light pollution;*

*•   all new homes must not contribute to unsafe or illegal levels of indoor or ambient air pollution and must be built to minimise, and where possible eliminate, the harmful impacts of air pollution on human health and the environment, and;*

*•   all new homes must be designed to provide year-round thermal comfort for inhabitants.*

*•   Review all policies, processes and procedures to ensure that new homes meet the requirements of the principles. Draw up a list of appropriate suggested changes to any JLP polices in time for when work begins on the JLP first revision, detailing how South Hams, with partner LPAs, envisages delivering on the requirements of these principles.*

*•   Review the corporate plan to ensure the healthy homes principles are a priority.*

*•   Make the principles an integral part of activity throughout the council, including all decision making on housing and planning in so far as policy will permit.*

*•   Investigate ways to ensure that future local plans ensure that all new development is in line with the Healthy Homes Principles at the earliest possible date.*