

At a MEETING of the **BRIDPORT TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Town Hall, Bridport on Tuesday 22 October 2013 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT Cllr Mrs M.J. Ray – Town Mayor (in the Chair)

Cllr	G.J. Ackerman	C.M. Ray
	Miss S.A. Brown	D.G. Rickard
	P.J. Colfox (until 7.15pm)	D.R. Tett
	Ms R.C. Kayes	Ms A-M.A. Vincent
	Ms G.E. Massey	Ms S.J. Williams
	C.O. Michell	

PUBLIC FORUM

Mrs Ann Guppy spoke about the West Bay Forum and said that the Forum looked forward to working with the Town Council and taking part in the neighbourhood plan process.

Mr Barry Bates raised objections to the inclusion of the Vearse Farm site in the Local Plan and referred in particular to the scale of the development, flooding issues and the impact on the local habitat. He questioned the need and demand for such an allocation and highlighted local people's concern about the consultation.

Mr Richard Freer objected to the Vearse Farm allocation and echoed the concerns regarding the impact of the development on the local environment, flooding issues and consultation.

Mrs Eileen Harding objected to the Vearse Farm allocation on the impact on the area, referred to its impact on the balance of employment and housing and transport and parking issues.

Ms Sarah Horniman referred to the concerns regarding Vearse Farm and encouraged people to respond to the consultation on the proposed modifications and also to the sustainability appraisal that accompanied the Local Plan.

32. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Cllrs E.T. Colfox and K.G. Wallace.

33. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor (Chairman).

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr P.J. Colfox declared a pecuniary interest in relation to the Vearse Farm allocation and left the meeting prior to consideration of item 5 on the Local Plan Proposed Modifications.

35. STANDING ORDER 14 (b)

There were no questions pursuant to standing order 14(b).

36. LOCAL PLAN PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2739.

Hilary Jordan, West Dorset District Council's Spatial and Community Policy Manager was welcomed to the meeting and outlined the Local Plan process. She referred to the initial consultation held across the District, prior to the draft plan being produced. This was followed by consultation on the draft plan in 2012. At this stage, the consultation was just on the proposed modifications to the Plan. The next stage was for the Plan to be considered by the Inspector, with a formal public examination likely in January/February next year. The Inspector would decide which issues he wished to look at. If any further modifications were made, then there would be another consultation on those elements. The Inspector's report will be binding on the Council. In terms of other opportunities for consultation, there could be a development brief produced for Vearse Farm, which would involve local councils. Also a neighbourhood plan would allow for local influence on aspects of the development of the site, although that plan would have to be in conformity with the District plan. There would also be consultation on the planning application when it was submitted.

Members discussed the proposed modifications and also the comments made in the public forum, regarding the Vearse Farm allocation.

In terms of the proposed modifications, the following amendments were agreed:

13.2.2 Second paragraph delete: "made" and replace with "reinstated" to read: "The reference to a replacement facility for Sydney Gale House should be **reinstated** ~~made~~ subject to the outcome of the current consultation....."

13.2.4 Second paragraph, with reference to Miles Cross and the A35, add: "Moreover this issue should be included in the review of road strategy, to be undertaken by the Police and Crime Commissioner".

In discussion of Vearse Farm, there were a number of concerns expressed by members in respect of the original consultation on the Local Plan. Some members said that their experience of the original process was that they had been unable to take part, as they had hoped. It was emphasised that there were some serious concerns regarding the process and this had been reflected in the strength of feeling shown in the public attendance at this meeting and the comments in the Public Forum regarding consultation and the level of awareness of the site allocation. Also, it was generally felt that Bridport had not had the same opportunity, as accorded to Sherborne and Dorchester, to specifically comment on the inclusion of such a large development in its area.

Whilst it was noted that the Council was being asked to comment on the modifications, it was felt that the Inspector should in addition be asked to agree that there should be a further separate consultation on the inclusion of the Vearse Farm allocation.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the comments on the Proposed Local Plan modifications for the Bridport area be approved as in Appendix B, subject to the amendments proposed above to paragraphs 13.2.2 and 13.2.4.
- (2) That the Town Council express its serious concern at the initial consultation on the Local Plan, whether it was conducted properly and whether the views of the local community, regarding Vearse Farm in particular, were properly represented as part of that process. The Local Plan Inspector to be asked to request that a further separate consultation be held, regarding the inclusion in the Local Plan of the site allocation at Vearse Farm.

37. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA DESIGNATION

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2740.

It was reported that the Bridport Local Area Partnership (BLAP) had convened a number of meetings of local councils to discuss a wider area neighbourhood plan. There had been a lot of interest in the neighbourhood plan process and a large number of parish councils had attended the meetings facilitated by BLAP. Some councils felt that they did not have the resources to participate at this time and others were felt to be too far from the immediate Bridport area. It was confirmed that Allington and Symondsburry would be part of the plan area.

It had also been confirmed that a neighbourhood plan could be the vehicle to ensure full community involvement and influence over how the Vearse Farm site was delivered. The neighbourhood plan had to be in conformity with the Local Plan, but could allow for full involvement from the local councils and the community in issues that the Town Council had identified as important, such as infrastructure, services, design etc.

Members welcomed the proposed neighbourhood plan and hoped that other councils in the area could be involved at a later stage. BLAP was thanked for all its work in facilitating the process of seeking interest from local councils, in being part of the plan area.

RESOLVED: that it be agreed that the Bridport town area be included as part of the neighbourhood plan area along with Symondsburry and Allington parish areas. The Town Council to be the lead council and request West Dorset District Council to agree the designation of the plan area.

38. DISTRICT COUNCIL WARD BOUNDARIES

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2741.

RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk be given delegated authority to finalise the response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on District Council ward boundaries, to include the following comments as in paragraph 5.3 of the report:

That the Town Council wishes to reiterate its concern, if it is proposed to reduce the number of District Councillors representing Bridport and West Bay. The town was growing and it was important to ensure that the electorate was represented. In particular, the Town Council would not wish to see a reduction in Bridport South District Councillors and feels that the boundary should be altered, to include the proposed site for the Vearse Farm allocation. The projected electorate figures, that currently show no change by 2019, should also be reviewed when the timetable for any development was known. It would not be helpful to reduce councillors, bearing in mind the current need for representation at the District Council and the consequent democratic deficit for future electorates, should the development go ahead.

The Town Council would also wish to discuss the parish boundaries in this area with Symondsburry Parish Council, in respect of a separate community governance review.

39. DAPTC MOTIONS

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2742.

RESOLVED: that the two motions to be submitted to the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils AGM from Wareham St Martin and Chideock Parish Council be supported, as set out in the report.

40. COMMUNICATIONS

The Town Mayor thanked all present for attending the meeting. There were no further communications.

The meeting closed at **8.15 p.m.**

The next meeting of Bridport Town Council will be held on 26 November 2013