

MINUTES of the meeting of the PLANNING COMMITTEE held at Mountfield, Bridport on Monday 23 September 2024 at 7.00pm.

PRESENT Cllr Ian Bark (in the chair)

Cllrs: Nigel Amor, Jonathan Bourbon, Sarah Carney, Kelvin Clayton, Anna Killick, Paddy Mooney, Anne Rickard and David Worthington.

ALSO PRESENT: 19 members of the public, James Bowditch (National Farmers Union (NFU)), Greg Pickstock (Pickstock Group) and Will Austin (Town Clerk).

PUBLIC FORUM

E Harrop, N Ramsden, S Hine, and P Kidney spoke as individual residents, in objection to planning application P/FUL/2024/04044. The following issues were raised:

- Concerns that the stated employment benefits would not be deliverable, and in particular that the jobs would not be filled by local people.
- The environmental and social impact of the development.
- Concerns that the proposed facility was too large, with a resulting significant community impact.
- A preference for a greater number of smaller abattoirs to bring local economic benefits, better animal welfare, and shorter journey times.
- A need for more comparative data on which to base analysis of the proposed development.
- The impact of increased traffic flows on the residential area of Bradpole, and on Mangerton Lane.
- An assertion that some cattle might have to travel further than previously under the proposals.
- The impact on the Defined Development Boundary.
- The impact on the neighbouring Mangerton Lake leisure facility.
- An email from the applicant to Dorset Council containing data on the number of animals processed at the previous abattoir, which was not comparable and gave rise to traffic, safety and other concerns.

James Bowditch, a local farmer representing the NFU, explained that to date, beef has had to travel far and wide for processing, reducing its availability to local outlets and increasing the environmental impact, which was simply being exported. If run properly, the proposed development would be an asset to the area, and would be good for jobs, the economy, farming, and animal welfare. Mr Bowditch said the current arrangements were wasteful. The NFU supported the proposals and encouraged others to do the same. Later in the public forum, Mr Bowditch confirmed that retired dairy cows were those that farmers needed to sell to McDonalds and similar.

Simon Williams, speaking for the St Andrews Road Residents Association, recognised the need for small abattoirs as agriculture was the largest local industry, but said that the proposed increase in size was wrong. He reminded the meeting of the constraints placed in past planning permissions, and about the example of a rejected waste site

that had showed how the A35 might be affected. Traffic on St Andrews Road would be a concern, along with noise, travel, and working times.

The owner of Mangerton Lake said that the applicant's odour assessment did not address the impact on his neighbouring business and home. The screening was unacceptable, and the noise and working hours would affect his business.

Speaking for the applicant, Greg Pickstock advised that:

- He had been a farmer and processor for 20 years.
- Although not a legal requirement, he wanted to reduce travel times to four hours. Animals would be processed at the site and butchered in Telford.
- In terms of the size of the facility, the company could manage with the existing, but the proposed expansion would improve animal welfare and reduce the community impact. The proposals included good lighting and facilities for breaks, and the factory would be modernised for both working people and animals. The existing facilities, including the lairage area, were very small. The refrigerators were satisfactory as they were.
- The development needed to happen.

Mr Pickstock answered questions from councillors and members of the public, as follows:

- Vehicle movements would involve workers arriving at 6am, with deliveries from about 8am to 4pm. Hygiene activity would follow, with a team of about five or six. Large vehicle movement would generally be from 8am to 1pm or 2pm, and 'deadstock' would leave at about 6pm.
- 30% of vehicles would be relatively small trucks and trailers and about 70% would be four-wheeled lorries weighing about 18 tonnes, which would number about 10 to 15 a day.
- The previous use of the site would have had nine lorries daily, but if still operating would have 15.
- The main objective was to reduce travel requirements, including for the local area.
- The minimum number of stock for a profitable business was about 30,000.
- About 5% to 10% of stock would stay local.
- Each lorry would transport 12 to 14 cows.

41. APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were received.

42. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

43. MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 2 September 2024 were confirmed as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

44. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

Members discussed the applications tabled for consideration. In respect of application P/FUL/2024/04044, which had earlier been considered during the Public Forum, Greg Pickstock was invited to assist with consideration of the following:

- Whether recruitment would be local. Mr Pickstock said that he would like to recruit locally, and at another plant had purchased a hotel to house workers. Currently, 34% of workers were female and 50% were butchers, and many types of roles were needed.
- Whether the proposed figure of 800 cattle per week was a maximum. Mr Pickstock said he did not envisage a higher figure and that in the first couple of years it would be fewer. The facility was only for the south.
- The level of noise at night. Mr Pickstock said that the last lorry would be at 7pm. Cleaning would not present any noise impact, except when staff were leaving. The lairage would sound similar to a farm. He had not received complaints from neighbours of other facilities.
- Whether the covenanted arrangements in an earlier Section 106 agreement, relating to the house on the site, were to be changed. Mr Pickstock said he did not know.
- An advisory statement in 1993 or 1994 by the then planning authority, suggesting that further expansion would not be acceptable. Mr Pickstock said that the expansion would modernise and improve the facility and make it quieter.
- Noise impact on the neighbouring Mangerton Lake. Mr Pickstock said that concerns about dogs were misplaced, as there would be none.
- Odour impact. Mr Pickstock said that new modern drainage would improve this, compared with 30 years ago.
- Whether the 800 capacity would apply at the existing site if still operating. Mr Pickstock said it would.
- Progress with further comparative information being sought by Dorset Council Highways. Mr Pickstock said he was not able to get information from the previous owner.

Following discussion of all applications, it was

RESOLVED: that the recommendations set out in column 4 of the attached [Schedule A](#) be forwarded to Dorset Council.

45. **PLANNING DECISIONS**

The Town Clerk reported for information, the planning decisions received relating to applications previously considered by the Committee, [ENCL: 3927](#).

Cllr Paddy Mooney reported on his attendance at Dorset Council's Planning Committee to speak on behalf of the Town Council on two applications. He expressed concern at the voting arrangements and personal views expressed by officers. Members discussed the planning and decision-making processes, and a possible review by Dorset Council.

RESOLVED: that Cllr Mooney be thanked for attending the Dorset Council Western & Southern Area Planning Committee for the Town Council.

RESOLVED: that the planning decisions be noted.

46. HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION MATTERS

The Town Clerk reported on a discussion at the last West Bay ward meeting that had suggested traffic calming on West Bay Road, to reduce speeds and the prevalence of 'boy racers'. Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED: that traffic calming on West Bay Road be tabled for future consideration, and that residents be encouraged to consider a Speed Watch scheme.

Cllr Sarah Carney thanked the Ward Clerk for West Bridport & Allington ward, for pursuing applications for 20mph speed limits on roads in the ward. She noted that Dorset Council traffic surveys would be required. The Town Clerk added that these applications would be instructive for any future similar requests for 20mph limits.

RESOLVED: that the report of Cllr Carney be noted.

47. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK AND OTHER CURRENT CONSULTATIONS

Members considered a draft response to a government consultation, [ENCL 3928](#) on the National Planning Policy Framework.

An updated draft and a list of amendments were tabled for discussion at the meeting. Following discussion, including an explanation of housebuilding targets from Cllr Sarah Carney, it was:

RESOLVED: that the response shown at Appendix 1 to these minutes be submitted.

RESOLVED: that the Project Manager (Strategic) be thanked for his work on the response.

48. LICENSING APPLICATIONS

No licensing applications had been received for consideration at the meeting.

49. COMMUNICATIONS AND ONGOING ISSUES

The Town Clerk advised that an application for a 'retirement community' development off South Street had been submitted and was being validated before registration.

Cllr Sarah Carney asked about the skate park at Plottingham. The Town Clerk reported that this had unexpectedly been found to be unsafe and mostly beyond repair. Interim and permanent replacement installations were under consideration.

Cllr Nigel Amor reported concerns about parking in Wellfields Drive, and pedestrian access to West Pier.

The meeting closed at **9.23pm**.

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 4 November 2024, pending consideration of this being brought forward by one week.

Bridport Town Council

Response to proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system - September 2024

Changes to the development of brownfield land

1 - The Government is right to commit to a brownfield-first approach. But rather than housing targets that risk fuelling speculative development in our area, we need ambitious targets for brownfield homes, homes for social rent and genuinely affordable homes for private sales.

2 - BTC supports a serious commitment to Brownfield-first and the ability to genuinely plan strategically and sustainably. The changes proposed in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) consultation will result in new housebuilding targets across England rising by 22% on average, but by a staggering 80% in Dorset¹. The proposed changes are steering development disproportionately into the most rural local authority areas (just a 6% increase in predominantly urban authorities, but a 70% increase in predominantly rural authorities. This would seriously undermine the Local Planning Authority's ability to effectively manage the location, scale and nature of development in West Dorset.

3 – We would, therefore, like to see extra protection for preserving the culture and heritage of rural areas by lifting mandatory targets (except for social housing) and devolving planning powers so that Dorset Council can meet real local need. In this way we can envisage being able to breathe new life into unused brownfield spaces and build houses close to schools, shops and transport. **The right number of the right houses for the right people in the right places.**

4 – Without changes along the lines suggested above, it will be almost impossible for us to meet the demand for both housing for rent and for sale in this part of West Dorset. Across the whole of Dorset, there are over 4,000 people on the housing waiting list and it is growing fast with Dorset Council receiving 500 requests a month for help with housing. This is at a time when there are over 13,000 house plots with permission in Dorset which have yet to be built on.

5 – We welcome the proposal to withdraw planning permission from housing schemes where the developers have not started building homes within a defined period since receiving planning approval. We would suggest this period is set at no longer than two years and that alternately the planning permission can be transferred to a registered provider (either the local council or a nominated housing association of the council's choosing).

¹ Source: Housing Supply Statistics (June 2024)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/housing-supply-indicators-of-new-supply-england-january-to-march-2024/housing-supply-indicators-of-new-supply-england-january-to-march-2024>

Councillors also noted a separate calculation of a 250% uplift in Dorset housing building targets, see; <https://dorset-cpre.org.uk/news/dorset-housing-target-is-excessive-misguided-and-threatens-environment/>

Iceni Report for Dorset Council (2021)

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/2012718/Sensitivity+Report+-+Final+Dec+21.pdf/907d0399-0cf7-36a2-4920-a268c4e93e0f>

Changes to the presumption in favour of sustainable development

6 – We would urge the Government to make it easier for councils to use their own land and to buy land at current values, rather than future use values. BTC are calling on the Government to encourage councils to buy land at cheaper rates primarily for new social rent housing, by reforming the current Land Compensation Act. Councils should also be incentivised to purchase empty homes and empty shops/retail properties for them to be converted into residential use, where this is considered appropriate.

Changes to housing need and supply

7 – The new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) consultation proposes a reinstatement of mandatory targets to include a 40% uplift to our house-building targets. This, at a time when there are over 13,000 house plots with permission in Dorset today which have yet to be built on because the market favours high prices over extra supply. Meanwhile, we still have an acute shortage of social housing and private rentals and over 4000 people on the Dorset Council Housing Needs Register.

8 – The Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan 2019 demonstrated that Bridport is becoming demographically unbalanced. The CPRE has highlighted that Dorset's median age and proportion of over 65s is one of the highest in England, fuelled by inward migration.

9 – Our Neighbourhood Plan's Housing-need Assessment showed that local need is for genuinely affordable homes, particularly for Bridport's young people, families and keyworkers. Homes at 80% of market rates are still not 'affordable' to local people in West Dorset.

10 – We have great difficulty recruiting health, social care and other keyworkers because they cannot afford to live in the area. We have depleted capacity in our GP surgeries and County Hospital and other infrastructure, such as sewerage, electricity and highways. The prevailing national models of developer-determined provision have consistently failed to meet the evidence-based needs of local people in terms of the number of affordable homes delivery, while, instead, contributing to environmental, demographic, and infrastructure problems.

11 – Our most recent housing needs assessment justifies the prioritisation of 1- and 2-bedroom properties, primarily for social rent. As well as housing for young adults and families, we are in desperate need of key worker housing and the development of much needed associated infrastructure. We need to ensure that all housing development has appropriate infrastructure, services and amenities in place, integrating infrastructure and public service delivery into the planning process.

12 – Where private housing for sale is being built, we would welcome changes to planning conditions to prevent these properties from being sold as second homes, or as holiday homes to let through schemes such as Airbnb. Priority should be given to reserving sales to local people, as defined by local councils.

13 – In the private rented sector, we support the Government's plans to deliver a fair deal for renters by immediately banning no-fault evictions, making three-year tenancies the default position, and creating a national register of licensed landlords.

Changes to affordable housing

14 – BTC welcomes a commitment to boosting affordable and social housing delivery. Local communities in Bridport are facing a housing crisis, but more specifically, a crisis of both supply

and affordability. Changes to NPPF must ensure that affordable means affordable at local income levels. We would like to see policies that make it easier and more feasible for local authorities to build and facilitate the delivery of homes for social rent. Such new provision should be made sustainable in terms of revenue generation and stock retention by being designated 'social housing in perpetuity'. We would also like to see a redefining and the devolving of the definition of 'affordable' housing in the NPPF to reflect average local incomes.

15 - We welcome proposals to end the Right to Buy, even if this is only for a temporary duration of the next Parliament. This will protect the existing and future stock of social housing for the most vulnerable members of society.

16 - BTC welcomes the removal of the previously prescriptive prioritisation of a particular type of affordable housing. Whilst BTC would want to see high percentages of 'affordable' housing on any development site a more nuanced solution would be to enable the right housing solution for local need.

Strengthening support for community-led development

17 - BTC welcomes strengthening of support for community led development. Community led development works well in our rural context, helping unlock exception sites as well as small or difficult sites unattractive to large housebuilders. BTC also values the engagement and connection a community led development brings to housing provision.

18 - In Bridport (West Dorset) we only have six relatively small brownfield sites and no green belt. Instead, we are surrounded by Dorset National Landscape (formerly Dorset AONB), which is protected from 'significant' new development. Safeguarding the special qualities of the national landscape is clearly important, however, we also need to identify exceptions for rural housing development - similar to those devised for switching green belt to grey belt land.

Tackling Climate Change

19 - BTC welcomes recognition that climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing the world today, and that the planning system can play a powerful role in helping to mitigate and adapt to its effects.

20 - BTC urges the Government to seize the opportunity to prioritise zero-carbon and energy efficient homes, as well as creating more resilient communities by strengthening and accelerating implementation of ambitious Future Homes Standards. Installing the full range of solar panels, heat pumps, and battery storage in new homes at the point of construction will lock in low bills and low carbon emissions. Crucially, missing out any one of these technologies will result in unnecessarily higher energy bills for householders.

Limits to Embodied Carbon

21 - Building 1.5m new homes using traditional building methods would seriously undermine govt meeting decarbonisation objectives under the Climate Change Act 2008. There needs to be a revolution in how new homes are built, especially the materials used.

22 - The first thing should be to prioritise what is being built to meet our housing, health, transport, and educational needs, without blowing our carbon budget. That means better using our existing stock, including vacant and derelict properties, and supporting high-quality, affordable retrofit at scale. It's important to realise that the carbon emissions of a deep retrofit are on average a quarter of those of a new build.

23 - Most decarbonisation of buildings focuses on reducing operational emissions by reducing energy use or swapping energy to renewable resources with heat pumps, insulation, PV solar panels etc. Currently, there are 'no statutory requirements to measure or reduce the embodied carbon emissions of buildings in the UK' (POSTbrief, 2021).

Changes to renewable energy

24 - BTC wants to see real ambition in the NPPF to deliver renewable energy. Strategic planning should steer the right infrastructure to the right place, with expert environmental scrutiny from the start.

25 - Planning reforms are needed to enable both renewable energy and nature restoration to be delivered at scale, at pace and in unison.

26 - Our planning system must prioritise space for nature and have nature in mind the whole way through the development process on land and at sea. A reformed planning system gives us the chance to create more space for wildlife, which would work alongside renewable energy to fight climate change while increasing biodiversity.

Changes to design policy

27 - BTC considers that the quality of new homes and developments is also an important factor, so it is encouraging to see the government's inclusion of planning for healthy communities as part of the proposed NPPF reforms. BTC supports the TCPA's [principles for healthy homes](#) as a basic standard for new homes, and calls for progress on the commitment to increase the accessibility and adaptability standards of new homes. We would also urge the Government to give priority to designing communities that are walkable, are mixed-use, multi-tenure and resilient to climate impacts.

28 - Also, regarding Listed Building, there needs to be an extensive public consultation and discussion regarding what the public (current & future generations) value in terms of the significance of heritage assets. In the words of one senior heritage manager: *"Traditionally, heritage specialists have used their expertise to define the significance of heritage sites, but increasingly practitioners will need to behave less like dictators and more like facilitators – listening to people, engaging with communities and helping groups to explore what matters, rather than telling them."* Kate Clark, *Playing With The Past* (2019) p xii

29 - BTC would like to register support for the proposed changes to the following:

- Changes to urban residential density uplifts,
- Changes to upwards extensions,
- Changes to application fees.