

## **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, 4th December, 2012

**Present:-** Councillor Andrew Fear – in the Chair

Councillors Miss Baker, Boden, Cairns, Hambleton, Howells, Jones, Matthews, Miss Reddish, Stringer, Studd, Sweeney and Williams

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs Hambleton.

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

### **3. DEMOLITION OF WESTERN SIDE OF THE QUADRANGLE OF BLOCK B AND INFILLING OF THE COURTYARD AND FORMATION OF A NEW WESTERN FACING ELEVATION. BLOCK B, UPPER SCHOOL SITE, NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME SCHOOL, LANCASTER ROAD. NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME SCHOOL. 12/00646/FUL**

**Resolved:-** That permission be granted subject to the undermentioned conditions:-

- (i) Standard time limit condition.
- (ii) Approved plans.
- (iii) External materials.

### **4. STOKE-ON-TRENT AND STAFFORDSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP PLANNING CHARTER**

The Committee was invited to comment upon a proposal that was to be considered by Cabinet that the Council sign up to aspire to achieve a Planning Charter Mark developed by the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). It was indicated that the LEP sought commitment from local authorities to adopt the 'Red Carpet' approach to businesses by delivering a set of five outcomes namely, clarity and consistency, effort and focus, competence and respect, accuracy and fairness and dialogue and understanding.

Members were advised that LEP's were relatively new bodies that promoted enterprise and deliver economic growth and jobs following abolition of the Regional Development Agencies and were business led including representation from local authorities. The Borough Council was represented by its Deputy Leader on the LEP for Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire.

The LEP saw the proposed Planning Charter Mark as a process to encourage economic growth and job creation in the LEP area, with the Stoke and Staffordshire Red Carpet being described as a process providing single point of contact, individual

case officers and a streamlined process for business development, inward investment and planning.

With respect to planning the LEP was suggesting that every part of the planning process from initial enquiry to issuing the decision should be focused on the importance of securing economic growth and that this should ensure that incoming and existing businesses will receive clear advice in that they can plan for their future needs and secure the permission that they need in a timely fashion.

The LEP had put together the undermentioned proposals as a way of meeting the concerns of business:-

**“Outcome 1 – Clarity and Consistency**

A clear statement of the Local Planning Authority’s strategy for economic growth that business can rely on to be followed in every case and a single point of contact for guidance and advice.

**Outcome 2 – Effort and Focus**

Local Planning Authorities to have a process review with a customer feedback element. The review should address ways to prioritise applications that deliver jobs and growth and help applications succeed rather than find reasons for them not to succeed. Ideally the process will deliver pre application advice within 4-6 weeks, focus on business needs and explore all avenues for a satisfactory outcome, even if it results in refusal. There should be dialogue to identify potential sticking points and resolve them.

**Outcome 3 – Competence and Respect**

LPAs to adopt a formal training regime to support all committee members and ensure that they have an adequate and up to date knowledge of the planning system and an understanding of appropriate demeanour at planning committee. Special training and support for Chairs of Planning Committees.

**Outcome 4 – Accuracy and Fairness**

LAPs to ask if there are any disputed matters of fact after debate at committee, before making the decision.

**Outcome 5 – Dialogue and Understanding**

Central to the whole initiative, the LEP will promote face to face workshops with officers and members of the LPAs and representatives of the business community to build mutual understanding. This will enable closer and more co-operative working and lead to more appropriate and better quality schemes being brought forward.

In expressing its general support to the initiative and the need to promote economic growth, the committee did express reservations about the wording of parts of the document and the way in which it had emerged. The Committee also confirmed the requirement to take into account a wide range of other material considerations in addition to business and economic growth when considering planning applications. Concern was also expressed that the document did not appear to enable Local Planning Authorities to be flexible when seeking to deliver the outcomes set out above.

**Resolved:-** That the Planning Committee recommend to Cabinet that it aspires to sign up to the LEP's Planning Charter Mark as set out in the officer's report, on the condition that it be made clear that it is for the Planning Committee to determine how its meetings are conducted, in the context of the Council's constitution and the Council should not accept the imposition of a rigid LEP approach to the checking of accuracy for material facts.

**5. APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (HISTORIC BUILDINGS GRANTS) - CONSERVATION AND HERITAGE FUND - CLOD HALL, LITTLE HEATH GREEN, ALMINGTON. 12/13003/HBG**

Consideration was given to an application for financial assistance from the Conservation and Heritage Fund towards the costs involved in the above re-thatching of the building.

The total cost of the works was reported to be £19,560 in respect of which a grant of £3912 could be awarded.

**Resolved:-** That a grant of £3912 be awarded subject to the appropriate standard conditions.

**6. MID YEAR DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT 2012-13**

Consideration was given to the mid-year report on the performance recorded for Development Control between 1 April 2012 and 30 September 2012.

**Resolved:-** (a) That the report be received.

(b) That the Head of the Planning and Development continue to operate mechanisms to maintain current high performance levels and improve the service provided for those procedures where our level of performance still needs to be addressed.

(c) That the next 'Development Management Performance Report' be submitted to committee around May 2013 reporting on performance for the complete year 2012/13.

**7. HALF YEARLY REPORT ON PLANNING OBLIGATIONS - DECEMBER 2012**

Consideration was given to a report providing details of planning obligations secured over the previous 6 months, works that had been funded in part or in whole by planning obligations and compliance with their requirements.

**Resolved:-** (a) That the report be noted.

(b) That the Head of Planning and Development report on a half yearly basis to the Planning Committee on planning obligations which have been secured over the preceding six months, works that have been funded during that period in whole or in part by planning obligations and compliance with their requirements.

**8. TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NO 145 (2012) - TREES AT FORMER POLICE STATION, LONG ROW, KIDSGROVE**

The committee considered a report recommending that the above order, made using delegated powers on 19 August 2012 be confirmed but in a modified form as set out in the report.

**Resolved:-** That subject to Tree Preservation Order 145 (2012) being modified so as to exclude an area of land measuring 37 sq metres located in the south-western corner of the site, and which was included in the original Order Plan when made, the Order be confirmed in accordance with the amended plan on display at the meeting.

**COUNCILLOR ANDREW FEAR**  
**Chair**