

Minutes of an **Interim Council Meeting** of Buckingham Town Council held at 7pm.
on **Monday 17th December 2018** in the Council Chamber, Cornwalls Meadow, Buckingham.

Present:

Cllr. T. Bloomfield	
Cllr. M. Cole	Deputy Mayor
Cllr. Mrs. M. Gateley	
Cllr. J. Harvey	Mayor
Cllr. P. Hirons	
Cllr. D. Isham	
Cllr. A. Mahi	
Cllr. H. Mordue	
Cllr. L. O'Donoghue	
Cllr. A. Ralph	
Cllr. M. Smith	
Cllr. Mrs. C. Strain-Clark	

Also Present:	Mr P. Hodson	Town Clerk
	Mrs. N. Stockill	Committee Clerk
	Mrs K McElligot	Planning Clerk
	Mrs C. Cumming	Buckingham Society

The meeting was preceded by a Public Session in accordance with Standing Order 3.f.

PUBLIC SESSION

Mr John Sneddon of Tetlow King Planning presented to Members on Application 18/04290/APP to vary the conditions of approved plan 16/00847/APP for West End Farm, Brackley Rd, MK18 1JA. Mr Sneddon explained his clients, Brio Retirement Living, had make some alternations to the original design in order put their place their mark on the application. Mr Sneddon listed the following alterations to the application:

- A new footpath is included in the current submission leading from the existing footway on Brackley Road up to the main vehicular access to the site
- The buildings are of modular design provided by Ideal Modular Homes (IMH) in Speke. The modules will arrive in a ready state and slotted together onsite
- Plans have been modified to allow for the modular design
- Trees and hedgerows
- There are small differences in the footprint of blocks 1-3 and 5-7 and a reduction to block 4 which is also position slightly closely to the Brackley Road
- A sewerage pumping station has been position at the north-eastern corner and will be screened by sympathetic landscaping
- The number of two bedroom units have increased by 8 and there are some small increases in height with most significant being 800m.

Mr Sneddon confirmed that there would be pedestrian access from the southeast corner of the site onto the Brackley Road.

Mrs C. Cumming said the amendments were significant and it must be resubmitted as an entirely new planning application.

582/18 Apologies for Absence

Members received and accepted apologies from Cllrs. Try, G. Collins, P. Collins, Newell, Stuchbury, District Councillor Mills and County Councillor Whyte.

583/18 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Members **AGREED** to bring forward agenda item 4 (18/04290/APP West End Farm) for the benefit of Mr Sneddon.

584/18 Major Planning Application 18/04290/APP West End Farm, Brackley Rd, MK18 1JA

Members received a written report from the Planning Clerk and recorded their thanks for her hard work. Cllr. Cole summarised the proposal for Members and a copy of his speech is appended to the minutes. He noted that no site notice had been posted, so neighbours would be unaware of the new application. The agreed response is as follows:

This Council has always maintained that this proposal was a retirement complex, not a care home, and this requested Variation reinforces this opinion, to the point where Members considered that the application should be treated as a new application. The applicants' representative agreed that this was not a Care Home with 24-hour on-site staffing, and he described it as a Retirement Village.

*The Council decided unanimously to **OPPOSE & ATTEND**:*

- 1. As a Retirement Village, even with a minimum care package qualification, it is housing and therefore subject to 35% Affordable Housing provision per the Neighbourhood Plan –*
- 2. – notwithstanding the fact that not all the site is within the Plan boundary.*
- 3. The proposal is for a modular construction, with large units being brought in by lorry along the Brackley Road, over a period of two months or more. No new Traffic Assessment has been submitted, nor a Construction Management Plan, to show that this is feasible or safe.*
- 4. The Traffic Assessment should be based on movement data for a residential estate, not a care home where peak traffic numbers will occur at shift change times, with infrequent intermediate visitor and delivery vehicles. Though 72 units does not imply 72 visiting carers, nor 1½ hours per week daily visits, there will still be traffic throughout each day, and as only one resident of a unit is required to sign up for the care package, their partner may well be active, maintain outside connections, and keep a car or use taxis to enable this. No details whatever of the (conditioned) minibus service have been provided, but it is unlikely to cover all likely reasons for trips into town for shopping, appointments and social activities, nor journeys further afield. Respite periods are essential for the wellbeing of permanent carers, and there are now fewer facilities on site.*
- 5. So far as can be assessed only 66 parking spaces are provided for 72 units plus staff.*
- 6. Members recognise that the 2016 application was approved on appeal, but the current facilities on offer are much reduced from what the Planning Inspector made her judgement on. The cinema and therapy room have been redesignated as lounges, and the other block's communal sitting areas much reduced. The communal dining room she referred to was never such in the sense of residents sitting down together to eat a meal, it was described as a café open to non-residents, much as the current Bistro. All flats have adequate kitchen provision (which implies shopping trips or deliveries). It is not obvious*

from the current site layout whether the proposed bowling green has been retained.

7. The only staffroom (1st floor, block 1) has been very much reduced in size, and there is no overnight accommodation for staff. Possibly residents needing professional night care will have a live-in carer in the second bedroom, otherwise this implies night-time traffic movements.
8. Members would like to see evidence of the 64 jobs quoted as being generated, as much of the construction work is off-site, and the hired carers will come from an existing pool available in the locality, as will grounds maintenance contractors.
9. The changes to the design necessitated by the modular construction were not found acceptable, in particular Block 7 which had been designed to reference the Edwardian style of the houses opposite. Chimneys and quoin detailing had been lost, and in other blocks the site was levelled, roof profiles evened out and stepped-in elevations made rectangular, to the detriment of architectural variety on a substantial site. Standardised window and door patterns and spacing also lacked interest, and concern was expressed at the inclusion of ground floor French windows which gave on to unfenced areas, both from the point of view of residents' security from incursion, and safety for residents with dementia. Only the single-storey terrace Block 5 had private gardens.
10. Though the remodelled road system now allows access to all blocks for the standard refuse collection wagon, there is no indication of what provision is to be made – skips, bins for black bags, or separate arrangements for recyclables. There is no evidence of specific disposal facilities for medical waste. The label 'Commercial Kitchen Refuse' is placed in the middle of the road and there is no indication of the separate collection site for kitchen refuse, and it is some distance from the road to the only exterior door in the kitchen area, behind the new conservatory.
11. There is still no internal communication between stairwells, requiring care staff with several clients to descend to ground level and walk in the open air to the next appropriate lobby door.
12. There is no indication of parking provision for mobility scooters; not all under-stair areas are accessible, and may not have convenient charging points.
13. There are several incidences of carelessness which do not inspire confidence in the developer; for example, the exterior door to the stairwell in Block 3 adjacent to apartment 23 is labelled 'eradicated' which leaves no other means of entry; a Juliette balcony (no 35) has an outward-opening door; there are no stairs or lifts on the second-floor drawings of Block 7.

Proposed by Cllr. Cole, seconded by Cllr. O'Donoghue and unanimously **AGREED** to oppose the application on the same Neighbourhood Plan grounds as the original application.

585/18 Consultation on AVDC's Home Choice Allocations Policy

Cllr. Harvey reported The Bucks Home Choice Partnership had drafted a revised Allocations Policy document with a six-week public consultation period from 9am Tuesday 20 November until 5.15pm on Tuesday 7th January 2019. Members discussed and **AGREED** for Cllrs. Gateley and Stuchbury to consider and submit an appropriate response on behalf of the Town Council.

ACTION CLLRS. GATELEY & STUCHBURY**586/18 LAF Funding for River Warden Scheme**

Members received and discussed a written report from the Town Clerk. Proposed by Cllr. Smith, seconded by Cllr. O'Donoghue and unanimously **AGREED** for the Town Council to submit a proposal to the County Council to use LAF funding to enable the River Wardens scheme to be set up and funded for the first 12 months.

ACTION TOWN CLERK**587/18 Proposed budgets for 2019/20**

The Town Clerk reminded Members each Committee had discussed its possible budget for 2019/20 twice during autumn 2018, prior to the Precept meeting in January 2019 where councillors will consider the 2019/20 budget. The Precept is currently drafted to include a 3.8% increase. The Town Clerk noted the following significant contributors to the 3.8% increase:

- The proposed budget includes an annual repayment cost of £27,000 for the new Tingewick Road cemetery
- An additional £7k has been budgeted to create a new footpath in the current cemetery to enable additional grave spaces to be made available
- The National Joint Council for Local Government Services agreed a two year pay deal in April 2018, setting rates for council staff for 2018/19 and 2019/20. This provided for a general increase of 2% for all salary scales, with an additional increase for the lowest paid. Some of the lower scales were also combined. The proposed budgets for 2019/20 reflect this increase.
- The Council's required employer pension contributions will increase from 1 April 2019.

Members thanked the Town Clerk and noted the report.

588/18 Unitary Proposals

Members received and discussed a written report from the Town Clerk. Proposed by Cllr. Smith and seconded by Cllr. Bloomfield to accept the report recommendations in their entirety.

A vote was taken and the results were:

In favour: 11

Against: 0

Abstentions: 1

Motion carried

ACTION TOWN CLERK

[It is recommended that:

1. *The Council delegate the Town Clerk responsibility for carrying out discussions and negotiations relating to the assets, services and powers listed.*
2. *The Council has a standing item on Full Council agendas to receive a report and make any relevant decisions regarding unitary discussions*
3. *The Town Clerk arranges further ad-hoc workshops as necessary during the year*
4. *The Council agrees to send councillors to relevant liaison and briefing meetings with the County, District and Shadow Unitary Councils wherever possible. Rather than a specific lead councillor being nominated, different councillors to carry out this role depending on availability, and skills / interest pertinent to the agenda*
5. *The Council agrees to adopt the Proposed Principles*
6. *The Council agrees the proposed Milestones for 2019/2020*
7. *The Council considers establishing a Unitary Committee, to be called as required, to enable decisions to be made following fuller discussion and to a tighter timescale than is possible during Full Council meetings.]*

589/18 Chairman's Announcements

Cllr. Harvey invited Members and Officers to join him for Christmas drinks following the evening's Planning Committee.

590/18 Date of next Meetings:

Full Council (Precept)	Monday 14 th January 2019
Full Council	Monday 28 th January 2019
Informal meeting	Monday 25 th February 2019
Interim Council	Monday 25 th February 2019

Meeting closed at 7.30pm

Signed Date

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Appendix A

Cllr. Cole's speech reference minute 584/18

"This is effectively a new application, although the new developer chooses to call it an amendment. It follows approval after appeal against refusal of the original application, 16/00847, made in April 2018 by Minton Health Care and Oak Retirement Living, for 72 extra care units, in their own words, "held together by communal facilities".

Firstly, I would point out that as of tonight, no statutory notices have been posted, so neighbouring residents may be unaware of this new application, so have not yet had an opportunity to oppose or support.

This has come back to us through a new applicant, who although keeping the units at 72, is tonight has referred to the development as a "retirement village" and not a care complex, something which this council contended was the its purpose when we opposed the original application.

Not only was it contrary to the made Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan, being largely outside the plan's settlement envelope, and offering no affordable housing content, but it had a number of areas of concern such as being sited on a dangerous bend, its distance from the town centre, and the likely large number of vehicle movements, as there would be no on-site care staff, but individually-hired personnel.

This new application by Brio Retirement Living would be constructed from prefabricated units provided by Ideal Modular Homes, brought down from Speke, Liverpool. Their transportation could create its own difficulties in access to the site with continual abnormal loads over 30 weeks.

These modular units will discard many of the design features which the original application trumpeted as being in keeping with the character of Buckingham – gone are the references to the Edwardian houses opposite, gone are the chimneys, and gone are the many of the changes in height and pitch of roofs.

We note, too, the loss of many of the communal areas (there is no longer a communal dining room) and the absence of on-site nursing and care staff, which point to these being retirement homes for sale, not a staffed care home, which should accordingly provide for 35% affordable housing content.

We also have concerns about details such as lack of parking for mobility scooters, French windows on ground-floor apartments (a risk to both security and to residents with dementia issues), and a lack of stairways or lifts to upper floors in some drawings, which shows a lack of attention to detail.

There are parking spaces for just 66 vehicles for 72 residential homes, visitors and visiting care staff; what changing facilities there are for those visiting staff have been reduced in size, and there are no on-site medical waste disposal facilities. Even the proposed therapy room has now become a sitting room, the cinema has gone, and other public rooms have been deleted.

The appeal inspector made much of the 64 jobs the development would create; presumably these would have been largely during construction, although they would now be less than before, as these units will be manufactured in Speke, transported

by road, and then bolted together on site. Once completed, those jobs will presumably go, as there are no proposed live-in staff.

I believe that the changes to the original application are such that we should treat this as a new application for retirement homes, and I propose that we oppose it on the same Neighbourhood Plan grounds as we did the original.”

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