



Minutes of a Meeting of the Planning Committee held in the Small Hall of the Village Hall, East Dean at 6.30 pm on Tuesday 19th September 2017

Present: Cllr M Keller (Chair), Cllr B Greenwell, Cllr I Haydock, Cllr P Hill, Cllr A Hookham, and Cllr P Seeley

In attendance: K Larkin (Parish Clerk).

There were thirty three members of the public present

PUBLIC SESSION

Proposed Eastbourne Road Phone Mast

The Chair welcomed residents and noted that all were interested in the application to put a mobile phone mast on the Eastbourne Road in the centre of the parish (Item P.826 below). He explained that central government had set restrictions on the grounds for refusal of such an application: it would not be admissible for the parish council or the South Downs National Park Authority to argue (1) that the facility was unnecessary; (2) that radio emissions from it would endanger health; or (3) that it would affect competition between operators. Residents were requested to bear this in mind in commenting on the application. The debate was then opened with illustrative material on locations etc. available to view, and the following points were raised:

- Was the outcome pre-determined? – no, it was not. The SDNPA could refuse the application if the specific location requested was deemed unsuitable. The applicant would then have a choice: whether to revise the application and ask for a different location, or go to Appeal.
- Would the council receive a facilitation fee? – no, it would not. Unofficially it was understood that a facilitation fee of £100,000 would be payable if the project went ahead, but this would not come to the parish council. It would probably be made to the owner of the verge for giving permission for the installation on their land. In that case, the beneficiary would be East Sussex County Council (Highways).
- What utilities would the installation require? – the antennae would be powered by mains electricity and would need to be connected to a fibre optic cable. These utilities were already in place in the chosen location and had probably influenced the choice of location.
- Why had the parish council previously referred to the chosen location as ‘the least worst option’? – the parish council had been responding to a report from the phone company discussing a number of widely scattered vicinities in the parish, and had accepted that a location in the general vicinity of Eastbourne Hill would be preferable to others investigated (e.g. the village green). The remark should be understood in that context. If a mast were provided in the general vicinity of the junction of Gilberts Drive and the A259, 4G data coverage would be achieved across the parish and down to the coast. At present, though voice signals were

obtainable in parts of this area, voice-only coverage was no longer deemed adequate. The intention of central government was to provide moderate to high speed data communications (4G standard) nationwide.

- Why had those residents most affected not been personally consulted? – the applicants had only consulted the local authorities, and residents felt sidelined: the consultation had not been adequate. The Chair of the committee took note. It was also noted that although the parish council had commented on a pre-application in February 2017, its response had not been acknowledged in the current application papers.
- Health implications – residents strongly objected to the government ruling that health implications could not be considered as grounds for refusal of a phone mast. Members of the public did not feel convinced that this was right. The Chair took note, but advised that this issue could only be taken up by lobbying Maria Caulfield MP.
- Who would benefit from the installation? – it was argued that most residents were already as well served as they wanted to be, and that extra provision would benefit tourists rather than residents. Again, however, the Chair advised the meeting that government policy was to provide 4G coverage nationwide, without exceptions, and the parish council could not use this argument.
- What power did the parish council have to influence the outcome of the application? – the parish council was a statutory consultee, entitled to pass its comments to the planning authority and to have those comments considered; it would endeavour to sum up and fairly represent the view of the village. If the planning authority went against the parish, it must supply reasoned arguments for doing so. In this case, the SDNPA had already raised concerns with the applicant at the pre-application stage, commenting critically on the precise location of the mast in the streetscape (close to a Grade II listed building – The Old Parsonage), and close to the carriageway of the A259. It could refuse the application.
- If a mast were installed, could it be camouflaged? – some residents objected that there was a plethora of posts and signs and an ANPR camera mast in this general vicinity already, and the overall effect was ugly. The value of adjacent properties could be affected. The Chair confirmed that the planning authority did have power to insist that any mast should be camouflaged so far as possible, but that the loss of property value was not a ‘material consideration’ in the planning process; nor was the loss of an individual view. The parish council would try to address this problem by pointing out adverse effects that the community would suffer collectively. The District Councillor pointed out that increasing numbers of people now needed a good data signal at home, and the availability of 4G service could increase rather than decrease the value of a property.
- Why could the mast not be sited further up Eastbourne Hill, where the lie of the land would allow it to be shorter? – the roadside verge immediately beyond the parish boundary (east of Downsvie Lane) was too narrow to install a mast and equipment on so this would have to be located in fields that were part of the Eastbourne Heritage Downland owned by Eastbourne Borough Council. The Council had been approached by the applicant but had apparently refused to allow this.
- Public safety implications – it was pointed out that the proposed location could hide users of the pedestrian crossing point (including children going to school, and mums with buggies) from the

view of eastbound traffic on the A259, and that this could be a serious hazard particularly on dark evenings, as there were no street lights. The narrowing of the pavement east of the proposed location could also mean that pedestrians with buggies etc. could have insufficient room to manoeuvre. The chair took note of this point.

- What would the mast actually look like, and how tall could it be? – the Chair had prepared some photo montage illustrations of the mast in various locations near the Gilberts Drive/A259 junction, including the spot proposed in the application. The image of the mast had been taken from information made public by the manufacturer. Central government would in due course support the roll-out of 5G provision by allowing existing masts to be extended without further permission. This would mean that a 12.5m mast could be raised to 17m; illustrations of both were available to view.
- Why did the application include two equipment cabins, one of which would be for 'future deployment'? – this was probably forward planning for the roll-out of 5G.
- Comment from the Residents' Association – Cllr Seeley in his capacity as Chair of the RA noted that there was clear disquiet among residents over the location proposed for the mast, but probably a reluctant acceptance of the general framework of the debate. The Association had written to the phone provider at the pre-application stage, asking for a site to be considered further up Eastbourne Hill, but had received no reply. The application had since come in with no amendment at all, and the RA had complained to the company, to the MP and to the planning authority. It would now consider complaining to Eastbourne Borough Council.
- What was the role of Wealden District Council? – the Chair clarified the fact that the district council had no role in planning within that part of the district that lay inside the National Park. It would not be involved in the present application.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions, which would be fully considered by the parish council.

The Chair closed the public session and opened the Planning Committee meeting.

P.822 Apologies for absence: - Cllr S Fuller, Cllr J Sargent

P.823 Declarations of Interest: - None

P.824 Minutes of the previous meeting: - the Minutes of the meeting held on 15th August 2017 were confirmed as a correct record, and signed by the Chair

P.825 CORRESPONDENCE

Land adjacent to The Brow (Minute P.820 of the meeting held on 15th August refers) – the County Ecologist had responded that her only concern with trees in this planning application was in relation to whether they were likely to support protected species. The committee took note but agreed that in that case the County Landscape Officer should comment on the application in the light of Appendix 14 of the East Sussex County Landscape Assessment (page 23), which requested more trees within the residential areas of East Dean. **ACTION: IH to**

pursue this enquiry.

P.826 NEW APPLICATIONS

SDNP/17/04557/PA16 – Eastbourne Road, East Dean, East Sussex

Installation comprises of 1 No. 12.5m Pandora Street Pole with 3 No. Enclosed Trisector Antenna, 2 No. Equipment Cabinets (1 for future deployment) and ancillary development thereto

The committee thanked Cllr Keller for his summary report, and noted the contributions of residents to the debate, both in the Public Session and in writing to the SDNPA. It was agreed that the council's response to the planning authority should respect the restrictions imposed by central government on the terms of the debate, but should explain that the proposed location was unacceptable for the following reasons:

- Proximity to a Grade II listed building (The Old Parsonage)
- Adverse visual impact on the Heritage Downland
- Impairment of long views affecting much of the community, not just individual properties, (contrary to the Village Design Statement)
- Creation of a safety hazard on the highway and on the verge, impairing the sight lines of motorists, potentially endangering cyclists, and leaving insufficient space for pedestrians with buggies etc.
- Inadequacy of reasons given by the applicant for rejecting alternative positions in the immediate vicinity. This applied particularly to the alternatives numbered D1 and D6 in the applicant's documentation. Factual errors and unsubstantiated general statements (i.e. not backed up by field work) were noted in this material.

The clerk was instructed to draft a response on this basis and to check the notice requirements for this unusual type of planning application. Members noted that, by central government directive, the SDNPA had only 56 statutory days from receipt of an application (in this case 5th September 2017) in which to determine it, and that if this deadline were missed the application would be deemed to be approved, without redress. The council should expedite its response which must be received by the SDNPA no later than 9th October 2017, and remind the planning officer concerned of this time restriction.

RESOLVED - To recommend that the application be refused

SDNP/17/03269/FUL and SDNP/17/04323/LIS – Birling Manor, Gilberts Drive, East Dean BN20 0AA

Re-alignment of driveway entrance where it meets the public highway

The committee supported the intention of this application which was to separate an existing right of way from traffic, to the benefit of both. It was noted that some trees would be lost, and it was requested that the loss should be balanced by some compensatory planting within the curtilage of the property, as a condition of planning approval.

RESOLVED – To recommend that the application be approved

P.827 WITHDRAWN APPLICATION

The committee noted that the following application had been withdrawn:

SDNP/17/03563/HOUS – 26 Hillside, Friston BN20 0HE

General remodelling to an existing dwelling including a 2 storey side extension, replacing an existing garage, side and front single storey extension, alteration and extension to the roof forming additional accommodation

P.828 DECISION NOTICES

The committee took note of the following applications approved by the SDNPA in accordance with the recommendations of the parish council:

SDNP/17/03057/HOUS – 3 The Close, Friston, BN20 0HB

Two storey front extension, single storey rear extension and garage extension

SDNP/17/03113/HOUS – Longview, Micheldene Road, East Dean, BN20 0HP

A kitchen extension on the ground floor flank wall and a rear dormer window to the second floor bedroom

SDNP/17/03237/LIS – Birling Manor, Gilberts Drive, East Dean BN20 0AA

Replacement of two external doors

SDNP/17/03326/HOUS – Taperfield, Jevington Road, Frison BN20 0AG

Proposed basement areas under the already approved raised rear balcony and existing garage areas

The committee took note of the following application refused by the SDNPA:

SDNP/17/03050/HOUS – 20 The Brow, Friston, BN20 0ES

Rear extension to ground floor, rear extension to first floor roof

P.829 LOCAL PLAN – Nothing further to report.

P.830 URGENT BUSINESS - None

P.831 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: - Tuesday 17th October 2017 in the Small Hall of the Village Hall, East Dean, starting at 6.30 pm

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.02 pm.

Signed..... (Chair)

Date.....