

PRUDHOE TOWN COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of the PLANNING, CONTRACTS AND WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING held in meeting room 1, The Spetchells Centre at 7.00pm on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2019

**PRESENT**

Cllr Jennifer McGee (Chair), Cllr Andy Gill, Cllr Russ Greig, Cllr Glenn Simpson, Cllr Duncan Couchman, Cllr Chris Cuthbert, Cllr Angie Scott, Cllr Bryan Futers, Cllr Tracy Gilmore, Cllr Gerry Price.

**PCW 1819/082 Apologies for Absence**

Cllr Carol Stephenson, Cllr Chris Barrett, Cllr Brenda Grey, Cllr Ignasious Varghese

**PCW 1819/083 Declarations of interest**

Cllr Tracy Gilmore declared an interest in item 3 of the Agenda.

**PCW 1819/084 Gentoo Group Housing at Cottier Grange**

Cllr Jennifer McGee welcomed Samantha Humble (Head of Operations- Gentoo Group), Colin McCartney (Head of Operations- Washington- Gentoo Group), Susie Thompson (Director of Neighbourhoods- Gentoo Group) and Kye Bradley (Head of Sales & Marketing Gentoo Homes) and Councillors and Officers introduced themselves. Prior to taking questions from Councillors, Samantha Humble and Susie Thompson outlined their standard offer check procedure advising that all housing applicants underwent an affordability check and a property check and that in some cases a police check would be undertaken. They emphasised that each case was looked at individually and that they would not comment on individual cases. The meeting was advised that property checks were undertaken to ascertain that properties were clean and undamaged and the question they would put when inspecting a property was *“Would we be able to re let this property today in this condition?”* The Gentoo representatives advised that if they undertook a property inspection from an applicant who was currently being housed by another social housing provider that they would inform the tenants existing social landlord if they did not feel that the property was being acceptably maintained.

Cllr Angie Scott questioned how the social housing that had been let on Cottier Grange appeared not to have been let to those in priority need of housing, but to those who already had accommodation.

Samantha Humble confirmed that of the 6 properties let, all 6 were let to Prudhoe residents, she also went on to say that 74% of all allocations are made to those not in priority need and that this was the case across all social housing providers.

Cllr Russ Greig questioned why Gentoo felt it necessary to police the tenancy of other social landlords by reporting housing applicants to their existing social landlord if they felt that their homes were in a poor decorative state as it was all very subjective.

Gentoo representatives were keen to emphasise the support that they had available to young people who were keen to take up a tenancy, and explained the role of their Positive Engagement Officers, emphasising that eviction was a last resort as it was a long and costly process as every failed tenancy costs Gentoo at least £3000.

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Cllr Jennifer McGee asked about a hypothetical scenario where an applicant for housing did not have their own property to inspect because they were “living in” with parents and queried whether it was equitable to judge them as a potential tenant when the house was their parents tenancy and the applicant did not have personal responsibility for the tenancy. The Gentoo representatives said that the applicant would be expected to ensure that the housing applicants own living space within the home was clean and decorated but emphasised again that every case was different and that generally the reason behind a refusal to consider an applicant as suitable was not as a result of one sole factor but as a result of a number of issues.

Councillor Simpson indicated that he did not feel that the Council’s concerns about the subjectivity of Gentoo’s pre tenancy checks had been addressed.

Kye Bradley then addressed the Meeting in relation to the background to their application to have the s106 agreement varied in relation to the slow uptake of Discount Market Sale Units (DMV) on the Cottier Grange site. He explained that of the 16 homes being offered for sale at Discount Market Value (DMV) only 7 had completed so in effect only 50% of their DMV stock which had been on sale for over a year had been sold, but there were buyers who were interested in purchasing them at full market value. He went on to say that purchasers had to meet the eligibility criteria, but that because there were restrictive covenants on the property which required any resale to be at DMV, lenders were very unwilling to lend without a 15% deposit and this was in turn putting off potential applicants. Mr Bradley went on to explain that if the s106 conditions were lifted then the additional 20% sale proceeds received would be paid over to the County Council. Members expressed the view that if this did happen then the additional monies, should, within the spirit of the s106 agreement be reinvested by the County Council back into Prudhoe.

**PCCW 1819/085 Draft Minutes of the Planning Contract and Works Committee held on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

**It was AGREED to RECEIVE** the minutes as a true record of the Meeting

**Proposed: Cllr J McGee                      Seconded: Cllr Glenn Simpson**

**PCCW 1819/086 Clerks report**

**It was AGREED** that the following report of the Clerks actions from the Planning, Contract & Works Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> February be received.

**Television Licence Refund Scheme**

Although the clerk previously advised that this motion would be brought back to the council in order to seek a legal minute reference (in view that the January PCW’s minutes were not agreed as a true record), the clerk has subsequently raised the matter with the Northumberland Association of Local Councils to confirm if this is absolutely necessary. It may be that the council’s actions in publicising the cessation of the scheme and in making no further budget provision is implicit of their decision.

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**Prudhoe East Centre**

A site meeting took place on Wednesday 6th February, attended by Cllrs Gilmore, Scott, Greig, Couchman, Simpson, Grey and Cuthbert and also including County Cllr Gordon Stewart, Kate Steel (NCC Strategic Assets) as well as representatives from Prudhoe Poppets, Community Buddies, Mortal Fools and Northumberland Citizens Advice. Carol Quinn, Catherine Hubbard-Coates and Ashley Brown (NCC Youth Service) were also in attendance. A report of the site meeting and responses from the groups visiting will be brought to the April meeting of the PCW's Committee.

**Space Net at Highfield Park**

The Space Net has been ordered. A start date will be confirmed asap, the play equipment provider has been advised that installation during any school holidays must be avoided.

**Planning Application, 19/00046/OUT** Land at Junction with Western Avenue and Cranbrook Drive, Western Avenue, Prudhoe, Northumberland

The Clerk has contacted NCC Planning Enforcement twice since the February meeting to request an update on any site meetings carried out, copying in County Cllr Ken Stow; as yet no communication has been received.

**Edgewell Cemetery**

Work to the beech trees in the old cemetery has been carried out. The resident complainant is still unhappy about the lack of light. The Clerk has advised that they put their concerns in writing to the council.

The cemetery committee is scheduled to meet on Wednesday 20th March at 7:00pm and this will be a full agenda including the new Service Level Agreement costs, cemetery fees, the new footpath planned into the old cemetery and memorial stability testing.

**Litter Bins**

The litter bin outside Prudhoe Community High School was tipped over and damaged; hopefully the damage, which was preventing this new bin from being opened, has been rectified.

Those litter bin installations that are outstanding are:

Castlefields – double capacity

Halfway Bus Shelter (travelling west) – slimline

Halfway Bus Shelter (travelling east) – slimline

**New Bus Shelter at bottom of Beaumont Way**

This will be ordered in the new financial year in consultation with County Cllr Ken Stow, who has agreed to contribute from his small schemes fund (minimum £2,000).

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**Northumberland Estates (NE) Front Street Development**

Following a letter sent to NE on 18th February, a reply was received confirming that NE were not aware that the large site, previously with planning permission for housing, had been designated 'protected open space'. Since then we have received confirmation from County Cllr Gordon Stewart that this is an error but nothing formal has been received from NCC Planners yet.

In respect of the 2nd site, off Front Street, which is designated for housing, parking and retail, NE has confirmed that they are actively marketing the site to retail operators and there is interest from the housing sector. Additionally, that they are in discussions with a contractor regarding site preparation and infrastructure design, with a view to investment, expecting significant progress this year.

Looking at the both sites together, NE has written that with regards the larger site the proposal for housing looks to include a mix of starter type housing as well as affordable units and they have been speaking with a provider of elderly accommodation also, all of which NE feel would be beneficial to the town. This development is described as being necessary for the viability of the town centre scheme, from a financial as well as an accessibility point of view; the road into the town centre site housing and for delivery is through the larger housing development off Station Bank.

NE has advised that they will update the council as plans progress.

**PCCW 1819/087 Draft Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2019**

**It was AGREED to RECEIVE** the Minutes as a true record of the meeting.

**Proposed Cllr. Jennifer McGee      Seconded Cllr. Glenn Simpson**

**PCCW 1819/088 Planning Matters**

**a) Planning applications received.**

**Application number 19/00062/CCD**

**School House, Prudhoe Castle First School, Castle Road, Prudhoe, Northumberland  
NE42 6PH**

Mrs Tammy Allen

Change of use from residential to school use.

**It was AGREED** to support this application

**Proposed Cllr Bryan Futers      Seconded Cllr Duncan Couchman**

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**Application number 19/00502/FUL**

**2 Highfield Prudhoe, Northumberland NE42 6EZ**

Mr & Mrs Dale Armstrong

Proposed Ground floor extension to the side and rear.

**It was AGREED** to support this application

**Application number 19/00549/FUL**

**Cara Cottage, Hallyards Farm, Stonybank Way West Mickley, Stocksfield Northumberland NE43 7LR**

Mr & Mrs C. Digirolamo

Single storey side extension for annexe to main house.

**IT was AGREED** to support this application.

**Proposed Cllr Russ Greig    Seconded Cllr Jennifer McGee**

**Application 19/00719/s106A**

**Variation of s106 agreement pursuant to application 14/04160/FUL granted on 27.04.2016**

Brendan Ferguson & Alan Sears (Gentoo Homes and Homes England)

**IT was AGREED** to Support this application on the basis that representations should be made to the Planning Authority to the effect that the additional 20% from the proceeds of the sales at Market Value should be invested back into affordable housing in Prudhoe.

**126 Western Avenue, Prudhoe, Northumberland NE42 6QB**

**Retrospective application: Erection of a 5m x 3.5m external balcony at first floor level to the rear of the property**

Mr Chilton

Members noted that this matter had been REFUSED.

**Holmlea Highfield Lane, Prudhoe Northumberland NE42 6EY**

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**Single rear extension, 2 storey side extension and detached garage**

Mr Lee Nuttall

Members noted that this application has been withdrawn at the Applicants request.

**b) Planning Decisions**

**Proposal for alterations and change of use of first floor to provide 6 residential apartments (C3 use) within the existing building to include the installation of new doorway, rooflights and window**

**8A Front Street, Prudhoe, Northumberland NE42 5HJ**

Evolve Estates

Members noted that NCC GRANTED PERMISSION.

**PCCW1819/088 Litter Bin at Mickley A695**

Members considered the request from residents, supported by County Councillor Anne Dale for a litter bin to be installed on the A695 between the Western Gateway and the entrance to Mickley. As there is not a safe pull in for vehicles where the Town Clerk had previously advised Northumberland County Council had suggested that the best location to site any bin would be on the other side of the road near the layby.

**IT was AGREED** that a new bin for the Northumberland County Council preferred location would be purchased by the Town Council at the start of the next Financial Year

**Proposed Cllr. Chris Cuthbert      Seconded Cllr. Russ Greig**

**PCCW1819/089 Bus Shelter Seating**

Following a request from users for suitable seating at the bus stops travelling East at the Golf Club and Waterworld, **IT was AGREED** that the Town Clerk would obtain costings for the installation of appropriate seats within the Bus Shelters as discussed.

**PCCW1819/090 Potential Solution to Cigarette Litter on Front Street**

Members considered the design prototype for installation on the top of the Litter bins in Front Street, **IT was AGREED** that subject to the small modification that “checker plate” be added to the prototype to assist in the stubbing out of cigarettes that the prototype be added to the bin outside the Spetchells Centre as a trial.

**Proposed Cllr Bryan Futers      Seconded Cllr Tracy Gilmore**

**PCCW1819/091 Rent Increase at Castledene Allotments**

**IT was AGREED** to receive the correspondence from Northumberland Estates dated 7<sup>th</sup> February 2019 in relation to the rent increase at Castledene Allotments.

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**PCCW 1819/092 Essity Prudhoe Miners Race 2019**

Following receipt of the report from the small Working Group of Councillors that had met on the 6<sup>th</sup> March to discuss the Annual Prudhoe Miners Race It **was AGREED**

- a) That the race should start and finish at Eastwoods Park, to allow other activities to take place within the Park and in view of the Heritage of Eastwoods Park
- b) That a preferred 10K route is offered that takes in Hagg Bank, the riverside track, Princess Way (past Essity the Sponsor), the Miners Tub, the old pit road and then back to Eastwoods Park.
- c) That a Junior and Mini run should take place within Eastwoods Park
- d) That the start times for Club runners and fun runners will be staged to ease the pressure on fun runners and encourage more amateur local fun runners to participate.
- e) That the Council seeks interested parties to lead as Race Director
- f) That the Council, together with sponsorship from Essity cover the costs of any associated Road Closures and prizes to be paid from the event's budget.
- g) That the preferred date for the event be Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

**PCCW 1819/093 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**It was AGREED to approve a motion, that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the press and public be excluded for consideration of the following item in accordance with section 68 of the Council's Standing Orders.**

**PCCW 1819/094 Town Council Website**

Following consideration of the recommendations from the recently held working group who had met on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2019 to discuss the proposals received from interested website designers **IT was AGREED** that ICT Digital Services be offered the opportunity to develop a new website for Prudhoe Town Council at a cost of £2000 plus £20 per month thereafter for hosting, backup, support and monitoring.

**Proposed Cllr. Jennifer McGee      Seconded Cllr. Tracy McGee**