

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL AND REGULATORY PANEL
HELD ON TUESDAY 19th DECEMBER 2006**

Present: Councillor M. Routledge (Chair)
Councillors Mrs. E.M. Connor, R. Davison,
J. Haggan, T. Longstaff, Mrs. J. Maitland,
M. Nicholls and D.J. Taylor-Gooby.

Objectors: Mr. S. Cudlip

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors R. Taylor and A.J. Holmes.

2. THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING held on 20th December 2006, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were confirmed.

**3. APPLICATIONS UNDER THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACTS
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT 1990**

**2006/0747 SEATON WITH SLINGLEY (SEAHAM NORTH) - 2 No.
Houses At Land To Rear Of Pear Tree House And East Of
Hillrise Crescent Seaton For WMW Self Build**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Planning and Building Control Services which recommended approval subject to conditions relating to landscaping, external materials, contaminated land. The proposed development was in accordance with the relevant Local Plan Policies referred to in the report.

RESOLVED that the application be conditionally approved.

**2006/0821 SEAHAM (SEAHAM HARBOUR) - Re-Location,
Alterations/Increase In Height Of Existing Telecom
Mast At Land At Enfield Road Garage, Enfield Road,
Seaham For O2 (Uk) Limited**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Planning and Building Control Services which recommended approval subject to conditions relating to landscaping. The proposal complied with the relevant planning policies referred to in the report.

The Senior Planning Services Officer explained that Members had visited the site that day and were familiar with the location and setting and gave a detailed presentation on the main issues which were outlined in the report.

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The Senior Planning Services Officer explained that a letter of objection had been received from Seaham Town Council.

Mr. Cudlip explained that Seaham Town Council had been corresponding with the Acquisition Surveyor representing the developer and it was hoped that they could have persuaded them not to proceed with the proposal. A letter had been written to the Planning Officer summarising the grounds for objection. Groundwork East Durham, Durham County Council and the Town Council wished to see a new cycle route established on land close to where the new mast was to be sited. If a new mast was located as proposed, it would severely constrain even perhaps inhibit altogether the new cycle route alongside the existing bridleway. He felt that this would be a retrograde step and not in keeping with the regeneration measures which were about to start on the adjoining site.

Seaham Town Council had informed the developer that there was to be a start made very soon on the new housing estate to be built on the former Seaham Colliery site. A shortlist had been selected and that day he had dealt with an enquiry from Wimpey who were on the shortlist asking about art features, a remembrance garden and other major community facilities which could be incorporated on that site. That enquiry alone showed how active the new housing scheme was. Building work was expected to start in Spring/early Summer next year and it would mean that the site of the new mast would adjoin a new state of the art housing scheme comprising of some 400 new houses.

The Town Council saw the mast as being totally out of character if allowed to be built in the location. It would seem the developer had no regard to the densely residential neighbourhood which existed in the locality. The number of properties occupied by families would significantly increase to such a point where the whole neighbourhood would be very densely populated. The Town Council believed a mast should not be allowed in such a densely populated area and a better site should be found elsewhere.

In addition, the new mast was much bigger than the existing one. It would be some 5m higher. This would have a significant visual intrusion into a densely residential area and would be capable of being seen by families living everywhere nearby and such, would be detrimental to the amenities of residents and should not be allowed.

Mr. Cudlip explained that the Town Council had consistently put forward a view which they realised the

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District Council had chosen to ignore. He urged the District Council to follow the precautionary principle and not allow such a proposal to be built in a densely residential area where there was likely to be the potential of a significant health risk to families in the coming years. These views were not shared by everyone but several Councils in England and Scotland had recognised the potential of such health risks and refused to grant requests.

The Town Council believed that they had put forward a reasoned set of arguments which he hoped would convince the panel that the new mast should not be permitted.

A Member queried if the existing mast would be in the middle of the new housing that was proposed. The Senior Planning Services Officer explained that the mast would have to be removed if the houses were built. He was not sure if the landowners would be able to request the applicants to remove the mast.

A Member queried if the application was refused, could an appeal be resisted. The Senior Planning Services Officer explained that there was an existing structure there although the proposal was to increase the height by 5m and was visually more imposing.

A Member commented that she would have preferred to have had the mast located in an industrial estate rather than in the middle of a housing estate.

The Principal Planning Services Officer explained that the District Council had always envisaged that housing development would take place on the colliery site. Developers would have to be mindful of a mast adjoining the site. On balance, it was felt that the relocation and increase in height of the mast should be supported.

A Member commented that he had no objections to moving the mast but felt that the extra 5m would have a significant visual impact and be very intrusive.

Mr. Cudlip queried if the Planning Department had any detailed proposals as to where the housing would be located on the Seaham Colliery site. The Principal Planning Services Officer explained that no information on where housing would be located had been submitted. Four developers had been shortlisted and were tendering for the site and would have to take account of the surroundings when designing the site.

Mr. Cudlip queried if the Planning Department had consulted One North East, the owners of the Seaham Colliery site and if the information had been passed to the potential developers of the site. The Senior Planning

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Services Officer explained that he had not consulted the adjacent landowner although One North East would be aware of the mast on their boundary.

Members commented that they felt that the extra height on the mast would be visually intrusive to the surrounding area.

RESOLVED that the application be refused for the reasons detailed above.

4. ANY ADDITIONAL URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

In accordance with the Local Government Act, 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, Section 100B(4)(b) the Chair, following consultation with the Proper Officer, agreed that following item of business, not shown on the Agenda, be considered as a matter of urgency.

5. PLANNING APPLICATIONS (AOB)

Members raised concerns regarding the number of applications that were determined under Delegated Powers and explained that they felt that if objections were received, then they should be determined by the Panel. Concerns were also raised regarding the lack of information Members received regarding the planning applications that had been submitted in their villages.

The Principal Planning Services Officer explained that the Head of Planning and Building Control Services was currently reviewing the Scheme of Delegation. At present, applications could still be determined under delegated powers if there were objections provided the proposal was being decided in accord with planning policy. Some difficulties that had been experienced with the new Planning and Building Control Services IT system and had caused problems with providing the weekly list to Members. An Improvement Team had been established involving the Corporate Development Unit to look at ways to improve the service. Members would be informed with revised Delegated Powers at a future meeting. The weekly lists had now resumed and this should hopefully keep Members apprised of what planning applications had been received.

RESOLVED that the information given be noted and further reports be awaited.

JC/CB/COM/DEV/061201
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