

FARINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of a Planning & Highways Committee Meeting
held on Tuesday, 26 January 2010 at 6.30 pm
and Wednesday, 27 January 2010 at 7.15pm
in the Council Chamber, The Corn Exchange, Faringdon**

PRESENT: Cllrs **A V Hickmore (Chairman)**
Mrs M J Barker
Mrs J Boulton
J C W Gillman (*for Min 20/10 only*)
D Keeble
N S O’Keeffe
S Leniec
A Marsden
D Price
Dr M L H Wise
D/Cllr Mrs A Thomson (*up to Min 20/10*)

IN ATTENDANCE: **J Hulme (Faringdon House Estate)** (*up to & incl Min 18/10*)
I Tant (Barton Willmore) (*up to & incl Min 18/10*)
M Knott, (Barton Willmore) (*up to & incl Min 18/10*)
1 Member of Press (*from Min 20/10*)
98 members of public (*Min 20/10 only*)
Deputy Town Clerk
Assistant Clerk (*from Min 21/10*)

Before the meeting commenced the Chairman proposed that Agenda Item 4 (Future Shopping in Faringdon) be moved forward for discussion after Agenda Item 2 (Minutes of Last Meeting) and that Agenda Item 3 (Matters Arising) be considered after Agenda Item 6 (Public Speaking Time). This proposal was seconded and CARRIED.

16/10 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs K Herbert and J Boyle.

17/10 Minutes of Last Meeting: Tuesday, 5 January 2010

The Minutes were AGREED and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

18/10 Future Shopping in Faringdon

Preliminary view of Faringdon House Estate plans for Faringdon.
The Chair proposed that in accordance with Town Council Standing Order section 65 and in view of the confidential nature of the business to be discussed, the public, including the press, be temporarily excluded for this item. This proposal was seconded and CARRIED.

In view of the possibility of a new supermarket being built on land northwest of Gloucester Street car park (part of Faringdon House Estate) representatives from the Faringdon House Estate had been invited to the meeting to update the committee on its possible plans for a food store on this land. Outline plans were then discussed but it was NOTED that the proposals were not complete and that work was still in progress.

Thanks were expressed to the representatives for attending the meeting and updating the committee.

19/10 Public Question Time

No questions had been received

20/10 Public Speaking Time

The meeting moved from the Council Chamber to the Corn Exchange Hall at 7.15 pm for this item.

Vale of White Horse District Council Draft Core Strategy

Additional Consultation January 2010 –The Future of Shopping in Faringdon:

The Chairman stated that District Council is in the process of preparing a draft core strategy for the district up to 2026. As part of this core strategy, it was considering whether shopping facilities in Faringdon should be improved and had asked the residents to comment on various possible proposals for shopping ie a Tesco site, development of Budgens, or the Faringdon House Estate site. He then invited members of the public to speak.

Comments were made individually by 36 members of public and the points highlighted were:-

- Faringdon was a town with a small population that could only support a limited number of shops and a smaller supermarket.
- it was important that the vitality of the town centre in Faringdon was ensured. It was strongly felt by all present that free car parking for 2 hours was essential in the town centre.
- a large supermarket on the edge of Faringdon would have an adverse effect on the business community which currently did much for toddlers groups, infant schools and other community groups.
- the site on Park Road, proposed for a Tesco supermarket although good from a traffic point of view would not bring footfall into the town centre and would not do anything for retail in the town centre.
- there was a need for a good food retailer to come to Faringdon.
- the proposed Tesco site was currently a manufacturing site employing people carrying out skilled work and earning money they could spend in the town if they chose to. Tesco would import management from elsewhere and the people that would be employed there would be at the lower grade. All that would happen would be that the people who at present work in shops and little retailers in the town centre would go out to work at Tesco.

- employment was vital to the town. There were too many people in Faringdon having to drive out of Faringdon to work as there was not enough employment in Faringdon.
- people who had had experience with a Tesco supermarket being built on the edge of a town stated that the town centre had been destroyed. Their preference would be something smaller closer to the town centre with only a short walk to the town centre.
- concerns were expressed regarding the loss of business in the town centre if a large supermarket came to the edge of town but some people queried what would be lost in the town centre as there currently was not a great deal to be lost.
- the representative from Budgens was disappointed with the adverse comments made by townspeople regarding their shopping experience at Budgens to date. He stated that Budgens would be moving forward to provide a better service.
- the town centre was not vibrant and it was felt there was nothing in Faringdon to do. However, it was NOTED that the Corn Exchange was due to be refurbished and that a major marketing plan was being drawn up to promote the Pump House as a training facility/conference facility to bring people into the town who would use pubs, catering facilities, shops, etc.
- adverse impact on farms if a large supermarket such as Tesco came to Faringdon
- the Park Road Tesco site would be too far away from the town centre for people to walk even if a link footpath was provided.
- research had shown that a Tesco store as proposed for Faringdon destroyed local retail outlets.
- parking charges were a major disincentive to shop in the town centre, especially as there was free parking in neighbouring towns such as Highworth, Witney and Wantage.
- a Tesco store in Park Road was welcomed in some cases as it would mean greater choice and cars could access it and park more easily. Currently it was impossible to park anywhere in the town centre where there had been congestion for some years.
- it was felt important that there should be a vision for the future of the town centre.
- it was NOTED that Faringdon House Estate had earlier in the evening given a short presentation to Faringdon Town Council on its proposal for the land behind Faringdon House, with access from the Gloucester Street car park but that they were still very much in the planning/thinking stage.

It was generally felt that access and egress for both delivery vehicles and private vehicles would be a problem with this site and that the weight of traffic coming through the town centre would be too much.

- although the District Council had indicated there were 3 proposals, it was not a comparable playing field as Tesco had held an exhibition 2 weeks ago giving details of their proposals but, to date, no detailed proposals from either Budgens or Faringdon House Estate were available.
- it was generally felt that the townspeople were being asked to make decisions on the future of shopping in Faringdon without being provided with full details.

At this stage, the meeting was adjourned to the following evening, Wednesday, 27 January 2010

The meeting was reconvened at 7.15 pm on Wednesday, 27 January 2010

21/10 Matters Arising

Min 3/10, Proposed changes to waiting restrictions, Gloucester Street, Faringdon: The Deputy Town Clerk advised that a letter had been sent to the Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and that this had been acknowledged by OCC.

Min 7/10, Precept 2010/2011: The Chairman advised that the 2010/11 budget for £2340 had been approved by Finance Committee on 20 January 2010. With regard to the bus shelters, the Deputy Town Clerk was asked to obtain costs for replacement of the vandalised panels with either (a) solid panel in the bottom and glass at the top or (b) all glass and arrange the work up to a budget of £800. The Deputy Town Clerk was also asked to check whether the Leisure Services Assistant would be able to undertake the job of replacing the panels.

Min 10/10, Park Road, Faringdon – Relocation of Stone Gateway: It was NOTED that there seemed to be some confusion regarding the stone gateway to Faringdon as it was thought that, as part of an S106 agreement regarding a development in Coxwell Road, there was money available to be spent on a new gateway. The Deputy Town Clerk was asked to clarify this situation with D/Cllr R Cox. Meanwhile, the Consulting Civil & Structural Engineers acting on behalf of Builders Ede should be contacted to ask if the gateway could be moved to just past the 30mph sign, as close as possible to the A420.

Min 11/10, Street Names: Cllr Mrs Boulton advised that she was arranging for a letter from the family giving permission for the name of Stallard to be submitted to the District Council as a possible street name.

22/10 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

23/10 Planning Applications to be considered:

GFA/10015/4 Proposed pergola for photovoltaic solar panels in rear garden

17 Coxwell Road, Faringdon

For: Mr D Williamson

NO OBJECTIONS

24/10 For Information

(a) Notices of Permission were received from the Vale of White Horse District Council in respect of the following planning applications and

NOTED:-

- GFA/18176/5** Erection of a garage
Dove Lodge, Radcot Road, Faringdon
For: Mr T Fane
(No objections – Planning & Highways Committee Meeting, 1.12.09)
- GFA/19770/2-CA** Demolition of existing redundant building
The Old Barn, Stanford Road, Faringdon
For: Miss J Carroll
(No objections – Planning & Highways Committee Meeting, 1.12.09)
- GFA/15261/2** Change of use of adjoining land to garden and erection of fence on land adjoining 73 Tuckers Road (retrospective)
73 Tuckers Road, Faringdon
For: Mr D Cryer
(No objections – Planning & Highways Committee Meeting, 1.12.09)
- GFA/13321/2** Change of use of land from Agricultural to Boat Moorings (10) and car parking spaces (5)
Land at Pidnell Farm, Radcot Road, Faringdon
For: Mr R Bolter
(No objections – Planning & Highways Committee Meeting, 1.12.09)

(b) Work to Trees:

Notice of Intention to undertake the following works was received from the Vale of White Horse District Council and NOTED.

To remove 1 purple Prunus at 3 Sudbury Court, Faringdon

25/10 Planning Policy Statement 4 (PPS4)

A report written by Cllr Hickmore outlining details of this new Government policy statement was received and NOTED for future reference. Thanks were expressed by the committee to the Chairman for the hard work he had put into drawing up his report.

26/10 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

A written extract from a Government Report regarding the above was received. Cllr Marsden, who had originally brought this paper to the attention of the committee, gave a brief summary on the details contained therein. It was NOTED that CIL will be a new charge which local authorities in England and Wales will be empowered, but not required, to charge on most types of new development in their area. CIL charges will be based on simple formulae which relate the size of charge to the size and character of the development paying it.

The members were asked to consider the matter further in order that it could be discussed at the next scheduled meeting of the Planning & Highways Committee. Thanks was expressed by the Chairman to Cllr Marsden for bringing this matter to the attention of the committee.

**27/10 Oxfordshire Minerals & Waste Development Framework
Informal Consultation on land-won aggregates spatial strategy options**

It was NOTED that as part of the above informal consultation process, Oxfordshire County Council was organising three facilitated workshops in different areas of the county for parish councils who had an interest in the minerals development plan process.

It was AGREED that Cllr Dr Wise be delegated to attend the workshop for parish councils to be held at Standlake Village Hall on 2 March 2010 and then to report back to the meeting of the Planning & Highways Committee due to take place on 9 March 2010. Travel expenses were approved as this was a council duty.

28/10 Oxfordshire County Council Local Transport Plan 3, 2011-2030

It was NOTED that Consultation 4 on the draft policies was now under way and town council had been asked by OCC for its comments. It was AGREED that Cllr Hickmore would look through this and report back to the next scheduled meeting of the Planning & Highways Committee. The deadline for comments was 21 February 2010

29/10 Swindon Borough Council – Draft Inclusive Design Access for All Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

It was NOTED that the draft SPD went out for public consultation from 19 January 2010 to 1 March 2010 and that any comments submitted in respect of this draft SPD would be considered and would inform the final draft of the SPD. It was AGREED that Cllr Dr Wise be delegated to look through this document and to report back with any comments to the next scheduled meeting of the Planning & Highways Committee due to take place on 16 February 2009.

30/10 S106 Agreements

(a) *Bloor Homes S106 Agreement – Oxfordshire County Council:*

Cllr Keeble stated that in his role as town council representative on the Faringdon Community Bus Group, he had attended a recent meeting of the group where various options for either one bus or two buses were discussed. Cllr Keeble advised that FCB was working exceptionally hard to obtain funds. He further reported that the issue with clause 1.26 of the Bloor Homes S106 agreement with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) which referred to the community bus service had also been raised. It was NOTED that Town Council's concerns regarding this clause had already been conveyed to OCC which would be seeking legal advice on the points raised.

(b) *Bloor Homes S106 Agreement – VWHDC:* The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the District Council's legal department had advised that it had still not received any instructions to carry out revisions to this agreement.

(c) On the assumption that either Tesco or Faringdon House Estate did obtain planning permission for a supermarket in Faringdon, it was AGREED that town council needed to be ready with requirements for S106 contributions.

Following discussion, the following items were AGREED:

- i) improvement of Hobbs Lane/Southampton Road in order to provide vehicular access to allotments site on Willes Close;
- ii) street lighting for pedestrian path from Tesco to town centre;
- iii) community bus to link Tesco supermarket to the town centre and the environs of Faringdon;
- iv) £100,000 contribution to District Council to compensate for free parking in both car parks in the town centre for the first 2 hours;
- v) £50,000 traffic lights to regulate traffic through the “narrows” in Cornmarket.
- vi) provision of access land for future allotments;
- vii) improvement of the lighting in Gloucester Street car park;
- viii) improvement of alley leading from Gloucester Street car park to Gloucester Street, together with being well lit;
- ix) £500,000 towards community building on the Faringdon House Estate site or towards building converted for community use;
- x) £30,000 to beautify town centre and make it more attractive.

31/10 Vale of White Horse District Council – Core Strategy

In January 2009, the District Council published its Core Strategy Preferred Options for consultation and it was NOTED that District Council had now carried out further work on which it was seeking comments before it finalised the draft core strategy. The deadline for submission of comments had now been extended from 29 January 2010 to 12 February 2010.

(Agenda items (a), (b) and (c) were all considered at the same time)

Affordable Housing: It was NOTED that the District Council proposed to reduce the threshold for affordable housing from 15 to 3. Following discussion, it was felt that although there was a need for affordable housing, this reduction was too severe and that if it was reduced to 10 houses this would maintain numbers of small developments whilst still providing affordable houses from medium sized developments.

Retail in Faringdon: It was felt that both the town and the town council was being asked to comment on something for which there was very little information available and that they had been let down by the Vale in terms of consultation. Although Cllr Price felt that no significant study had been carried out establishing a need for additional shops or supermarkets in Faringdon, the majority of the committee AGREED that there was a need for an additional supermarket in Faringdon as well as a site for additional smaller shops in the period up to 2026.

It was strongly stressed that free car parking in the town centre was essential for retail. Cllr Leniec commented that between town council and the retailers this could be achieved in the town if that was what was required.

It was generally commented that the planning authority had already allowed housing to take over retail units, rents were high for the shops in town centre, and non-food shops were in very short supply. It was felt we should be looking at the comparison offer and should develop as much emphasis on non-food retail as food shopping

Comments on the three sites being considered by VWHDC were:

Faringdon House Estate Site: This site in the grounds of Faringdon House was near the town centre and near the car park but there would be problems with access and egress for delivery vehicles.

Budgens: It was NOTED that Budgens was now talking about an internal refit which would increase retail space. It was felt that although this was not now strictly a planning matter and, therefore, not a matter for the core strategy, this would affect total retail availability in Faringdon.

Tesco Site: It was NOTED that this is currently a manufacturing site which would require permission for change of use. The site was in the geographical centre of the town.

Further lengthy discussion ensued on the following options:

- (a) not to do anything;
- (b) to have a development on Park Road;
- (c) to develop Budgens;
- (d) to develop Faringdon House Estate site;
- (e) town centre to be properly defined with increased comparison offer of possibly 10-12 offers in one or other of the two locations, ie one at Faringdon House Estate site or one at Park Road.
- (f) to have comparison shops on the Faringdon House Estate and fill the need for an extra supermarket with a smaller one on Park Road

It was suggested that District Council should

1. in the first instance define Faringdon's town centre;
2. carry out a health check on the town centre;
3. carry out a proper usage analysis of the town centre;
4. consider mixed use retail on either (a) Faringdon House Estate site development or (b) Portway.

Cllr Leniec raised the possibility of a convenience store being sited in the Bloor Homes estate on Park Road.

It was AGREED that that if it was accepted there is a need for another supermarket, the most likely position would be a site on Park Road, with easy access/egress for customers and delivery vehicles. This should be tied into a development plan for the town centre so that the comparison needs in the town centre were brought back

It was proposed, seconded and CARRIED that authority be delegated to the Chairman, Cllr Dr Wise and the Deputy Town Clerk to draw up town council's response in respect of employment, housing and retail as a whole package for submission to the District Council next week. A copy of this submission would be circulated around the committee members before being sent to District Council.

"Your Faringdon – Your Future": Notes from the meeting of the Working Party held on 21 January 2010 were received and considered. It was NOTED that various groups had now been formed to look into employment opportunities, education, roads/transport, retail/parking, health provision, water/sewage, environmental and housing and that these groups would report back to the next meeting of the Working Party due to be held on 22 February 2010.