

26 MARCH 2024

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a Special meeting of the New Forest District Council held on Tuesday, 26 March 2024.

- * Cllr Neville Penman (Chairman)
- * Cllr David Hawkins (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

- * Alan Alvey
- * Peter Armstrong
Geoffrey Blunden
Hilary Brand
- * Mark Clark
- * Steve Clarke
- * Jill Cleary
- * Keith Craze
- * Kate Crisell
- * Sean Cullen
- * Jack Davies
- * Steve Davies
Philip Dowd
- * Barry Dunning
Jacqui England
- * Allan Glass
David Harrison
- * Matthew Hartmann
- * John Haywood
- * Jeremy Heron
- * Nigel Linford
- * Patrick Mballa
- * Colm McCarthy

Councillors:

- * David Millar
- * Neil Millington
Ian Murray
- * Stephanie Osborne
Alan O'Sullivan
- * Adam Parker
- * Dave Penny
- * Dan Poole
Caroline Rackham
- * Alvin Reid
- * Joe Reilly
- * Janet Richards
- * Barry Rickman
- * Steve Rippon-Swaine
- * John Sleep
- * Michael Thierry
- * Derek Tipp
- * Neil Tungate
Alex Wade
- * Malcolm Wade
- * Christine Ward
- * Phil Woods
- * Richard Young

*Present

Officers Attending:

Kate Ryan, Tanya Coulter, James Carpenter, Tim Guymer, Sue Jennings, Joe Tyler and Matt Wisdom

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Blunden, Brand, Dowd, England, Harrison, Murray, O'Sullivan, Rackham and A Wade.

70 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of any disclosable pecuniary interests by Members.

It was acknowledged that there were a number of councillors who were also members of Hampshire County Council.

71 CALL-IN REQUEST - HAMPSHIRE MINERALS AND WASTE PLAN (PARTIAL UPDATE) CONSULTATION RESPONSE

The Chairman welcomed Members to the Special Council meeting and invited Cllr Haywood to speak who had the following procedural motion to put to the Council:-

“That Standing Orders be suspended to enable Venetia Rowland and Cllr Anna Wilson to speak at this Special Council meeting, for up to three minutes each, as provided for by the procedure for public participation at meetings of Overview and Scrutiny Panels.”

Cllr J Davies seconded the motion.

The motion was carried unanimously by the Council and Venetia Rowland and Cllr Anna Wilson of Fordingbridge Town Council each addressed the Council in turn.

Venetia Rowland reported that Midgham Farm had received 962 objections as part of the previous Regulation 18 consultation undertaken by Hampshire County Council, which amounted to 42% of the overall responses to the consultation. She highlighted that the plan needed to demonstrate deliverability and viability as part of its overall stated policy. Issues relevant to the site included public rights of way, air quality and health, amenities for local residents, landscape, protected habitats and species, noise and dust, loss of agricultural land, ground water, flood risk, restoration, archaeology, traffic cumulative impacts, and the overall need for the site. She cited concerns about leaving these issues to be addressed at the planning stage. Previous applications in the 1990s were noted as having been withdrawn as the impacts could not effectively be mitigated and it was suggested that the position had not changed.

Cllr Anna Wilson, Fordingbridge Town Councillor highlighted in particular the loss of large areas of green space to strategic planning sites in Fordingbridge and that Midgham remained vital to be retained in the light of that. She was concerned about the impact of such a minerals site on local people and suggested that it was incorrect to term Midgham as an extension of an existing site.

They both encouraged councillors to uphold and enhance their objections to the Midgham Farm site.

Following the public speakers, the Chairman of the Place and Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Panel offered a brief introduction to the item, as Chairman of the Panel that had made the referral to Council. He highlighted that Hampshire County Council was the decision maker in the matter and the District Council was a consultee. To that end, all councillors were offered a briefing on the matter by Hampshire County Council officers, and the Portfolio Holder had sought input into the consultation response from relevant local ward councillors, prior to making the decision.

Cllr S Davies moved the following motion:-

“This Council, as a consultee to the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan, is concerned about the continued reliance on the Avon Vally for extraction, and the impacts that this may cause locally. There are strong and heartfelt concerns and objections, and we ask that the Hampshire County Council and the Secretary of State take the concerns raised by the local community into account and carefully consider them during the examination of the proposed plan.

Furthermore, that both Hampshire County Council and the Secretary of State needs to ensure that if, following examination, the Plan does retain the proposed allocations that the development considerations are suitably drafted to ensure that any developments that come forward are subject to appropriate site specific policies and controls to manage development and ongoing operations. To this end whilst the Portfolio Holder has prepared a detailed, technical response, this Council requests that he considers any further concerns raised to Council tonight, before submitting a final response to the consultation.”

Cllr Craze seconded the motion.

Cllr J Davies moved the following amendment to the motion, with the bold text replacing the strikethrough text below:-

*“This Council, as a consultee to the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan, is concerned about the continued reliance on the Avon Vally for extraction, and the impacts that this may cause locally. There are strong and heartfelt concerns and objections, ~~and we ask that the Hampshire County Council and the Secretary of State take the concerns raised by the local community into account and carefully consider them during the examination of the proposed plan.~~ **and we oppose the inclusion of the Midgham Farm Quarry site and Ashley Manor Farm site in the Minerals and Waste Plan and advise the Portfolio Holder to reflect this in his response to the consultation.**”*

Furthermore, that both Hampshire County Council and the Secretary of State needs to ensure that if, following examination, the Plan does retain the proposed allocations that the development considerations are suitably drafted to ensure that any developments that come forward are subject to appropriate site specific policies and controls to manage development and ongoing operations. To this end whilst the Portfolio Holder has prepared a detailed, technical response, this Council requests that he considers any further concerns raised to Council tonight, before submitting a final response to the consultation.”

Cllr Millar seconded the amendment.

Members debated the amendment and in doing so, also provided commentary on the parts that did not amend substantive motion.

During the course of the debate, a number of matters were discussed with a wide variety of views expressed. There was particular reference to the concerns expressed by members of the public living in and around the proposed Midgham Farm site, along with observations from those who had experience of the extraction and operation of existing sites. Some Members acknowledged that minerals extraction was an essential resource that helped to meet local housing need.

Put to the vote, the amendment was lost.

The Council went on to debate the substantive motion further. A Member highlighted that the call-in procedure demonstrated the Council’s commitment to revisit decisions and asked specifically to place on record the Council’s thanks to its officers for their advice and support throughout the consideration of this issue.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy committed to reconsidering the decision following the meeting, in light of the Council debate.

In responding to the debate, Cllr S Davies referred Members to Policy 20 within the Plan in supporting appropriate controls and measures. He thanked the Council for agreeing to allow the two public speakers to address the Council on this matter.

Put to the vote, the substantive motion was carried.

RESOLVED:

This Council, as a consultee to the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan, is concerned about the continued reliance on the Avon Vally for extraction, and the impacts that this may cause locally. There are strong and heartfelt concerns and objections, and we ask that the Hampshire County Council and the Secretary of State take the concerns raised by the local community into account and carefully consider them during the examination of the proposed plan.

Furthermore, that both Hampshire County Council and the Secretary of State needs to ensure that if, following examination, the Plan does retain the proposed allocations that the development considerations are suitably drafted to ensure that any developments that come forward are subject to appropriate site specific policies and controls to manage development and ongoing operations. To this end whilst the Portfolio Holder has prepared a detailed, technical response, this Council requests that he considers any further concerns raised to Council tonight, before submitting a final response to the consultation.

Note – following the Council meeting, the Portfolio Holder reconsidered the decision in accordance with the Council's procedures and made a further decision on 28 March 2024.

CHAIRMAN