

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning Committee held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Ruthin and by video conference on Wednesday, 19 April 2023 at 9.30 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Ellie Chard, Karen Edwards, Gwyneth Ellis, James Elson, Huw Hilditch-Roberts, Alan James, Delyth Jones, Julie Matthews, Win Mullen-James, Merfyn Parry, Gareth Sandilands, Peter Scott (Vice-Chair), Andrea Tomlin, Cheryl Williams and Mark Young (Chair)

ALSO PRESENT

Legal Officer (CL), Development Control Manager (PM); Principal Planning Officer (PG); Zoom Host (KJ); Committee Administrator (RTJ).

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chris Evans, Jon Harland, Terry Mendies, Pete Prendergast and Elfed Williams.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest raised.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There were no urgent matters.

4 MINUTES

The minutes of the Planning Committee held on 22 March 2023 were submitted.

Matter of accuracy –

- Members highlighted that some of the Members' attendance was noted both virtually and in person; the chair responded that the matter had been highlighted to officers and that for future meetings the minutes would not differentiate between who was in attendance in person and who was in attendance virtually.
- Councillor Andrea Tomlin raised that in agenda item 5, she had lived in Prestatyn her whole life rather than "many years".

***RESOLVED** that subject to the above, the minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2023 be approved as a correct record.*

5 APPLICATION NO. 09/2022/1080 - LAND OPPOSITE PORTH Y WAEN, ABERWHEELER, DENBIGH

An application was submitted for the change of use of agricultural land to form community amenity land, formation of new vehicular access and parking and associated works at Land opposite Porth y Waen, Aberwheeler, Denbigh (previously circulated)

Councillor Merfyn Parry (**Local member**) proposed the item be deferred as there was late information that the committee had not had sight of; alongside this, Councillor Parry requested a site visit be organised for the site and that the application be brought to the next meeting to ensure that the delay had no impact on the determination of the application. Councillor Peter Scott seconded the proposal.

VOTE –

For Deferral – 14
Abstain – 0
Refuse – 0

RESOLVED that the planning application be ***DEFERRED***.

6 REVIEW OF MEMBER TRAINING PROTOCOL

The Development Manager introduced a report outlining suggested amendments to the Member Training Protocol (Planning). If agreed by the Planning Committee, the new version of the Member Training Protocol (Planning) was to be operational immediately (previously circulated).

The Member Training Protocol (Planning) was the document that sets out the need for Members to be kept up to date on the processes and procedures used within the Planning system and keep Members informed of any relevant changes in legislation. The Protocol outlines the required training level, what constitutes training, and how training would be recorded. Training ensures the Council's Planning Committee makes robust and defensible decisions on development proposals and other issues. Risks present themselves where Members are making decisions at Planning Committee — such as those involving planning appeals and legal challenges — without the requisite degree of knowledge. Without an adequate and appropriate level of training, Members of the Planning Committee would not be able to vote on planning matters at the committee.

Officers highlighted the change within the protocol (Paragraph V3 2); the change would acknowledge elements of Planning training which were not led by the Planning officers, as they would be connected to Planning in some way, and would benefit members. This change would require trust between members and officers.

The way training would be conducted was raised by members, and whether they could be carried out through hybrid means, officers stated that was a method which would be looked at; however, they felt that more in-depth training sessions would be beneficial to hold face to face as they were in their opinion were more engaging. Councillor Julie Matthews disagreed with the stance of in-person meetings being

more engaging; having all sessions as a hybrid would allow more members to engage with training.

Members were supportive of receiving any training which was available to them; they felt this would make more informed decisions, which would, in turn, protect them if those decisions were challenged.

The committee relayed to officers their concerns with the complex nature of planning and queried whether they could receive training on the more niche aspects of planning; officers clarified that knowledge of the matter would benefit members. However, they suggested briefing notes on the issues would most likely help rather than training sessions as there were numerous elements of planning which could be discussed.

RESOLVED that members of the Planning Committee note the content of the report and adopt the suggested changes to the Member Training Protocol (Planning).