

**Minutes of Little Bealings Parish Council meeting held at Bealings Village Hall at 7.30pm
on Friday 23 January 2015**

Present: Mrs F Rogers (Chairman), Mr D Hunter, Dr C Rowe and Mrs M Wilson

Also present: Mr J Tate, architect, and six residents

In attendance: Mrs C Ramsden, Clerk to the Council

1 Apologies and Declarations of Interest

Apologies were received from Mrs T Cornish (who had signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office on 17 January 2015), Mr B Rufford, and Mr D Wilson.

Dr Rowe and Mr Hunter declared a non-prejudicial personal interest in planning application DC/14/4251/FUL as nearby residents to the site.

2 Planning

Application

DC/14/4251/FUL: Erection of a new headquarters building for vehicle hire operator comprising of workshop, offices, associated parking, drainage infrastructure and landscaping to allow for the hire, storage, workshop and sales of vehicles and machinery.

During the period of public participation Mr Tate presented the planning application on behalf of the applicants, Trucks R Us, showing a scale model and plans. He advised that the application was for a new build for the Trucks R Us sale and hire business. The proposed site was adjacent to that of Fork Rent, for which planning permission had been given last year. The application included use of the main drive to the A1214, as for Fork Rent. The site was that of the old Cemex quarry and so was already bunded, with heath land and lakes. A traffic report had concluded that comparing traffic movements from Cemex operations in 2007 with the proposed Trucks R Us movements would mean a 'low to medium' impact on traffic on the A1214.

A ground condition survey had been carried in view of existing leaching problems from the old landfill site and an old diesel spill identified which would be cleared. The SSSI status of the adjacent land meant that drainage needed to be managed.

The existing BIFFA building would be demolished and replaced with a new building. The majority of the site would be hard standing for vehicles and the edges would be landscaped. The visual impact was low due to the existing bunding. The ridge height of the building would be 8m which was below the level of the bund.

An ecology survey had considered wildlife. Biodiversity would be improved by the development and lighting would be managed in view of the bats present. Some trees of low quality would be felled, to be replaced with new planting. Mature woodland trees would be retained, apart from two which were considered dangerous.

The building would be 'robust', built of steel and rendered with a muted colour to be 'quiet' in the landscape. It would comprise a workshop and offices. The site layout covered about one hectare, with the maintenance building in the centre. It would be screened by the woodland copse.

In response to questions from residents and Councillors Mr Tate said:

- There would be space to park 40 vehicles, but spaces would not be laid out as such as the site was basically a maintenance and wash-down yard and an office. The office would have good natural daylight and a low energy build was proposed. The building would be similar in style to the Fork Rent building, but much smaller. It would be adjacent to Fork rent and close to the Cemex operations.
- There would also be 25 vehicles for hire.
- There would be vehicles for sale as well as hire. The operating hours were proposed to be 7am – 7.30pm Monday to Friday and 7am – 1pm on Saturdays. There would be no Sunday working. Unlike the Fork Rent application there was no need for the site to open earlier than 7am.
- Up to 25 full time equivalent jobs would be created, both office and maintenance jobs.
- The development proposed less HGV movements than the Cemex operation, but more total vehicle movements.
- Landscaping and environmental improvements would be conditioned on the planning permission and would need to be carried out in the first planting season after permission was granted.
- There is no noise assessment accompanying the application. This is because pre-application advice from SCDC had not stated that a noise assessment was required. The pre-application advice received had been in the form of an email and advised that SCDC supported applications that created jobs and that the application would need to be supported by similar reports to the Fork Rent application.
- The application states that the site cannot be viewed from the footpath as this information is required by SCDC, in order to know whether it can view the site from the public highway or if it needs permission to visit the site from the applicant. Not all of the site can be seen from the footpath and so the application had to state this. It is not a statement which forms a part of the application. It is the case that the proposed building end will be seen from the footpath, but this will be 'through the Cemex park'.
- The Fork Rent application included vehicle movements which have now been extracted and included in the Trucks R Us application. There are therefore no additional vehicle movements.
- Cemex has retained a small part of the site for its cement operations. It owns the site freehold, but not the access track, which is thought to be owned by Mr Jolly. Both Fork Rent and Trucks R Us are limited companies. He has no knowledge of Bag Agg, a separate company, or whether it will continue its aggregate business at the site once Fork Rent and Trucks R Us are operating.
- He does not know the total noise impact as a result of Cemex, Fork Rent, Trucks R Us and Bag Agg all operating from the site. Only Trucks R Us would operate from the application site. He does not represent Bag Agg. He could not comment on a suggested figure that the noise level produced by Fork Rent, Trucks R Us and Bag Agg operating together would be twice the level produced when only Cemex operated on the site.
- The site comprised some 34 acres, of which, approximately, Fork Rent would use ten and Trucks R Us one. This left over 20 acres for other potential development.
- The granting of permission would be permanent, not time limited as with the Cemex

mineral extraction consent. The use of the site for B1 development would be permanent.

- The current traffic assessment relates only to the A1214 as that is the access road to be used by traffic to and from the site. It would be very difficult to assess whether the development would result in more traffic using Playford Road. He cannot advise how to restrict traffic from using Playford Road; perhaps by traffic calming measures.
- Kesgrave Town Council was aware of the application, but had not asked him to attend a meeting. He had been invited to attend a meeting by Playford Parish Council.
- Employees would transfer from the current Trucks R Us operation in Felixstowe Road, but this would only be around four employees. The development was expansion of the business.

Dr Rowe advised that it was impossible to consider the application without a noise assessment and that the site should be developed as a whole and not piecemeal. SCDC had not taken this on board and there was no overall assessment of the site. Mr Hunter commented that there was a further 20 acres which could be developed and each development was closer to Playford Road and Heath Lane (Laundry Cottages). The design of the site was not the issue; a noise assessment should be carried out, as required for the Cemex application.

Dr Rowe also advised that he had complained to Dr Poulter, MP, about SCDC's determination of the Fork Rent application and had been advised that SCDC was wrong not to require a noise assessment for that application. The decision could have been successfully challenged, but a legal challenge was beyond the means of the Council. A complaint to the Ombudsman would be time consuming and not achieve the overturning of the decision, merely criticism of SCDC and perhaps a limited amount of compensation. Proving a statutory noise nuisance would be very difficult to do.

The period of public participation in the meeting ended.

It was considered most important that a noise assessment was made, to consider the impact of this application in the light of the existing Bag Agg operations and the anticipated Fork Rent development.

It was **RESOLVED** that there was objection to the application on the grounds that:

- it was not possible to ascertain whether the application was compatible with SCDC Development Management Policy 23(d) without a noise assessment.
- the development would result in an increase in traffic along Playford Road as drivers sought to avoid the slower A1214, also in breach of Development Management Policy 23(d).

There being no further business to discuss the meeting closed at 8.05pm. The next meeting will be held on Monday 2 March 2015.