

BEARPARK PARISH COUNCIL

At a **meeting** of **Bearpark Parish Council** held on **Wednesday 27 June 2018** at **6.00 p.m.**

Present:

Councillor M Wright in the Chair.

Councillors G Hendry, E Hull, R Kemp, J Peart and M Wilson

18/32 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors N Anderson and M Chard.

18/33 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest in relation to any items of business on the agenda.

18/34 PLANNING APPLICATION

DM/18/00129/FPA - Development of 170 residential dwellings, including 34 no. affordable dwellings on Land to the rear of the Old Chapel, Colliery Road, Bearpark, DH7 7AU

The Chair welcomed representative from Taylor Wimpey to the meeting. Representatives had been asked to attend to provide an update regarding the planning application.

Taylor Wimpey representatives summarised that the planning application had been submitted a number of months ago. Various consultations had taken place as part of the planning process. This involved public and statutory stakeholder consultations.

The applicant was due to make some formal amendments to the application. The amendments were required due to formal objections being submitted by the Highways Authority.

The Council were informed of some of the issues that had been highlighted, which included the upgrading of Colliery Road, Auton Stile junction, traffic speeds, highways safety and rat-running. There had also been request to provide further information as to how the junction would operate in terms of visibility splays and further details/monitoring of the numbers of trips the site would generate.

The Council and applicant discussed the design and connectivity of the site to local bus services and a potential footpath link to the more regular bus service in the village. The linked footpath area between Cook Avenue and Beaurepaire was seen as positive in terms of the overall development and would potentially be catered for through ringfenced section 106 monies to the local planning authority.

An update was provided on S106 financial contribution and what these would be ringfenced to, e.g. open space, school, bus provision etc.

The applicant had held positive discussions with Durham County Council and additional works to the scheme were currently being costed.

Resolved

- (i) That representations be drafted in response to the planning application, with details of areas of support, concern and objection.
- (ii) That negotiations commence regarding the potential acquisition of open space adjacent to the site

18/35 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) 2017/18

The Clerk informed the Council that all parish councils were required to complete an AGAR as set out in the Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities. Sections 1-3 of the document were mandatory for completion. The Clerk advised that an internal audit had been undertaken as required and was set out in the AGAR. Due to recent legislative changes, councils with an annual turnover of less than £25,000 were no longer required to have an external audit of their accounts. Instead, they needed to comply with the mandatory Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities by publishing certain information online. The Clerk confirmed that Bearpark Parish Council were not required to have an external audit of their accounts. The Council would be required to publish the following documentation should they decide to exempt itself from a limited assurance review:

- the completed certificate of exemption;
- the public notice of electors rights;
- the completed, signed and dated annual internal audit report;
- the completed, approved, dated and signed annual governance statement; and
- the completed, approved, dated and signed summary of accounting statements

Resolved

That the Clerk having confirmed that the Council met the qualifying criteria, as set out in Regulation 9 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015, declare itself exempt from a limited assurance review and that the Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer and Chair be authorised to sign the Certificate of Exemption for submission to the External Auditor and publication on the Bearpark Parish Council website.

18/36 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2017/18

The Council then considered the annual governance statement for 2017/18. The Clerk explained that the purpose of the annual governance statement was for the council to report publicly on its arrangements for ensuring that business is conducted in accordance with the law, regulations and proper practices and that public money was safeguarded and properly accounted for. The return contained a number of statements, known as assertions, to which the reviewed and agreed to. Appropriate evidence was required to support a 'yes' answer.

Resolved

That the Annual Governance Statement for 2017/18 be agreed;

18/37 ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS 2017/18

The Clerk informed the Council that Section 2 of the annual return was essentially a statement of accounts in the form of a summary income and expenditure account and a statement of balances. Where an authority's gross income or expenditure was

not more than £200,000 for that year, or for either of the two immediately preceding financial years, the statement may take the form of a summary receipts and payments account. This was presented to the Council for approval, together with details of income and expenditure for 2017/18, a bank reconciliation and an explanation of variances.

Resolved

That the accounting statements for 2017/18 be approved.

The meeting closed at 6.50 p.m.