

County Council – 19 July 2019

Item 7(d) - Notice of Motion by Mr Jones

Prospective sale of County Council-owned land at Withy Patch - Briefing Note

Introduction

This is a complex site to bring forward for development and the County Council has a variety of interests which are explained below.

In October 2018 the Planning Committee of Adur District Council resolved to approve a planning application for 600 new houses and an Ikea store, to be built in Lancing on the site known as New Monks Farm, subject to completion of a section 106 planning agreement.

The County Council is a landowner of the gypsy and traveller site known as Withy Patch, which forms a small part of the land within the proposed development scheme of New Monks Farm and is located directly in the path of the proposed access to the site from the A27.

The County Council has been in negotiation with the developers (now known as The Community Stadium Ltd) regarding the sale of the land at Withy Patch and the provision of a new gypsy and traveller site within the New Monks Farm development but has yet to reach an agreement on this matter. The County Council has also been in negotiation regarding the S106 contributions towards education provision arising from the New Monks Farm development but has not yet reached an agreement on this matter.

Further work is being undertaken by the County Council's appointed valuers to understand the overall viability of the New Monks Farm development and how this affects the ability of the developer to deliver contributions for education and to reach an agreement on the value of the Withy Patch land.

Withy Patch - Land Ownership

The gypsy and traveller site is owned and managed by the County Council. The land has been used as a gypsy and traveller site since the late 1980's.

The site forms a part of the proposed access to the development. The developer has included within their proposals an alternative site for the relocation of the gypsy and traveller families and proposes to build a new purpose-built site.

There is currently no formal legal agreement in place between the developer and the Council for the use of Council land for the proposed access nor an agreement that the Council will dispose of the land. The value of the disposal of a County Council asset requires valuation in accordance with section 123 Local Government Act 1972 (to ensure best consideration).

It has been agreed that the developer will share further information with the Council's appointed valuers, Montagu Evans, to allow a better understanding of

the development's viability and to establish a position in relation to the valuation of the land. There are also covenant and title issues to resolve as part of any proposed land transfer.

Withy Patch - Gypsy and Traveller Site

Management of the County Council's gypsy and traveller sites was brought back in-house in November 2017.

The County Council has not directly sought the views of residents in respect of the planning application as that is a matter for the planning process managed by Adur District Council. Residents were actively engaged in responding to the planning application through a variety of channels. The County Council will engage with site residents directly to assist the preparation of any proposals prior to any decision to transfer the land. This stage has not yet been reached.

The developers propose to replace the gypsy and traveller site as part of the new development with improvements to the current amenities.

- The size of each individual plot is to be increased.
- Each plot would have a larger utility block with improved facilities sufficiently sized to allow for disability adaptations.
- Residents will purchase their water and electricity directly from the supplier of their choice reducing administration processes and costs.
- The site would eventually be on mains drainage reducing the inconvenience of current arrangements.
- The new site would pass to the ownership of the County Council. The only regular costs to the Council would be for electrical supply to the communal area street lighting together with ongoing maintenance as is the case currently with Withy Patch and all other sites.

Adur and Worthing Growth Deal

- Delivering growth at New Monks Farm is a priority in the Adur and Worthing Growth Deal signed in March 2017 and includes a commitment to resolve the property position in relation to Withy Patch.
- The planning permission subject to a s106 agreement is for a development of 600 homes (30% affordable) and an Ikea superstore.
- The development is intended to contribute 875 jobs to the local economy, circa 400 of which are directly related to the Ikea store and include an Apprenticeship Programme.
- The provision of 600 new dwellings is intended to help meet the challenging housing requirements in an area with limited capacity.
- The whole development has the potential to add approximately £11.4m GVA to the local economy

Education Provision

Pupil projections based on the proposed housing numbers from both the New Monks Farm and West of Sompting developments project the need for a new 1 Form Entry (FE) primary school (210 pupils), but expandable to 2FE (420 pupils). Contributions from both developments will be needed to meet the

estimated £6m build costs for a new 1FE, expandable to 2FE, primary school. Costs are based on recent typical examples and may change subject to design, specification or market conditions.

The site at New Monks Farm is identified by the Council as needing to provide land and contributions (approximately £3.2m) towards a new 1FE expandable to 2FE primary school, with early years facilities. The west of Sompting site is to provide financial contributions (approx. £2.8m) towards the cost of providing the 1FE primary school plus early years facilities to mitigate the impact of its development. These contributions have yet to be secured and, without these developer contributions, the cost of providing the new primary school would fall upon the County Council.

Expansion of other local schools is not advised as this will require families to travel away from the New Monks Farm and West of Sompting developments to secure school places. Recent strategic site developments have all provided a new school on the site to minimise traffic movements and encourage parents/carers to walk or cycle their children to school.

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