

FROME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of an extra ordinary meeting of Frome Town Council

Wednesday 28 October 2020 at 7pm
Zoom

Present:

Councillors: Richard Ackroyd, Ali Barclay, Lizzie Boyle, Rob Collett, Anita Collier, Maxine Crawley, Mark Dorrington, Sheila Gore, Anne Hills, Paul Horton, John Nelson, Andy Palmer, Steve Tanner, Scott Ward, Andy Wrintmore

In attendance:

Chris Bennett (Selwood Parish Council), Paul Wynne (Town Clerk), Peter Wheelhouse (Deputy Town Clerk), Rachel Griffin (Marketing and Communications Manager), Jane Llewellyn (Planning and Development Manager), Laura Flaherty (Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk and Mayor)

35 members of the public

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2020/58/FC	<p>The meeting started at 7pm</p> <p>1a. Apologies for absence Received from Sara Butler</p> <p>1b. Declaration of members' interests Rich Ackroyd, Ali Barclay, Lizzie Boyle, Sheila Gore and Mark Dorrington declared pecuniary interests as shareholders of FRECO. Rich Ackroyd also declared personal interests as trustee of FORF, Missing Link and a Sustrans. Rob Collett declared a personal interest as a member of Extinction Rebellion.</p>	
2020/59/FC	<p>2. Questions and comments from the public and Cllrs None was received.</p>	
2020/60/FC	<p>3. For Decision – Response to pre-application consultation, Selwood Garden Community Jane Llewellyn gave a comprehensive summary of the report.</p> <p>Chris Bennett, Vice Chair of Selwood Parish Council explained that the Council had not fully committed to their position on the proposed development. They were aware of the positives but said they must guard against the negatives. He said it was important to have a common aim for the best outcome and if there was no coordination it could mean piecemeal development. Chris noted that they had gathered the opinions of those living in the Selwood Parish and communicated them to FTC. At the time the constituents were fairly negative.</p>	

FROME TOWN COUNCIL

	<p>Matt and Rebecka Mau asked how the development related to the Climate Emergency. They felt it was concrete heavy, there was no minimum car usage, they would be digging up green fields, none of the houses had passive status, they felt there was no forward thinking, no solar panels and no rain collection. They felt it should not go ahead if it was not carbon neutral. Jane explained that once the application was formally submitted it would be accompanied by a comprehensive statement which would hopefully answer some of their questions. Jane assured Matt and Rebecka that FTC would be keeping a close eye.</p> <p>Phillipa Clarke asked if there were brownfield sites in MDC. Jane said there were, but she was not familiar with the amount of housing that could be put on them but would ask MDC. She explained that it was however unlikely to be enough to provide this amount of additional housing. She noted that they were also reliant on owners of the land to make it available.</p> <p>John Clarke felt a planning balance should be considered. His opinion was that there would be lots of harm from this development, particularly to the biodiversity and climate. He felt it was not in the interests of Frome but just for profit. As there was no evidence of what residents needed and wanted, he asked if FTC would consider a review of the Neighbourhood Plan? Jane explained that now was not the time to review the plan. However, it was a formal process that would be lengthy and possibly longer than to determine the application. She also noted there had been a recent Government White Paper about planning reform, which at the time did not answer how review of Neighbourhood Plan's would be treated. In addition, the impacts of MDC's revisions of the Local Plan Part 1 were yet to be known.</p> <p>Andrew Carpenter had the opinion that the way people wanted to live and work will have been altered post COVID and this should be taken into account in the design.</p> <p>David Bailes asked if there would be a maximum size of Frome in the future? Jane explained that MDC set out figures in the Local Plan that covered twenty years. Jane expected that the Selwood Garden Community proposals would make a significant contribution to meeting MDC's housing needs. Anita Collier felt a limit would be needed. She felt it was fine to support the right larger developments as long as they had the right infrastructure. She said she would hate to see the market town to become so large that Frome become anonymous.</p> <p>A member of the public, Caspar, asked how could the council have a position without much information? Jane clarified FTC were giving a</p>	JL
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FROME TOWN COUNCIL

view, with the expectation of influencing the plans before they were submitted. When the further information was available then FTC would have a position.

Pippa Howell asked if there would be an ability to grow food? Rich Ackroyd noted how he was often saddened new developments had very small gardens if at all. This development had a green area of 50% but it was not known how that would translate to garden space.

Trevor Mills asked if FTC supported blanket tree protection? Cllrs discussed offering their support and the work and report already done by Julian Height. It was noted that a proposal for support could be taken to a future FTC meeting.

Ali and Iain Ballamy were worried about representation particularly during a pandemic. Paul Wynne said FTC was trying had to use all the ways to communicate it had to try hard to involve all residents. FTC put information in the local press, used noticeboards and social media.

Trevor Mills expressed concern that there was only one primary, medical practice. He asked how could the size of development be justified with little infrastructure? Jane said that his concerns were shared by FTC and would be raising these with public health as well as the education authorities. Initially it was understood the NHS did not want to provide facilities as part of the development. FTC would have further conversations to understand all positions.

There was discussion about the impact of traffic and exacerbating the problems already existing in Frome. Jane noted that the developers had stated as part of an outline application they would submit a series of design codes, which would indicate materials, layouts, heights and the sustainability standards. She explained this was not normally seen with an outline application.

Paul Horton felt the vision was not good enough and needed to be better. His opinion was that there was an opportunity to change the culture of car dominance by the residents being very demanding.

Andy Palmer and Andy Wrintmore had an issue with using brownfield sites and providing no additional infrastructure. They felt Frome needed to take its share of housing and SGC could be a good way forward. However, it needed infrastructure and s106 agreements to ensure a quality development. They were not convinced the amount of housing proposed was needed. Andy Wrintmore also felt the residents of the Mount should be given an opportunity to give their opinion as they were often left out.

FROME TOWN COUNCIL

	<p>Anita Collier said the response had been excellent. Her concerns were around traffic and infrastructure.</p> <p>Rich Ackroyd felt Frome had suffered from no joined up thinking in planning. He felt it was important to have a ten or twenty year plan for the town.</p> <p>Lizzie Boyle felt the vision was not there yet particularly around environmental sustainability. She was also concerned about governance and accountability: how could FTC ensure this happened and the community had an active voice. Lizzie suggested citizens panels and assemblies to create ongoing dialogue.</p> <p>Mark Dorrington was concerned about transport and felt a complete town wide review was required that incorporated future development. He called for MDC Cllrs to influence decisions around this.</p> <p>Sheila Gore was grateful to all who had got informed and involved to help FTC. She felt FTC needed to make a stronger response and keep consulting with all the surrounding councils.</p> <p>Steve Tanner proposed to delegate authority to the Planning and Development Manager to strengthen FTC's response, seconded by John Nelson and agreed by majority.</p> <p>The recommendation was for Cllrs to agree the report as a formal response to the pre-application consultation.</p> <p>Proposed by Sheila Gore, seconded by Rich Ackroyd, agreed by majority.</p>	<p>JL</p>
<p>2020/61/FC</p>	<p>The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 18 November 2020 on Zoom.</p>	

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.50pm