

MINUTES of the meeting of the PLANNING COMMITTEE held at Mountfield, Bridport on Monday 2 December 2024 at 7.00pm.

PRESENT Cllr Ian Bark (in the chair)

Cllrs: Nigel Amor, Jonathan Bourbon, Kelvin Clayton, Anna Killick, Paddy Mooney, Anne Rickard and David Worthington.

ALSO PRESENT: Jonathan Hill (Route Manager, National Highways) and Andrew Gayle (Network Manager, National Highways), and Will Austin (Town Clerk).

PUBLIC FORUM

Jonathan Hill (Route Manager) and Andrew Gayle (Network Manager) of National Highways presented to members on planning application P/FUL/2024/06791, proposing the repurposing of the A35 Eype Picnic Area for a maintenance compound. Messrs Hill and Gayle advised that:

- The existing third party contract for maintenance of the A35 was to end in 2026, and responsibility would return in-house;
- National Highways had no suitable premises along the route and a depot was needed;
- The Eype site was owned by National Highways, and a lease covering the café expired in January 2025, so this site represented a good opportunity to deploy rapidly and easily;
- Acquisition of other land would be expensive to the taxpayer;
- An extension to the café lease would be on a rolling three-month basis;
- The revised site would be designed for operational maintenance, including safety and asset inspections;
- The plans, circulated at the meeting, included a revised entrance, parking, offices, a garage, a salt barn, and storage;
- Solar panels would be incorporated as part of the drive towards net zero;
- A pond would provide for surface water run-off;
- The site would serve the A35 from BEre Regis to Honiton;
- Employment opportunities were possible, for operators, inspectors, and junior managers;
- There would be additional screening of the area; and
- National Highways had engaged with neighbouring residents, the constituency MP, the café business, and councils.

The Town Clerk displayed plans from the application, and explained that the timing of the application meant that it would not be tabled formally as an agenda item, and a response was required prior to the next committee meeting. As a consequence, members' comments were sought informally

and the Town Council's response would be agreed under delegation.
Members discussed:

- Three other sites that had been considered by National Highways and ruled out;
- The possibility of retaining some public parking, including for visitors to Eype. National Highways considered that this would represent too great a safety risk;
- Whether neighbouring verges could be adapted for public parking;
- The challenge of assessing current usage given the screening in place;
- The loss of a stopping point for motorists;
- Some concern about the 'industrialisation' of the site;
- The need to engage with residents, and Highlands End Holiday Park;
- The height of a proposed communications tower;
- The fact that the existing site was not designed for freight;
- The need for a construction traffic management plan, and this to ensure that works were separate from the construction of the Miles Cross junction;
- Whether the former Askerswell Motel site could be used. National Highways advised that this was not state-owned so was not so readily available as a maintenance site, and not easily accessible is re-purposed as a public stopping point;
- A need for clear signage to alternative parking and facilities;
- Whether the existing contractor had facilities that could be used. National Highways advised that there was no such site on this length of the A35, and that a localised facility was considered critical;
- The potential benefits to the road, and to the community, from a local maintenance base;
- The environmental enhancements included in the proposals; and
- Concern to ensure that access arrangements minimised the risk of accidents and preferably, reduced the risk.

Members indicated informally that they were in principle supportive of the application, provided the proposals incorporated consideration of alternative facilities for motorists. National Highways indicated a willingness to invest in upgraded facilities elsewhere, such as at Bridport Football Club Car Park.

The Mayor thanked National Highways for their attendance, and advised members that the Town Clerk would circulate a draft response for comment, and for approval under delegation.

60. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Sarah Carney.

61. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Paddy Mooney declared an interest in application P/FUL/2024/06045 as Vice-President of Bridport Rugby Club.

62. MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 4 November 2024 be confirmed as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

63. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

RESOLVED: that the recommendations set out in column 4 of the attached [Schedule A](#) be forwarded to Dorset Council.

64. PLANNING DECISIONS

The Town Clerk reported for information, the planning decisions received relating to applications previously considered by the Committee, ENCL: 3944.

RESOLVED: that the planning decisions be noted.

65. BRIDPORT AREA NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The minutes of the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan JCC meeting on 28 November 2024 were not available for adoption and this item was deferred.

66. FOUNDRY LEA WORKING GROUP

The notes of the Foundry Lea Working Group on 13 November 2024 were received at the meeting.

Members discussed:

- Whether shared ownership arrangements would allow 'staircasing' up to 100%. The Town Clerk advised that this could be considered at the next working group meeting.
- Whether a tour of the site could be arranged for members. The Town Clerk advised he would request this.
- Concerns about flooding, and in particular the off-site impact of run-off to West Bay. The Town Clerk suggested members consider inviting the Environment Agency to discuss the impact.

RESOLVED: that the notes of the Foundry Lea Working Group on 13 November 2024 be received and noted.

67. HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION MATTERS

There were no Highways and Transportation matters raised at the meeting.

68. LICENSING APPLICATIONS

No licensing applications had been received for consideration at the meeting.

69. COMMUNICATIONS AND ONGOING ISSUES

No matters were raised for information.

The meeting closed at 8.26pm.

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 6 January 2025