



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY 28 OCTOBER 2014
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON**

Committee Members Present:

Councillor N Hampshire (Convener)
Councillor S Akhtar
Councillor D Berry
Provost L Broun-Lindsay
Councillor J Caldwell
Councillor S Currie
Councillor T Day
Councillor A Forrest
Councillor J Gillies
Councillor J Goodfellow
Councillor D Grant
Councillor W Innes
Councillor M Libberton
Councillor F McAllister
Councillor P MacKenzie
Councillor P McLennan
Councillor K McLeod
Councillor J McMillan
Councillor T Trotter
Councillor M Veitch

Council Officials Present:

Mr D Proudfoot, Acting Head of Development
Mr I McFarlane, Service Manager – Planning
Ms M Ferguson, Service Manager – Legal and Procurement
Ms E Wilson, Service Manager – Economic Development and Strategic Investment
Mr D Irving, Acting Senior Planner
Ms C Molloy, Senior Solicitor
Mr M Greenshields, Transportation Planning Officer

Clerk:

Ms A Smith

Visitors Present:

Mr C McPherson, Manse LLP

Apologies:

Councillor S Brown
Councillor J McNeil
Councillor J Williamson

Declarations of Interest:

None

1. PRE-DETERMINATION HEARING: PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 14/00219/PM – PLANNING PERMISSION FOR ERECTION OF 112 HOUSES, INDUSTRIAL UNITS (CLASS 4 USE), PUB/RESTAURANT AND ASSOCIATED WORKS ON LAND AT THE FORMER GATESIDE COMMERCE PARK, HADDINGTON

The Convener reminded Members of the pre-determination hearing procedure.

The Service Manager for Planning, Iain McFarlane, presented the report, providing a brief outline of the development proposal and summaries of the development plan policies and other material considerations, consultation responses and public representations. The full planning assessment would be provided to Members at the determination stage at the Council meeting.

Mr McFarlane advised that since the report had been finalised the applicant had submitted revised phasing plans for 5 years, was originally 4 years, in response to comments from the Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services) regarding education provision at Haddington Infant School. Following assessment of this, the Depute Chief Executive confirmed that if this longer phasing was adhered to he would be prepared to withdraw his objection subject to developer contributions of £572.32 per housing unit (£59,050) for Haddington Infant School, whilst for Knox Academy the required contribution for additional capacity would be £1,970 per unit (£220,640). On the basis of this condition the Depute Chief Executive would withdraw his objection if the Committee was minded to grant permission and if phasing was made a condition of the planning permission and the financial contributions were the subject to a Section 75 Agreement.

He informed Members of a further revision. Road Services indicated, in relation to the signalisation of the junction at Gateside and Letham Mains, that the financial contribution required from the applicant would be £30,000; again, this would be the subject of a Section 75 Agreement.

Mr McFarlane responded to questions from Councillor Berry regarding distance from Gateside to the Infant School and alternative commercial land. He referred to safe routes to school as confirmed by Transportation. He advised that commercial land availability was very limited; the Economic Development and Strategic Investment Service had expressed concern about the application, as detailed in the report and objected to the proposal.

Mr McPherson, Development Director of Manse LLP, site co-owners, informed Members that this application proposed a mixed-use development of 112 houses, 25% of which would be affordable (28 units), a pub/restaurant and 14 business units, all of which could provide 100 new jobs over the next 2/3 years. The current buildings on this site had been vacant for many years due to lack of demand for this size/type of building, in this location. The application was recommended for refusal however the education issue had now been addressed. He outlined 4 key points:

1 Refusal of this application would not mean retention of the existing buildings, they were vacant and obsolete – a demolition warrant had been granted and the buildings would soon be removed.

2 In relation to setting a precedent, given that planning permission for the adjacent sites, both east and west, had already been granted, this application was following rather than setting a precedent. This former commerce park was the preferred site for development and the proposal would provide greater employment space.

3 The recommendation for refusal referred to Interim Planning Guidance tests regarding land supply, stating the desirability of securing housing did not outweigh the need for land for economic purposes. Contrary to statements in the report, the applicants believed the proposal did meet all the relevant criteria.

4 Given the brownfield nature of the site, this was the only site in Haddington that had existing sewerage capacity and could deliver housing and employment opportunities in the next 2/3 years.

In conclusion, this proposal would provide the opportunity for much needed new housing and new employment infrastructure, tailored to local demands. It would allow development on an otherwise stagnating site. If approved, construction would begin in early 2015. Dialogue was ongoing with a potential pub/restaurant owner. It was very important to initiate development at this side of Haddington.

Members questioned Mr McPherson on a number of aspects of the application, particularly employment opportunities, the demand for a pub/restaurant and viability/deliverability of the industrial units.

The Convener reiterated that the application would be determined at the Council meeting which would follow this pre-determination hearing.

Signed

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Councillor Norman Hampshire
Convener of the Planning Committee