

North Yorkshire County Council

Planning and Regulatory Functions Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Northallerton on 2 April 2019 at 10.00 am.

Present:-

County Councillors Peter Sowray (Chairman), David Blades, Eric Broadbent, Robert Heseltine, David Hugill, Mike Jordan, Zoe Metcalfe, Richard Musgrave, Chris Pearson, and Clive Pearson.

County Councillor Bryn Griffiths was in attendance.

There were four members of the public and one representative of the press in attendance.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

84. Minutes

The Head of Planning Services provided an update in relation to application C2/18/01876/CCC - (NY/2018/0104/FUL) - Erection of an anaerobic digester plant and facilities Sowerton Farm Yard, Sykes Lane, Tollerton, noting that the applicant had appealed against the Committee's decision to refuse the application. The appeal papers were now with the Planning Inspectorate and a start date for the appeal was now awaited.

Resolved -

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2019, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

85. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

86. Public Questions or Statements

The representative of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) stated that, apart from the people who had registered to speak in respect of the application below, and who would be invited to do so during consideration of that item, there were no questions or statements from members of the public.

87. C2/18/01581/CCC - (NY/2018/01510/FUL) - Widening of Tanton Bridge (Grade II Listed), construction of new abutments and arch wing, spandrel wall, wingwalls and parapet and dismantling and rebuilding of all sections of parapet using existing stone, erection of 1.4 metre high 4 post and rail fence and soft landscaping works at Tanton Bridge, Stokesley, North Yorkshire

Considered -

The report of the Corporate Director - Business and Environmental Services requesting Members to determine a planning application for the widening of Tanton Bridge, as detailed above.

The application was subject to four objections having been raised in respect of the proposal on the grounds of need for development, inaccuracies within information submitted as part of the planning application including plans and elevations, accident data, general bridge information and measurements re vehicular space for passing, disturbance to locality in terms of road closure while works take place and road safety.

Mr Richard Agar, local resident, addressed the Committee, outlining the following:-

- ◆ He raised concerns in respect of road safety, inaccuracies within the information submitted as part of the planning application, including plans and elevations, noting that the questions raised by both him as an objector and Stokesley Town Council, in relation to the application, had not been answered satisfactorily.
- ◆ He noted that he lived at Tanton Hall Farm, and had done so since 1986, but did not believe that the report recognised the existence of his property.
- ◆ He considered that the proposal would increase the speed of traffic across the bridge, and on the roads approaching the bridge.
- ◆ He noted that there had been no serious accidents on the bridge itself, to his knowledge, however there had been a number of accidents, including fatalities, over the previous ten years, on the road approaching the bridge.
- ◆ He suggested that the proposals to widen the bridge would increase speeds on the road and the alterations to the approach to the bridge would heighten the possibility of serious accidents. He stated that he would not want further fatalities to occur on the road and have not spoken out against the proposals. He suggested that Members were fully aware of the potential for accidents on the road and considered the issue of “corporate manslaughter” should be taken account of should the proposal be approved and a subsequent fatality occurred.
- ◆ He did not believe that health and safety concerns had been addressed through the consultations with statutory consultees. He noted that he had met with health and safety officials, at the site and did not believe that sufficient consideration was being given to the road approaching the bridge, only the site itself.

County Councillor Bryn Griffiths, local Member for the application area, addressed the Committee, highlighting the following:-

- ◆ He had lived in Stokesley for around 45 years and had seen a notable increase in vehicles passing through the area in recent times, due to increased housing developments in the area.
- ◆ Many local residents used the road that passes across Tanton Bridge to access employment in Teesside, therefore, there was a large amount of traffic travelling in both directions particularly at peak periods.
- ◆ A number of years ago a weight limit was introduced along the road, and the bridge, to prevent HGVs from travelling along there.
- ◆ There had been a number of accidents along the road approaching the bridge, ranging from minor to serious with fatalities.
- ◆ He noted that more housing developments had been agreed and were proposed for the Stokesley area, which would only lead to an increase in traffic along the road and, potentially, further accidents.
- ◆ He stated that he supported the application in principle but wanted to ensure that every effort was made to alleviate accidents along the road approaching the bridge through the proposals and suggested that further work would be required to address that.
- ◆ He also noted that the route contained the National Cycleway and he would like adequate provision for cyclists.

A representative of the Head of Planning Services presented the Committee report, highlighting the proposal, the site description, the consultations that had taken place, the advertisement and representations, planning guidance and policy, planning considerations and provided a conclusion and recommendation.

Detailed plans, photographs and visual information were presented to complement the report. Issues from the report were highlighted specifically to address the concerns that had been expressed during the public statements.

As an update to the report she noted that a listed building application was required and, under the appropriate regulations, this had been made to Hambleton District Council with a recommendation for approval. Hambleton District Council would now consider the listed building application and would refer the matter to the Secretary of State for determination.

Members undertook a discussion of the application and the following issues and points were raised:-

- ◆ Noting the issues raised in relation to the safety of the road, a Member asked whether the issues raised by the public speaker had been taken account of. In response it was stated that the matter had been the subject of consultation with the Highways Authority and various options had been explored, with the proposal being the most appropriate in terms of safety, in the opinion of the Highways Authority.
- ◆ Noting the issues raised by Historic England in relation to alternative methods of addressing the situation, a Member asked what these were and whether they involved traffic lights. In response it was noted that Option 5 had considered narrowing the highway access across the bridge and using traffic controls, which

was the option preferred by Historic England. The option had been considered by the Highways Agency, but it had been suggested that this would lead to extensive queuing traffic in the area, and the option chosen allowed for traffic to move more freely and more safely.

- ◆ A Member asked whether a realignment of the road would be undertaken in terms of white lining, etc to take account of previous incidents on the bridge where damage had occurred, so as to try and avoid that. In response it was stated that the proposed white lineage would split the bridge evenly for two-way traffic. Checks would be made to determine whether there would be an onus on one side of the road to try and prevent accidents and those details would be fed back to the Member. It was noted that the current weight limit of 7.5 tonnes would remain.
- ◆ It was noted that there would be considerable disruption in the area when the works took place and a Member asked whether a Traffic Management Plan was available detailing where the diverted traffic would be directed to during that period. In response it was stated that a plan had not been developed as yet, however, a request would be made for that information and provided to the Member.
- ◆ Clarification was provided that the Local Planning Authority referred to in Condition 5 was North Yorkshire County Council, as opposed to the Local Planning Authority referred to in paragraph 8.4 which was Hambleton District Council.
- ◆ A Member asked what justification there was for making the alterations to the bridge, so that it could accommodate HGVs, given that there was a weight limit on it. It was clarified that the weight limit referred to the highway, rather than the bridge, however, the Member again wondered about the justification if HGVs were unable to use the highway that crossed the bridge. In response it was stated that damage could be seen on the bridge where vehicles had found it difficult to manoeuvre, therefore, there was justification for making the alterations, as vehicles that did not exceed the weight limit were also finding it difficult to navigate the current arrangements. It was also noted that there would be a right of access for vehicles using local businesses, which could be above the weight limit.
- ◆ A Member considered that more thought was required in terms of the traffic management system that would be in place when the works were undertaken and in terms of ensuring the highway approaching the bridge was as safe as possible, given that the bridge would be wider and could accommodate traffic at greater speeds.
- ◆ A Member considered that the widening of the bridge would increase the amount of traffic using the road and noted that other local authorities address such situations by narrowing bridge access and providing traffic controls at either end.
- ◆ A Member considered that the proposal provided the most effective method of addressing public safety in terms of alterations to the bridge. He noted that this method was being undertaken on bridges throughout North Yorkshire, that there were no material considerations that could lead to a refusal of the application and that the benefits of the proposal outweighed the negatives. A number of Members concurred with the points made, stating that public safety was paramount in terms of the alterations proposed and noted that safety had been addressed extensively in terms of the proposals suggested.
- ◆ It was clarified that the alterations would not alter the Grade 2 Listed status of the bridge.

Resolved -

That the application be approved for the reasons stated within the report and subject to the conditions detailed.

88. Items dealt with under the Scheme of Delegation

Considered -

The report of the Corporate Director - Business and Environmental Services outlining items dealt with under the Scheme of Delegation for the period 28 January 2019 to 3 March 2019, inclusive.

Resolved -

That the report be noted.

The meeting concluded at 10.35 am

SL/JR