

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

COUNCIL HELD ON 02 JULY 2020

QUESTION from the Wolds Community, in relation to Item 14 – Decision Making Recovery Plan.

Hello,

To ensure the democratic process is followed and this is put into proper context, we request that this question can be read out in full at the council meeting on 2nd of July 2020.

This question is about Item 14, The Decision Making Recovery Plan, relating to section 3.6 Planning Committees with specific reference to the phrase "to determine a small number of applications, which have attracted significant opposition" which is on page 105 of the agenda.

Will this council give assurance that:

- 1 The application 18/01242/EIA will **not** be brought before a virtual or online committee either on, before or after 22nd July 2020 and...*
- 2 A decision on this application will **not** take place until such time that full public participation can safely take place at a face to face meeting of the Planning Committee and...*
- 3 This major decision will be postponed until such time as a robust investigation has been undertaken regarding the Bentley Brook catchment as outlined and recommended by the Environment Agency in their letter of 4th February 2020.*

If these assurances are not given this will be discriminatory against those who cannot engage in a virtual meeting thus eroding democratic rights. It will not give the Environment Agency opportunity to carry out further investigations which it has deemed necessary in relation to the application and its potential detrimental impact on their flood defence asset at Knowleston Place, Matlock. It will also undermine the right to make personal representation to council or committee.

Trust all are safe and well,

Regards,

Wolds Community

ANSWER

1. None of us can be absolutely certain what will happen in respect of the current Covid-19 restrictions and the ability to hold full meetings of the Council and its Committees 'in person'. However, the Council recognises that this application will generate a great deal of public interest when it is ready to be determined and that this would be best serviced through a public

meeting of the Planning Committee. It is not the intention of the Council to bring this application before a virtual meeting of the Planning Committee.

2. As per the answer to question 1, the Council recognises that the amount of public interest in this planning application will require robust public participation. Whilst none of us can guarantee the future in relation to Covid-19 restrictions it is the intention of the Council to enable this through a face to face meeting of the Planning Committee if possible.
 3. The applicant has been asked to undertake analysis on the impacts of the development on the Bentley Brook catchment and this will be made available to the Environment Agency and the Lead Local Flood Authority prior to the application being considered by Committee. Those agencies' opinions on the adequacy or otherwise of the assessment will form part of the officer's report and will be considered by the Planning Committee.
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QUESTION from Ms Lynn Irving on behalf of Hathersage Rewilding Group,
on the conservation and biodiversity of green spaces with the District.

“The Hathersage Rewilding Group is working with the Parish Council to conserve and enhance biodiversity within our green spaces. Therefore we were pleased to note from the minutes of the January meeting (item 270/19) that the District Council is working with the County Council with regard to the mowing of verges and the possible creation of ‘wildlife corridors’.

In item 271/19, members also discussed a motion to trial an alternative to the pesticide glyphosate and agreed to refer the motion to the Community & Environment Committee for a detailed report. We are very concerned about the use of glyphosate, which is “probably carcinogenic to humans” (World Health Organisation), and which has also been shown to be harmful to wildlife such as amphibians, bees and other invertebrates. My question is: “When can we expect the proposed report to be completed and any recommendations referred back to full Council for a decision to be made?”

Lynne Irving

(On behalf of Hathersage Rewilding Group)

ANSWER

The Council has responded to the concerns surrounding the use of glyphosate by significantly reducing its use by our Clean & Green team. It is now only used in certain situations by staff wearing the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment and with no members of the public present.

Although the Council’s weed spraying contractor is still using glyphosate, discussions are underway to consider a suitable alternative. We are currently in year 2 of a 3 year contract.

Our Clean & Green team have continued to trail and review alternative treatments and we remain committed to finding a suitable alternative. At this present time, there are two products currently being assessed and two more arriving this month. A report on this matter will be presented to Members in September.

QUESTION from Ms Hilary Hart a Grindleford resident, on the use of pesticides.

“Why? Why is the outdated and dangerous practice of spraying Roundup continuing against the wishes of the local residents who have to suffer the immediate effects of it (along with the danger to their pets)? Grindleford was subjected to this on June 25th. Many residents are deeply concerned.

A brief synopsis for your information, in case the wider world has eluded the District Council's notice: Roundup is banned in the EU and this was the 2019 US ruling:

Juries in three U.S. lawsuits in the last year have ruled that Monsanto's glyphosate-based Roundup herbicide caused or significantly contributed to the onset of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, a life-threatening immune system cancer. Over US\$2-billion has been awarded in damages to four victims, and over 13,000 other lawsuits are now pending.

Particularly in National Parks, we are the guardians of our unique countryside heritage and in the Peak District we are encouraging wild flower verges, along with other beneficial wildlife and insect biodiversity. Your authorisation of the continuing use of Roundup liquidates any possibility of this.

From a nationwide view, Roundup is proven to kill bees. Without these there will be no future.

This is not a party political matter; it's a grave environmental concern for all of us. Please be good enough to explain just how your Council came to such a dangerous, inappropriate and ill-informed decision.”

Yours sincerely,

Hilary Hart

ANSWER

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QUESTION from Mr Dobbs an Ashbourne resident, on the Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR).

Could Council clarify when the Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) is to be published?

The Corporate Plan passed on 2nd March states the intention to;

*'Publish an Air Quality Monitoring Report **by July 2020** and where necessary commence appropriate mitigation measures and create an action plan by March 2021.'*

I appreciate that the Council have needed to operate with changed priorities in the last 3 months, due to the pandemic.

However it is possible that there has been a greater impact on life expectancy and health from the high levels of air pollution in Ashbourne, than the prevalence of coronavirus.

Thank you,

Peter Dobbs

ANSWER

The Council's ability to publish its annual Air Quality Status Report has been impacted by the pandemic, not least by the fact that the laboratory that we use to analyse our monitoring devices was closed early in lockdown. That laboratory subsequently reopened and the results that we have received back from them have been made available.

Officers are now working with Defra to agree the final submission of the Status Report and the report will be published as soon as Defra have confirmed that they are happy for this to happen. Whilst we haven't been given a firm timescale, officers do not expect that there will be a long delay.
