

Notes from informal virtual meeting held Thursday 24 December 2020 – 09.35 to 10.00

RE: Planning & Sustainability PFH decision of 18 December 2020 of Planning Portfolio Holder Decision PLS-003: Adoption of Epping Forest SAC Interim Air Pollution Mitigation Strategy

In attendance (Members):

On behalf of the Call-in Members: Councillor C C Pond

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor N Bedford (Planning and Sustainability PFH)

O&S Committee Chairman: Councillor M Sartin

O&S Committee Vice-Chairman: Councillor R Jennings

In attendance (Officers):

G Blakemore, N Dawe, A Small, A Blom-Cooper, N Richardson, G Woodhall, V Messenger, S Kits

1. G Blakemore, Chief Executive, acted as Chairman for the meeting and Councillor M Sartin would be taking questions. Councillor C C Pond was asked to give his opening statement.
2. Councillor C C Pond stated that he did not have much to add to the reasons given in the call-in. The PFH Decision could not have any force in planning application determination. The Councillors that had called in the PFH decision had taken legal and other professional advice.
3. Councillor N Bedford said that the Council had followed due process and Natural England's response had given a holding position.
4. A Blom-Cooper (Service Manager (Planning Policy and Implementation)) said that the Council had been advised by Natural England that it could use the Epping Forest SAC Interim Air Pollution Mitigation Strategy. Cabinet had agreed in July 2020 on the principles of the mitigation strategy. The Council had taken into account Natural England's comments and the appropriate way to go forward was for the mitigation strategy to be embedded in policy. This policy would likely change over time.

5. Councillor C C Pond said that the call-in Councillors did not agree with this. There had been little point in holding this informal meeting, so the call-in should be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee when a meeting was convened.

6. Councillor M Sartin said that she was not hearing anything to facilitate a withdrawal of the call-in. The Chief Executive commented that as there were two opposing views here, the call-in should move to the next stage of the procedure and go to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

7. Councillor N Bedford commented that the Council had been mindful that it had followed the due process and had sought legal advice from Counsel. The Council had worked extensively with Natural England and therefore, had released this PFH decision. If legal consultation proved correct, he asked if officers could claim against costs as this call-in had caused a delay, especially to small builders waiting to receive planning decision notices to start building their developments. Councillor C C Pond replied that he had received numerous calls from aggrieved residents that this was the thin edge of the wedge. Councillor Bedford added that if the Local Plan was not agreed, the Government could step in and take over and allocate different housing quotations. Councillor C C Pond replied that he believed the City of York did not have a local Plan and the Government had not imposed one.

8. It was agreed that the call-in be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny on 7 January 2021 at 19.00 and that the agenda would be published today.

Vivienne Messenger (Democratic Services)

24 December 2020