

-----Original Message-----

From: John Bint <[REDACTED]> On Behalf Of John Bint

Sent: 18 March 2019 23:16

To: Simpson, Paul <[REDACTED]>

Subject: [EXT] FWD: Scope for External Review of Blakelands Warehouse Planning Application Process

Paul,

In an attempt to be helpful, can I expand on my second point below (about growing concerns over officers misinforming DCC) and give you more scope to paraphrase it if you feel that's appropriate. I would be entirely comfortable if you prefer to phrase it as

- the quality, accuracy and clarity/transparency of advice from officers to members, in connection with this site (and any other planning applications over the same period of time that Members feel are relevant); to cover the formal report, written updates, and any other information/advice supplied by officers. In the case of Blakelands, to cover the May 2017 meeting where it was resolved to grant permission with 23 conditions, the April 2018 officer report, subsequently withdrawn, which explicitly recommended varying one condition and adding an 11th condition, and the November 2018 report and meeting. To include, in all cases, the full list of officers involved in reviewing and approving draft committee reports.

In the light of information recently coming to light, can I add additional points as follows:

- The timing and content of all correspondence between officers and the Applicant (or their agents & solicitors), linked in to the point already raised about the timing of information being shared with other officers and shared with Councillors.
- A review of the Council's statement of case and other submissions to the JR process, for quality, accuracy consistency with other material.

Kind regards,

John Bint (Cllr)

Conservative Spokesperson for Planning, Transport & Highways.

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: John Bint <[REDACTED]>

To: "Simpson, Paul" <[REDACTED]>

Cc:

Date: Sat, 9 Mar 2019 09:18:34 +0000

Subject: re[2]: [EXT] Scope for External Review of Blakelands Warehouse Planning Application Process

Paul,

You invited comments from residents, other stakeholders, and Councillors, on the scope and terms of reference for the external investigation.

I would suggest that:

The investigation should look into all aspects of the handling of the application, from the date it was submitted (or from the beginning of any informal or formal pre-app discussions, if any took place), up to the date at which the consultant starts the investigation.

The investigation should particularly deal with the following aspects already identified as concerns:

- the missing planning conditions and the allegations that conditions to benefit the Council were all included but conditions to protect the residents were mostly omitted;
- the growing viewpoint (expressed by residents and some Committee Members) that the Committee was extensively misinformed by officers;
- the extent and nature of any other concerns raised by residents, parish councillors or Borough Councillors, over this period, about the balance, objectivity and professional independence of officer advice to DCC in connection with other planning applications or otherwise (eg officer proposals to revise the scheme of delegation and the public speaking arrangements);
- the timeline of the missing conditions coming to the attention of any individual officer and then officers and Councillors more widely, in the context of the time period in which the Council could have taken action to rectify the omissions;
- the decision to remove this case from a senior officer (thought to believe the facts would justify recommending refusal) to another, much less senior officer, on the apparent justification of case workload.

Cheers,

John Bint (Cllr)

----- Original Message -----

FROM: "Simpson, Paul" <[REDACTED]>

DATE: Wed, 6 Mar 2019 16:21:31 +0000

SUBJECT: Re: [EXT] Scope for External Review of Blakelands Warehouse Planning Application Process

Thx for this - as I set out last night, I am keen to ensure the Independent review covers all necessary ground in understanding the reasons behind the original decision, events leading up to it, the decision making process itself and all other pertinent matters.

I will happily acknowledge, as I did at the meeting, that this is not my area of expertise. That said I am confident that I can ensure it is a thorough, professional, robust, fair and transparent piece of work, that will take on board all stakeholder views and any information they have that is relevant; this quite clearly must include affected residents.

I do not wish to prejudice the review in any way and as such, whilst your information is extremely useful, (and please do feel free to share your other correspondence), I trust you understand that I will want to pass it to the appointed Independent person, to consider as part of their review.

Best regards

Paul

