

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE KIG JOINT PARISHES GROUP

Held on 17th June 2008 at 7.30pm.

Present: Representatives from the following Parish Councils:
Bearsted
Broomfield & Kingswood
Boxley
Downswood
Hollingbourne
Leeds
Lenham
Thurnham
Ulcombe

The meeting was chaired by Richard Jacques - TPC

Also in attendance: Mrs Sherrie Babington.

1. Apologies.

Apologies were received from Langley Parish Council.

2. Meeting with Lord Berkeley - arrangements

Richard Jacques informed all present that the sole purpose of this evenings meeting was to set the scene for Thursdays meeting with Lord Berkeley. He stated that Lord Berkeley was the Chairman of the All Parties Transport Group, he advised of the importance of working out the points to put to him at the meeting, and that these should be sensible and logical.

It was agreed that the points to put to Lord Berkeley had already been circulated to the members of the JPG in the form of the group's response to the planning application, the letter from Paul Carter and the Highway Agency's letter to MBC. He referred to a recent article in a planning publication written by Lord Berkeley in which he referred to the KIG proposals, he asked the Clerk to email a copy of this article to all JPG members.

Action: Email article to all JPG members as requested.

The meeting was discussed by all present, it was agreed that Lord Berkeley was likely to have been fully briefed prior to the meeting.

Richard Jacques informed all present that Lord Berkeley was due to arrive at 6pm and he would be taken on a short tour of the application site by Richard Jacques, John Horne and Mark Watts, he would then arrive at the Tudor Park Hotel by 7pm for a meeting with the JPG members. Richard Jacques stressed the importance of having as many parishes as possible represented at the forthcoming meeting.

Action: Clerk to email an urgent reminder to all group members.

The questions for discussion at the meeting were then considered by all present.

June Harrison asked for Lord Berkeley to be shown Bearsted Green and for it to be made clear that one warehouse would be 6 times the size of the green; Richard Jacques took this suggestion on board.

Peter Titchner spoke regarding the need for the meeting to be followed up with a paper outlining the points discussed at the meeting.

Geoff Licence spoke regarding the location of the development and the points to make regarding the area affected by the development.

Richard Jacques stated that the JPG needed to be cautious when putting across the facts regarding the number of people affected by the development due to its rural location.

Terry Laing spoke regarding his experience with regards to the freight industry and its logistics.

John Horne spoke regarding the documents supporting the planning application, he stated that in his view these were not professional and there was no common editorial theme. He questioned the hidden agenda and stated that parish councils needed to raise this question and questioned why AXA would be interested in investing in such a project.

Geoff Licence spoke regarding the planning application and how the South East of England would benefit from putting the depot in this area. He stated that AXA was one of the biggest insurance companies and they were sensible with their investments, he therefore felt that the application is a smoke screen for other development.

Richard Jacques suggested that this was a question that could be raised with Lord Berkeley. It was also suggested that the question could be raised as to how this provision would link in with similar depots.

A general discussion took place with regards to the affects of the current credit crunch and how this would affect AXA in terms of investment in the project.

It was stated that to date an estimated 3 million had been spent by AXA on putting the application together.

Paul Mace stated that pension funds could not be invested in residential development it had to be commercial. He stated that AXA's investment was in the infrastructure for the KIG and when this was fulfilled the site would then be classed as a brown field site. He stated that the planning requirement would have been met by AXA. The site would then be available for potential development. This was discussed further and agreed that this could be another option being considered by the developers.

Richard Jacques stated that in his view something was happening as since Easter things had been moving for some reason, he stated that this could be due to the fact that Highways deadline was approaching, however the group should expect other things to happen.

June Harrison suggested that Lord Berkeley could be asked what the motive was of AXA and then Paul Mace could respond with his assumptions.

A discussion took place with regards to the probable increase in lorry movements and support vehicles, which would be associated with the development. She questioned who would fund the upgrade of the highway infrastructure etc.

Richard Jacques stated that the Highways Agency letter to MBC criticised the traffic, however he stated that the Highways Agency could just accept the information provided by the applicant.

The effects of operation stack were discussed by all present and it was suggested that this was an area that could be raised. Richard Jacques reminded all present that Lord Berkeley was only expected to stay at the meeting for an hour, he stated that KCC had

put forward proposals for a solution to the problem and therefore he suggested that this might not be an appropriate use of the time, this was agreed by all present.

The manner in which to approach the points with Lord Berkeley was discussed and it was suggested that it may be more practical to approach these by asking for his assistance and advice rather than questioning his views.

Richard Jacques stated that he would draft a list of the questions to be raised for members to work on.

Members asked for Lord Berkeley to be briefed on the set up of the group and the amount of electorate that it represented. Richard Jacques confirmed that this was a matter that would be addressed during the site tour prior to the meeting.

It was agreed that the Environmental aspects and concerns needed to be addressed with Lord Berkeley.

Richard Jacques summarised the discussions of the meeting and the areas to be raised at Thursday's meeting.

He reminded members that a future meeting date did need to be arranged at some point to enable the group to consider the planning meeting and Neil Harris would be invited to this meeting, he asked members to email their preferred date the Clerk.

He also asked members to consider a request fro StopKIG to enter in a joint meeting at some point.

Richard Jacques thanked all present for attending the meeting and closed it at 9.15pm.