

DECISION ARISING FROM THE PRESENTATION OF A PETITION IN RELATION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF WHITTONS GARDENS – GAINSBOROUGH

Extract from Minutes of a Meeting of Full Council held on 4 March 2013

100 PRESENTATION OF PETITION – WHITTONS GARDENS

The Chairman welcomed the petitioners to the meeting and invited them to make their presentation to Council, in doing so they outlined the reasons for them having started the campaign. It was stressed that they were not opposed to the building of a hotel in Gainsborough but opposed to the proposed siting of the development. They were of the view that Whitton's Gardens belonged to the people of the town and should remain for their use. They disputed the financial business case, citing a number of nearby green spots they considered were ripe for developing and in the ownership of the Council. Concern was again expressed at the lack of public engagement and consultation which had been undertaken regarding the project and it was also stated that the concept had considerably changed since it had been first proposed. The petition cited some 800 signatures and Mr Mills considered this indicated the level of feeling amongst the towns people regarding the Project. In concluding Mr Mills indicated that he had recently met with senior Officers and Members of the Authority regarding the way forward and West Lindsey District Council had made an alternative offer, regarding identifying an alternative green space located with the South West Ward for public use. Mr Mills indicated that he would be happy to meet with Members and Officers again to further discuss the proposals over coming months.

The Chairman of the Prosperous Communities Committee outlined the nature of the discussions which had taken place with the petitioners and commented on the positive and constructive nature of the meeting. In essence, the outcome had been that assurances had been given that the Council would review its assets list with a view to identifying an alternative green space within the Ward, followed by a degree of public consultation during the Summer after which time the intention was to invite the petitioners back for further discussions.

On that basis it was moved and seconded that the matter be referred to the Prosperous Communities Committee to oversee.

However, there was an opposing view expressed with some Members feeling this was not about the land or hotel but was in fact a matter of principle and about how the Council should operate when embarking on large scale / sensitive proposals. It was also considered the alternative offer of land was not

comparable to what was being lost considering its riverside location and its use during major events within the town, one being the Riverside Festival.

The Leader of the Opposition raised various points regarding the bidding process, changes to the development, the lack of public consultation which had been undertaken and apparent disregard of resident's views and needs.

It was proposed and seconded that the Scheme should be put on hold, pending the holding of a public meeting / consultation event to ascertain the views of the towns people prior to the Scheme moving to the next stage. However on being put to the vote the motion was declared lost.

On that basis it was: -

RESOLVED that the matter be referred to the Prosperous Communities Committee for further investigation with a view to identifying an alternative green space within the South West Ward.