

29 RYE HIRE – POSSIBLE ACTIONS

At the Affordable Housing Working Group meeting held on 25 August 2021, those present took the opportunity to consider RDC's intention to develop its Cyrus Place site for housing (including 4 'affordable' units).

It was noted that, after a search of c2 years, the owner of Rye Hire had been unable to identify a suitable alternative site.

Whilst RDC has stated that it has no wish for Rye Hire to go out of business – and has not set a final date for the firm to vacate the site – it is pressing ahead with preparation for a planning application.

RTC remains opposed to the (enforced) relocation of Rye Hire.

Those attending the WG meeting agreed generally that the former TG School playing field is a more suitable site for affordable housing.

It was agreed that RDC's intention for its Cyprus Place site - set out within the current Alliance Homes (Rother) Business Plan - need to be publicised more widely – with a view to encouraging RDC to reconsider.

It was noted that Ben Hook (Alliance Homes lead officer – and now RDC Place & Climate Change Director) was amenable to outlining the purpose and objectives of Alliance Homes (Rother) to RTC Members – together with the officer responsible for taking forward the planning application – and a housing colleague who could address housing need. *[Possible dates are awaited.]*

Suggestions made during the meeting included:

- A leaflet drop to all residents (explaining the situation and what they can do about it).
- Some form of demonstration/protest.
- A public meeting (with Ben Hook/RDC Leader invited).
- A petition.

It was acknowledged that petitions can be of limited value.

Following the meeting

The Clerk (not present at the meeting) added:

- a) The relocation of Rye Hire conflicts with both the RNP (Policy B1 (p50) states: *Existing employment and business floor space will be safeguarded unless it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the LPA that the premises are no longer suitable for employment . . .)*

and the DaSA – which supports the retention of sites of economic value (subject to businesses being financially viable).

This was put to RDC's CEO last December. He replied that he was sure that Alliance Homes would run these considerations by Planning colleagues before work proceeded on a planning proposal. I presume this has happened and Planning has advised that work can continue. **However, it would be appropriate for RTC to request Planning's reasoning.**

Note: The above could form a key component of the objections to RDC's intended planning application.

- b) *Publicity etc* Once the weddings peak has passed (around mid-Sep) the TH office should have more time for **social media output**.

It might be quicker (and would guarantee wider coverage) **if the leaflet suggested went out with Fixtures**.

No councils are known to be organising (indoor) public meetings currently – and probably not for a while yet.

Given that all RDC Members are collectively responsible for signing off AH's Business Plan (which includes possible development of Cyprus Pace) I would suggest that **RTC emails each Member directly**.

However, when it comes to 'guiding' **members of the public** on making known their objections I would suggest we ask them to **focus on the Leader (Doug Oliver) and relevant portfolio holders - Christine Baylis (regeneration) and Jonathan Vine-Hall (planning)**.

RF 1.9.21