

THE DISTRICT COUNCIL OF CHESTER-LE-STREET

Report of the meeting of Planning Committee held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Newcastle Road, Chester-le-Street, Co Durham, DH3 3UT on Monday, 9 July 2007 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT:

Councillor George Keith Davidson, Councillor Lancelot Edward William Brown, Councillor Paul Ellis, Councillor David Michael Holding, Councillor William Laverick, Councillor Maureen Diana May, Councillor Philip Bernard Nathan, Councillor Michael Sekowski, Councillor Allen Turner and Councillor Frank Wilkinson

Officers: A Hutchinson (Head of Planning and Environmental Health), C Potter (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), S Reed (Acting Planning Services Manager) and D Chong (Planning Enforcement Officer)

Also in Attendance: Four members of the public.

16. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors A Humes, D L Robson, K Potts and R Harrison.

17. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: "That the Minutes of the proceedings of the Meeting of the Committee held 11 June 2007, copies of which had previously been circulated to each Member, be confirmed as being a correct record, subject to the address on page 23 of the report on Item 3 being amended to read '1 Ash Meadows, Picktree.'"

The Chairman proceeded to sign the minutes.

18. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

There were no declarations of interest received from Members.

19. CONFIRMATION OF SPEAKERS

The Chairman referred to the list of speakers, copies of which had previously been circulated to each Member and confirmed their attendance.

20. REPORT OF HEAD OF PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH - PLANNING MATTERS

A report from the Head of Planning and Environmental Health was considered, copies of which had previously been circulated to each Member.

(A) District Matters Withdrawn

Proposal: Construction of 109 bed residential care home including details of associated access, car parking, servicing, arrangement landscaping and boundary treatment

Location: Site of Former County Council Depot, Picktree Lane

Applicant: Premier Quality Developments Ltd – Reference 07/00160/FUL

The Acting Planning Services Manager advised that the applicant had withdrawn this item from being considered on the agenda.

(B) District Matters Recommended Refusal

Prior to consideration of the following item, the Acting Planning Services Manager referred to photographs in relation to this proposal, which were displayed for Members information.

(2) Proposal: Proposed change of use of games room to private members club

Location: White House, Greenford Lane, Ouston

Applicant: Sylvia Pallas – Reference – 07/00201/COU

Mr Hamilton, the applicant's agent spoke in relation to the application.

The Acting Planning Services Manager spoke in response to the comments raised by the speaker and advised of discussions Officers had held about the possibility of a 106 Agreement or a potential condition of planning permission that could be attached to this development, which may help overcome refusal reason number one in the report.

He advised however, that Officers did not favour this approach as one of the key tests of any such Agreement or condition was that it had to be enforceable and having regard to that test he did not feel that it would be practicable to enforce such an Agreement. He further advised that even if there were such an Agreement in place he would still have concerns that the development would increase the amount of vehicular traffic using this access point and as a result refusal reason number two would still remain.

He advised that he did not feel the comments the speaker had made in relation to the existing access to the North of the site at Bewicke Main Caravan Park had any relevance to this proposal. He reminded Members that they should consider each particular scheme on its own merits.

He advised that Durham County Council as the Highways Authority had looked at this particular scheme and were not satisfied that the access proposed for this site was acceptable, hence the refusal reason in the report.

He referred to a point listed in the report in relation to the advice in PPS7 that does encourage the development of rural facilities and amenities, which was a factor the applicant did have in favour of this proposal. Officers view however, was that this potential positive benefit of the application did not outweigh the negatives.

Members raised queries and concerns in relation to the proposal on the following issues:

- It was felt that the club would be more suitably located at the Bewicke Main Caravan Park Site.
- Concerns in relation to accessibility of the site for pedestrians and vehicular traffic.
- Concerns on the amount of increased traffic, which would be prejudicial to highway safety.
- Concerns on how this proposal could be enforced.
- Clarification on how the facilities were currently utilised.
- The number of members anticipated to be visiting the site.
- The type of activity proposed in the clubhouse.
- Clarification on current planning restrictions on the building.

The applicant's agent spoke in response to the queries raised by Members and the Acting Planning Services Manager addressed the comments made in relation to the planning aspects of the proposal.

Councillor Turner proposed to move the Officer's recommendation of refusal, which was seconded by Councillor Sekowski. It was agreed that the application be refused.

RESOLVED: "That the recommendation of the Head of Planning and Environmental Health for refusal in respect of the application be agreed, for the following reasons.

Extra 1: The proposed location of the development would, in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, represent an unsustainable location, encouraging the use of the private car and would therefore be contrary to the aims of Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 and Local Plan Policy T17.

Extra 2: The proposal would be contrary to Local Plan Policy T15 in that the accessibility of the site for pedestrians and drivers is likely to create conditions prejudicial to highway safety both in terms of the lack of a lit segregated footway from nearby settlements and the substandard vehicular access from the application site."

The meeting terminated at 6.35 pm