

Durham County Council

At a Meeting of the Planning Committee held at the County Hall, Durham on **Wednesday 16 April 2008 at 10.00 a.m.**

Present

Councillor R Rodgers* in the Chair

Councillors: Barker, Bell, Chapman, Coates, E Foster, N C Foster, Magee, Marshall, Shuttleworth, Walker, and Williams

Other Members:

Councillors Porter and Pye

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Armstrong, R Carr, Ebbatson and Young

A1 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2008 were confirmed by the Committee as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

A2 Applications to be determined by the County Council

Teesdale District: Proposed consolidation of future operations at Stainton Quarry including a proposed extension for the disposal of mineral waste generated by the cutting and dressing of stone on site, at Stainton Quarry, Stainton for Ennstone Building Products Limited.

The Head of Environment and Planning presented a report on the consolidation of future operations at Stainton Quarry including a proposed extension for the disposal of mineral waste generated by the cutting and dressing of stone on site, at Stainton Quarry, Stainton (for copy see file of Minutes).

During the presentation the Head of Environment and Planning highlighted the representations that had been received in respect of the application, including an objection from Stainton and Streatlam Parish Council. The Committee was informed of additional objections received from members of the public since the report was published and provided with a detailed response to these objections.

The Committee heard representations from Mr Peter Wilkinson on behalf of the Parish Council and as a resident of Hesley Rise.

Mr Wilkinson expressed his serious concerns on behalf of the Parish Councillor and local residents. He informed the Committee that there was now little extraction taking place on the site and most of the activity was concerned with the production of reconstituted blocks and he suggested there was little profit to be made from this activity. He was concerned that the application as originally submitted had included a new access road which has now been shelved. He also informed the Committee that Ennstone has a history of failing to meet its obligations and the requirement for the submission of a restoration scheme for the site has not been enforced.

He believed there were reasons not to grant the application based on issues of uncertainty surrounding the operation and that these were highlighted in the officer's report. He also considered that the reserves of stone in the quarry had been exaggerated and that Marshalls had withdrawn from the site due to the lack of extractable stone and the cost of transporting stone to Stainton. He highlighted that the site had been used a hub centre (central processing centre) over recent years but this role will go when Marshalls move out of the site and take the majority of the processing equipment with them leaving only the crushing equipment. He also said that he had a complete lack of faith in the company's willingness to comply with conditions and agreements.

Mr Wilkinson requested that the Committee make no decision on the application until a new lease is place and an independent geological survey is carried out. He also requested that officers visit the site prior to making any decisions and that the application be refused.

Councillor Bell asked if this was still a quarry or a manufacturing and processing centre. Referring to the new mound he queried why it was needed given that he would have expected the waste to be placed in the quarry void. Referring to the commercial future of the site he considered this to be unclear and noted that the current owners had form in non-compliance. He queried whether or not the site has a future and whether or not this proposal was a way of avoiding restoration. He requested a site visit and said that he was uncomfortable with the proposal.

Councillor Shuttleworth reminded the Committee that it had visited the site a few years ago and asked about the views of the local member.

Councillor Williams supported Councillor Bell's request for a site visit.

Councillor E Foster was concerned about comments made by one resident that she did not have sufficient time to comment on the proposal. The Head of Environment and Planning highlighted the consultations that had been carried out since the application was received in May 2007 and correspondence with the person in question.

Councillor Coates requested that Councillor Bells' comments be addressed in a further report. He also noted that the liaison committee were informed that it was unlikely that the application would be determined before June.

Councillor N Foster queried whether or not the Committee could bind a future Committee to a site visit to which the Acting Head of Legal Services confirmed it could. Councillor Foster expressed his concerns regarding remaining reserves and restoration of the site.

Councillor Rodgers questioned the implications of not determining the application at this time. The Head of Environment and Planning responded that the site can operate under the terms of the current planning permission but the applicant could appeal against non-determination of the application.

Councillor Walker said there were a number of issues regarding this application and that he wanted to know more about the previously proposed access; the issues raised by Councillor Bell and also why the previously proposed legal agreement had not been entered into.

Resolved:

That a decision be deferred until a site visit has been arranged and that a further report should be presented to the Committee.

**A3 Sedgefield Borough Local Development Framework –
Consultation Draft Windlestone Hall Supplementary Planning Document**

The Head of Environment and Planning presented a report concerning a consultation by Sedgefield Borough Council on a Supplementary Planning Document relating to Windlestone Hall, near Chilton

Councillor Porter, local Member, said that this was a beautiful area with some houses on the site already. He doubted the possible future use as a hotel as there was already provision in the locality. He agreed however that the sooner the building was restored to use the better.

Councillor Coates queried whether there was a protection order on other trees in the locality.

Resolved:

That the comments in Paragraphs 7-13 of the report be endorsed as the County Council's formal response to the consultation on the draft Windlestone Hall Supplementary Planning Document

A4 Applications for Planning Permission: Decisions made using Delegated Powers (October 2007 – March 2008)

The Committee noted recent decisions relating to planning applications which have been received in accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and determined under the delegated powers procedure (for copy see file of Minutes).