

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

PLANNING COMMITTEE

AT A MEETING of the **Planning Committee** held at the County Hall, Durham on **Tuesday 16 December 2008 at 10.00 a.m.**

PRESENT

COUNCILLOR RODGERS in the Chair

Members:

Councillors Alderson, Armstrong, , B Bainbridge, A Bell, Boyes, Burnip, Cordon, Davidson, Dixon, Holroyd, B Myers, Plews, Richardson, Shuttleworth, Stoker, P Taylor, Allen Turner, Walker, Williams and R Young

Other Members: Arthur, Bailey, Wilkes

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Fergus. Naylor O'Donnell and Yorke.

A1 Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings held 19 November 2008 were confirmed by the Committee as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

A2 Applications to be determined by the County Council

Easington District: Provision of a multi-use games area and associated works to the north east side of the school building, Easington Colliery Primary School, Easington Colliery (Regulation 3)

The Head of Environment and Planning presented a report on the application (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor Burnip declared an interest as he was the Chair of the School Governing Body and Councillor Davidson stated that he was a personal friend of Mr Weightman.

The Head of Environment and Planning informed the meeting that a further letter of objection had been received from a resident of St Nicholas Terrace objecting on similar grounds to the other residents. He added that Sport

England's objections were not based on statutory grounds under the Playing Fields Directive but because the project does not meet their technical specification. Consequently the matter would not need to be referred to GONE if the recommendation in the report was accepted.

The Chairman informed the meeting that he had agreed for three speakers to address the Committee, Mr Taylor and Mr Houghton, local residents, opposing the proposal and Mr Weightman, the applicant.

Mr Houghton informed the Committee that the proposed MUGA was only 11 metres from the boundary fence. He believed that the facility would attract lots of anti-social behaviour and was a breach of his Human Rights. There was already occasions with fighting and vandalism in the streets and he wanted to know who would pay for this damage. 5-a-side football would attract at least 10 people to play as well as numerous spectators. Their quality of life would be severely reduced by this facility. He considered that it should be relocated to the school fields.

Mr Taylor informed the Committee that he was a shift worker and that his sleep was likely to be affected due to noise disturbance. No-one would want this facility built outside their home and whilst not against the proposal in principle it was the location that was an issue. The facility would attract gangs of children to the area and cause a disturbance to residents.

Mr Weightman, the applicant explained to the Committee that this was a purpose built area to provide top quality sports opportunities for children aged between 4 and 11 years. It will help promote healthy lifestyles and provide a resource for the local community under strict and safe supervision. The idea is a smaller version of the facility built at Great Lumley and would provide for traditional sports such as football, netball, high 5s and tennis. The school would operate a bookings system and provide supervision while the facility was open. When the school was closed the MUGA would be closed. The school site is surrounded by a metal fence and there has been no history of young people gathering on the site. There is no intention to provide floodlighting so the facility could only be used during normal daylight hours but would only be open till 6.00 pm and would be under the day to day management of the head teacher on behalf of the governing body. Other locations have been considered on the school site, by staff, governors and Local Authority officers. These were discounted because of the need to control the use of the MUGA and have natural surveillance to avoid abuse of the facility and due to the ease of access for younger children of the Green Team (ages 5-7 years). The surface of the games area will be considerably lower than the existing ground level reducing the visual impact even further. There will also be a suitable landscaping scheme that will be sensitive to the local residents and the children. He concluded that this would be an asset to the local community and had the support of the Primary Care Trust.

Councillor Boyes, Local Member, re-iterated what the residents had stated in that no-one is against the provision of the MUGA on the site but that the

proposed location was the problem. He felt that the site at the west side of the school was a more appropriate location away from the residential area and this would further safeguard amenities of residents.

Other Councillors expressed views in support of the application which was in accord with the County Council's ethos regarding the provision of facilities for children and young people and extending community use of schools. It was felt that the proposal had been thoroughly considered and assessed by the school in terms of need, the consideration of alternative sites and the proposed management of the facility. It was also important to provide facilities to make children and young people feel valued and part of the community. It was pointed out that the facility would not be used until 6.00pm in winter.

Other Members believed that the location of the MUGA was an issue and felt that more information on alternative locations should be made available. This could lead to a better development including the provision of floodlighting.

Resolved:

By a majority vote of 15 – 6 that planning permission be granted for the development for the following reason:

The proposed MUGA in terms of its size, location, appearance and use would relate acceptably to the site and surrounding area and would not have a significant impact upon visual and residential amenity, in accordance with Policies 1 and 89 of the District of Easington Local Plan

**A3 Consultation by a Neighbouring Planning Authority:
Consolidation of existing planning permissions incorporating an extension to sand and gravel extraction area and extension of time for sand and gravel extraction to 31st December 2022 and restoration by 31st December 2025 at Broadoak Quarry, Newlands, Ebchester**

The Head of Environment and Planning presented a report on the application (for copy see file of Minutes). He informed Members that the consultation had been received at a very late stage in the process allowing only 21 days to respond and that he contacted the Local Members as soon as he became aware of the matter.

Councillor Shields, Local Member, informed the meeting about the poor consultation. The County Council had been notified late and Derwentside District Council even later. He had not received details about the consultation until 25 November and this advised that officers were making no objections on planning grounds rather than asking for Members' views. He was not happy with this recommendation and therefore wanted the matter considered by the Committee. The main concern was that the proposals do not take into consideration that planning permission for 600 houses in the Shotley Bridge area has already been granted increasing traffic levels on the A694. This is where all the traffic from the quarry will gain access to the main roads

network. Accident figures for this road are inaccurate as only those involving personal injury are recorded in police figures. This application will lead to a reduction to the quality of life for all the residents in the locality whose homes these wagons will pass. Alternative routes using existing roads and bypasses outside Durham could be used but were not purely on cost grounds or additional mileage. Councillor Alderson supported Councillor Shields and said there would in the event be no reduction in vehicle numbers.

Councillor Brown said that a decision could not be based on assumptions about potential traffic levels from residential development and Councillor Dixon said he supported the recommendation as it was important to safeguard jobs at this time. Councillor Armstrong said it was vital that Chare Bank was fit for purpose and Councillor Cordon asked whether there were any guarantees the road improvements mentioned in the report would be provided. The Head of Environment and Planning replied that we could only request these improvements, although Northumberland County Council was aware of this concern.

Members agreed that this consultation was far from satisfactory but as planning permission had already been granted by Northumberland County Council the best that could be achieved for residents of Durham County was possible highway improvements.

Resolved:

that the County Council raise no objections to the proposals but request that proposed highway improvement works to Chare Bank be incorporated into a condition or suitable legal agreement associated with the grant of planning permission to ensure that the works are carried out. It is also requested that the Head of Highway Management Services be consulted directly regarding the details of such works. In addition the Planning Committee wished to inform Northumberland County Council of its concern regarding the limited consultation period afforded to this Council to consider the application before it was reported to their Planning and Regulation Committee.