

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **County Planning Committee** held in Council Chamber - County Hall, Durham on **Tuesday 5 June 2018 at 1.00 pm**

Present:

Councillor J Robinson (Chairman)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors H Bennett (substitute for C Kay), I Jewell, A Laing, L Maddison, H Nicholson, G Richardson, A Shield, P Taylor and O Temple (substitute for A Simpson)

Also Present:

Councillor(s) S Hugill and H Smith

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Bell, J Clare, K Hawley, C Kay, A Simpson, F Tinsley, M Wilkes and S Wilson.

2 Substitute Members

Councillor H Bennett and O Temple substituted for Councillors C Kay and A Simpson respectively.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 May 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5 DM/16/00107/OUT - Land To The South Of Three Ways, Hurworth Burn Road, Trimdon Village

The Committee were informed that item no. 5a) had been withdrawn prior to the meeting.

6 DM/18/00692/FPA - Land To The North Of 25 Copeland Row, Evenwood

The Committee considered a report of the Senior Planning Officer regarding the erection of a production warehouse unit and offices, new access, ancillary buildings and associated development and landscaping (for copy see file of minutes).

The Senior Planning Officer gave a detailed presentation of the application which included a site location plan, aerial photograph, proposed site layout, photographs of the site.

Councillor Hugill, local member for Evenwood confirmed that he had been consulted prior to the submission of the application. He confirmed that the new layout of the site would result in a reduction in noise and improve the visual impact of the site. In addition the new site entrance would ensure that site traffic would cease to queue outside of Copeland Road, minimising disruption to residents. The Applicant contributed to local sporting clubs and associations and was a major employer in the area – he was delighted they had chosen to upgrade the premises rather than locate elsewhere. The benefits of the new site far outweighed any negative impact and he was in full support of the proposed development.

Mr Linsley, local resident was concerned about the noise, especially on an evening after 11pm. He described the existing noise from forklifts sliding pallets across the floor during the night and was concerned with regards to the speed of site traffic upon shift changeover.

The Senior Planning Officer confirmed that there had two objections received from local residents which both cited noise from HGV traffic, however Environmental Health had been consulted and concluded that the proposal would result in no additional impact. There was an option to condition the operation on site, however there were no existing noise complaints and the main service yard would be located further away from the nearest residential properties on Copeland Row and be shielded by the proposed building. He was satisfied that the Applicant would address any issues should residents raise them.

Ms Ferguson, spoke on behalf of the Applicant and provided a history of the Company which had been established for more than 35 years and employed approximately 200 people. Because of the substantial growth, the current business premises were not adequate. Despite the majority customers located in the Midlands, the Applicant was loyal to the area and committed to remaining in Evenwood. The new building would incur a significant cost and no expense had been spared during the design process. The intention of the new building was not to increase production or employees, but to improve the current manufacturing process. The building was outdated and overcrowded, production was scattered and inefficient. The proposed development would alleviate a lot of the need for on site traffic as currently the manufacturing process was spread across the site in different locations, resulting in the forklift movement in between areas. The new building would house an enclosed production line and reduce the need for outdoor traffic. The existing building would provide a screen in between Copeland Road and the new building and a better design would improve the acoustics. A new access would ensure that vehicles would not have to queue on the entry road.

Councillor Maddison referred the strict adherence to the Drainage Strategy which Northumbrian Water had based its response on and also confirmed that the response of Environmental Health was based on the existing operation and cited a

number of uncertainties. She queried whether the conditions attached would provide any follow up to ensure the noise levels and operation did not increase.

Councillor Shield queried the volume of HGV's and times of use. He also referred to the recommendation of a precautionary condition which would restrict noise emitted from the site and ensure a future validation check. He queried what action would be taken following a validation check should noise be found to have increased. He noted that the new building would be a modern construction with better insulation and the new entry point would ensure a welcome reduction in traffic outside of the residential properties, but he wanted to ensure that residents were protected.

The Senior Planning Officer confirmed that there had been discussions with Environmental Health regarding the addition of a condition, however there had been no suggestion that the development would be unacceptable in the absence of one. The transfer between buildings was essential for the current operation, however the new accommodation was a large, modern, well-insulated building situated further away from residential properties than the existing building. There was a need to allow businesses to operate whilst also protecting residential amenity and on balance it was not felt appropriate to attach a condition.

With regards to drainage, the Senior Planning Officer confirmed that the Applicant had addressed concerns by the inclusion of an attenuation pond, permeable surfaces and had followed the most recent guidance to the satisfaction of Northumbrian Water and the Councils drainage team.

The Highway Development Manager confirmed the number of traffic was estimated as 20 incoming and 25 outgoing HGV's, and 10 LGV's. In addition 75 employees would arrive for a 6am start. It could be assumed that there would be approximately 5 HGV's exiting the site between 2am and 7am.

Councillor Shield moved the recommendation to approve.

Councillor Nicholson commented on the significant investment in the locality from a major employer and saw no reason to refuse the application.

Councillor Taylor considered the Applicant had consulted thoroughly throughout the application process and he considered that matters would improve following completion of the development. It was a positive proposal and therefore he seconded the recommendation to approve.

Resolved:

That the application be approved subject to the conditions as outlined in the report.