

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

At a Meeting of **County Planning Committee** held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham on **Tuesday 1 March 2022 at 9.30 am**

### **Present:**

**Councillor G Richardson (Chair)**

### **Members of the Committee:**

Councillors L Brown, J Higgins, P Jopling, C Martin, B Moist, I Roberts, K Shaw and S Zair

### **1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Hunt, C Marshall, P Molloy and A Simpson.

### **2 Substitute Members**

Councillor L Brown substituted for Councillor A Simpson.

### **3 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **4 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 January 2022 were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

### **5 Applications to be determined**

#### **a DM/21/01984/FPA - Land south west of Burdon Place, Sedgefield TS21 3BF**

It was reported that this application had been withdrawn from the Agenda.

#### **b DM/21/03348/FPA - Land to the north west of Discovery Offices, William Armstrong Way, NETPark, Sedgefield, TS21 3FH**

The Committee considered a report of the Senior Planning Officer regarding a hybrid application for the development of NETPark phase 3a on land to the north west of Discovery Offices, William Armstrong Way, NETPark, Sedgefield (for copy see file of Minutes).

C Harding, Senior Planning Officer provided a detailed presentation which included a site location plan, photographs of the site, and site layout.

Councillor Liz Brown noted that the application proposed town centre uses and requested more detail regarding the reference in the report to a sequential assessment in respect of the ancillary unit and hub building. The Senior Planning Officer explained that Policy 2 of the County Durham Plan allowed for an element of ancillary use on employment sites. In terms of whether the retail element of the development was deemed to be ancillary, Members were informed that the main town centre uses in terms of floor space would represent only 6-7% of the overall total floorspace. In this context they would remain ancillary to the overall development.

CDP Policy 9 and the NPPF sought to protect town centres and required sequential assessments for town centre uses in out of town locations. However consideration should also be given to whether it was appropriate for those uses to be disaggregated to another location. Given that the town centre usage element of the scheme was to provide services primarily for employees of NETPark, and that the local centres of Sedgefield and Fishburn were around a 30 minute walk from the site, Planning Officers were of the view that it would not be reasonable to disaggregate from the wider development or that a sequential assessment was necessary.

In terms of a retail impact assessment the size of any single retail unit must not exceed 400sqm. This did not trigger the need for a retail impact assessment.

Councillor Craig Martin stated that this was an application to extend NETPark on land that was allocated for this purpose. The site was very successful and needed to expand to bring further high quality jobs to the area. Councillor Martin **MOVED** approval of the application.

Councillor Sam Zair **SECONDED** the motion to approve the application.

**RESOLVED:**

That the application be approved subject to the conditions contained in the report.