

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Area Planning Committee (South and West)** held in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Spennymoor on **Thursday 19 January 2017 at 2.00 pm**

Present:

Councillor H Nicholson (Chairman)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors B Armstrong, D Bell, J Clare, K Davidson, J Gray, E Huntington, C Kay, S Morrison, A Patterson, G Richardson, L Taylor, C Wilson and S Zair

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Boyes and M Dixon.

2 Substitute Members

Councillor J Gray substituted for Councillor M Dixon.

3 Declarations of Interest

Councillor A Patterson advised that she would be speaking as Local Member on both items on the Agenda and would not participate in the deliberation or decision making for either of the applications.

4 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

a DM/16/03590/OUT - Land East of North Bitchburn Terrace, North Bitchburn Bank, North Bitchburn

Consideration was given to the report of the Senior Planning Officer regarding an outline residential development and all matters reserved for 14 dwellings at Land East of North Bitchburn Terrace, North Bitchburn Bank, North Bitchburn.

The Senior Planning Officer gave a detailed presentation which included plans and photographs of the site.

Councillor Patterson spoke on behalf of local residents and confirmed that although only one objection had been received, a number of local residents had contacted her as local Member, in objection to the proposal.

Councillor Patterson confirmed that North Bitchburn was a small village, which was lacking in amenities and had no primary school. A former cricket ground was no longer in use and there was one pub which had closed and reopened under new

management, numerous times. The nearest primary school in Howden-le-Wear was already over-subscribed and therefore children would be diverted to Crook Primary which had no direct bus route. In addition, Councillor Patterson confirmed that the site was not within the boundary of North Bitchburn, but situated in open Countryside. In summary, the location of the site was isolated and unsustainable and she supported the Senior Planning Officer's recommendation to refuse the application.

Councillor Davidson moved the recommendation to refuse as he considered the reasons as outlined in the report sufficiently robust.

Councillor Clare referred to the response from the Highways Authority which was in the interest of public safety and could not be disregarded. He considered that if the required visibility splays could not be achieved this would pose a danger for motorists including those new to the area as they would not expect vehicles to be emerging from this point on this particular stretch of road.

In response to a question from Councillor Clare about a substandard section of footpath the Senior Planning Officer confirmed that although this had been referenced by the Highways Authority as being unsuitable, it was of relatively short length and although not ideal would not constitute a reason for refusal. Councillor Clare seconded the recommendation to refuse.

Resolved:

That the application be refused as per the recommendations outlined in the report.

b DM/16/03433/FPA - Site of Former Council Depot, Queen Street, Crook

Consideration was given to the report of the Senior Planning Officer regarding the erection of a food retail store with associated vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access, car parking and landscaping.

The Senior Planning Officer gave a detailed presentation which included plans and photographs of the site.

Councillor Patterson confirmed that this was a welcome application which would benefit Crook and Weardale. A pre-planning consultation had been attended by 300 people who were positive about the proposed new supermarket. Any concerns that had been put forward by residents or local businesses had been mitigated by the applicant. As well as creating jobs, Councillor Patterson confirmed that this type of supermarket would benefit low income families in the area and was a positive addition to the town.

Councillor Davidson moved the recommendation to approve and it was seconded by Councillor Clare.

Resolved:

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