

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE (NORTH)

At a Meeting of the **Area Planning Committee (North)** held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham on **Thursday 27 February 2020 at 1.00 pm**

Present:

Councillor I Jewell (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors S Wilson (Vice-Chair), A Bainbridge, A Bell, D Boyes, J Higgins, A Hopgood, O Milburn, C Martin, J Shuttleworth and T Tucker

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Kay and J Robinson.

2 Substitute Members

There were no substitute members.

3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 November 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2019 were confirmed as a correct record by the Committee and signed by the Chair.

4 Declarations of Interest (if any)

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Applications to be determined by the Area Planning Committee (North Durham)

a DM/19/03091/FPA - Graham Court, Sacriston, Durham DH7 6LW

The Committee considered a report of the Senior Planning Officer which consisted of the demolition of Graham Court and the construction of 25 residential dwellings and associated landscaping.

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

The Senior Planning Officer confirmed that since the report had been published a further condition had been included in the application to prevent any fences from being built near to the traffic lights at the crossroads to ensure visibility control. He also noted that there had been a low turn out to the developer's event about their plans in the village pre application.

The Chair thanked the Senior Planning Officer for his presentation. As there were no speakers for this item the Chair asked the Committee for their comments and questions.

Councillor Wilson informed the Committee that he had received no issues from members of his division regarding the application. He agreed that the building had come to the end of its life and did not oppose the application but required assurances from Highways that they did not have any visibility issues with the development being at a crossroads

Councillor Wilson requested that a condition be added to the application regarding the construction management and how it would be maintained. He felt there would be issues with parking around the garage and bus turning circle as people used the estate as a rat run.

The Senior Planning Officer notified the committee that extra detail could be added within the construction management there would be no access from the top of the site if he thought that would cover the issue.

Councillor Wilson agreed that would be suitable.

The Principal Highway Development Management Engineer confirmed that Highways did not object to the application and had found that from Plawsworth Road to the traffic lights all the visibility had been adhered to by the developers. He explained that the parking standards 2019 had been applied and the development had adequate parking on site with one space allocated per household and an additional 25% parking for visitors. He highlighted that 'no parking' and 'no waiting' restrictions would be rolled out along Plawsworth Road and Durham Road to protect the Highways and to reduce the parking issues. He added that the bus turning area was offsite and would not be the responsibility of the developer to address any parking issues on the estate roads.

Councillor Wilson requested that both Councillor Liddle and himself as Local Councillors be consulted with over the road restrictions as residents did park on the highway outside their homes along these roads and he did not want the restrictions to affect them.

The Principal Highway Development Management Engineer agreed to set up a meeting with Councillor Wilson, Councillor Liddle and the Major Projects Team Leader to discuss what road restrictions would be put in place and where.

Councillor Tucker asked if the site of the new residential dwellings would be prone to the risk of flooding as the properties were at a lowered elevation to the main road.

The Senior Planning Officer notified the Committee that there had been no issues of flooding at the property at 18 Highfield in Sacriston that was next to the development site. He added that an agreement had been reached with the Drainage Engineer and the Developer regarding the floor level of the new developments as the area coped well with rainwater. In addition, an amenity fence and obscure glazing had been added as a condition of the application for privacy as the height of the site had been reduced, all to protect that dwelling.

Councillor Boyes was concerned that yet another registered provider was disposing of their social housing for elderly people. He questioned what was going to happen to the few residents that remained in the building and whether there was still a demand for sheltered accommodation. He wanted to know if a condition could be included in the application to ensure that the people that remained would be looked after.

The Senior Planning Officer indicated that tenants would have legal rights in these circumstances and although no information was known at this moment as to how or if the registered provider would seek to re-house the residents, the Senior Planning Officer did not feel that a planning condition could be included to address this.

Councillor Milburn wanted to know if the planning application took into consideration the privacy of the houses that already existed to ensure they were not overlooked. She required a guarantee that lessons had been learned from the past when buildings were built at different levels.

The Senior Planning Officer assured the Committee that although the new properties changed in levels the application had taken privacy of the neighbours into consideration and referred Members to the detailed assessment in paragraph 69 in the report.

Councillor Bell wanted to know how exactly the parking provision had been calculated and wondered if the 106 funding could remain in the division of Sacriston.

The Senior Planning Officer confirmed that the 106 funding would stay in the division and would be added to the legal agreement.

The Principal Highway Development Management Engineer clarified that the Parking Standards 2019 had been applied to calculate the parking allocation within the development. He explained that for a 2-3 bedroomed property only one curtilage per dwelling was sufficient with 25% allocated for visitors.

The Principal Highway Development Management Engineer responded to Councillor Hopgood's query regarding who set the parking standards 2019 criteria that it was the Local Authority who set their own parking standards based on visitor and curtilage parking and the location of the development. He confirmed that it was a Durham County Council's policy that had been applied.

Councillor Hopgood wanted to know who had ratified the policy within the Council whether it had been full council or an Officer. She felt that based on most households having two cars there would not be adequate parking. She thought that if residents could not park outside their homes, they would either use the visitor spaces or park on the kerbside causing obstructions. She questioned how wide the roads and footpaths were to cope with the amount of traffic generated by the number of cars as she believed that residents would eventually complain in the future that there was too much traffic.

The Principal Highway Development Management Engineer explained that his Manager the Highway Development Manager had created the Parking Standards policy that had been supported by Councillors. He noted that research had shown that it was acceptable to provide one space for a one bedroomed house. He confirmed that the footpath was 1.8 metres wide and the road width was 4.8 metres. He noted that a typical car was 1.8 metres making the road an ample width for two cars to pass. He felt that cars would not need to park on the footpaths as there was enough visitor's parking. The Principal Highway Development Management Engineer noted that the Highway Development Manager would be happy to discuss the Parking Standards policy with Members should further explanation be required.

Councillor Hopgood felt that Members did not have a choice in accepting the Durham County Council's parking policy but had not been involved with the standards so was not clear on what was acceptable or not. She thought that it may be difficult for people to go for a walk at night if cars were parked on the footpath. She felt that Councillors needed to look at the standards to be more aware of what was adequate in terms of parking on new developments.

Councillor Jewell emphasized that debating the Council's parking policy was for discussing outside of the meeting and if Councillor required clarity then the appropriate Officer should be lobbied. He believed that the parking standards were influenced by national standards.

Councillor Tucker asked if the corner amenity space on the plans could be utilised to create further parking for visitors.

The Senior Planning Officer advised that the opportunity had been taken as the land in question had already been utilised for the visitors parking. He advised that no further amenity land could be used for additional parking for safety reasons as it was close to the junction.

The Principal Highway Development Management Engineer explained that the visitors parking was in a layby style to allow drivers to put in and pull off in a safe manner rather than carry out a 90-degree manoeuvre.

Councillor Jewell stressed that the planning application had to be determined as it stood as changes to the application could not be negotiated within the meeting.

Councillor Shuttleworth agreed to approve the planning application.

Councillor Boyes was concerned that one space allocated per dwelling did not appear adequate and was not sure that the width of the road could cater for more than one car passing.

The Principal Highway Development Management Engineer confirmed that the width of the road was of an adoptable standard of 4.8 metres and was ample for two cars to pass.

Councillor Boyes gave an example of a housing development in the East of the County that was two-year-old that had caused pandemonium due to insufficient parking and cars parallel parked in the street causing obstructions to both motorists and pedestrians. He felt that parking for the site would need to be acceptable to prevent issues developing in the future.

Councillor Wilson was happy to approve the application.

The Principal Planning Officer notified the Committee that there were to be additional conditions added to the application regarding permitted development rights for fencing on the roadside boundary.

Councillor Bell was familiar with the area and the proposed site was next to a public house. He wanted to know if the noise from the pub had been taken into consideration in the planning application.

The Senior Planning Officer confirmed that any noise nuisance potential from the pub had been considered by Durham County Council's Environmental Health Team. The team had liaised with the developer and they were satisfied that no further work was needed to be carried out on it.

Councillor Wilson **proposed** approval of the application and was **seconded** by Councillor Shuttleworth.

Upon a vote it was unanimously

Resolved

That the application be **APPROVED** subject to the conditions in the report and the additional conditions regarding fencing.

6 Appeal Update

There were no appeal updates.