

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Area Planning Committee (South and West)** held in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Spennymoor on **Thursday 20 September 2012 at 2.00 pm**

Present:

Councillor M Dixon (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors E Tomlinson (Vice-Chairman), D Boyes, D Burn, M Campbell, K Davidson, P Gittins, J Gray (substitute for E Paylor), G Richardson, J Shuttleworth, R Todd, J Wilkinson and M Williams

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G Holland, E Paylor, P Taylor and R Yorke

Also Present:

A Caines – Principal Planning Officer

C Cuskin – Legal Officer

A Glenwright – Highways Officer

1 Declarations of Interest (if any)

There were no declarations of interest received.

2 The Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 July 2012

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2012 were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

3 Applications to be determined

3a 3/2010/0568 - Open Space Adjacent to Village Green, West Auckland

The Committee considered a report of the Principal Planning Officer regarding an application for the siting of a public art sculpture including paving layout and relocation of Christmas tree in a prominent position in the village adjacent to the Village Green (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Principal Planning Officer gave a detailed presentation on the application which included photographs of the site.

Resolved:

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

3b 6/2012/0081/DM - Land to the Rear of 10,11 and 13 Etherley Bank, High Etherley

Members were advised by the Legal Officer that this planning application had been withdrawn as it did not meet the relevant criteria for referral to the Area Planning Committee for determination.

3c 7/2012/0199/DM - Former Greenfields Nursing Home, Alston Crescent, Newton Aycliffe

The Committee considered the report of the Principal Planning Officer regarding an application for the demolition of former Greenfields Nursing Home and redevelopment to create 22 no. dwellings (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Principal Planning Officer gave a detailed presentation on the application which included photographs of the site. Members had visited the site that day and were familiar with the location and setting.

In discussing the application Members were assured that affordable housing would be secured on the site in perpetuity. This would be achieved by way of a Section 106 Agreement.

A Member referred to the shortfall of recreational facilities in the area as identified in the Open Space Needs Assessment for Newton Aycliffe. The Principal Planning Officer advised that it had not been possible to secure a financial contribution from the applicant towards off site open space provision or maintenance. The applicant had stated that because the development was entirely affordable, and in view of the high redevelopment costs of the brownfield site, the viability of the scheme would be in question if a commuted sum was required.

The Legal Officer explained that in accordance with Local Plan Policy and the SHMA 15% affordable housing would normally be required for developments of this size in the local area, and that the delivery of 22 affordable homes on this site represented 100% provision. Planning Officers considered that on balance the public benefit of the scheme in terms of meeting housing need in the area outweighed the need for a contribution towards open space provision.

Councillors Gray and Gittins, local Members for Aycliffe North felt that Newton Aycliffe did have a number of green spaces for children and considered that on balance there was a greater need for affordable housing.

Having taken into account the comments of local Members and Officers, the Committee considered that the development would improve a site that was currently an unpleasant eyesore, and would meet the need for affordable housing in the local area.

Resolved:

That the application be approved subject to the conditions outlined in the report and to the completion of a Section 106 Legal Agreement to secure the provision of affordable housing in perpetuity.