

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Area Planning Committee (South and West)** held in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Spennymoor on **Thursday 18 February 2016 at 2.00 pm**

Present:

Councillor M Dixon (Chairman)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors H Nicholson (Vice-Chairman), B Armstrong, D Bell, J Clare, K Davidson, E Huntington, S Morrison, A Patterson, G Richardson, L Taylor and C Wilson

Also Present:

S Pilkington – Senior Planning Officer
C Cuskin – Solicitor – Planning and Development

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Kay and S Zair.

2 Substitute Members

There were no substitute Members.

3 Declarations of Interest

Councillor C Wilson declared an interest in Agenda item 5(a). The Member advised that she wished to address the Committee in support of the proposals and would withdraw from the meeting during consideration of the application.

4 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2016 were agreed as a correct record, subject to Councillor E Huntington being added to the list of apologies for absence. The Minutes were signed by the Chairman.

5 Applications to be determined

a DM/15/02958/FPA - Land to Rear of East Green Care Home, 3 East Green, West Auckland

Consideration was given to the report of the Senior Planning Officer regarding an application for the erection of 10 no. dwellings on land to the rear of East Green Care Home, 3 East Green, West Auckland (for copy see file of Minutes).

S Pilkington, Senior Planning Officer gave a detailed presentation on the application which included photographs of the site and the proposed layout.

The Officer advised of an amendment to paragraph 27 of the report which should read that the County Durham Plan had been withdrawn from examination.

Councillor C Wilson, local Member addressed the Committee in support of the application. The Member advised that a number of complaints had been received by the Police and herself regarding anti-social behaviour in the surrounding area. The proposed development would be welcomed by residents and visitors to West Auckland, and would enhance the area. The Member had only received positive comments from local residents who were pleased that the site would be improved.

Councillor Wilson left the meeting.

The Officer was asked by the Chairman to comment on flood risk mitigation. The Committee was informed that the majority of West Auckland was within flood zone 3a, and there were flood defences in the form of a floodwall on the bank of the River Gaunless which would protect the site and surrounding properties. The Environment Agency had raised no objection to the application on flood risk grounds subject to mitigation measures, and the proposed increased finished floor levels would be sufficient to meet a 1:200 year flood event. The Council's Drainage Section and Northumbrian Water had offered no objections subject to conditions to resolve final surface and foul water disposal.

Councillor Richardson advised that on a visit to the site he had observed that the land in its current state was unsightly. The proposed development would improve the site and he moved approval of the application.

Councillor Huntington referred to the lane to the rear of the properties which she was concerned may attract anti-social behaviour. The Senior Planning Officer advised that the proposed footpath was not a through route and was a private footway which would give residents access to the gardens to the rear of their properties.

In agreeing with Councillors Wilson and Richardson, Councillor Armstrong considered that this was a blight site which would be improved by the development of 10 houses, would secure £10,000 towards the maintenance and provision of public open space in the proximity of the site, and would create employment. The Member seconded approval of the application.

Resolved:

That the application be approved subject to the completion of a Section 106 Legal Agreement to secure the provision of one affordable housing unit and a contribution of £10,000 towards the maintenance and provision of public open space in the proximity of the site.