

**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 23 February 2017 at 2.00 pm**

**Present:**

**Councillor C Marshall (Chairman)**

**Members of the Committee:**

Councillors B Armstrong, H Bennett, P Brookes, J Cordon, I Jewell (Vice-Chairman), J Maitland, J Robinson, A Shield, L Taylor, O Temple, K Thompson and S Zair

**1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor O Milburn, K Shaw and S Wilson.

**2 Substitute Members**

There were no substitutes.

**3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 January 2017**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2017 were confirmed as a correct record.

**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/16/03157/FPA Land to the west of Fulforth Way, Sacriston**

The Committee considered the report of the Planning Officer regarding an application for 73 dwellings with associated landscape and garaging at land to the West of Fulforth Way, Sacriston (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Planning Officer advised that since the production of the report a petition containing 106 signatures had been received objecting on the grounds of access.

Councillor Liddle, local Member, addressed the committee to raise some concerns regarding the proposed highways scheme and impact upon current highway

arrangements. She advised that in her opinion the development would result in increased traffic flow and would exacerbate issues of waiting cars on Front Street and the bottleneck which already existed. She further queried whether it was necessary for the development to have 3 access points and added that residents were concerned, that this may impact upon the existing Stopping Up Order which was in place on Acorn Close and result in a rat run used by cars and increase the likelihood of anti-social behaviour.

Mr G Ludlow, local resident addressed the committee to outline his concerns regarding the application. He to, noted that although there were no specific concerns regarding the development of the site the 3 access points proposed were unnecessary and would increase the risk of accident to pedestrians and road users. He further noted that the site was directly opposite a school and he had major concerns regarding the safety of school children crossing in this area.

Mr R Harrison, Sacriston Parish Council, addressed the committee to object to the application. He agreed that access was the main issue with the application and reiterated the concerns relating to road safety already raised. The access proposed on the main road was opposite a school, bus stop, close to a medical centre and was already an extremely busy route. He further noted that this was a popular route taken by road users from Durham to Stanley. He further raised points relating to works traffic, delivery vehicles and noted that he considered access via Sacriston Lane to be the only suitable option.

The Chair then welcomed S Harrison, Applicant Agent to the meeting who addressed the committee to support the application. She advised that the developers were proposing that all construction traffic use Sacriston Lane only to access and exit the site. Regarding the issue of multiple access points for residents, she advised that the highways scheme proposed was in line with DCC standards where multiple access points were encouraged in order to more efficiently disperse traffic.

Regarding issues of anti-social behaviour and the potential rat run created, she advised that this would be secured by design standards which had been considered following the advice of police.

In conclusion she further provided some background regarding the developer and their aim to promote a quality development for the area. It was further noted that a number of resident consultation events had been undertaken and all residents and local organisations had been invited to attend.

Councillor Brookes raised a query regarding likely highway issues or impacts should the access via St Cuthberts estate be amended. The Highways Officer in response, advised that the highways scheme would have to be remodelled. The current model was based upon the presumption that there would be approximately 1 vehicle exiting the estate every 3 minutes. This was deemed acceptable in highways terms. He further noted that although accidents had been recorded at the junction of St Cuthbert's Drive, they had not been attributed to the junction itself.

Councillor Cordon added that he could see some positives in the application however did feel that Members would of benefited from a site visit. He therefore proposed that the application be deferred until a site visit can be undertaken.

Councillor Thompson added that a plan of the development would also have been useful in the pack of papers circulated and asked whether this could be considered in future. He further queried what the current 5 year supply of housing was and how far short the county fell. In response the Planning Officer advised that the council was just short of 5 year supply. The Solicitor advised that due to the 5 year shortage and local plan policies being outdated, this was enough to tip the council into a presumption of favour of sustainable development as outlined in the NPPF. Councillor Cordon, in following this point up advised that permission had been given for over 14,000 dwellings in the last four years, however only 6,000 had actually been built.

Councillor Robinson added that he did consider 20 additional cars at peak times to be a concern, when so close to the school and suggested that a condition be added to protect the school access.

Councillor B Armstrong commented that she was aware that the high street in Sacriston was a very busy road and noted that the council were currently spending thousands on enforcing 20mph speed limits outside schools. By allowing access via St Cuthbert's this could potentially impact upon that scheme. She therefore added that in her opinion the only viable access would be to take off Sacriston Lane.

She further agreed that a site visit would be beneficial and **MOVED** that the application be deferred on the basis that a site visit should be undertaken and a revised highways model be submitted. Councillor J Robinson **SECONDED** the proposal.

**Resolved:**

That the application be deferred on the grounds that revised highways scheme be submitted and a site visit be undertaken by Members of the Committee.

**b DM/16/03893/FPA Former Bust Station and Co-op Buildings Sites, Front Street, Stanley**

The Committee considered a report of the Senior Planning Officer for the erection of an Aldi food store with associated vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access; car parking and landscaping at the Former Bust Station and Co-op Buildings Sites, Front Street, Stanley (for copy see file of Minutes).

Mr Binny, local resident addressed the committee to speak in support of the application. He advised that Stanley Town Centre had seen major changes in its characteristics and economic and social aspects in past years and the area was run down and desperately in need of investment. The application to bring Aldi to Stanley would have both a positive social and economic impact and create jobs, introduce competition for other retailers and produce additional footfall in the town centre, hopefully helping to boost business for other retailers.

Mr Stamp, local resident addressed the committee to speak in support of the application. He noted that Stanley had become so run down in previous years and many people felt that Stanley was the forgotten town in North West Durham. Most money was also thought to be spent in Consett and focus had always been around the loss of jobs at the Steelworks, however over 6,000 jobs had also been lost in Stanley over the years and there had been little investment in the area since. He added that he would welcome any new store to the area which would provide more choice for local residents.

Councillor Marshall as local member commented that he was proud of the residents who had spoken today and their support given to the application. The application could only be seen as a positive for the area as the town centre was so desperate for investment. He further added that he whole heartedly welcomed the application and hoped that if approved would act as a catalyst for other traders to invest in the area.

He further commented that he wished to thank Aldi for the work undertaken to date and for the consultation events with public which had taken place prior to submission of the application.

Councillor Jewell commented that the issues in Stanley Town Centre were well documented and he found the application to be extremely positive for the area. He further agreed that Stanley did once have a vibrant town centre and hoped that this application would encourage further development of the area. As a point of clarification, Councillor Jewell asked what the arrangements for delivery access would be and how the parking would work at plot 2. In conclusion he thanked the residents for their attendance.

Councillor Shield queried why there were no comments from Stanley Town Council within the report. He added that the only concerns he had were relating to the number of car parking spaces provided and asked what provision there was for staff parking and whether restricted time limits would be imposed. He also asked whether clarification could be given regarding safeguards for pedestrians crossing sites and to the existing business which were adjacent to the bus station.

In response, The Senior Planning Officer advised that the highway between the two plots would be narrowed and levelled. The taxi company who also used this access had been consulted and were happy with proposals. Regarding deliveries there would be unrestricted hours as it was considered that there would be little disruption to residents. The nearest property was approximately 40-50 metres away.

The issue of car parking had been discussed in depth and although the number of spaces to be provided was below the recommendations for the size of store there were access to numerous other car parks in the town centre. The Senior Planning Officer further advised that based upon experience it would be likely that parking time limit restrictions would be put in place.

Regarding comments received from Stanley Town Council, it was noted they were fully supportive of the application.

The Chair then welcomed S Plumb, Aldi to the meeting who provided a brief overview of the consultation which had been undertaken with business and residents.

He advised that the level of interest in the new store had surpassed any other store development in the north east area. Regarding parking, he advised that the level of car parking to be provided was felt to be adequate. As already stated numerous other car parking facilities were available in the area and in addition excellent pedestrian access was to be provided, with open access onto Front Street. Most shoppers spent on average 30 minutes in the store however it was likely that any time limit enforced on parking would be 90 minutes. Aldi also had in place a green travel plan for staff, although it was hoped that the majority of staff employed at the store would live locally.

Councillor Temple added that he to welcomed the application and agreed that the store could potentially be of enormous help to existing businesses in the town centre.

Councillor Jewell **MOVED** and Councillor Cordon **SECONDED** that the application be approved.

**Resolved:**

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

**c DM/16/03863/FPA The Moorside Hotel, Todd Hill farm Road, Moorside, Consett**

The Committee considered a report of the Senior Planning Officer for the erection of 12 houses with associated parking and landscaping (revised and resubmitted) at The Moorside Hotel, Todd Hill farm Road, Moorside, Consett (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Chair noted that unfortunately due to adverse weather conditions Mr Kavanagh, the applicant's agent was unable to be in attendance to answer any questions the committee may have.

Councillor Shield commented that the site had been in a derelict state for some time and considered the proposals to be a welcomed improvement to the area. In addition he noted that the land was classified as brownfield and the local member Councillor Hicks, was in full support of the proposals.

Councillor Temple asked for some clarification regarding access to driveways and garage provision on site. The Senior Planning Officer advised that all 4 bed properties had a garage next to the property. All other properties had an allocated space either in front of the dwelling off the main road, or in the hammerhead section within the estate.

Councillor Shield **MOVED** that the application be approved subject to the conditions listed within the report. Councillor Temple **SECONDED** the proposal.

**Resolved:**

That the application be approved subject to the conditions listed within the report.

Signed.....

Date.....