

**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 25 January 2018 at 1.00 pm**

**Present:**

**Councillor I Jewell (Chairman)**

**Members of the Committee:**

Councillors A Bainbridge, D Bell, A Hopgood, M McKeon, J Robinson, A Simpson, L Taylor, M Wilson, S Wilson (Vice-Chairman), D Wood and S Zair

**1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Boyd, M McGaun, O Milburn, A Shield and J Shuttleworth.

**2 Substitute Members**

Councillor D Wood substituted for Councillor L Boyd, Councillor M Wilson for Councillor O Milburn and Councillor A Simpson for Cllr M McGaun.

**3 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 December 2017 were agreed as a correct record subject to Councillor Shield's declaration of interest in application numbered 5a being removed. The applicant was not a member of Councillor Shield's political group.

The Chairman signed the Minutes.

**4 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Wilson informed the Committee that the application was in his electoral division and that he lived near to the development site but he had not been consulted on the proposals. The Member advised that he had not made a decision on the application.

For information Councillor Wood informed the Committee that he worked for Phil Wilson MP and in this capacity had submitted information to the Planning Section in March 2017 in respect of the previous proposals for the site.

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

### **a DM/17/03378/FPA - St Cuthbert's Drive, Sacriston**

The Committee considered a report of the Senior Planning Officer regarding the proposed erection of 24 dwellings, including associated access and infrastructure (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Senior Planning Officer gave a detailed presentation which included photographs of the site and plans of the proposed layout. Members had visited the site the previous day and were familiar with the layout and surroundings.

Members were informed that the Headteacher of the Primary School had submitted a statement which was read out by the Senior Planning Officer. The school considered that the 20mph zone would help to ensure the safety of schoolchildren at key times during the day. Having a condition regarding the safest route to school, and the offer to provide high visibility jackets would be very helpful as visibility would be essential.

The Headteacher also asked that a condition be agreed regarding the restriction of access to the site by heavy vehicles at key times, and the Senior Planning Officer advised that the standard condition for construction works could be amended to take into account the proximity of the school to the site.

Members were also informed of proposed amendments to condition 6 regarding the submission of a drainage scheme.

Councillor Liddle, local Member expressed concern that there had been insufficient consultation on the proposals, and whilst the developers were now consulting with residents and the school she believed that if dialogue had been better the issues could have been resolved more quickly.

Mr J Ridgeon, the applicant's agent was in attendance to speak in support of the application. He advised that the proposals before the Committee were an evolution of the scheme approved in April 2017, the only key difference being the point of access to the development. A ransom strip on the site boundary had prevented the earlier scheme being developed and therefore an alternative access had to be found.

As with the previous scheme the main concerns related to road safety. The developer had agreed to fund a 'Slow to 20' scheme for the benefit of residents and pupils. Apart from the access, Members had already found the proposals to be acceptable and all the issues raised had been addressed.

The developer had been working with Homes England to deliver homes as rent to buy and was committed to County Durham and its residents. Prince Bishops Homes would continue to engage with Officers and the school to ensure that there was no adverse impact on road safety during the construction period or afterwards.

Councillor Wilson referred to the proposed 20mph zone and asked if the scheme could be imposed as a condition. The Senior Planning Officer advised that a condition attached to any approval would not meet the necessary tests, nor could the scheme be secured through a legal agreement which would potentially compromise the applicant's grant funding arrangements. The Highways Officer added that location of the Primary School did not meet the criteria in the Council's 20mph limit and zones policy. Members were assured that as the Council was the landowner the scheme would be delivered as part of the land-deal for the site. Officers acknowledged the wishes of the Committee that the scheme be scheduled as quickly as possible.

Councillor Wilson asked if the 'Slow to 20' could also restrict overtaking and was advised that this could not be incorporated into the scheme as vehicles would need to pass buses and cars within the zone.

Councillor Hopgood asked if the 20mph restriction would be in force all day, given that pupils used the nearby playing field. The Member was informed that the restriction would be in place during school start and finish times. Barriers were already situated outside the school and the children would wear high-visibility jackets to walk to the playing field. A barrier was not required on the opposite side of the road as the exit from the playing field was onto the estate road of Acorn Close, and not onto the B6532.

In response to further questions from Councillors Wilson and Hopgood regarding the footpath, the Committee was informed that during the re-alignment works pedestrians would use an alternative route. Discussions with regard to the location of the alternative route were ongoing but disruption would be kept to a minimum. Proposed amendments to condition 5 would reflect this.

Following a further question from Councillor Wilson about the access and visibility splays, the Highways Officer advised that visibility of 2.4 x 47m was compliant with the Manual for Streets for speeds of 33mph.

Councillor Simpson expressed concern about the lack of affordable housing and open space. The Senior Planning Officer advised that as with all schemes a rigorous viability assessment had been undertaken which had concluded that the requirements for affordable housing and open space provision would render the development unviable.

Mr Jackson, on behalf the applicant clarified that the developer's Rent to Buy scheme offered 100% affordable housing but was not recognised within the NPPF at present. All the dwellings would be funded under the Homes England Affordable Housing Programme allowing occupiers to rent their homes for 5 years with an option to buy at the end of this period. The developer considered that in future this would be recognised as affordable housing within the NPPF.

Councillor J Robinson **MOVED** and Councillor Hopgood **SECONDED** that the application be approved subject to the conditions listed and subject to authority being delegated to Planning Officers in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee and local Members to amend conditions 5, 6 and 13.

Following a vote being taken it was **Resolved:**

That

- a) the application be approved subject to the conditions listed in the report, and;
- b) delegated authority be granted to Planning Officers, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee and local Members, to amend the wording of conditions numbered 5, 6 and 13.

## **6 Appeal Update**

The Committee considered a report of the Principal Planning Officer which provided details of an appeal considered by the Planning Inspectorate regarding the refusal of outline planning permission for the erection of one dwelling at Old County View, Hett Hills, Pelton Fell (for copy see file of Minutes).

Members were informed that the Inspector had allowed the appeal.

**Resolved:**

That the content of the report be noted.