

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 29 March 2018 at 1.00 pm**

Present:

Councillor I Jewell (Chairman)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors D Bell, A Hopgood, O Milburn, J Robinson, A Shield, J Shuttleworth, L Taylor, O Temple, S Wilson (Vice-Chairman), D Wood and S Zair

Also Present:

Councillor A Watson

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Bainbridge, H Bennett, L Boyd, M McGaun, M McKeon and K Thompson

2 Substitute Members

Councillor O Temple substituting for Councillor M McGaun.
Councillor D Wood substituting for Councillor L Boyd.

3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 March 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 March were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4 Declarations of Interest (if any)

Councillor Temple declared an interest in Item 5a, as a local Member, however noted that he had not pre-determined the application although had expressed reservations prior to the meeting. Furthermore, he intended to speak and take part in the discussion and voting on the matter.

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

a DM/17/04130/OUT - Magistrates Court, Ashdale Road, Consett

The Committee considered a report of the Senior Planning Officer regarding the proposed outline residential development (Class C3 – Dwelling – houses) for up to 20 units including access (all other matters reserved) (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 and access.

Councillor A Watson, addressed the Committee to speak in objection to the application. He advised that Ashdale Road was extremely busy as a result of Consett Academy and it was difficult for anyone trying to access Medomsley Road or other streets which were accessible from Ashdale Road. He added that due to the volume of traffic and parked cars during school drop off and pick up times it was virtually a one-way system.

He noted that although there had been no recorded accidents or fatalities in the vicinity there had been numerous incidents and near misses, one most recently involving a child. He amongst others had concerns that the existing issues would be exacerbated by further development of up to 20 dwellings at this location.

Concerns were also raised regarding emergency service vehicles and the potential for lives to be at stake as a result of the congestion and accessibility issues around this area. Furthermore no junction improvements were being proposed to Medomsley Road and this he felt contravened TR2 of the Derwentside Local Plan.

He therefore urged Members of the committee to refuse the application on highways grounds and to insist that an in-depth traffic assessment be carried out.

Mr D Waltham the Applicants Agent, addressed the Committee to speak in support of the application. He advised that the applicant was a government agency whose main goal was to boost housing supply by seeking permission on brownfield sites before disposing to a developer.

He further referred to the density of surrounding and nearby dwellings noting that Medomsley Road had 40 homes per hectare with this scheme proposing 39. He furthermore advised that the scheme would comprise of 3 affordable units with the overall development appealing to first time buyers looking to get on to the property ladder.

The land was considered suitable for development and a sense of open space would be provided through thoughtful planning of planting and provision of green space.

With regards to comments made regarding highways he noted that the proposals met adoptable standards and noted that a reduction of speed to 20mph was proposed on Ashdale Road. He considered there to be no perceptible impact upon existing highways issues.

In conclusion, he advised that the application would bring benefits to the area, encourage economic activity and support sustainable development consistent with policies.

The Principal DM Engineer advised that the site did comply with standards and in mitigating some concerns it was proposed that double yellow lines be implemented 10 metres into the site.

Regarding highways safety concerns he advised that there was no injury data held on Ashdale Road and due to the slow-moving traffic, it was not considered to be a safety risk.

Regarding the suggestions of a one-way system being imposed in this area the Principal DM Engineer advised that this had been considered however was not deemed feasible in this location. He further addressed concerns regarding emergency vehicles not being able to pass at peak times and noted that he had visited the site and did not witness any issues with two-way traffic flow.

In addition, he advised that survey work had been undertaken on car parking provision and it was noted that there were 3 car parks within walking distance of the schools, with capacity. Furthermore trip rate analysis had indicated that the proposed development would generate approximately 12/13 additional trips on to the network each day – around 1 vehicle every 5 minutes.

Regarding the 20 mph zone and proposed double yellow lines it was noted that this would be enforceable and subject to a traffic regulation order.

Councillor Temple noted the difficulties in the area as a result of school traffic and referred to the recent road traffic incident where a child had been knocked down. He did however report that his main concerns were surrounding the proposed density of the development. He advised that guidelines on (delete and replace with 'Government statistics for') average dwellings per hectare were almost double the county's average and with that in mind suggested that the development should be built on the basis of 12.39 dwellings per hectare. He therefore queried what scope if any, there was to restrict the number of houses on this site.

He further referred to GDP1 of the Derwentside Local Plan and NPPF Part 7 regarding scale and density and suggested that there was sufficient weight in those policies to reject the proposals for 20 dwellings.

In response the Senior Planning Officer further noted that the application at this stage was outline only and was for up to 20 homes. The style and layout would have to be considered when the reserved matters application was submitted. As a further point of clarification, he advised that there was a new chapter contained within the revised NPPF regarding the efficient use of brownfield land. The Officer provided densities for surrounding existing estates that varied from 30 to 37 dwellings per hectare.

Councillor Shield noted that he too had concerns regarding the number of dwellings proposed and the number of vehicles per dwelling. He noted that if there was inadequate parking within the development it would like overspill on to Ashdale Road and down towards the academy. In response the Senior Planning Officer advised that should the full application be submitted with inadequate parking or larger dwellings then it may be deemed unacceptable at that point.

Further discussion ensued regarding parking standards and Councillor Shield further noted that the council had a social responsibility and with such should not disregard issues with parking on new developments and the problems that it may cause in the future.

As a point of order the Solicitor advised the committee that members should be mindful that the scheme was presented in outline only and all matters apart from access were reserved. Members therefore should only consider the principle of development.

Councillor Hopgood asked whether it would be possible to give outline permission without specifying the maximum number of dwellings. She further asked when the last time that parking standards had been reviewed and what the figures were before that time. She noted that most starter homes would be bought by couples which meant that in all likelihood they would have 2 cars. In addition because of the lack of employment in the area most residents had to travel to work giving greater reliance on cars. The Senior Planning Officer noted that the mechanism for addressing this issue was through reviewing the Council's adopted parking standards.

Councillor Jewell advised that he was aware that there was a formal procedure which the council must go through in order to increase car parking standards.

Councillor Wilson in referencing a recent application at Sacriston asked whether conditions relating to access and egress could be applied at this stage to avoid dispute later down the line.

Having listened to the comments made, Councillor Milburn added that she had no objection to the principle of the development although did recognise the concerns expressed. She therefore **MOVED** that the application be **APPROVED** subject to the conditions as listed in the report.

Councillor Wilson **SECONDED** the proposal.

Councillor Hopgood subsequently **MOVED** that the application be **DEFERRED** to allow further discussion with local members regarding density and parking standards.

Councillor Shield **SECONDED** the proposal.

Following a vote being taken the proposal to **DEFER** the application was **LOST**.

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

That the application be **APPROVED** subject to the applicant entering into a section 106 legal agreement to ensure delivery of Affordable Housing, Open Space provision and to address an identified need for Education Provision, and subject to the conditions as listed in the report.