

At a meeting of the DEVELOPMENT CONTROL (HETTON, HOUGHTON AND WASHINGTON) SUB-COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on WEDNESDAY, 8th JANUARY, 2014 at 4.45 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Thompson in the Chair

Councillors Blackburn, Davison, Lauchlan, Padgett, Richardson, Scaplehorn, Tate Wakefield, Walker and Wood

Declarations of Interest

Cllr Tate made an open declaration in the items for information on the agenda in any applications that were relevant to the Hetton area, as a member of Hetton Town Council who was a consultee on those applications.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Heron and Scott

Applications made under the Town and Country Planning Acts and Regulations made thereunder

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated), which related to Hetton, Houghton and Washington areas, copies of which had also been forwarded to each Member of the Council, upon applications made under the Town and Country Planning Acts and Regulations made thereunder.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

11/01066/SUB – Provision of 176 space car park (as amended) at land at Campground, Springwell Road, Springwell, Gateshead, NE9 7XW

The representative of the Deputy Chief Executive presented the report in respect of the application, summarising the planning issues around the principle of the development.

The Chairman welcomed Ms. Clare Stagg from PlanIT Design and Mr. Patrick Burns from Wrekenton Nou Camp to the Committee who wished to speak in favour of the application.

Ms. Stagg spoke in support of the application, addressing the issues that had been received in objection from members of the public. She explained that the proposal would not increase the risk of flooding but actually reduce it due to the 100 cubic metre soak away store. With regards to any increase in noise, she explained that there was no intention to increase the number of football matches played and therefore the levels of visitors to the site should remain the same.

Ms. Stagg further advised that they had been proactive in visiting local residents to discuss the proposals and had received positive feedback from them all. In response to concerns over the development causing a 'blot' on the landscape, she informed Members that there were plans to screen the car park quite heavily with trees that would grow to approximately 10 feet so that this would not be an issue.

With regards to the use of an alternative surface, Ms. Stagg advised that they had looked at other surfaces and were keen to explore any other options so long as they were cost effective and of a solid surface to allow cars to park upon it. She explained that the plot of land was currently being used as a car parking facility but as there was no hard standing, in times of bad weather it could not be parked upon, which then created issues with residents as visitors to the site parked in neighbouring streets.

In closing she advised the Committee that they were happy to work with Officers to find a suitable solution but would need clear requirements as to what needed to be provided to allow the application to be granted approval.

The Chairman then invited Mr. Burns to address the Committee, who also spoke in support of the application.

Mr. Burns informed the Committee that the club had been formed in 2008 and since then the site had been gradually improved. He explained that over 20 teams, comprising of 250 players and 18 coach's now accessed and used the facilities over the course of the week, although the fixtures were arranged so that there would never be this number of visitors accessing the site at any one time and that the fixture lists would see arrivals being staggered over the day, over the five football pitches.

He explained to the Committee that concerns had been raised that there would not be another venue that would have the capacity for the same number of clubs to use and that this affected not only the local clubs but also those that visited from around the region.

With regards to alternative surface materials, he explained that they had looked into the costings of materials other than the proposed tarmac but that this doubled the costs and made it almost impossible to be cost effective to the club.

The Representative of the Deputy Chief Executive advised that this development would be within the Green Belt and therefore to be granted approval it must not harm the openness of the surrounding area and show very special circumstances for the development to be undertaken. Unfortunately, on this occasion and in its current proposal, this application could not be supported as it did not evidence these matters.

Upon seeking clarification as to whether the application could be deferred to allow the applicants to consider proposing an alternative material for the car parking, Members were advised that this was only one of a number of issues, as there were also concerns over the access road to the site.

Members having fully considered the application, and the representations made, it was:-

1. RESOLVED that the application be refused for the three reasons as set out in the report.

11/03177/EXT1 – Application for a new planning permission to replace an extant planning permission 05/03963/SUB (Use of existing lake and land for trout/pike lake, Associated development including lodge, on site wardens accommodation, snack and tackle shop and W.C. and education room. Formation of car park, new ponds, jetties, footpaths and fencing.) in order to extend the time limit for implementation at Willows Reservoir, East of 23 Eddison Road, Swan, Washington

The representative of the Deputy Chief Executive presented the report in respect of the application, summarising the planning issues around the principle of the development.

The Chairman welcomed Ms. Clare Grogan and Mr. John Richardson to the meeting who both wished to speak in objection to the application.

Mr. Richardson addressed the Committee first explaining that the applicant did not have access to the track to the east of the lake where the Lodge was proposed to be built as this land was now privately owned by a group of residents from The Willows who would not allow the applicant access to develop any part of the track or any other land within their ownership. He advised that to his knowledge there was no other way for the applicant to gain access to develop the site and therefore the application should be refused.

Ms. Grogan then addressed the Committee advising that there had been a number of changes in ownership of the land and how the land is set out since planning consent was given in November, 2005 and that many of the planning conditions that related to that application were no longer relevant. She raised concerns over the detrimental impact the development would have on the local wildlife and trees.

Ms. Grogan also believed that the development would breach articles of the Human Rights Act 1998, for the elderly community who are neighbours to the development and all other residents in the vicinity.

Members having fully considered the report, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the application be refused for the three reasons as set out in the report.

Items for Information

3. RESOLVED that the items for information be received and noted.

(Signed) G. THOMPSON,
Chairman.