

At a meeting of the PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on TUESDAY, 24th FEBRUARY, 2009 at 5.00 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor T. Martin in the Chair

Councillors Chamberlin, Fletcher, D. Forbes, M. Forbes, Miller, O'Connor, Scaplehorn, J. Scott, Snowdon, Tate, Wakefield, J. Walton, Wares, S. Watson, A. Wilson, D. Wilson, Wood and A. Wright

Declarations of Interest

Item 08 - Development Control Performance 2008/2009

Councillor Tate declared a personal interest in the report in connection with the major outstanding planning application 06/02209/FUL Land at Murton Lane as a Member of Hetton Town Council.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Blackburn, I. Cuthbert, Fletcher, E. Gibson, Howe and Tye

Minutes

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on 27th January, 2009 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Report of the Meeting of the Development Control (North Sunderland) Sub-Committee

The report of the meeting of the Development Control (North Sunderland) Sub-Committee held on 3rd February, 2009 (copy circulated) was submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

2. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Report of the Meeting of the Development Control (South Sunderland) Sub-Committee

The report of the meeting of the Development Control (South Sunderland) Sub-Committee held on 3rd February, 2009 (copy circulated) was submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

3. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Report of the Meeting of the Development Control (Hetton, Houghton and Washington) Sub-Committee

The report of the meeting of the Development Control (Hetton, Houghton and Washington) Sub-Committee held on 3rd February, 2009 (copy circulated) was submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

4. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Newbottle Village Conservation Area : Character Appraisal & Management Strategy

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copy circulated) to seek the comments of the Committee on the 'Newbottle Village Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Strategy', prior to its presentation to Cabinet to:-

- report on the outcome of consultations on the draft version of the Character Appraisal and Management Strategy;
- adopt the revised document as Formal Planning Guidance.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Mr. Mark Taylor, Senior Conservation Officer, presented the report.

Councillor Wakefield commented that there were a lot of modern infill housing developments in Newbottle that had impacted on the village's character. It was important that the Council's planning and conservation teams work in close consultation to seek to refuse planning applications that fail to preserve or enhance the Newbottle Conservation Area.

In response to a comment from the Chairman in relation to unsympathetic alteration of residential properties in Lily Terrace, Mr. Taylor agreed that many 'Sunderland Cottage' style properties had been altered with large additions that were overbearing and their impact on the traditional character of the cottages was intrusive.

Councillor G. Hall queried whether any planning permission granted prior to the conservation area designation would still be valid.

Keith Lowes, Head of Planning and Environment responded that any full planning permission granted prior to the designation would still be valid but the development must be commenced within 3 years of the permission being granted or it would otherwise lapse.

Councillor M. Forbes asked whether there were any identified common problems or general advantages in relation to the designation of conservation areas in the city.

Mr Taylor stated that a significant advantage of designation was that any new development or redevelopment was more closely controlled in terms of its character and appearance and architecture was protected.

The problem of insensitive alterations to buildings within the conservation area made before designation could of course detract from the architectural quality and character of the area.

Members welcomed the Strategy.

5. RESOLVED that it be recommended to the Cabinet that the Newbottle Village Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy be endorsed.

Development Control Performance 2008/2009

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copy circulated) to advise the Committee of the performance of the Development Control service over the first three quarters of the financial year 2008/2009.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Mr. Mike Mattok, Development Control Manager presented the report and informed the Committee that performance had exceeded the national and local targets.

Councillor Wood referred to appendix 6 'Outstanding Planning Applications over 13 weeks old and still awaiting a decision' and asked what was happening in relation to Sunderland Retail Park.

Mr Lowes advised that the original target date would have meant the planning application would have been considered at this Committee; however the updated retail capacity study had just been submitted by the applicant and it was possible that the application could be brought to the next Committee meeting in March subject to the resolution of any outstanding matters.

Councillor Hall congratulated the department on its planning performance in relation to the targets and commented that he hoped the delegation scheme, which was intended to speed up the decision making process still looked to retain a high level of Ward Member involvement and did not adversely affect the quality of service.

Councillor Hall queried what was holding up the outstanding planning applications in appendix 6.

Mr Lowes advised that many of the applications were quite old and were marked outstanding or live for 'tactical' reasons. Sunderland Association Football Club was maintaining an interest in light of the Master plan. The original Saint Peters Wharf application had been superseded by a revised application in which revised plans/details had been submitted for consideration.

Councillor Wakefield commented that the wording "under negotiation" might be more appropriate than "over time" when the statistics were reported.

Mr Lowes stated that applications were only registered on the official statistics when a final decision had been made.

Mr. Mattok and Mr. Lowes having addressed questions and comments from Members, the Committee congratulated the Managers of the Development Control Team for maintaining the improvement of the Section and it was:-

RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

The Chairman closed the meeting having thanked everyone for their attendance.

(Signed) T. Martin
Chairman.