

CONSULTATIONS FROM NEIGHBOURING COUNCILS ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report has two purposes. The first is to seek the Committee's endorsement to responses made to two consultations from neighbouring Councils about planning applications affecting sites close to the common boundary with the City of Sunderland. The second is to seek authorisation for the Deputy Chief Executive to respond on the Committee's behalf to similar future consultations on non major applications.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Where the Council is consulted by a neighbouring authority on planning applications in their area but which may have an impact on Sunderland's interests, the common practice is to seek the approval of the Planning and Highways Committee to the form of the proposed response. However, the Council only has 21 days in which to respond to these consultations, which means in practical terms officers respond to these consultations on an interim basis and then seek the Planning and Highways Committee's endorsement of the comments made.

2.2 Under the Council's Constitution any major application made to Sunderland City Council for development of 10 houses or above or of 500 sq m. of other development is not delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive for determination, but is determined by the appropriate Area Development Control Sub-Committee. It is proposed that where the Council is consulted on an application in the area of a neighbouring authority which is above this same size threshold then the response should continue to be made by this Committee, whereas for all other minor applications below this threshold the Committee would delegate the authority to respond to the Deputy Chief Executive.

2.3 Delegating the response on these minor applications would significantly reduce the number of consultation responses which would have to be reported to Committee and allow a timely response to be made to the authority in question. The recommendation on this report is, therefore, to seek the Committee's agreement to delegate the authority to respond to future consultations on minor applications to the Deputy Chief Executive.

3.0 CURRENT CONSULTATIONS AND RESPONSE

3.1 Sunderland City Council has recently been consulted by neighbouring authorities on two applications.

- 3.2 Gateshead MBC has consulted on application DC/09/01379/OUT, which is an outline application for the erection of an industrial building for the manufacture, assembly and testing of train carriages and the creation of onsite vehicle storage, delivery, parking facilities, landscaping and new access from Lamesley Road at the Tyne Marshalling Yard Smith Lane, Lamesley. The site is shown on Plan 1 at the end of this report.
- 3.3 The site is approximately 2 km from the Sunderland City boundary near Armstrong District and Springwell. As this is an outline application with all matters reserved there are few details submitted. However the size of the building will be 68,000 sq m, with an indicative height of 10m and parking provision for 530 cars. No employment details are available but the numbers will likely be significant.
- 3.4 The officer's comments are that Sunderland City Council has no objection to the proposed development and does not consider that the proposed development would affect any of the Council's strategic objectives. The creation of a large number of jobs easily accessible to the western parts of Sunderland is to be welcomed.
- 3.5 South Tyneside MBC has also consulted on application ST/2032/09/FUL, which is a full application for the erection of an indoor training facility and landscaping on land at the Sunderland Association Football Club, Academy of Light, Sunderland Road, Cleadon.
- 3.6 The proposal relates to the erection of an indoor training facility and landscaping on land at Sunderland Association Football Club's (SAFC) Academy of Light. The site is shown on Plan 2. A similar application was made to South Tyneside Council in 2002 and was refused permission, despite an amended design being submitted which reduced its impact on the greenbelt. This was followed by an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate subsequently dismissed following a public inquiry.
- 3.7 The current scheme is the result of pre-application discussions between S.A.F.C and South Tyneside Council, which have led to the proposed building, being 'sunk' into the site, with the effect that its ridge height stands only marginally higher than the existing buildings due to the significantly lower level on which it is to be constructed.
- 3.8 The key planning consideration for Sunderland City Council is the impact of the proposal on interests of acknowledged importance to the City of Sunderland, namely the greenbelt in South Tyneside
- 3.9 At the time of the previous application, the Club demonstrated that the development proposed would create a facility which would be among the best in Europe. As such, the proposal has the potential to enhance the image of the City, through the direct benefits to the Football Club and indirectly through the Club's association with the City. It would raise the profile of the region and the City, and is therefore supported again, in principle, on this basis. In terms of the physical impact of the proposal on the Green Belt, the key consideration is whether the proposed development would result in the actual perceived closing of the gap

between Sunderland and South Tyneside. Given the existing landform, the approved mounding around the pitches on the site and the existing tree cover on the southern edge of the developed part of the Academy site, the training barn, particularly given its sunken elevation in the current proposal, would have little visual impact when viewed from either the south or east. This screening would be further reinforced by the existing buildings and the extensive tree planting proposed in the overall scheme.

3.10 The Academy can reasonably be viewed as a use which in the long term, given its context and would not harm the overall openness of the Green Belt, through retention of the majority of the site for playing pitches with only a central core of buildings for the operation of the whole facility.

3.11 The officer's comments are, therefore, that Sunderland City Council has no objection to the proposed development and does not consider that the proposed development would affect any of the Council's strategic objectives.

4.0 RECOMMENDATION

1. The Committee is therefore recommended to
 - (1) endorse the comments sent to Gateshead MBC in relation to application DC/09/01379/OUT and
 - (2) endorse the comments sent to South Tyneside MBC in relation to application ST/2032/09/FUL.
2. The Committee is recommended to delegate the authority to respond to future consultations on non-major applications to the Deputy Chief Executive.

