

At a meeting of the DEVELOPMENT CONTROL (NORTH SUNDERLAND) SUB-COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on TUESDAY, 2ND MARCH, 2010 at 3.30 P.M.

Present

Councillor Copeland in the Chair

Councillors Bell, Charlton, Francis, T. Martin, D. Smith and L. Walton

Declarations of Interest

09.04734/LAP – Improvements to existing pedestrian access to Thompson Park from Newcastle Road, to include entrance gates and realignment of existing bow top railings.

The Chairman declared a personal interest in the item as a friend of Margaret Thompson Park.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Fletcher, Howe and Miller

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

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) relating to the North Sunderland area, copies of which had also been forwarded to each Member of the Council upon applications made thereunder.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

09/04452/FUL – Erection of 3 storey building to provide young persons immediate access facility, to include boundary enclosure, parking area and hard and soft landscaping – Land at Junction of Dundas Street and Liddle Street, Sunderland

Dr. Dale Addison spoke against the application on behalf of himself and other local residents. He stated that:-

- residents were strongly opposed to the application, whilst recognising the excellent work of Centrepont, they felt the location of the development was inappropriate;

- the area was already saturated with similar services such as the Lazarus Centre, Williamson Terrace Residential Home and Barclay Lodge;
- the area was in the top five for social deprivation and in 2009, Police were called 234 times to the area and there had been a number of high profile crimes during the last 18 months;
- the area was not a safe environment for the people of Centrepoint and urged the Committee to reject the application as he did not believe the area was capable of meeting Centrepoint's needs.

Councillor T. Martin stated that he had studied the objections raised and commented that the Centrepoint facility in Hendon had suffered some difficulties but these had lessened with Police help.

Councillor D. Smith queried how the Police have not objected to the application, when Dr. Addison had informed of a number of serious offences which had occurred in the area.

Mike Mattok, Technical Manager, Development Control, confirmed that the Police had not objected to the application.

Councillor G. Hall spoke on the application as a member for St. Peter's Ward and commented that there were a number of concerns over the rationale in deciding on the location for the facility, concerns which had been previously raised at Scrutiny level and passed to Cabinet for consideration. Councillor Hall felt that no action had been taken and that the underlying risk assessment taken on the new build was lacking.

He considered that the process had been a desk top exercise, without proper consultation, and whilst Councillor Hall supported Centrepoint and the role they play in the community, he had significant concerns about the proposal and felt that the location wasn't suitable.

Martin Gill, Regional Operations Manager and spokesperson for Centrepoint, advised that the purpose of the Dundas Street facility was to promote social inclusion, working closely with the Local Housing Options Team, the Council and Police to implement action plans.

He stated that Centrepoint want to be an advocate for the community and want to deliver an excellent level of service by leading in the community and listening to residents' concerns.

He further added that a number of procedures would be in place such as curfews and acceptable behaviour contracts to minimise any opportunity for young people to cause nuisance in the community.

Councillor Francis raised concerns and questions regarding the potential occupants of the proposed facility, what CRB checks would be undertaken, the potential impact of the development on visitors to the church and medical centre and what contingency plans would exist for management of the facility in the event staff were ill.

Mr. Gill advised that in relation to the proposed service users, there could be a number of reasons for the youths to be homeless, such as fragmented families, the recent recession, people leaving care or suffering from alcohol/substance misuse. Centrepoint would look at the individuals' learning, work and health issues and provide the required support.

He stated that he was not sure if a CRB check would be required but all who attend would have individual risk assessments.

He also advised that Centrepoint were committed to implementing the proper policies, to monitor through CCTV and would always have two trained members of staff on site at any one time. Protocols would be in place with the Police and curfews would be implemented so if a service user was out past the designated time, they could be dealt with accordingly. There was a senior management team on call who could assess the situation if a problem arose.

Most of the service users would be the people of Sunderland that were in need of help. Mr. Gill commented that in their experience the majority of service users did not breach the user agreement and that any incident arising would be dealt with on a case by case basis..

Alan Caddick, Head of Housing, commented that the Council took its role in Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding very seriously. In terms of the process for the selection of the site, other locations were considered but Dundas Street was deemed more suitable in terms of being near the City Centre and transportation.

There was a need for caution and not to stereotype all potential service users as likely to engage in anti-social behaviour or other criminal activity. Without this facility, people would be going out of the City, increasing their vulnerability.

From a Council point of view, this accommodation was much needed and they would be working closely with Centrepoint on a commitment to try and improve the situation in the area.

Councillor Francis referred to the report in relation to the site not being near to vulnerable children and yet there was a school nearby.

Mr. Caddick advised that in the application site was in the proximity of the school but not directly next to it, and that with this facility they would be able to manage any behavioural issues in the area much better than if they did not have the facility.

Councillor Francis expressed concerns over the vulnerability of the surrounding residents.

Mr. Caddick commented that it was considered that any risks could be appropriately managed through the proposed management arrangements.

Councillor D. Smith commented that he had heard nothing to allay Members and residents' fears. He considered that the issues had not been sufficiently addressed and further consultation should be undertaken regarding the identification of an appropriate site, to examine safeguarding and policing problems in the area.

Councillor D. Smith proposed that the item be deferred until this further consultation be carried out.

Following a request by Councillor Charlton for clarification of his position, the Legal representative confirmed that he should not participate in the vote as he was late for the meeting and therefore not present for the duration of this item

The motion to defer was put to a vote:-

For: Councillors Francis
 D. Smith
 L. Walton

Against: Councillors Bell
 Copeland
 T. Martin

As the Chairman exercised the casting vote, the motion to defer was rejected.

Mr. Mattok advised that the proposal did accord with Council Policy and accepted that there were issues of maintaining residential amenity but on balance it was considered that there were sufficient safeguards in place and the proposal was therefore considered acceptable in planning terms.

The officer's recommendation to approve the application was then put to a vote:-

For: Councillors Bell
 Copeland
 T. Martin

Against: Councillors Francis
 D. Smith
 L. Walton

With the Chairman exercising the casting vote, it was:-

1. RESOLVED that the application be approved for the reasons set out in the report and subject to the 11 conditions set out therein.

09/04734/LAP – Improvements to existing pedestrian access to Thompson Park from Newcastle Road, to include entrance gates and realignment of existing bow top railings – Margaret Thompson Park, Newcastle Road, Sunderland.

2. RESOLVED that consent be granted in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992, subject to the three conditions set out in the report.

Items for Information

10/00229/OUT – Land adjacent to Swan Street Centre, Swan Street, Sunderland, SR5 1EB – Proposed residential development comprising 34 No. dwellings and associated parking and vehicular access

Councillor Bell requested that a site visit be undertaken.

10/00323/FUL – Land at end of cul-de-sac, Lavender Grove, Sunderland – Erection of 2 No. detached houses to include stopping-up of highway and change of use to private access

The Chairman requested that a site visit be undertaken.

3. RESOLVED that site visits be undertaken in respect of the following applications:-

(a) 10/00229/OUT – Land adjacent to Swan Street Centre, Swan Street, Sunderland, SR5 1EB;

(b) 10/00323/FUL – Land at end of cul-de-sac, Lavender Grove, Sunderland.

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – Appeal

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) concerning the appeals determined for the period of 1st January, 2010 to 31st January, 2010.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

4. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

(Signed) R. COPELAND,
Chairman.