

**At a meeting of the DEVELOPMENT CONTROL (HETTON, HOUGHTON AND WASHINGTON) SUB-COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on THURSDAY, 13<sup>th</sup> MARCH, 2014 at 4.45 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor Thompson in the Chair

Councillors Blackburn, Davison, Lauchlan, Padgett, Richardson, Scaplehorn and Wakefield

**Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were given for Councillors Heron, Scott, Tate, Walker and Wood.

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

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report and report for circulation (copies 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)

**13/04116/FUL – Refurbishment of existing bungalows at Roche Court and Wenlock to include changing the existing flat roofs to pitched. Existing open space including three parking bays adjacent to central garages to house a district heating energy centre works to include stopping up of public highways. (Amended Plans received 14.01.2014)**

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 and advising that the item was originally heard at this Committee on 26 February, 2014 where it had been deferred pending a site visit and further investigation.

The Planning Officer also advised that the Committee had been presented with new plans which clearly showed the interface of the relationship between the properties and that the distance between them was actually 8 metres and not the 14 metres as set out in the original report.

The Chairman welcomed Mr. Mounter and Ms. Rebecca Marshall from Gentoo to the Committee who wished to speak in objection and in favour of the application, respectively and advised that a written objection from Mr. Patterson had been circulated to all Members of the Committee for consideration.

Mr. Mounter spoke in objection to the application, stating that by his measurement the distance between the properties was actually 7.84 metres and not those distances as referred to in the report. He explained that from his living room window at present he had a partial amount of sky and some trees in his view, if this proposal were to go ahead this would reduce the amount of skyline in his view by a quarter and it would be almost like looking straight at a prison wall which he did not think was reasonable.

In relation to the sunset and sunrise times, he explained that at present the sun hits his living room on 15:10 until 16:23, which was approximately one hour of sunlight. If the development goes ahead then the time would be cut in half and yet this was deemed acceptable. He asked if this would be deemed to be in the 'spirit of the law'?

He circulated photographs to the Committee of the roofs which clearly showed frost on them at intermittent times on a morning, and even at the point that frost had cleared on the nearby grass it was still shown on the roofs so he could not understand the argument that the roofs were needed to improve insulation.

In closing, Mr. Mounter explained that he had no objection to the installation of roofs on the bungalows as such but that he did not want to see the adverse effects on his own and neighbours properties and quality of life.

Ms. Marshall of Gentoo spoke on behalf of the applicant and advised that the properties did have some insulation in the roofing at present but that it was only made up of timber and felt and not substantial. She explained that the storage heaters for the properties were timed devices that customers did not have control of and would switch on later in the day which could explain the frost remaining on the roofs. She explained that the energy rating of the properties at the moment was low and the improvements to the properties would increase this.

In response to a Member regarding alternative roofs, Ms. Marshall explained that if the flat roofs remained there would be nowhere to put piping for the heating system and this was partly the reasoning for the pitched roofs.

With regards to the distance between properties the Planning Officer advised that these guidelines were recommended for new build developments but even then they were only guidelines for the Officer to take into account when exercising judgement and making their decision as to what was best for each site on its individual circumstances and merit.

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

4. RESOLVED that the application be approved for the reasons as set out in the report and subject to the five conditions detailed therein.

(Signed) G. THOMPSON,  
Chairman.