

**At a meeting of the DEVELOPMENT CONTROL (HETTON, HOUGHTON AND WASHINGTON) SUB-COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on TUESDAY, 28<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2012 at 5.45 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor Fletcher in the Chair

Councillors Charlton, Lauchlan, Morrissey, Padgett, D. Richardson, Scaplehorn, Scott, Tate, Thompson and Wakefield.

**Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Tate declared a personal interest in application 11/03553/FUL – Land North of Sycamore House, Louvain Terrace West, Hetton le Hole, Houghton Le Spring and Items for Information, 11/02362/OUT – Land at North Road, Hetton le Hole, Houghton le Spring as a Member of Hetton Town Council, which is a consultee in the application.

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors I. Richardson, Tye and Vardy.

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

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report, supplementary and a circulatory report (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).

**Change in Order of Business**

The Chairman proposed that the application for 11/03442/FUL – Land North of Pattinson Road, Pattinson Industrial Estate, Washington, be heard first.

**11/03442/FUL – Erection of 83 dwellings, with associated landscaping, parking and highway works – Land North of Pattinson Road, Pattinson Industrial Estate, Washington**

Danielle Pearson, Senior Planner presented the report and was on hand to answer Members queries.

Councillor Padgett enquired if there had been any assurances given over Primary School places and expressed concern in relation to their distance from the development resulting in long journeys and question marks over bus availability etc.

Mrs. Pearson advised that the Authority could only request a financial contribution and the ratio provided by Children's Services had been satisfied.

In response to Councillor Tate's enquiry as to what the rest of the land was designated as, Mrs. Pearson advised that various parts of land designated for employment had been released for housing as a departure from the Unitary Development Plan

The representative from Hellens Investment advised that Barratt Homes had submitted an application for homes on the remaining land and was in the process of being validated.

Councillor Thompson enquired over the off site play provision sought in regard to the Section 106 Agreement and play provision in the area as he was concerned parents would have to travel in a car to the nearest playing area for their children.

The representative of Hellens Investment advised that Teal Farm did have an onsite play area and the Barretts application also had an area of open space in the vicinity which would be available.

Mrs. Pearson advised that from a planning position there were sometimes requests from residents for the removal of the on site play areas due to instances of anti-social behaviour.

Councillor Thompson referred to the School Places and queried why the funding would be given to Holley Park and Lambton Primary Schools when they seemed such a distance away.

Mrs. Pearson informed the Committee that Children's Services had advised that these schools had the capacity for the additional intake of pupils.

The Chairman commented that in the cases of big Housing Schemes, Children's Services advise there are plenty of school places yet in Washington, parents are fighting for places.

Councillor Thompson commented that it was 2.5 miles by car to the schools, which have parking issues, double yellow lines and Nexus have stated that public transport is not viable so children will have a 30 minute bus ride plus walk. This did not fit in with the school availability issues and Councillor Thompson had concerns over this.

Councillor Scaplehorn wished to echo Councillor Thompson's concerns.

The representative of Hellens Investment advised that £400,000 of funding would be available for road improvements and additional bus lay-bys. They were also in discussions with bus operators but could not proceed without the planning consent.

Councillor Padgett also wished to raise concerns over the limited bus routes in the area and commented that he did not want to see children having to get multiple buses and emphasised the need to ensure the children were able to get to school safely.

1. RESOLVED that the application be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive to:-

- (i) grant permission subject to the 20 conditions set out in the circulatory report and subject to completion of a Section 106 Agreement by 6<sup>th</sup> March 2012 or such other date as is agreed by the Deputy Chief Executive; and
- (ii) refuse permission should the legal agreement not be completed by 6<sup>th</sup> March 2012 or such other date as is agreed by the Deputy Chief Executive.

**11/01307/FUL – Change of use of building to be used as a gym and martial arts centre (amended description) – Former Garage, Mill Pitt, Houghton-le-Spring, DH4 4RA**

Mike Mattok, Technical Manager, Development Control presented the report and was on hand to answer Members queries.

The Chairman introduced Mr. Alan Connolly, agent for the applicant who wished to stress that the Members did not need to have concerns as to parking issues as whilst it had proved impossible to purchase the adjacent land, the owner of that land had given permission for them to use it for customer parking if needed. However there was no real parking problem as the majority of customers did not arrive by car. The membership for the gym was at the level now where parking was not an issue. Mr. Connolly circulated photographs to the Committee.

Mr. Connolly advised that they had invested £20,000 worth of apparatus and customers had won several martial art awards, since the facility had opened.

There were letters of support for the proposal and a nearby resident, who had experienced anti-social behaviour in the past, has had no problems since the gym opened, yet feared these problems could return, should this application be refused.

Mr. Connolly also advised that a number of crimes in the area had been solved via the help of the CCTV cameras at the gym.

Councillor Scott commented that the gym had provided a great improvement to the area but queried if there was the possibility of a Section 106 Agreement to improve the roads around the area.

The Chairman commented that the roads had already seen an improvement based on the photographs circulated.

Mr. Mattok advised that the applicant had originally offered an informal arrangement for parking but unfortunately they could not provide a formal agreement and that in the circumstances as there was no highway concern in regard to parking that it was inappropriate to require a planning obligation for that

Councillor Scott commented that the gym had been a tremendous help to the area and should not be rejected.

Councillor Charlton asked Officers if the parking issues were acceptable. Eric Henderson, Engineer advised that the use was no more onerous than the previous planning use of the building in terms of highway safety Councillor Charlton commented that it appeared the positives outweighed the negatives for approving the application.

2. RESOLVED that the application be approved subject to the three conditions set out in the report.

**11/03412/LAP – Erection of an 8 metre CCTV column including a 360 degree camera – Rectory Park, The Broadway, Houghton-le-Spring, DH4 4BB**

Councillors Wakefield, Scott and D. Richardson all wished to express their support for the application.

3. RESOLVED that the application be approved subject to the six conditions set out in the report.

**11/03553/FUL – Erection of new dwelling (Amended plan received 08.02.2012) – Land North of Sycamore House, Louvain Terrace West, Hetton-le-Hole, Houghton-le-Spring, DH5 9PR**

Mr. Mattok presented the report and advised that a tree had been cut down in the garden, which had originally been shown on the application site plans but was not protected under a TPO.

There was the potential of Birds/Bats inhabiting the tree but as this was gone, there was no evidence to call upon. Mr. Mattok advised that this reason alone would not be sufficient to refuse the application and therefore recommended approval subject to the conditions set out in the supplementary report and with an additional condition for a further tree planting.

Councillor Tate queried that as the back street was very narrow, would a one way system not be of benefit.

Mr. Henderson advised that in practice, a one way system would cause more problems than it would solve and would resist this option if possible.

4. RESOLVED that the application be approved subject to the 12 conditions as set out in the supplementary report and inclusion of an additional condition in relation to the planting of a tree.

#### **Items for Information**

5. RESOLVED that site visits be undertaken to the following applications:-

11/03181/OUT – Site of Emerson House at the request of Councillor Thompson.

12/00100/FUL – Land North of Armstrong Road at the request of Councillor Scaplehorn.

#### **Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – Appeals**

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) concerning the appeals received and determined for the period 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2012.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

6. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

(Signed) J. FLETCHER,  
Chairman.