

At an Extraordinary Meeting of the PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on TUESDAY 5th OCTOBER, 2010 at 6.15 p.m.

Present: -

Councillor Tye in the Chair

Councillors Ball, Charlton, Copeland, Essl, Fletcher, E. Gibson, G. Hall, Howe, Miller, Old, Padgett, Scaplehorn, J. Scott, Snowdon, Tate, D. Wilson and A. Wright

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Ellis, Francis, O'Connor, P. Watson and Wood

Revised outline planning application, received 5th August 2010, for erection of superstore (A1); retention and recladding of an existing unit; erection of four additional retail units; retention and recladding of the existing Farmfoods/Blockbuster unit ; new vehicular accesses; reopening of section of highway to emergency vehicles; resurfacing/landscaping and stopping up of a highway.

Sunderland Retail Park Sunderland

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to make a recommendation to Committee on an outline planning application submitted on behalf of Mountview Securities in respect of Sunderland Retail Park for the erection of a superstore (A1); retention and recladding of an existing unit; the erection of four additional retail units; retention and recladding of the one other existing Farmfoods/Blockbuster unit; new vehicular accesses; reopening of a section of highway to emergency vehicles; resurfacing/landscaping and the closure of a highway.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

At this juncture the Chairman checked that all Members of the Committee had the Addendum and Supplementary reports in respect of the application. He also asked if any Member wished to have a further period of reading time to refresh on the planning issues before hearing the Planning Officer's report.

Members unanimously agreed that they were content to proceed with the agenda item.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Mr Keith Lowes, Head of Planning and Environment introduced the report and advised that a short supplementary report had been circulated at the meeting to address, in the interests of completeness, an editing error contained in Appendix A1 to the Addendum Report regarding the initial consultation response from Sunderland Arc in respect of the original scheme and to comment further on the proposed Section 106 agreement.

The revised application was accompanied by a number of other documents which provide supporting information. These were:-

- a Design and Access Statement
- a Transport Assessment including a framework for a Travel Plan
- a Sustainability Statement
- a Flood Risk Assessment
- a Retail Assessment
- an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment
- a Geo-Environmental Desk Study
- an Acoustics Assessment Technical Report and
- a Statement of Community Involvement.

Mr Lowes also advised that a negative EIA screening opinion had been issued by Officers in respect of the application under delegated powers. As a consequence, an environmental impact assessment was not required. This screening opinion had been published together with the planning application documents as part of the planning register.

Mr Lowes then invited Mr. Mike Mattok, Technical Manager, Development Control to take the Committee through the details of the report. He informed the Committee that the applicant has followed the sequential approach and demonstrated that there are no sequentially preferable sites for the development under Policy EC15 of PPS4. In addition, the development has been assessed against the impact tests contained in Policies EC10.2 and 16.1 of PPS4 and there is no clear evidence that the proposal would lead to a significant adverse impact in respect of any of the impacts referred to in those policies.

Mr Mattok confirmed that the application is not a departure from the Council's Development Plan and complies with key retail policies S1 and NA44.

Mr Mattok also advised Members of the key heads of terms for the proposed Section 106 Agreement and explained why the proposed planning obligations were necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.

Councillor Snowden welcomed the development proposal and enquired whether consideration had been given to installing electric vehicle charging points at the site.

Mr Mattok advised that it had not been considered but a condition could be added to include the charging points if Members thought it appropriate and were minded to grant planning permission.

Councillor Scaplehorn referred to the consultation with Nexus which stated they were not convinced that commercial bus operators would be willing to divert services through the site and queried whether further discussions had been held.

Mr Eric Henderson, Transportation Engineer advised that bus operators were concerned that they would be caught up in the congestion. However the wheatsheaf junction would be improved as part of the development proposal through a negative planning condition, easing traffic on the main routes.

Councillor E. Gibson welcomed the job opportunities the development would bring.

Councillor G. Hall also welcomed this new development in the St Peter's Ward. However he felt that the consultation process on the extent of the off-site highway works could have involved talking to local residents as the opportunity had been missed to have further input on improving the highway network in the wider area. Councillor Hall stated that the current one way system ostracised people. Roker Avenue had current access issues and Councillor Hall requested that residents should still be approached by the Council outside of this development for their views.

Mr Lowes advised that the road improvement proposal as part of the development would ensure the free flow of traffic and would enable access by a range of modes of transport. .

Councillor Miller was very supportive of the application and was pleased to see regeneration was being carried out north of the river.

Councillor Howe raised concerns in relation to drainage capacity at the site and was advised by Mr. Mattok that conditions 29-31 addressed the drainage issues which included a condition requiring the drainage provision to be agreed with the Council prior to the commencement of the development and for these works to be completed before the new buildings are occupied.

The Chair, having checked that no other Members had any questions or comments regarding the application, moved that the Officer's recommendation in respect of the application be put to the Committee.

RESOLVED that:-

1) Members be minded to approve the outline application for retail development subject to the conditions outlined in the Addendum Report and an additional planning condition regarding the provision of charging points for electric vehicles as part of the development and to the completion of a Section 106 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Agreement for the following reasons:-

- The proposed development accords with UDP policy and in particular strategic retail policy S1 and site specific policy N44.(having satisfied the sequential test and there being no clear evidence of a significant adverse impact on the vitality and viability of other centres); policies EC1 and EC3 (being in an area of economic and social deprivation and re-using already developed land); policies R1 and R2 (being environmentally sustainable and using existing infrastructure) and accords with the supporting text to emerging Core Strategy CS6 (which provides for out of centre retail provision where there is a lack of such facilities and there are no sequentially preferable sites available).
- The proposed development satisfies the requirements of the sequential approach set out in Policy EC15 of PPS4 and there being no sequentially preferable sites for the development. Further there is also no clear evidence that the proposal will have any significant adverse impacts in terms of any of the impacts referred to in Policies EC10.2 and 16 of PPS4.
- The proposed development has been assessed taking account of the positive and negative impacts of the proposal and other material considerations and the positive impacts in terms of employment and physical and social regeneration more than offset any potential negative trade diversions.

2) The application be referred to the Secretary of State under the terms of the Town and Country Planning (Shopping Development) (England and Wales) (No 2) Direction 1993.

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

(Signed) P. Tye
Chairman.