

CONSULTATIONS FROM NEIGHBOURING COUNCILS ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To seek the Committee's agreement to responses about to be made to consultations from neighbouring Councils about planning applications affecting sites close to the common boundary with the City of Sunderland.

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 approval of the Planning and Highways Committee is obtained to agree the form of the proposed response.

3.0 CURRENT CONSULTATIONS AND RESPONSE

- 3.1 **Notifying Authority:-** Durham County Council (Easington Office)
- Application no:-** PL/5/2010/0444 (our reference 10/03222/CAA)
- Applicant:-** Salford Estates.
- Proposal:-** Demolition and erection of 7,990 sq. m food store with associated car parking.
- Location:-** Castle Dene Shopping Centre
Yoden Way
Peterlee
- 3.2 The proposal is for outline planning application which seeks to establish the principle of demolishing existing retail and community buildings and replacing them with a new 7,990sq. m food store with associated car parking at Castle Dene Shopping Centre. The site, which occupies 1.69 hectares of land, is currently occupied by Argos, Bright House and Shoe Zone and is situated to the south of the existing undercover Castle Dene Shopping Centre. The application site is shown in appendix 3 at the end of this report.
- 3.3 The key issue to consider in relation to this proposal from the City Councils perspective is as to whether or not the proposal would have an adverse impact on the retail centres in Sunderland (possibly including the City Centre) due to the creation of an additional large scale food store. The Head of Planning and

Environment has considered the proposal and offered the following observations in relation to the scheme.

- 3.4 When assessing applications for retail development consideration needs to be given to national and local planning policies. The application has been submitted along with a supporting planning statement and retail assessment which details the above policy considerations as follows.
- 3.5 **National Planning Policy**
Applications for retail development need to be considered, against the criteria set down in Planning Policy Statement 4. Policy EC14 of the PPS outlines the supporting evidence needed to accompany applications for retail development; primarily this relates to assessments of sequentially preferable sites and the impact that the proposed development will have on other centres within the catchment of the proposed development.
- 3.6 The supporting planning statement and retail assessment states that as the application site is situated within the defined town centre for Peterlee, in the context of PPS4, there is no need to undertake a sequential assessment. The applicant has however in their Supporting Planning Statement and Retail Assessment considered the proposal in accordance with other considerations in PPS4, the conclusions of which are outlined below.
- 3.7 Paragraph 10 of the PPS states that the Government's objectives for prosperous economies are to:-
- Build prosperous communities by improving economic performance of cities, towns, regions, sub-regions and local areas, both urban and rural;
 - Reduce the gap in economic growth rates between the regions, promoting regeneration and tackling deprivation;
 - Delivering more sustainable plans of development, reducing the needs of travel, especially by car and respond to climate change;
 - Promote the vitality and viability of town and other centres as important places for communities.
- 3.8 To do this, the Government wants:
- New economic growth of main Town Centre uses to be focused in existing centres, with the aim of offering a wide range of services to communities in an attractive and safe environment and remedying deficiencies in provision areas with poor access to facilities;
 - Competition between retailers and enhanced consumer choice through the provision of innovative and efficient shopping, leisure, tourism and local services in Town Centres which allow genuine choice to meet the needs of the entire community (particularly socially excluded groups);
 - The historic, archaeological and architectural heritage of centres to be conserved;
 - Raise the quality of life and environment in rural areas.

- 3.9 With regard to the above objectives it is considered that the proposal will increase consumer choice and improve economic growth in the Town Centre, whilst creating more competition within the food sector which does not currently exist in Peterlee. As such the application accords with both the Governments objectives and wants.
- 3.10 Policy EC3 encourages Local Planning Authorities to plan positively for Town Centres as part of the economic vision for the area. The statement further goes on to state that Local Planning Authorities should proactively plan to promote competitive Town Centre environments and provide consumer choice in a number of ways as identified in the statement.
- 3.11 Whilst it is not anticipated that the above guidance will be relevant to this application, it does reinforce the Governments renewed focus on the importance of Town Centres.
- 3.12 Other Sequentially Preferable Sites – Given that the site is situated within the Town Centre boundary of Peterlee, a sequential assessment is not required.
- 3.13 Local Planning Policy
The main aim of the Easington Local Plan is to maintain Peterlee as a major centre to provide employment, shopping, community and other facilities for residents of these centres and the surrounding villages. Policy 101 states that Peterlee should be maintained as a main retailing centre, with any new development being appropriate in scale and character to the existing centre.
- 3.14 Furthermore, the Durham County Council Retail and Town Centre Study (November 2009) states that although expenditure flows from Peterlee to Sunderland 'mainstream high street fashion multiples' would be required in order for Peterlee to further enhance its market share and the retention of expenditure, which is presently flowing from its catchment to nearby higher order sub-regional centres such as Hartlepool and Sunderland.
- 3.15 The study also states that for shoppers in Peterlee alternative shopping destinations are the higher order centres of Hartlepool (14%) and Sunderland (6%). In addition, the study also states that shoppers are more likely to visit Newcastle than Sunderland.
- 3.16 The Supporting Planning Statement and Retail Assessment states that the existing Asda store in Peterlee is already overtrading and therefore the predicted additional retail floor area (gross) of 6,435sq. m will be absorbed by the proposed store.
- 3.17 Therefore, in light of all of the above it is considered that for any significant impact to occur Sunderland would have to become more of an attraction to shoppers and Peterlee would have to attract mainstream high street fashion multiples. As such it is not considered that the proposed development would have any serious adverse impact on any of the retail centres in Sunderland.

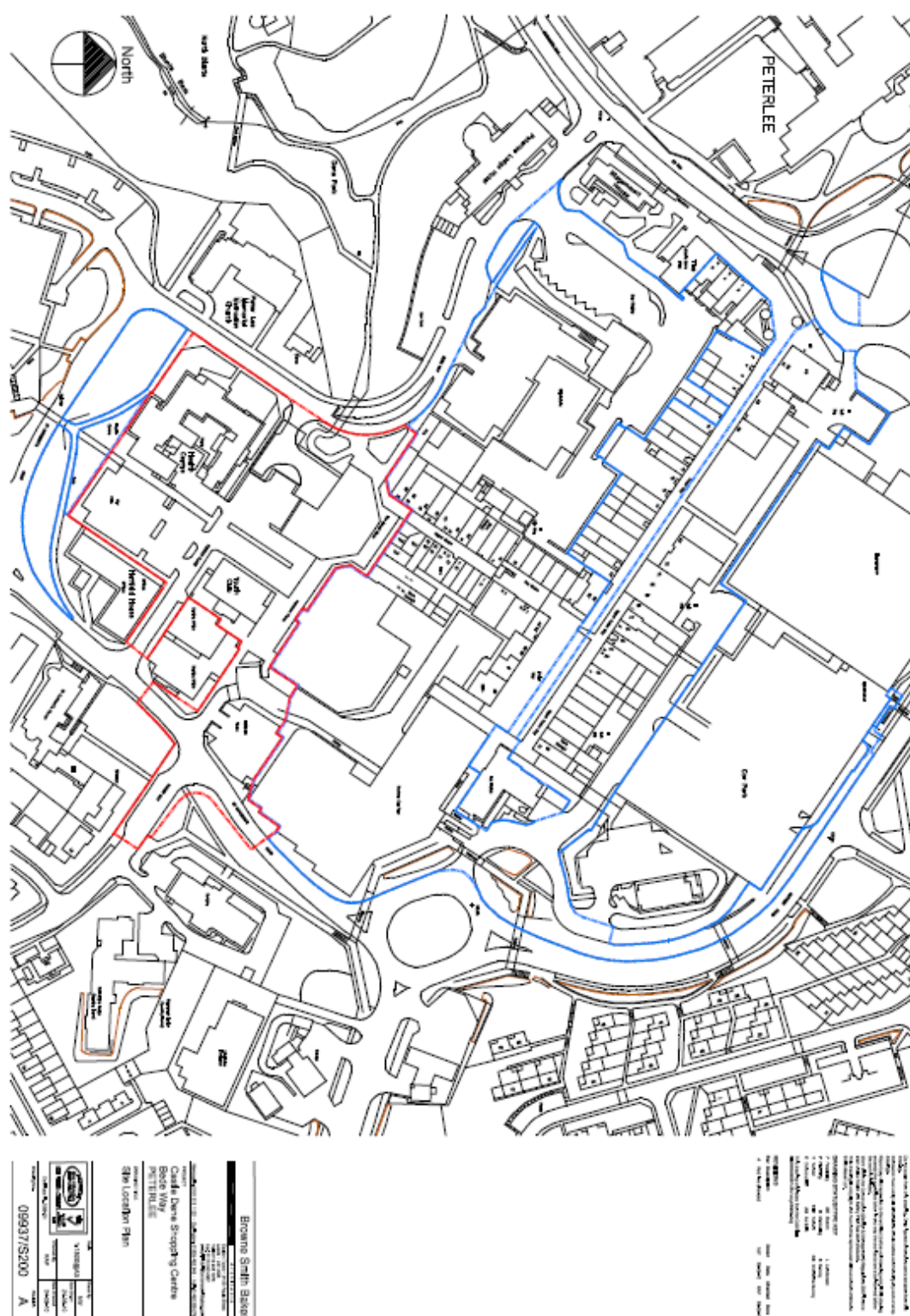
4.0 CONCLUSION.

- 4.1 As a town centre redevelopment, this proposal accords with many aspects of planning policy requirements at National and Local level.
- 4.2 As the application site is in a town centre location, it is accepted that there can be no sequentially superior locations.
- 4.3 Whilst it is accepted that the development proposed is large in scale, the likely level of impact on the retail centres of Sunderland is not considered to be significant given the attractiveness and consumer preference of alternative shopping destinations.
- 4.4 It is therefore recommended that Sunderland City Council advise Durham County Council of the above observations with regards to the proposal.

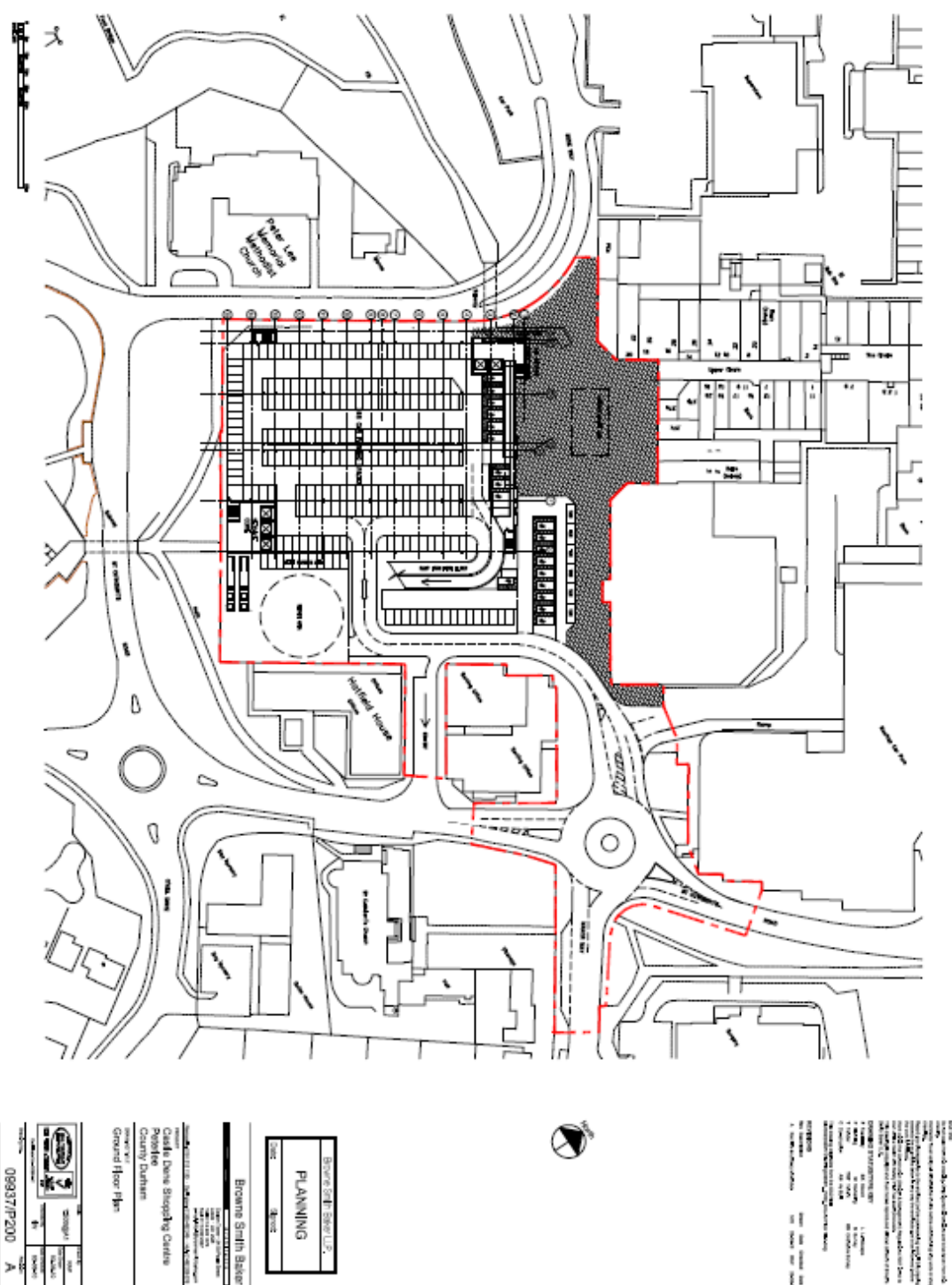
5.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 The Committee is therefore recommended to agree the above comments, which will then be sent to Durham County Council in relation to application no. PL/5/2010/0444.

Appendix 1 – Castle Dene Shopping Centre – Location Plan



Appendix 2 – Castle Dene Shopping Centre – Proposed Ground floor Layout



Appendix 3 – Proposed Visual

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Proposed Visual

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