

**At an extraordinary meeting of the DEVELOPMENT CONTROL (SOUTH SUNDERLAND) SUB-COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on TUESDAY, 11<sup>th</sup> JANUARY, 2011 at 5.00 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor E. Gibson in the Chair

Councillors Copeland, M. Dixon, M. Forbes, Miller, Old, Tye, Wood and A. Wright

**Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Charlton, Ellis, Essl, Fletcher and P. Watson

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

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report and supplementary report (copies circulated) relating to the South Sunderland area, copies of which had been forwarded to each Member of the Council, upon applications made under the Town and Country Planning Acts and the Regulations made thereunder.

(For copy reports – see original minutes).

**Change in the order of Business**

The Chairman advised that as there was a number of speakers present for the second application, 10/03519/LAP – Site of surface car park Tavistock Place, that this application would be heard first.

**10/03519/LAP – Provision of a three storey commercial office building to include community facilities and publically accessible café at ground floor level with associated landscaping and car parking**

The representative of the Deputy Chief Executive advised that the application had previously been deferred following a high court decision relating to the neighbouring site at Murton Street. Due to this High Court decision there would now be a re-examination of the Murton Street development by the planning inspectorate and as

such there was a need to ensure that the Software City development did not cause overshadowing. The work to determine the level of overshadowing had been completed on 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 2010 and it had been shown that there would be very little effect on the neighbouring development.

The Chairman introduced the first of the speakers, Mrs Ronald, who was speaking against the application.

Mrs Ronald advised that she was representing the Museum; she was a member of the friends of the museum. Her objection was based around the loss of the car park; the Tatham Street car park was not as accessible, especially at night, and she had been informed that the Civic Centre car park was not open at night. She wanted to know whether the new 100 space car park would be as easily accessible as the existing Tavistock Place car park.

The representative of the Deputy Chief Executive advised that the new car park was likely to be located on land south of the Crown building.

The Chairman then introduced the second speaker, Mr Lloyd. Mr Lloyd was a local resident and had provided a written objection to the committee and had also spoken against the application at the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2010.

Mr Lloyd, in his written statement and at the last meeting had raised concerns over the loss of the car park which was popular and well used at all times of the day and night. There had been planning permission granted for nearby apartments which did not have their own parking provision and he believed that this permission had been granted on the basis that residents would have been able to use the nearby public car parking.

In addressing the committee, Mr Lloyd stated that this committee had approved the surface car park at Tavistock Place. He had concerns over the decision which had been made by the Cabinet on 10<sup>th</sup> March, 2010, which seemed like a prejudgement of the application. He felt that it was important that the committee look at whether the development was appropriate for the city and its residents.

The representative of the Deputy Chief Executive advised that the decision taken by Cabinet had been for the procurement of the Software City; part of this decision was that planning permission would be sought for the development.

Councillor Wood commented that this was a desirable potential development and would be an asset to the city regardless of where it was built. The main issue in his mind was whether this was the right site. He had concerns over the loss of the car park; the development would increase the demand for parking in this part of the city centre yet there was to be the loss of 150 spaces. He found it hard to believe that the existing car park was surplus to requirements; there had been reference to the new 100 space car park however there was no information as to when this would be provided. He wanted to know what would be done to maximise the parking provision in the area should the planning permission be granted. There was a lay-by on Toward Road and a grass area outside of Prontaprint which could be used for short term parking.

Councillor Wood then stated that the image of the area the Software City was located in was important; this report had referred to concerns over the image of the area however there was very little detail on this matter. He commented that he was in two minds about the application; it was a desirable application however there were real concerns over parking.

The representative of the Deputy Chief Executive advised that there was a need to encourage the use of Public Transport; as the application site was within the city centre there were good public transport links with the Metro and bus routes within close proximity. There were also 4000 car parking spaces within the city centre. There was the possibility of some on street parking provision within the area and it was his understanding that the Highways Engineers were looking at the proposals.

The representative of the Council's Highways Department stated that this was a city centre site with good public transport links. The possibility of improving the footpaths and road junctions to accommodate an increase in the number of pedestrians in the vicinity of the site was being investigated.

Councillor Miller welcomed the proposal to create jobs on a flagship site which would greatly improve the Tavistock area. He sympathised with the local residents and understood why they had an issue with the loss of the car park however it was important to consider that there was surplus car parking provision in Sunderland, especially in the Tavistock area.

Councillor M. Forbes commented that the new, high tech jobs were highly welcome. She was however not convinced by the location. The Vaux site would have been a suitable option as it was a prominent site which was allocated for office use subject to the resolution of the existing land ownership issues. The use of the Vaux site would also prevent the loss of car parking. The loss of the car park would damage the existing local businesses and it seemed to be contradictory to be promoting new jobs while not catering for the existing businesses.

The representative of the Deputy Chief Executive advised that it was intended that work be carried out to develop the Software City as soon as possible. The Vaux site was not currently available as an alternative site for the development.

Councillor Tye stated that while Tesco owned the Vaux site it was unavailable for redevelopment although the Council and its public sector partners were working to acquire the site. He was pleased to see that the fencing at the Tavistock car park would be moved to the Tatham Street car park. There were perceptions of security issues at the Tatham Street car park and the installation of the fence would help to improve perceptions.

Councillor Copeland commented that it would be better to be able to start work on the development straight away rather than waiting for the Vaux site to become available. The development would add to the Sunnyside area and would help to improve the Tavistock area along with helping to put Sunderland on the map and attract more businesses to the city.

Councillor M. Dixon stated that there needed to be flexibility with regards to the parking in the area. It would be beneficial if there was short term parking to allow people to park for up to one hour while visiting local businesses. He asked whether the existing on street parking at Laura Street would remain.

The representative of the Deputy Chief Executive advised that it was likely that this parking would remain.

1. RESOLVED that the application be approved for the reasons set out in the report subject to the 16 conditions set out therein and subject to two further conditions:

17. Before the cafe use hereby approved is commenced, details of the ventilation/extraction/filtration system, including all external ducting and stacks shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local planning authority. All works shall be completed in accordance with the agreed details before the use commences, in order to protect the amenities of the area and to comply with policy S12 of the UDP.

18. Notwithstanding the submitted details, noise levels arising from the operation of the plant and equipment from the development hereby approved shall not exceed the background noise level by more than 5dBA or, if the noise is tonal, should not exceed the background noise at all, at any noise sensitive property in order to protect the amenities of the area and to comply with policy EN5 and B2 of the UDP.

#### **10/03530/FUL – Proposed part demolition and erection of 3 storey extension to The Bridges, reconfiguration of internal unit and stopping up of highway.**

The representative of the Deputy Chief Executive advised that there had been concerns raised over access, health and safety and urban design and as such the recommendation was for the decision to be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive.

Councillor Tye welcomed the development at what was a prominent location within the city centre. He queried what would happen to the existing Primark store once the new store had been opened.

The representative of the Deputy Chief Executive advised that this would be a bigger and better store than the existing and would benefit the city. It was not known exactly how long the existing store would remain empty for.

Councillor Miller commented that this would improve the pedestrian experience for this area and welcomed the development.

2. RESOLVED that the decision be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive.

(Signed) E. GIBSON  
Chairman