

**At a meeting of the PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, CITY HALL on MONDAY 20<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2025 at 5.30 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor G. Miller in the Chair.

Councillors Dixon, Foster, Scott and Wood.

**Appointment of Chairperson**

In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the meeting, the Committee's Solicitor sought nominations from the Committee for the appointment of a Chair. Councillor Dixon, seconded by Councillor Scott, moved that Councillor G. Miller be appointed as Chairperson for the meeting. With all Members being in agreement, Councillor G. Miller duly took the Chair for the duration of the meeting.

**Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chisnall, Herron, D.E. Snowden and D. Trueman.

**Minutes of the last Ordinary meeting of the Planning and Highways Committee held on 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2025**

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last ordinary meeting of the Committee held on 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2025 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**Change in the Order of Business**

It was agreed that application 6 – Land off North Road, Hetton le Hole would be considered as the first application on the agenda.

**Planning Application 25/01432/OUT – Outline planning application (with all matters reserved except of means of access) for the erection of up to**

**255 dwellings, with public open space, landscaping, sustainable drainage system (SuDS) and associated infrastructure.  
Land off North Road, Hetton le Hole, Houghton le Spring**

The Executive Director of Economy and Place submitted a report (copy circulated) in respect of the above matter.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

The representative of the Executive Director of Economy and Place presented the report advising the Committee of key issues to consider in determining the application.

The Chairperson thanked the Officer for their report and invited questions of the Officer from Members.

The Chairperson then introduced Mr Peter Fawcett who was in attendance to speak in support of the application.

Mr Fawcett stated that this site was a typical site for development, it was well connected to transport links and local facilities and there were no restrictions on the land. There was not a blanket ban on development within settlement breaks and in this case there would not be an impact on the landscape. The development would help to meet local housing need and was an effective use of the land. The Highways department had indicated no objection to the scheme subject to a contribution towards improvements being secured and the developer would reinstate the bus stops which were currently unused. Within the site there would be footpaths and cycle ways and new crossings installed to link to the wider network. He asked Members to consider deferring the application to allow further time to provide extra information to address the Officer's concerns.

Councillor Dixon asked for Officers views on the request to defer the application. The representative of the Executive Director of Economy and Place advised that the correct procedures had been followed and there was no obligation on the Local Planning Authority to accept the submission of extra information. The principle of the development was considered to be fundamentally unacceptable for the reasons set out in the report.

Councillor Scott stated that there was a 5 year supply of housing land without needing to build on inappropriate sites such as this. He agreed that there was a significant negative impact of the proposed development and agreed with the Officer's recommendation to refuse to grant Planning Permission.

There being no further questions or comments the Chairperson put the officer's recommendation, set out in the report, to the Committee and it was:-

2. RESOLVED that Members REFUSE Planning Permission for the reasons set out in the report.

**Planning Application 24/01111/OUT – Proposed demolition of existing retail store and erection of up to 55no. residential units comprising of up to 47no. assisted living flats (1 and 2 bedroom units for people in need of care – Use Class C2) and up to 8no. 2 bedroom residential apartments for independent living (Use Class C3) with retention of a commercial unit to the north of the site (approximately 575m<sup>2</sup>) for commercial use and formation of new vehicular access  
Former B&M Store, The Green, Southwick, Sunderland, SR5 2HT**

The Executive Director of Economy and Place submitted a report (copy circulated) in respect of the above matter.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

The representative of the Executive Director of Economy and Place presented the report advising the Committee of key issues to consider in determining the application

The Chairperson thanked the Officer for their presentation and opened up the meeting for questions from Members.

Councillor Wood queried whether the demolition of existing buildings for redevelopment rather than building on existing vacant sites fit in with the Council's sustainability aims. The representative of the Executive Director of Economy and Place advised that only applications which were submitted could be considered and that they were considered on their own merits. The Local Planning Authority had no control over what applications were submitted.

Councillor Wood then queried whether the Section 106 contributions could be increased to allow for mitigation against the environmental impact of the proposals. The representative of the Executive Director of Economy and Place advised that the Section 106 contributions had been based on evidence.

In response to Councillor Dixon, the representative of the Executive Director of Economy and Place advised that the applicant had submitted anecdotal evidence that B&M had requested a rent reduction to half of the current rate which potentially demonstrated that the site was not viable for continued retail use; there was no guarantee that another large operator would want to take on the site in its current form. There was no information as to the operator of the proposed commercial unit given that this was an outline application.

Councillor Foster commented that the store had been full at the weekend when he had visited; given that there had been 29 objections it suggested that

the store was a valuable community asset and it would be a shame to lose it. He did however note that the building was an eyesore.

There being no further questions or comments from Members, the Chairperson put the Officers recommendation, as set out in the report to the Committee. Councillor Wood having declared his objection to the approval of the recommendation, it was, by majority decision:-

3. RESOLVED that Members either:-

(1) Be MINDED TO APPROVE the application subject to the draft conditions set out in the report and the completion of a legal agreement

OR

(2) If the provisions of (1) have not been satisfactorily completed by 12 January 2026 then REFUSE planning permission as there does not exist a mechanism to provide the relevant planning obligation required to appropriately define the operation of the assisted living scheme, and to secure financial contributions for HRA mitigation and the maintenance/upgrading to neighbouring existing greenspace.

**Planning Application 25/00945/FUL – Conversion of former offices to a 30 bedroom co-living accommodation (students/young professionals), window upgrade and associated external works  
Mowbray Villas, Mowbray Road, Sunderland, SR2 7EA**

The Executive Director of Economy and Place submitted a report (copy circulated) in respect of the above matter.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

The representative of the Executive Director of Economy and Place then presented the report advising the Committee of key issues to consider in determining the application.

Councillor Dixon queried whether any precedent had been set regarding the use of exceptional circumstances to go against the Article 4 Direction. The representative of the Executive Director of Economy and Place advised that she could not recall any examples, especially for a development on such a large scale as this.

In response to Councillor Wood, the Highways Engineer advised that given the site was on the edge of the city centre it was not anticipated that all residents would own a car and the parking provision had been assessed on this basis.

The Chairperson introduced Mr Peter Goldthorpe who wished to speak in support of the application. Mr Goldthorpe stated that this would be premium

student accommodation and that there would be 30 rooms with one resident for each room. 21 of the rooms would have their own kitchenette so only 9 of the rooms would be required to use the shared kitchen facilities. There would be communal facilities within the property. The property was outside of the defined urban centre which was the preferred location for student accommodation however it was only just outside of the boundary. Prior to the applicant purchasing the property it had been marketed for sale for 2 years with no interest and the owner was intending to spend around £2million on the renovation of the property. The owner had intentions of preserving the building including the refurbishment of the ironwork and brickwork and the retention of the greenery surrounding the property. The gates and doors would be restored and the roof would be repaired using Welsh slate. The owner also owned the adjacent Langham Tower.

In response to Mr Goldthorpe having referred to the Article 4 Direction, the representative of the Executive Director of Economy and Place advised that exceptional circumstances could be considered and had been for the conversion of the Former Deaf Centre on Bridge Street; in that case the property had been in an area surrounded by commercial premises so the impact of the HMO would be less than in the case under consideration today where the neighbouring properties were residential.

Councillor Scott commented that he liked the application which had identified a need for this type of accommodation and which had its own merits however he acknowledged that it did not comply with policy given the number of HMOs already in the area.

Councillor Dixon commented that this was an exceptional building and it would be good to see it brought back into use however he agreed with the officer's recommendation.

There being no further questions or comments from Members the Chairperson put the Officer's recommendation to refuse the application to the Committee and with all Members being in agreement it was:-

4. RESOLVED that the application be REFUSED for the reason set out in the report.

**Planning Application 25/01007/FUL – Erection of single storey detached structure to house a single stage accelerator mass spectrometry system.**

**Suez Recycling and Recovery, Catherine Road, New Herrington Industrial Estate, Houghton le Spring**

The Executive Director of Economy and Place submitted a report (copy circulated) in respect of the above matter.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

The Chairperson advised that this application had been withdrawn from the agenda.

**Planning Application 25/01201/LB3 – Internal alteration and renovation works to existing units. Removal of existing shop frontages to the ground floor and replace with new traditional timber shop frontages. New external cladding to the facades and shop frontages to the connecting facades included within the Listed Building’s curtilage 114-118 High Street West, Sunderland, SR1 1TX**

The Executive Director of Economy and Place submitted a report (copy circulated) in respect of the above matter.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

The representative of the Executive Director of Economy and Place then presented the report advising the Committee of key issues to consider in determining the application.

Councillor Dixon commented that it was good to see improvements taking place in this part of the city.

There being no further questions or comments, the Chairperson put the Officer’s recommendation, as set out in the report, to the Committee and with all Members being in agreement it was:-

5. RESOLVED that Members GRANT LISTED BUILDING CONSENT subject to the draft conditions set out in the report.

**Planning Application 25/01202/LP3 – Installation of new external facades and shop frontages, responding to the existing elevations. 114-118 High Street West, 1-3 Lambton Steet, Sunderland, SR1 1TX**

The Executive Director of Economy and Place submitted a report (copy circulated) in respect of the above matter.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

The representative of the Executive Director of Economy and Place then presented the report advising the Committee of key issues to consider in determining the application.

There being no further questions or comments, the Chairperson put the Officer’s recommendation, as set out in the report, to the Committee and with all Members being in agreement it was:-

6. RESOLVED that Members GRANT CONSENT under Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 (as amended), subject to the draft conditions set out in the report.

### **Items for information**

Members gave consideration to the items for information contained within the matrix.

Although not listed within the matrix, Councillor Foster referred to the application 25/02213/FUL - Land adjacent Ferryboat House, Ferryboat Lane, Sunderland, and asked that a site visit be undertaken.

7. RESOLVED that the items for information as set out in the matrix be received and noted.

The Chairperson then closed the meeting having thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions.

(Signed) G. MILLER  
(Chairperson)