

**At a Meeting of the DEVELOPMENT CONTROL (SOUTH SUNDERLAND)  
SUB-COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on MONDAY, 4<sup>th</sup> JUNE, 2018 at  
4.00 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor Essl in the Chair

Councillors Bell, D. Dixon, M. Dixon, English, Galbraith, Hodson, Mordey, Mullen, Porthouse, Scullion, P. Smith, Waller, Watson and A. Wilson

**Declarations of Interest**

17/01761/FUL – Sunderland Church High School, Mowbray Road, Sunderland, SR2 8HY

Councillor Mordey declared that he had received promotional information on the proposal as ward councillor. He had not expressed any opinion on the matter and would be considering the application with an open mind.

17/01844/FUL – 34 Thornhill Gardens, Sunderland

Councillor M. Dixon declared that he had met with residents and had objected to the application; he wished to address the meeting in objection to the matter and as he had a closed mind on the matter he would withdraw from the meeting prior to consideration of determining the matter and would take no part in the decision making.

17/02278/FU4 – Southmoor Academy, Ryhope Road, Sunderland, SR2 7TF

Councillor M. Dixon declared that he had spoken to the planning department about this matter due to concerns over parking; he had not expressed an opinion on the matter and would be considering the application with an open mind.

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Scaplehorn

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

The Executive Director of Economy and Place submitted a report and circulatory 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 Regulations made thereunder.

(For copy reports – see original minutes)

### **Change in the Order of Business**

At this juncture the Chairman proposed a change in the order of business and accordingly the applications would now be submitted to the Committee in the following order:-

- 17/02278/FU4 – Southmoor Academy, Ryhope Road, Sunderland, SR2 7TF
- 17/01761/FUL – Sunderland Church High School, Mowbray Road, Sunderland, SR2 8HY
- 17/01844/FUL – 34 Thornhill Gardens, Sunderland, SR2 7LE
- 18/00424/FUL – 7 Hillcrest, Sunderland, SR3 3TN
- 18/00470/LP3 – Land adjacent 46 and 53 The Crescent, New Silksworth, Sunderland

#### **17/02278/FU4 – Erection of 8no. 15metre floodlights and 3metre mesh boundary fencing to create a new 4G pitch Southmoor Academy, Ryhope Road, Sunderland, SR2 7TF**

The representative of the Executive Director of Economy and Place outlined the development proposal to Members of the Sub Committee and the relevant material planning considerations against which the application had been assessed.

Councillor M. Dixon questioned the parking provision and the Highways Engineer advised that during school hours the facilities would be used by the school so there would be no additional parking demand. Outside of school hours the facilities would be open for use by clubs and other outside groups however they would be able to park in the school car park so there should not be any parking on the surrounding roads. The school had indicated that they were happy to ensure that the gate on Queen Alexandra Road was kept locked and that the car parking was open for use; the representative of the Executive Director of Economy and Place advised that the proposed condition 7 sought to control parking and also there was a restriction on the hours of operation to ensure that residential amenity was protected.

Councillor Mordey expressed concerns that there could be overspill parking on Ryhope Road; he commented that there were already concerns over sixth form students parking in the side streets around the school. He asked to be provided with the parking strategy for the proposal. The representative of the Executive Director of Economy and Place agreed to provide the parking strategy to Councillor Mordey and advised that there should be sufficient parking within the curtilage of the school.

1. RESOLVED that consent be granted under regulation 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Regulations) 1992 (as amended) for the reasons set out in the report subject to the 7 conditions set out therein.

**17/01761/FUL – Demolition of existing canteen and food technology block, erection of extra care facility (Use Class C2) comprising 55no. apartments with associated landscaping (removal of trees) and car park  
Sunderland Church High School, Mowbray Road, Sunderland, SR2 8HY**

The representative of the Executive Director of Economy and Place outlined the development proposal to Members of the Sub Committee and the relevant material planning considerations against which the application had been assessed. A late sheet report was circulated which advised the committee that Historic England had responded with no objection and which provided a copy of the letter submitted by Historic England.

In response to questioning from Councillor Mordey the representative of the Executive Director of Economy and Place advised that the rendered, set back elements of the building would help to make the building look like separate villas rather than one large block. The entrance on Gray Road at the corner of Ryhope Road would be closed up with a new entrance created on Gray Road further away from the junction with Ryhope Road.

Councillor Hodson commented that he appreciated the changes to the design, previously officers had been critical of the design and the amendments had improved it significantly. There had however been concerns over the scale and massing of the building which had been described as overbearing; he thought that there was still an issue with the scale of the building, especially as the footprint had not changed. Historic England had not objected to the proposal however their comments had not seemed to be supportive of the scheme. He referred to the statement in the report that the proposal had gone from having a marginally negative impact to having a marginally positive impact. The representative of the Executive Director of Economy and Place advised that it was unlikely that Historic England would ever change their position to be completely happy with the scheme. The scheme needed to follow the same format as other extra care schemes including level floors and a certain number of apartments being provided in order to ensure that it met the needs of the future residents and was viable; if the number of apartments was reduced the scheme would be unlikely to be viable. The Conservation Officer advised that there had been design features introduced to help complement the design of the properties in the surrounding area; there had been numerous minor changes as well as the more major changes. There was no getting away from the fact that it was a large building however the applicant had stated that this was the smallest the building could be while remaining viable. The size of the proposed building stopped it from having a significant positive impact on the area however this was the best design that there could be for the building.

Councillor English commented that he could see the benefits of the scheme but he felt that there was a need to take on board the comments from Historic England that the scheme had broadly not changed; he asked whether there had been any discussions between Historic England and the applicant. The representative of the Executive Director of Economy and Place advised that he knew that the applicant had consulted Historic England during the early stages of the application. There was a need to balance the benefits and harm against the size needed to ensure viability.

Councillor Mordey commented that although the site was within a conservation area however it was important to note that on the other side of Gray Road were apartment blocks of similar design to the proposals under consideration today.

The Chairman then welcomed Mr Stephen Courcier to the meeting who was in attendance to speak in support of the application on behalf of the applicant. Mr Courcier stated that since the previous meeting where the matter was deferred there had been work done with the officers to address the concerns and the application had been amended as such including better use of materials and better detailing in the design. This application would bring a brownfield site back into use and would provide extra care apartments which had been identified as there being a critical need for. Officers were now happy that the proposal would have a moderate positive impact and there had been no objection from Historic England. The scale of the development was unable to be reduced as it was necessary to ensure that the building could accommodate the needs of prospective residents. There was national planning guidance which stated that there was a need to weigh up the perceived harm against the public benefits of the proposal. The building would enable local people to live in appropriate housing within their local area and would also help to free up family homes within the area. The residents would spend money in local shops and there would be jobs created as a result of the scheme. As the development was on a brownfield site it would help to reduce the pressure to build on greenfield sites.

Councillor Hodson stated that he could see the benefits of the proposal and it was good to see the redevelopment of the unused site however he was still concerned by the proposal; he asked whether any changes had been made to the internal layout. Mr Courcier replied that the footprint had been looked at however there needed to be a certain number of apartments for the proposal to be viable which meant that there was a need for the development to be a certain size; there had been a lot of pre application discussions and there had been a number of different iterations of the scheme before the plans were brought forward; there were set backs in the elevations to help reduce the bulk of the building however it would be difficult to reduce the number of apartments within the scheme.

Members gave consideration to the matter and the Chairman then put the officer's recommendation to approve the application to the vote and with:-

12 Members voting for the approval

1 Member voting against; and

1 Abstention

It was:-

2. RESOLVED that the application be approved for the reasons set out in the report subject to the 28 conditions set out therein.

**17/01844/FUL – Change of use from residential dwelling (use class C3) to a residential care unit (use class C2) comprising 3 flats and 2 studio apartments with staff facilities and external works to include new railings and gate to front of property, staircase from ground level to basement and installation of a bay window and entrance to basement. (amended details received 17/1/18)  
34 Thornhill Gardens, Sunderland, SR2 7LE**

The representative of the Executive Director of Economy and Place outlined the development proposal to Members of the Sub Committee and the relevant material planning considerations against which the application had been assessed. There had been concerns raised by Members at the last meeting and a site visit had been undertaken; the applicant had been made aware of these concerns but had declined to amend the proposal.

Councillor P. Smith questioned where the staff accommodation was and she was informed that the staff bedroom was in the basement at the front of the building; it was accessible from inside of the building without needing to go through the basement flat. Councillor P. Smith then expressed concerns that the building did not seem to be big enough for the proposed number of residents.

Councillor Hodson expressed discomfort at the statement in the report that although the studio apartments would provide limited space and facilities they would be sufficient for people who were leaving institutional accommodation; the representative of the Executive Director of Economy and Place advised that the applicant had advised that the accommodation was designed with particular clientele in mind and that the layout of the property had been designed to meet their needs.

The Chairman then welcomed the speakers who were in attendance to speak in objection to the application.

Mr Paul Baker advised that he was chair of the Thornholme Residents Association and that this property, which was central in the area, had been a regular issue at residents meetings for the past six months. He thanked the applicant for withdrawing the proposal to excavate the front and install stairs down to the basement level although there were still concerns over the proposal. He urged the committee to reject the application.

Councillor M. Dixon then addressed the committee as ward councillor and as an objector to the proposal. He was concerned by the lack of amenity space that would be provided at the property especially considering the previous decision in respect of 5 Brookside Terrace which had been for a care home for children up to 18 years old which had been refused based on a lack of amenity space and this refusal had been upheld at appeal. He felt that there were a lot of similarities between the applications and the planning officers should have followed the precedent set by refusing to grant consent for 5 Brookside Terrace. The Council's guidelines stated that conversions of large dwellings in their own grounds would be appropriate where there would be a good level of outside amenity space and good outlook from the property; he felt that this proposal failed on both of these counts given that there was only a small yard to the front which could not be used as amenity space and the rear yard would be used for parking; the residents would be vulnerable and would need to have amenity space rather than having to attend parks which were a significant walk away and involved crossing major roads to access them. Most of the other properties on the street which had been converted were on the other side of the road where there were gardens while the converted properties on this side of the road did not have vulnerable occupants so the residents would be able to access off site amenity space. The application for 5 Brookside Terrace had been for the property to accommodate 6 people and it had been described as an over intensive use of the property however for the application today there was only one less proposed

occupant and the intensity had been described as low. The representative of the Executive Director of Economy and Place advised that there were similarities between the two applications however at the same time there were key differences given that the application for 5 Brookside Terrace was for a children's home while the application today was for adults; as such officers felt that it was less important for there to be a large amount of high quality outdoor amenity space provided. There were benefits to the proposal as it would provide accommodation which was in demand.

Ms Adele Graham-King then addressed the meeting; she advised that she lived opposite the application property and spoke on behalf of local residents. There was no objection to the proposed use of the property however it was felt that the use was too intensive for the property and it would be an acceptable proposal if there was a smaller number of flats proposed. The size of the studio flats in the roof space was a concern as they were significantly smaller than the minimum size set out in the government's national living space standards which stated that there would be 37 square metres of living space while the largest of the studios only provided 24 square metres. There were also concerns over the lack of private bathroom facilities for the studio apartments with one of the residents needing to use a bathroom which was located on a landing and would not provide them with sufficient privacy. It was also felt that the staff accommodation was inadequate given that it was located in the basement with no windows to allow natural light or ventilation and there was no secondary fire escape; it was also a concern that staff would be sleeping at the opposite end of the building to the most vulnerable residents who would be in the studio apartments in the loft space. If there were to be two staff members working overnight they would have to share a bedroom which was not appropriate. There was a need to provide high quality supportive accommodation to these vulnerable residents to help integrate them into society and this proposal only provided substandard accommodation with insufficient living and amenity space.

The representative of the Executive Director of Economy and Place confirmed that the Council had not signed up to the minimum size standards but this was being looked at as part of the refresh of the local plan which was currently being undertaken. As the standards had not been adopted then it was not possible to impose the standards on applications. The fire escape arrangements would be a consideration for Building Control which was a separate regime to the planning application; the development would need to satisfy the building regulations before it was able to be occupied.

Councillor M. Dixon then withdrew from the meeting and took no part in the deliberation of the matter.

Councillor Mordey commented that as the work on the Local Plan progressed there was more weight able to be put on the content of the plan. If Members wished to reject the application then they would need to put forward valid planning grounds for refusing to grant consent otherwise the decision was likely to be overturned at appeal and it would be likely that the Council would have a significant amount of costs awarded against them. Councillor Porthouse added that the officer's recommendation had been developed based on material facts and planning considerations and the application needed to be considered on these.

The Chairman then put the officer's recommendation to approve the application to the committee and with:-

9 Members voting for the approval;

3 Members voting against; and

1 Member abstaining

It was:-

3. RESOLVED that the application be approved for the reasons set out in the report subject to the 5 conditions set out therein.

**18/00424/FUL – Erection of a single storey rear extension.**

**7 Hillcrest, Sunderland, SR3 3TN**

The representative of the Executive Director of Economy and Place outlined the development proposal to Members of the Sub Committee and the relevant material planning considerations against which the application had been assessed. Since the publication of the report the representation had been withdrawn as the applicant and objector had come to an agreement that the wall facing the objector's property would be rendered in a light colour; this was detailed in the late sheet circulated at the meeting.

4. RESOLVED that the application be approved for the reasons set out in the report, subject to the 3 conditions set out therein.

**18/00470/LP3 – Erection of a 2.5metre steel mesh boundary fence**

**Land adjacent 46 and 53 The Crescent, New Silksworth, Sunderland**

The representative of the Executive Director of Economy and Place outlined the development proposal to Members of the Sub Committee and the relevant material planning considerations against which the application had been assessed.

Councillor English expressed concerns over the size of the gap to allow access to the electricity pole; he felt that people would likely just fly tip through the gap in the fence negating the deterrent effect of the fence. Councillor P. Smith added that there had been difficulties in designing the fence due to the rights of way across the land. The representative of the Executive Director of Economy and Place advised that the fence had been designed to deter fly tipping as there had been a problem with people dumping waste from cars and that there had been a need to leave a certain amount of space around the electricity pole to allow for access.

Members gave consideration to the matter and it was:-

5. RESOLVED that approval be granted under Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Regulations) 1992 (as amended) for the reasons set out in the report subject to the 3 conditions set out therein.

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

(Signed) M. ESSL,  
Chairman.