

At a meeting of the PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE held in COMMITTEE ROOM 2 on WEDNESDAY, 12th APRIL, 2017 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Bell in the Chair

Councillors Beck, M. Dixon, Francis, Hodson, Jackson, Lauchlan, Mordey, Porthouse, Scaplehorn, Taylor, W. Turton, P. Walker and D. Wilson.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Ball, Chequer, Cummings, I. Galbraith, Kay, Middleton, P. Smith, M. Turton, G. Walker and P. Watson.

Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 15th March, 2017 and the extraordinary meeting held on 1st February, 2017.

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 15th March, 2017 and the extraordinary meeting held on 1st February 2017 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Report of the Meeting of the Development Control (North Sunderland) Sub Committee held on 23rd March, 2017

The report of the meeting of the Development Control (North Sunderland) Sub-Committee held on 23rd March, 2017 (copy circulated) was submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

2. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Report of the meeting of the Development Control (South Sunderland) Sub Committee held on 21st March, 2017

The report of the meeting of the Development Control (South Sunderland) Sub-Committee held on 21st March, 2017 (copy circulated) was submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

3. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Report of the meetings of the Development Control (Hetton, Houghton and Washington) Sub Committee held on 23rd March and the extraordinary meeting held on 28th March, 2017

The report of the meetings of the Development Control (Hetton, Houghton and Washington) Sub-Committee held on 23rd March and the extraordinary meeting held on 28th March, 2017 (copies circulated) were submitted.

(For copy reports – see original minutes)

4. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Minster Quarter Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document

The Chief Operating Officer -Place submitted a report (copy circulated) to advise and Consult with the Committee on the responses received following public consultation on the Draft Minster Quarter Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Idris Balarabe, Senior Urban Designer, presented the report and advised that a total of 10 responses had been received and although the majority of responses supported the proposals set out in the Minster Quarter masterplan, it was possible to identify a number of key areas of concern amongst those consulted. Those issues were dealt with in more detail within the report.

Councillor Hodson commented that he was broadly a fan of the masterplan however he was uncomfortable with some of the changes made in particular to para 4.5 questioning whether a bend and flex approach was strong enough as he did not believe this had been the case on a recently approved application.

Councillor Hodson queried the point of having a masterplan if its function could be altered at the request of a Developer.

The Chairman reminded Members that any planning application submitted in parallel to the Masterplan being worked on would have had to be considered pursuant to the approved Development Plan and NPPF, the masterplan being afforded relevant weight considerations according to the status of the masterplan until approved in final form.

The representative from Legal Services advised that the status of the Masterplan was that of an aspirational document at that time and Officers would have had to bear in mind the applicants rights to appeal for non-

determination and on-going costs should their application be delayed pending the masterplan process

Mr Balarabe commented that the proposals were prescriptive enough to look for schemes we wanted as a city whilst also being able to flex and bend when needed. The plan hadn't changed in principal only the wording so that we could offer flexibility going forward.

Councillor Porthouse referred to the idea of pedestrianizing High Street West and commented that he did not agree with this and felt that more needed to be done to enhance the ways that people could come into the city and to deal with convoluted traffic issues.

Councillor Mordey wished to clarify that this plan dealt with a lot more than just the one developer that had been mentioned and that the plan had not changed significantly with only small changes in language. Councillor Mordey commented that this document was long overdue and would help enhance that part of the city. The Council was often criticised for lacking aspirations and he believed this document would help to reverse these perceptions and he asked Members to bear this in mind.

Councillor Jackson enquired if any plans had been made for the rerouting of buses to the St Mary's route.

Councillor Mordey advised of discussion with the bus companies over the past 12 months in relation to routes and had some success in the interim at removing those stopping at Fawcett Street and they were now using St Mary's boulevard.

Councillor Mordey also advised that they had commissioned a report from TASK to look at rerouting buses around the area and that plans for improving bus connectivity was a work in progress.

Councillor M. Dixon wished to stress that he was very supportive of Sunderland and believed a lot of the schemes were first class however he did share the concerns of Councillor Porthouse in relation to High Street West and also enquired about plans at Chester Road.

Mr Balarabe advised that Chester Road was an area of concern due to the amount of traffic on the road and the large number of students that would be moving east to west. Under the proposals they needed to look at making a more direct/safer route but details on this were yet to emerge. In relation to High Street West element, this would be addressed as part of the Investment Corridor Phase 2 to create a stronger cleaner more pedestrian prioritised route.

Councillor Francis commented that he was very much in favour of developing the quarter and wished to praise the introduction of Keel Square. In relation to the Court and Police Station schemes Councillor Francis believed that the

Court was in a dreadful state and would cost a great deal to put right and also that the Police Station would involve issues over asbestos.

Dan Hattle, Planning Implementation Manager commented on the national decline of retail centres, with the likes of Newcastle and the Metrocentre taking up most of the offer, so other areas were having to move fast just to keep up. In reference to Councillor Hodson's concerns Mr Hattle advised that Officers had worked hard in ensuring they achieved something fit for purpose and on balance had achieved a good scheme that didn't compromise our aspirations.

Mr Hattle also commented that this was one area of the city where we could really change the offer available.

Councillor Porthouse suggested that we should be looking at the success of other cities and that in his opinion pedestrianizing of so much of city centres had always failed.

Mr Balarabe commented that they would achieve public realm improvements around the area whilst balancing the needs for vehicular access and officers felt they had struck the right balance on this.

The Chairman suggested that the aspiration of the plan was to build upon the success of the Empire as this was a magnet for the area with successful results being seen from other venues and restaurants surrounding it.

5. RESOLVED that

- a) The Committee noted and commented on the amendments made to the Draft Minster Quarter Masterplan in light of responses received during the public consultation on the document and other consideration;
- b) That the comments of the Committee be referred to the Cabinet when it considered the adoption of the amended Minster Quarter Masterplan as a Supplementary Planning Document

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

(Signed) R. BELL
 (Chairman)