

**At a meeting of the PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE held in COMMITTEE ROOM 2 on WEDNESDAY, 9<sup>th</sup> AUGUST, 2017 at 5.30 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor Bell in the Chair

Councillors Ball, Beck, Chequer, M. Dixon, Francis, I. Galbraith, Hodson, Jackson, Kay, Lauchlan. Mordey, Porthouse, Scaplehorn, P. Smith, Taylor, Turner, G. Walker, 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 English, Hodson, Middleton, Scaplehorn and P. Watson.

**Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 11<sup>th</sup> July and the extraordinary meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> June, 2017**

Councillor Francis referred to the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> June in respect of planning application 16/02056/HY4 and requested the following amendment:-

In response to Councillor Francis' query over how many parking spaces would be allocated per dwelling, The Chairman advised that this would be decided at the reserved matters stage once developers had been identified and that the reserved matters would come back before the Committee for consideration.

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2017 be confirmed and signed as a correct record and the extraordinary minutes held on 28<sup>th</sup> June, 2017 be agreed as a correct record subject to the amendment above.

At this juncture the Solicitor, Mrs Carolyn Forster wished to provide a matter of clarification in respect of Item 16/02056HY4 and way of factual update

By operation of law, meaning for absolute clarity a matter not for consideration by the Committee, the application was subject to the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009.

Therefore following this update to Members, officers would begin the administrative process arising as a matter of law, as indicated this was not a matter falling for consideration by the Committee.

**Report of the Meeting of the Development Control (North Sunderland) Sub Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2017**

The report of the meeting of the Development Control (North Sunderland) Sub-Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> July, 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 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2017**

The report of the meeting of the Development Control (South Sunderland) Sub-Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2017 (copy circulated) was submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

3. RESOLVED that the reports be received and noted.

**Report of the meeting of the Development Control (Hetton, Houghton and Washington) Sub Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2017**

The report of the meeting of the Development Control (Hetton, Houghton and Washington) Sub-Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2017 (copy circulated) was submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

4. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

**Reference from Development Control (South Sunderland) Sub-Committee**

**Planning Application Reference 13/00799/FUL**

**Land at Burdon Lane, Burdon, Sunderland**

The Executive Director of Economy and Place submitted a report (copy circulated) for the Committee to determine planning application 13/00799/FUL which was for the erection of 109 dwellings, formation of vehicular and pedestrian accesses, pedestrian footpaths and cycle links; provision of SUDs basins and swales, open space, landscaping and associated works (Revised

scheme, amended description, application site plan, plans and reports 11 April 2017)

(For copy report – see original minutes)

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

Anthony Jukes, Principal Development Control Planner presented the report and advised the Committee that a further recommendation was to be included in relation to a detailed drainage plan to be signed off by the LPA.

Councillor G. Walker referred to the condition relating to the Travel Plan and enquired who would be responsible for this and the timescales involved.

Paul Muir advised that the Travel Plan would be co-ordinated by the developer and supported by the Council. In terms of timescales this would be dependent upon the developer.

Councillor P. Smith referred to page 53 of the report and the capacity of Doctors surgeries in the area, Councillor Smith commented that despite what the report stated, the reality was that the surgeries could not accommodate the patients they had at present and could not take on extra.

Councillor Kay queried the affordable housing details and what was meant by this being developed off site.

Mr Jukes commented that they were advised by their housing colleagues who were working through the affordable homes projects across the City and if they could not be provided on the site in question, then the immediate locality would be sought but if this was not possible then they would look further afield.

Councillor D. Wilson raised concerns that this scheme was within a settlement break and suggested it be more prudent to wait and see what was happening under the review of our Green Belt land first.

Mr Jukes advised that this scheme was part of the Sunderland South Growth Area and had been identified for development as part of the City's housing needs. It was deemed that the site did not perform its function as a settlement break due to surrounding developments already in place and on balance it was not considered to be a loss of the settlement break as there would still be a buffer there to stop the settlements from merging.

Councillor Porthouse commented that it would be interesting to see a report from the Heads of Service on how the section 106 money from affordable housing was being reinvested.

Councillor Mordey advised that there were processes in place particularly with Section 106 money so that certain triggers when money had been aligned resulted in Ward Members being informed. They now had an officer in place to deal with the Section 106 agreements and he was happy to look at more ways of improving.

Mrs Pearson advised that along with the officer in post, they had purchased a computerised system that detailed all the trigger points of when money was obtained and through discussions with Councillor Mordey as Portfolio Holder; they could bring a quarterly report to the Committee with updates.

In response to Councillor Francis, Mr Jukes advised that he did not have the figures to hand on what percentage of Brownfield Sites had been identified for Gentoo and that the intention to build on brownfield sites and the possible demographic they would cater for would be determined by whichever group should show an interest.

Mrs Pearson commented that there was a Brownfield site register available if Councillor Francis wished to see this.

The Chairman introduced Ms Barbara King who wished to speak in opposition to the application. Ms King raised concerns over the developer's priority of profit over sustainability.

Ms King commented that there were serious misgivings over the geological aspects of the proposal with land water in critical areas and future risks of sinkholes occurring which the developer had chosen not to pursue investigation.

Ms King commented that the projections around population growth were unreliable and based on assumptions and that Officers had assumed sustainability due to the desirable nature and not on the social aspects of the proposal therefore she requested the Committee reject the application.

Paul Armin, Flood and Coastal Group Engineer, referred to the ground water and advised that there were no issues there from previous flood studies and they had found that the magnesium limestone was overlaid with clay which had caused surface water issues, these issues would in fact be alleviated by the development of this scheme.

Councillor Mordey referred to the population statistics and commented that the 2014 stats for Sunderland showed that we were growing as a City and we must attract people to live here and stop the outward migration occurring.

Councillor Francis referred to the hydrology issues and took the point in relation to the magnesium lime overlaid with clay but enquired if any other sources could make their way underneath that could potentially dissolve the magnesium lime and create sinkholes.

Mr Armin advised that the Environment Agency maps showed that this was not a high risk of flood water and it was very doubtful water could get through the clay which was very dense.

In response to Councillor Francis' query whether water could enter via the side or other sources, Mr Armin advised that any water within the limestone would be sucked out from the pumping station.

The Chairman introduced Mr Stephen Hopkirk who wished to speak in opposition to the application. Mr Hopkirk thanked the Committee for allowing him the opportunity to fill in gaps that he believed were missing from the report, particularly in relation to the sustainability on economic, social and environmental grounds. Mr Hopkirk did not believe officers had assessed the application against these criteria and had assumed the proposal would actually do so.

In terms of economic sustainability, Mr Hopkirk queried if it was demonstrably necessary to build on this site at this time and suggested there was not the need for this development. Mr Hopkirk believed that the methodology used in determining housing need was inaccurate having asked strategy officers for examples of where their population and housing need projections had been proven correct and they had so far failed to do so.

Mr Hopkirk stated that the Council's own Strategic Housing Market Assessment recognised the dangers of building too many houses too quickly and as there were developments already approved for sites at Chapelgarth and Cherry Knowles for executive housing, then releasing this greenfield site prematurely would lead to the current housing market becoming over supplied, leading to a drop in value for the current home owners and something that would work against the economic sustainability.

Mr Hopkirk raised concerns over community safety issues due to the layout of the development which would expect children to use dark and isolated pathways through local woods to travel to and from school. The Council had a duty to consider community safety in all of its decisions and the response to merely link the proposal to work on the Chapelgarth development and the introduction of a suitably worded condition was not acceptable as the two locations and where they would meet may not be reached for several years but the developer suggests the use of the footpath putting vulnerable people at risk.

Mr Hopkirk felt that neither the applicant nor the Council officers had been able to successfully overcome the community safety issues raised by this development and highlighted the inappropriateness of the site when there was no pressing need for it. Mr Hopkirk urged the Committee to reject the proposals on the grounds that it did not meet the requirements of sustainability at this time.

Mr Jukes advised that in the absence of a five year plan for the supply of deliverable housing sites then the Council must consider the proposal in the

context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This proposal had safe pedestrian routes and Blakely Woods was not identified as a connection to bus routes and was more of a wildlife route.

Mr Jukes also advised that the Chapelgarth site, when developed would provide access to the bus routes.

Councillor Kay commented that there had been a number of major new housing developments which had received objections which questioned the demand. As a Council they had looked at this strategically and found an imbalance in Council Tax receipts for the higher band properties which put our economy out of kilter so it was critical that we build these types of executive housing to attract those that will obtain the well-paid jobs created from the IAMP and such like and he believed the justification for this was overwhelming.

Councillor Porthouse commented that such housing was identified as a need in 2004 and he felt it was essential the city have more executive housing and this was a good plan and report which he fully supported.

The Chairman introduced Mr Steven Longstaff who wished to speak on behalf of the developer of the application. Mr Longstaff fully endorsed the recommendation within the Officers report and commented that the proposal would provide much needed 4 and 5 bedroomed housing to the city whilst meeting all planning requirements and needs of the Sunderland South Growth Area.

The objections of local residents had been addressed in the application with mitigation measures introduced for flood risks via a series of SWALES and would transport the surface water away from the site so would not only manage the conditions but would deal with the existing issues.

Mr Longstaff advised that there had been no objections from the statutory consultees and this development would provide a greater increase in Council Tax receipts which was much needed.

In response to Councillor Francis' enquiry over how the developer had addressed the Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act issues, it was advised that they had consulted with local police and assessed Health and Safety aspects.

Mr Jukes advised that the western access had not been heavily landscaped and the dangers had been recognised and therefore had been amended so they were satisfied as reasonably as they could be that this scheme was safe.

Mrs Forster informed the Committee that the Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act was not the responsibility of the developer and would be something for the Council to consider.

In response to Councillor Kay's enquiry, it was advised that based on sales, they would be looking at the upper bands of Council Tax. Mrs Forster advised that the bands would be set by the District Valuer.

Members having fully considered the report it was put to the vote, with 19 Members voting in favour and 1 Member voting against, it was therefore:-

5. RESOLVED that Members delegated the decision to the Executive Director of Economy and Place to approve the application subject to the 27 draft conditions contained within the report and subject to the completion of a Section 106 Agreement also detailed within the report

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

(Signed) R. BELL  
(Chairman)