

## **DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that “where in making any determination under the planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material consideration indicates otherwise.

### **Unitary Development Plan - current status**

The Unitary Development Plan for Sunderland was adopted on 7th September 1998. In the report on each application specific reference will be made to those policies and proposals, which are particularly relevant to the application site and proposal. The UDP also includes a number of city wide and strategic policies and objectives, which when appropriate will be identified.

## **STANDARD CONDITIONS**

Sections 91 and 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 require that any planning application which is granted either full or outline planning permission shall include a condition, which limits its duration.

## **SITE PLANS**

The site plans included in each report are illustrative only.

## **PUBLICITY/CONSULTATIONS**

The reports identify if site notices, press notices and/or neighbour notification have been undertaken. In all cases the consultations and publicity have been carried out in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 – ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

The background papers material to the reports included on this agenda are:

- The application and supporting reports and information;
- Responses from consultees;
- Representations received;
- Correspondence between the applicant and/or their agent and the Local Planning Authority;
- Correspondence between objectors and the Local Planning Authority;
- Minutes of relevant meetings between interested parties and the Local Planning Authority;
- Reports and advice by specialist consultants employed by the Local Planning Authority;
- Other relevant reports.

Please note that not all of the reports will include background papers in every category and that the background papers will exclude any documents containing exempt or confidential information as defined by the Act.

These reports are held on the relevant application file and are available for inspection during normal office hours at the City Development Directorate at the Customer Service Centre or via the internet at [www.sunderland.gov.uk/online-applications/](http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/online-applications/)

Peter McIntyre

Executive Director City Development

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**Reference No.:** 18/01276/FUL Full Application**Proposal:** **Demolition of former Fire Station and erection of 1no. 4 storey block to provide a total of 28no. flats together with associated car parking and landscaping (Amended plans and supporting documentation received 03.07.2019)****Location:** Former Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service Fire Station, Station Road, Fulwell, Sunderland**Ward:** Fulwell**Applicant:** Cancara Property Ltd**Date Valid:** 25 September 2018**Target Date:** 25 December 2018

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**PROPOSAL:**

The application site comprises the land and buildings of the former Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Station which is located on Station Road in Fulwell. The site, which ceased being operational in 2015, consists of the main fire station building which presents a 3 storey facade onto Station Road, the training tower and the surrounding hard surfaced operational land to the rear. The service yard is bound to the east and west by 8no semi-detached properties which face into the site. These properties, known as Fire Station Houses, were formerly owned by the Tyne and Wear Fire Service prior to being sold off to private occupiers. To the immediate south of the site lie the rear gardens of 4no properties located on Mayswood Road.

The surrounding area is of mixed character with residential development predominating to the south, east and west of the site boundaries and a variety of commercial uses operating from within the busy classified Station Road to the north. The site is considered to be sustainably located with good transport links provided by the nearby Seaburn Metro Station and frequent bus services which operate along Station Road. Slightly further afield the coastline and Roker Beach lie approximately 1.2km from the site.

The application proposes to redevelop the former Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Station site to provide new residential apartments. Initially, a scheme was put forward to create 32no apartments on the site. The scheme would have seen the main fire station building and training tower demolished, and two new buildings erected within the site. The main building (accommodating 28 apartments) would be built upon the site of the former fire station with a secondary block erected towards the southern end of the site accommodating a further 4 apartments. However, due to concerns that were expressed over the siting of the smaller apartment block, this element has since been removed from the proposal.

The amended scheme now relates to the erection of a single four storey apartment block to provide a total of 28no residential units together with associated car parking and landscaping. Each apartment would be afforded 2no bedrooms with open plan lounge/dining and kitchen areas with access taken from a central lobby location within the rear elevation. Internal stairs and a lift will provide connectivity to the upper floors.

Pedestrian and vehicular access will be retained in its existing form with entry taken from the east and egress to the west via a one-way system. A total of 37no parking bays are to be laid out to the rear of the site with a centrally located bin store and southerly positioned cycle store provided. Selected areas of landscaping will be provided to the rear and across the frontage of the site.

The application has been accompanied by a raft of documents including a Planning Statement, Transport Statement, Ground Investigation Report, Noise Assessment Flood Risk Assessment, Bat Survey, Archaeological Assessment and a Habitat Regulations Assessment.

#### **TYPE OF PUBLICITY:**

Press Notice Advertised  
Site Notice Posted  
Neighbour Notifications

#### **CONSULTEES:**

Network Management  
Flood And Coastal Group Engineer  
Environmental Health  
Fulwell - Ward Councillor Consultation  
DC North Chair And Vice Chair Consultation  
Northumbrian Water  
Fire Prevention Officer  
NE Ambulance Service NHS Trust  
Southern Area Command - Police  
Tyne And Wear Archaeology Officer  
Director Of Children's Services  
Nexus  
Natural England

Final Date for Receipt of Representations: **13.09.2019**

#### **REPRESENTATIONS:**

##### **Public consultation**

The application has been advertised by way of site and press notices and has been subject to three rounds of public consultation in respect of nearby occupiers.

As a result, a total of 24no representations have been offered to the scheme. 10 of these representations include repeat objections from the same property following the further rounds of consultation. The issues raised by the representations are outlined below;

1. 32 flats are too many due to the lack of parking bays for occupiers and visitors.
2. 28 flats are still too many (comments offered on the revised scheme)
3. The surrounding area is already heavily impacted by the lack of available car parking due to commuters using the metro system and the current permit parking restrictions recently imposed by the Council.

4. As an occupier of Fire Station Cottages, I own my parking space, where will this be relocated too? What is to stop commuters and shoppers from just coming in and using other people's spaces? Will there be a barrier fob system?
5. Are the flats going to be privately owned or used for student accommodation?
6. Where will workmen and delivery vehicles park during construction?
7. Long established street fronting trees shouldn't be removed to make way for a bin store facing the front street.
8. The relocated bin store does not look big enough for the number of bins required/surely it should be roofed to discourage seagulls.
9. Unit 2 will have an adverse impact privacy and will appear overbearing to occupiers in properties on Mayswood Road.
10. The four-storey height of unit 1 does not fit in with the profiles of the surrounding properties as it will appear dominant and out of proportion with the current street scene and impact on the privacy of the occupiers in Fire Station Houses, Prince George Avenue and Mayswood Road.
11. The height of the building will also negatively impact on natural light entering No.8 Fire Station Houses.
12. The increase in the volume of traffic accessing the site will have an adverse impact on highway safety. Station Road is already extremely busy.
13. A development on this scale will only add to local traffic congestion and negatively impact on local air quality, and therefore the health and wellbeing of local residents. There will also be an additional strain on already-stretched local services such as schools and GP practices.
14. The development will increase levels of noise and disturbance in the area during the evening and night.
15. If the developer is making section 106 contributions, have alternatives to off-site play been considered, such as Fulwell Village Green/pond project, improving insulation at Fulwell Community Library.

### **Council's Natural Heritage team (Ecology)**

Initial comments were offered over perceived deficiencies in the 'Report to inform Appropriate Assessment' with regards to what Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) measures were being proposed. Further information was therefore requested to understand the impacts in more detail and the appropriateness of the mitigation measures. Following the submission of a report to inform a Habitats Regulations Assessment, Natural Heritage have concurred with the findings, advising that the financial contributions identified to overcome the potential impacts on the designated sites will need to be secured through a section 106 agreement.

It has also been confirmed that planning conditions will need to be provided to cover Section H of the Bat Risk Assessment, lighting details, compensation measures and detailed landscaping and planting schedules.

### **Council's Public Health team**

Public Health have advised that if permission is to be granted, conditions are recommended for a remediation strategy/verification plan, Verification Report and unexpected contamination, as well as for internal noise mitigation and a construction environment management plan.

### **Council's Flood and Coastal team (in capacity as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA))**

Initial comments advised that insufficient drainage detail had been submitted to warrant approval of the application. Following submission of additional details, the LLFA have advised that a

recommendation for approval can be given subject to the submission of a verification report to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to first occupation of the development.

### **Council's Highway Engineers**

Concerns were initially raised over the level of parking provision that would be afforded to the 32no and revised 30no apartments that were proposed, and clarification was requested as to existing parking arrangement was for the occupants of the fire station cottages including the status of the area of hardstand and garage blocks set within the wider site but outside the development boundaries.

Whilst the Engineers acknowledged that the site was conveniently located in terms of public transport, the existing parking issues raised by local residents coupled with the shortfall of in-curtilage parking is a concern. The engineers therefore recommended the removal of the rear units to provide additional parking for the development.

In addition to the above, the Engineers have qualified that the access to the site should be operated on a one-way principle with signage clearly visible and road markings laid out and displayed within the site.

Section 278 works will be required for works within the highway whilst the existing restrictions along Station Road (the keep clear and zig zag markings to the front of the development will need to be removed and replaced with a single yellow line (no waiting mon-sat 8am-6pm). A TRO is required for the introduction of the waiting restrictions, the TRO would require a statutory consultation process, the outcome of which cannot be pre-determined.

On receipt of amended plans (illustrating the removal of the rear residential units which has freed up space for further on-site parking and clarification as to the availability of the existing hardstand and garages set aside for occupiers of Fire Station Houses outwith the redlined development site), the Engineers have advised that the parking arrangements are, on balance, acceptable given the proximity of sustainable transport connections.

### **Council's Urban Design officer**

The initial comments received from the Council's Urban Design officer noted that there would only be a limited height difference between the existing fire station building and the primary residential unit. The officer noted that the increase in the building height would be most noticeable in the north west corner although this was considered to be of minimal overall impact from a street scene perspective.

Notwithstanding, the officer originally concluded that the design of the building will have a dominant massing through the inclusion of a single roof profile. Although the inclusion of some recesses within the northern elevation does allow for a slight softening, alterations to the roof scape were required to create a less dominant structure.

In addition, the officer also noted that the front elevation had a high level of fenestration which created a very busy frontage whilst comments were also offered in respect of rationalising the fenestration on the rear elevation. In this respect guidance and advice on how to achieve betterment was offered in the officer's comments.

Comments were also directed towards the inappropriate location of the bin store and the need to provide a more appropriate level of amenity landscaping within the site.

In terms of Unit 2 the Urban Design Officer advised that it was positioned within a highly constrained position and is located within close proximity of the existing residential properties to the south. In its current form the rear elevation of the building presents a poor design response onto the existing neighbouring properties through providing a predominantly brick wall. This is not considered an appropriate response and alternative approaches should be considered, this may include the removal of units, which would also result in providing an increase in space for required parking and landscaping/ amenity green space.

Following amendments received off the back of these comments the Urban Design Officer stated that the inclusion of the varied roof line, in combination with the vertical emphasis of the elevations and inclusion of recesses, has reduced the overall massing of the unit. Further, the officer qualified that the amendments have also addressed previous comments regarding the elevational treatment and the pattern of fenestration.

Confirmation was received that the relocation of the bin store was considered to be appropriate, although at that time no details had been submitted and an area of planting may be required to soften its appearance. Whilst there has been a minimal increase in the level of landscaping within the car parking area there is still a concern over the provision of amenity space and as previously mentioned there are opportunities for courtyard parking and landscaping to be combined to create a useable amenity space. The inclusion of a change in material in the parking bays is welcome.

### **County Archaeologist**

The site most probably lies at the core of Fulwell medieval village which dates back to 1204. Although the construction of the Fire Station in the 1940's will have caused some disturbance, archaeological remains may still survive therefore planning conditions pertaining to trial trenching will need to be attached to any approval granted.

### **Natural England**

Natural England initially requested that further information was required to determine the impacts on designated sites (namely Northumbria Coast Special Protection Area (SPA) and Durham Coast Special Protection Area (SAC). This was to be provided by the applicant through clarification on the proposed mitigation for recreational disturbance impacts on the interest features of the above designated sites and confirmation of any agreement between the Council and the applicant to secure mitigation.

Following confirmation of the above, Natural England have since offered no objection to the scheme subject to appropriate mitigation being secured by way of a financial contribution per unit to fund Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM).

### **Northumbrian Water**

NWL has advised that at this stage the application does not provide sufficient detail with regards to the management of foul and surface water from the development for them to be able to assess their capacity to treat the flows from the development. Consequently, they have advised that a condition be imposed to ensure that a detailed scheme for the disposal of foul and surface water from the development is submitted for future consideration.

### **Nexus**

No objection offered.

## **Tyne and Wear Fire Service**

No objections subject to measures identified through Building Regulations

### **POLICIES:**

In the Unitary Development Plan the site is subject to the following policies;

- R1 - Working towards environmentally sustainable development
- R2 - Taking account of spare infrastructure / reduced travel / vacant & derelict land
- H1 - Provision for new housing
- H4 - Density of housing development to at least reflect that of the locality
- H8 - Windfall sites to accord with other policies unless specific benefits are provided
- EN10 - Proposals for unallocated sites to be compatible with the neighbourhood
- B2 - Scale, massing layout and setting of new developments
- T14 - Accessibility of new developments, need to avoid congestion and safety problems arising
- T22 - Parking standards in new developments
- CN18 - Promotion of nature conservation (general)
- CN19 - Development affecting designated / proposed SAC's, SPAs and RAMSAR Sites
- CN22 - Developments affecting protected wildlife species and habitats
- CN17 - Tree Preservation Orders and replacement of trees
- EN12 - Conflicts between new development and flood risk / water resources
- EN14 - Development on unstable or contaminated land or land at risk from landfill/mine gas
- B11 - Measures to protect the archaeological heritage of Sunderland (general)

### **COMMENTS:**

#### **Policy backdrop**

By virtue of section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004, the starting point for consideration of any planning application is the saved policies of the development plan. A planning application must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

However, since the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which, as paragraph 2 therein makes clear, is a material consideration for the purposes of Section 38(6) of the Act, the weight that can be given to the development plan depends upon the extent to which the relevant policies in the plan are consistent with the more up to date policies set out in the NPPF. The closer the relevant policies in the development plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that can be given to the development plan.

The NPPF provides the Government's planning policy guidance and development plans must be produced, and planning applications determined, with regard to it. At paragraph 7, the NPPF sets out that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute positively to the achievement of 'sustainable development' which is defined as 'meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. Meanwhile, paragraph 8 states that in order to achieve sustainable development, the planning system has three overarching objectives - an economic objective, a social objective and an environmental objective - and these are to be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the applications of the policies within the NPPF.

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development and states that in respect of decision-making, this means authorities should:

- c) Approve applications that accord with an up to date development plan without delay; or
- d) Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, granting permission unless:
  - i) The application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
  - ii) Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

The Council's current adopted plan is the Unitary Development Plan from 1998 which sets out the future of how land is used within the City and is the land use development plan for the City up to the year 2006, however, on commencement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (September 2004) the policies in the UDP were automatically "saved" so that they would remain in force.

The Council has now produced a draft Core Strategy and Development Plan which is designed to guide new development within the City up to the year 2033.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019), sets out, at paragraph 48, the level of weight which can be attributed to emerging plans and policies, according to the following:

- a. The stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
- b. The extent to which there are unresolved objections, to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given);
- c. and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).

With regards to above, the CSDP is considered to be in an 'advanced stage' of preparation. The Council submitted the CSDP for examination to the Secretary of State on the 21 December 2018 and the 'Examination in Public' hearings have now taken place. Further public consultation has been carried out on modifications to the plan and the Council anticipates adoption of the CSDP in its modified form in early 2020. Consequently, the preparation of the plan is at an advanced stage and therefore its policies should be afforded significant weight based on the above criteria. Therefore, the CSDP is also considered to be relevant to the determination of this application.

## **Consideration**

The main issues to consider in the determination of the planning application are:

1. Principle of development
2. Design and layout
3. Residential amenity
4. Highway and pedestrian safety
5. Biodiversity and ecology
6. Landscaping and trees
7. Flood Risk and drainage
8. Ground conditions
9. Archaeology
10. Planning obligations



## **1. Principle of development**

Section 11 of the NPPF encourages the effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, whilst safeguarding and improving the environment, and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Paragraph 118 outlines that planning policies and decisions should give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs which is reinforced by Policies R1 and R2 of the adopted UDP.

Paragraph 122 stipulates that planning decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, whilst taking into account the identified need for different types of housing and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it. Moreover, local market conditions, the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting/promoting regeneration and change, and the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places, must all be taken into account in the determination of development that makes efficient use of land.

Policy H1 of the adopted UDP sets out general criteria for the provision of new housing, including the re-use of vacant and derelict land wherever possible. Whilst UDP Policy H8 provides the context for considering housing proposals that come forward as 'windfall' sites. The development site is identified as 'white land' on the proposals map of the City Council's adopted Unitary Development Plan (1998) and as such the proposal is subject to Policy EN10. This Policy dictates that where the UDP does not indicate any proposals for change, the existing pattern of land use is intended to remain and development in such areas must be compatible with the principal use of the neighbourhood.

The emerging CSDP at Policy SP8 sets out that new homes will be achieved through a combination of; sites set out in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), the development of sites allocated in the Allocation and Designation Plan, the development of sites set out in the Strategic and Housing Growth Areas, the conversion and change of use of properties and the development of windfall and small sites. The site is not identified for residential development within the SHLAA and is therefore considered a windfall site. In this respect, a proposed development of 28 units is considered to be relatively modest in quantum and consequently it is not considered that the scheme will demonstrably conflict with or undermine the Council's wider and strategic aims in respect of housing numbers and delivery, in compliance with the requirements of aforementioned policy H8 of the UDP.

Policy SP1, sets out that growth will be achieved by supporting the sustainability of existing communities (including Fulwell), whilst emphasising the importance of delivering the majority of development in the existing Urban Area and within sustainable locations in close proximity to transport hubs.

With regard to the above policies, it is clear that the scheme will result in securing the re-development of a vacant and previously-developed brownfield site which is located within a residential setting. The site benefits from excellent public transport links to the City Centre, Gateshead and Newcastle and is also conveniently located adjacent to local services found on the fronting Station Road and nearby Sea Road. Consequently, the general principle of developing the site for the purposes of residential development is considered to be acceptable.

Nevertheless, in order to fully establish the acceptability of the proposed development, an assessment must firstly be made of all other relevant material planning considerations raised by the scheme and these are discussed below.

## **2. Design and layout**

Chapter 12 of the NPPF places emphasis upon achieving well designed places with paragraph 124 stating that 'the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and help make development acceptable to communities'.

Paragraph 127 of the NPPF continues that that development should function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development.

On a local level, UDP Policy B2 and the emerging CSDP Policy BH1 reflects this principle, stating that the scale, massing, layout and/or setting of new developments should respect visual amenity and Policy H4 of the adopted UDP advises that housing development should reflect the density of the locality whilst increased densities may be sought, where appropriate, particularly where they relate to a public transport corridor. Emerging CSDP Policy H1 states that residential development should create mixed and sustainable communities by offering a mix of house types, tenures and sizes which are appropriate to the location and in achieving an appropriate density for its location.

As has been touched on above, the originally submitted scheme has been subject to a number of revisions in an attempt to achieve an appropriate form of design and layout within the site. Whilst the site is relatively large, it is nonetheless constrained due to the presence of the inwardly fronting Fire Station Houses positioned to the east and west and the lower lying residential plots on Mayswood Road to the south. In this respect, the proposed location of the rear sitting units (initially 4 apartments, before being reduced to 2), raised concerns due to the tight spacing that was illustrated between the rear elevation of the existing properties on Mayfield Road and the two-storey rear gable which was to sit close to the rear boundary fence on elevated land. As a result of these concerns and by way of seeking to achieve a more appropriate mix of landscaping and in-curtilage parking, the agent was requested to remove the rear units from the proposal. Amended plans have been received to this effect which has seen the quantum of development reduced from 32 apartments to 28. This has resulted in a more considered and desirable internal layout.

The development is now centred on the demolition of the existing fire station building and its replacement with a new build comprising of 28, two bed apartments. The apartment block would take the form of a 4-storey development with north and south facing primary windows. As has been noted within the consultation section of this report, the scale, massing and design of the building has been considered in association with the City Council's Urban Design Section who have offered a detailed appraisal of the scheme. The developer has appropriately addressed concerns that the Local Planning Authority (LPA) initially harboured over the perceived dominant massing of the building through the inclusion of the varied roof line, in combination with the vertical emphasis of the elevations and inclusion of recesses. The developer also agreed to rationalise the front and rear fenestration on the building which was previously considered to be appear busy and cluttered.

A number of neighbour representations have offered comment on the overall height of the building stating that the introduction of a 4-storey building would be overtly dominant and not be in keeping with the character and appearance of other buildings within the street. In acknowledging that the new apartment block would be larger than the existing Fire Station, the Council's Urban Design Officer has noted that the overall difference between the heights of the respective buildings would not be unduly significant and has offered no objection to the overall scale and massing of the development. In this respect, towards the eastern end of the new building where the existing building is at its highest, the increase in height would amount to some 300mm to 500mm (overall

increase from 10.8m to 11.1/11.3m), with the centre most point of the new building increasing the height by 1.1m and 1.4m (overall increase from 10m to 11.1/11.3m). The largest increase in height would see an overall increase of 1.7m to 1.9m at the western end where the roof line of the existing Fire Station building drops (9.4m to 11.1m/11.3m).

The approach to the materials is outlined on the elevational drawings with the street fronting facade proposed to be treated in two different bricks, for the recessed and proud standing elevations respectively. The rear elevation would be similarly treated but for the inclusion of a centrally located rendered panel which would serve the atrium and stairwell. The windows and doors would be powder coated grey with the fronting and rear balconies constructed out of glass and stainless steel. This approach, subject to confirming final material details through the imposition of a planning condition, is considered to be broadly acceptable.

Overall, from a scale and massing perspective it is not considered that the new building would represent a significant departure from that currently afforded by existing fire station whilst the removal of a functional and more utilitarian building and its replacement with a modern residential development would, in the opinion of the LPA, serve to provide betterment to the visual amenity of the area.

With regard to the proposed boundary treatments the proposal includes a 900mm high brick boundary wall which will divide the new landscaped area from the public footpath across the frontage whilst new sections of 1.2m high close timber boundary fencing is proposed internally to the front of the footpath which lies adjacent to Fire Station Houses. A further section of 1.8m high close board fencing is proposed towards the south-eastern corner of the site. It is considered that the boundary treatments would be acceptable in relation to the character and appearance of the proposed development and the area of which the site within which they would sit. Again, full details of the boundary materials will be required via a condition.

Bin storage provision is made to the rear of the site (centrally located within the car park). It should be noted that the bin store was initially proposed to be located adjacent to the western egress point fronting Station Road, however, following concerns expressed over the loss of trees and the associated visual impact, it was requested that the storage area be re-positioned. The bin storage area would provide 10 no 1100L wheeled refuse containers which is considered to be more than sufficient to serve the quantum of development on site. Whilst one objection has noted that the bin store is not roofed and therefore could be susceptible to seagulls, this would likely be the case even if the bin store was roofed with open access still possible from the sides. In any event, the lids on these bins are relatively heavy and it is not anticipated that this would be a significant issue going forward.

The proposed layout would afford prospective occupiers with a reasonable standard of external amenity commensurate with the nature of apartment living, with the wider site afforded communal garden areas and car parking spaces.

In conclusion, from a design and layout perspective the LPA consider that the proposed development would serve to enhance the visual appearance of an existing redundant brownfield site which is occupied by a large functional building, training tower and is dominated by hardstanding to the rear. It is considered therefore that the proposal complies with the NPPF, Policies B2 and H4 of the adopted UDP, the Residential Design Guide SPD and Policies BH1 and H1 of the emerging CSDP.

### **3. Residential amenity**

The NPPF is clear in requiring new development proposals to provide a high standard of amenity to occupiers of new housing, whilst maintaining an acceptable standard of amenity to existing surrounding properties, an aim which is echoed by UDP Policy B2 and emerging CSDP Policy BH1. The Council's Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets down further guidelines to be considered when determining applications for new housing development to ensure that new and existing dwellings are afforded appropriate levels of space, light and privacy.

Section 10C of the Council's adopted Residential Design Guide SPD sets out the recommended spacing standards for new dwellings. In particular, it is recommended that at least 21 metres be provided between main facing windows, with this distance increasing by 5m for every additional storey, (i.e. 26m for 3 storeys and 31m for 4 storeys). The same principle is utilised for main windows facing onto secondary windows or blank gables, with a minimum of 14m to be provided, increasing by 5m for every additional storey (i.e. 19m for 3 storeys and 24m for 4 storeys).

Based on the position of the building, it is evident that a distance of 31m would be retained between the northern facing primary windows within the development and the facades of the ground floor commercial/first floor residential properties on the northern side of Station Road. This is considered to meet the Council's spacing standards and thus there would be no undue loss of privacy, sun/daylight, overshadowing or overbearing impact for the opposing occupiers.

In turning to the residential property of Station House which lies to the immediate east of the site, it is evident that the new build would be within 7.4m of this property's existing side gable. However, when considering that the gable wall of the existing Fire Station is currently closer to this property at 6.8m and that there is only a 300mm increase in height between the two structures at this point, the impact of the physical massing and relationship between the two buildings will be largely comparable. It is evident that there would be three windows (per floor) within the eastern side gable of the new building. These windows would primarily serve WCs although one small window per floor would serve a kitchen. Due to the elevated height of the windows within the first, second and third floors, it is considered necessary to condition that they are fitted with obscure glazing to avoid potential for the overlooking of the rear garden of Station House.

On the western side the gable of the new build would be within 23.5m of No's 1 and 3 Prince George Avenue which are the two properties that would directly interface with the development. These distances are only 500mm below the desired standard of 24m and thus it is not considered that there would be any demonstrable harm arising to the amenity of these specific properties by way of appearing overbearing or through a prejudicial loss of sun/daylight or overshadowing. Again, for the reasons offered above, the small gable windows serving the WC's and kitchens will be required to be fitted with obscure glazing.

With regard to the properties known as Fire Station Houses, these dwellings have always had a more intimate relationship with the site and prior to their private sale were once owned by the Tyne and Wear Fire Rescue Service. These properties face directly into former service/training yard at relatively close quarters. As has been referenced earlier in the report, the scale and massing of the new building is not considered to be significantly disproportionate to that of the existing fire station building whilst the respective footprints are also generally comparable. In light of the above and given the continued northerly orientation of the new building and the east to west orientation of the Fire Station Houses, it is not considered that the scale and massing of the development would significantly alter the existing level of amenity that is currently afforded to the occupiers in terms outlook. Further, it is not considered that the level of sun light and daylight experienced by the occupiers of the properties would be dramatically altered during the majority of the day. The increase in the height of the building may, at the western end, cause some

additional overshadowing and sunlight restriction to the fronts of the properties of No's 1 and 2 Fire Station Houses in the late evening during the summer however a similar such impact would already be likely due to the presence of the Fire Station building. The removal of the Fire Tower would have the added benefit of freeing up outlook from and allowing additional light into, the property of No.3.

In terms of privacy, it is clear that the southerly orientation of the new rear windows coupled with the east to west orientation of the Fire Station Houses windows, would dictate that there would be no direct interfacing between habitable rooms. Outlook from the new windows and associated south aspect balconies would therefore be predominantly into the rear car park and communal areas. Whilst outlook would include views over the front garden areas of the Fire Station Houses, these gardens are not private in their current form. The rear gardens of Fire Station Houses, where most residential properties experience privacy, would not be overlooked by the development. Notwithstanding, the scheme also proposes to install obscurely glazed balcony screens to further minimise any potential overlooking and a specific drawing has been provided to illustrate this.

Any outlook from the rear facade of the building beyond the southern boundary of the site would be at a significant distance (58m) and not would not compromise the privacy of the residential occupiers of Mayswood Road.

Whilst there may be some disturbance to local residents throughout the construction period, this disruption would be managed by via the submission of a Construction Management Plan to ensure appropriate working practices which would be required as part of a suggested condition and in relation to hours of construction which are suggested to be added as an informative to the permission.

Therefore, in terms of the impact of the development on the amenity of existing nearby dwellings, it is considered that the layout of the development and the separation distances between the new dwellings and existing properties is acceptable and in accordance with the requirements of the Council's adopted Residential Design Guide SPD, the objectives of UDP Policy B2 and emerging CSDP Policy BH1.

With regard to the level of amenity afforded to prospective residents it is noted that the rooms within the apartments are afforded a good level of circulation space and private balconies. The nature of apartment living dictates that individual private gardens are seldom provided but the proposal does provide communal garden space to the rear. The accompanying noise assessment considers the issue of noise emanating from external sources with the main source noted to be road traffic on Station Road. Mitigation measures are detailed in Table 3 of the assessment and the Council's Public Health Section has advised that the identified measures will need to be installed in order to ensure that a satisfactory internal noise environment for the occupants. A planning condition to this effect will be required to be attached to any approval given.

#### **4. Highway considerations**

Paragraph 108 of the NPPF advises that planning decisions should take account of whether opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up, that safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved and whether improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost-effectively limit the significant impacts of the development.

Paragraph 105 advises that local parking standards for residential development should amongst other matters take into consideration the availability and opportunities for public transport, whilst paragraph 106 advises that maximum parking standards for residential and non-residential

development should only be set where there is a clear and compelling justification that they are necessary for managing the local road network, or for optimising the density of development in city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport.

Paragraph 109 is clear in stating that development should only be refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of the development are severe.

On a local level, Policy T14 of the adopted UDP requires new development proposals to be accessible, to not cause traffic congestion or highway safety problems on existing roads, make appropriate access for the safe access and egress of vehicles and pedestrians and to indicate how parking requirements will be accommodated. Policy T22 of the UDP, meanwhile, requires new development proposals to be afforded appropriate levels of dedicated parking; in this regard, the Council's Residential Design Guide SPD recommends levels of one in-curtilage parking space per new dwelling with visitor parking afforded at a rate of one space for every third dwelling.

Policy ST3 of the emerging CSDP outlines that development should provide safe and convenient access for all road users and should include a level of vehicle parking and cycle storage in accordance with the Council's parking standards.

The submitted layout illustrates that 37 in-curtilage parking bays are proposed to serve the new development two of which will have electric charging facilities. This includes a single dedicated parking space for each individual apartment (28 spaces) and a further 9 spaces for visitors. This quantum is considered to be appropriate with regard to the Council's parking standards as outlined above.

It is acknowledged that the above parking provision does not factor in the existing residential properties (No's 1 through to 8 Fire Station Houses) and Station Houses. From discussions with the Tyne and Wear Fire Rescue Services Head of Estates and Facilities, it is understood that an historical arrangement was put into place whereby 6no properties were provided with dedicated parking bays upon the purchase of their homes. These 6no spaces, have been annotated on the proposed site layout for information purposes and include an area of hard surfacing that can accommodate 3 parking spaces and a block of 3no garages, which are accessed from the existing service yard. The spaces fall outside of the redlined development site and are understood to be included in the individual title deeds of the properties. Station House, to the immediate west of the site also benefits from its own garaging facility.

The Head of Estates and Facilities has further confirmed that the remaining 2no properties (understood to be No's 1 and 8) were historically deemed to have suitable offsite access due to their proximity to the entry and egress points and have never benefitted from a formal dedicated parking space. (Site visits have however confirmed that parking in respect of No.1 has been taking place on an area of hardstand to the front/side of their property without causing obstruction).

It is further understood that a resident permit arrangement was in place which, at the discretion of the then Station Manager, allowed residents to park within the rear yard. These permits were issued annually and, on the understanding, that the land belonged to TWFRS. Notwithstanding, the Council's Parking Service Manager has confirmed that No's 5-8 Fire Station House are able to apply for a permit to park in zone F1a of the Seaburn Metro/Newcastle Road permit area as they are included in the scheme.

Overall, other than the loss of the permit parking within the service yard which could not be guaranteed due to land ownership, the proposal would not diminish the ability of the existing residents to access their existing allotted spaces or garaging facilities.

More broadly it is acknowledged that a number of objections have raised concern over the level of parking provision on site, citing concerns over two car families and the existing level of on-street parking that occurs on Station Road due in part to the displacement of traffic following the implementation of the parking scheme in surrounding residential streets to the west. Added to this is the fear that the volume of traffic accessing the site will have an adverse impact on highway safety, congestion and air quality/health and well-being in the area.

In reiterating the requirements of the NPPF, it is clear that Local Planning Authorities are being advised to guard against the adoption of overly-stringent maximum parking standards particularly in situations where a development is well served by public transport. As has been referenced earlier in the report, the site is positioned within one of the most sustainable locations within the City due to the excellent public transport links afforded by the Tyne and Wear Metro and the frequent bus services operating on Station Road and Newcastle Road. The onsite parking provision has been increased from 32 spaces to 37 spaces following the removal of the 4no units to the rear of the site whilst a dedicated secure cycle shelter is also to be provided. The level of parking for the apartments has been broadly met and the nature of the development (i.e. 2 bed apartments) would potentially suggest that car ownership would not be as high as other forms of residential development. On the basis of the above, the Council's Highway Engineers are satisfied that the overall level of parking to be provided will be sufficient to serve the development and the occupiers of the Fire Station Houses.

In terms of highway safety and traffic generation, Section 5 of the submitted Transport Statement (TS) considers the predicted comings and goings at the site and advises that proposed movements will be very low, whilst noting that any re-use of the existing substantial building on the site would generate additional traffic movements. The content of the TS has been considered and the Highway Engineers have offered no observations in respect the number of vehicles entering and egressing the site from a highway safety or traffic generation perspective. The developer has however been requested to reduce the width of the egress point to no more than 4m (western access), to deter vehicles entering the site at this point. The access and egress to the development will be retained as existing and operated on a one-way system (entry from the east and egress to the west). In terms of air quality and health, there are currently no air quality management areas in Sunderland and the City Council's Public Health have offered no observations in terms of air quality matters arising from this development.

Out with the site, works will be required to reinstate the footpath to the front of the property, whilst the developer will also be required to meet the costs of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to the front of the site (Station Road) which will introduce waiting restrictions.

The Highway Engineers have advised that further details will need to be agreed via condition. These will include a car park management plan which will be required to demonstrate the physical identification and allocation of the parking bays based on flat numbers for residents and VP for visitors, the provision of signage as required to highlight the operation of the one-way system with the east access as the entry point and west access as the egress point and details of the measures that will be put in place to prohibit members of the public from utilising the parking area.

Overall, the LPA is satisfied that the residential development can be accommodated on the site without giving rise to any significant highway safety concerns. As such, the development is compliant with the objectives of the NPPF, policies T14 and T22 of the UDP and the recommended parking standards set out in the Council's 'Residential Design Guide' SPD.

## **5. Biodiversity and ecology**

The NPPF states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and sites of biodiversity and minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressure. When determining planning applications if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.

On a local level policy CN18 seeks the protection of the interests of nature conservation throughout the City, policy CN19 advises that special areas of conservation, special protection areas and Ramsar sites, either designated or proposed for designation will be conserved, whilst policy CN22 states that development which would adversely affect any animal or plant species afforded special protection by law, or its habitat, whether directly or indirectly, will not be permitted unless mitigating action is achievable through planning conditions, and where appropriate, planning obligations, and the overall effect will not be detrimental to the species and the overall biodiversity of the City.

Policy NE2 of the emerging CSDP further advises that biodiversity will be protected, created, enhanced and managed by requiring development to demonstrate how it will provide net gains in biodiversity and avoid or minimise adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity. This includes development that would have an impact on the integrity of the European designated sites.

The application has been accompanied by a report to inform a Habitat Regulations Assessment (Final version received August 2019) and an ecological appraisal and bat survey. Both Natural England and the Council's Ecologist have been consulted on the proposal.

With regard to the above, the Council's Ecologist has advised that the proposal will predominantly impact on the European sites to the North of the City and possibly the designation in South Tyneside. (the Northumbria Coast Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site). The report concludes that there is potential, without appropriate restrictions, for increased recreational activity associated with the new development to adversely affect the Natura 2000 sites through pathways such as disturbance of the qualifying species and/or degradation of habitats. In this respect and with regards to mitigating the potential effects of the development, a financial contribution has been proposed to fund Strategic Access Monitoring and Management Measures. This form of mitigation is considered to be appropriate and has been supported by both the Council's Ecologist and Natural England.

The ecological appraisal and bat survey has considered the potential for existing habitat within the site noting that the site predominantly comprises hardstanding and buildings. Consequently, the site is considered to be of low habitat value with the two existing buildings being of low suitability for roosting bats and foraging bats and of very low suitability for hibernating bats. The report notes that there is potential for gull species to nest on the flat roofs of the buildings.

The Council's Ecologist has confirmed agreement to the mitigation and compensatory strategy measures outlined in Section H of the survey, recommending that they be conditioned to ensure adherence to the measures. Further details are also required, informed by conditions, in respect of the lighting design during construction and specific details and locations of the Schwegler bat boxes/external crevice roost features that are to be incorporated within the new building.

Subject to the development being completed in accordance with the submitted Ecological Appraisal and the receipt of contributions as required to mitigate the impact on the Natura 2000



sites, it is considered that the proposed development would accord with the aforementioned national and local policies with regard to biodiversity and ecology.

## **6. Landscaping and trees**

Policy CN17 of the adopted UDP states that the Council will encourage the retention of trees which make a valuable contribution to the character of the area and the retention of trees in all new development will be required where possible and paragraph 170 of the NPPF outlines that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment including protection and retention of trees.

Also, policy NE3 of the CSDP relates to woodlands, hedgerows and trees and states that to conserve significant trees development should only be permitted where it can clearly demonstrate that development cannot reasonably be located elsewhere.

The previous functional use of the site dictates that it is currently bereft of any meaningful form of landscaping and discussions between the developer and LPA have sought to ensure that an appropriate level of landscaping is proposed throughout the site. This has meant that a pragmatic approach as had to be taken when striking a balance between parking provision and amenity areas. As has been previously been touched on, the loss of the 4no units to the rear of the site has had the added benefit of creating additional parking spaces whilst securing a greater swathe of planted landscaping within this area of the site. Further landscaping will be provided across the front of the site which will soften the frontage of the building and undoubtedly enhance the visual amenity of this section of Station Road. Two electric bays are to be provided within the confines of an existing area of landscaped amenity space adjacent to the western egress point. One tree will need to be removed to facilitate these works however it is anticipated that the two remaining cherry trees should be able to be retained.

Whilst the Council's Landscape Officers have advised that the proposed areas set aside for landscaping are broadly acceptable, they have confirmed that further details will be required to understand the species, densities and exacting locations of the proposed planting. In this respect the Landscape Officers have offered some guidance advising that tree planting (maximum of 6no) should be undertaken across the front elevation. Such trees should be small or columnar in form/species and offer seasonal interest such as spring blossom or/and autumn berries to provide food for insects and birds. Examples of such species include, *Sorbus aucuparia* 'Josephs Rocks', *Pyrus calleryana* 'Chanticleer' and *Prunus umineko*.

Within the rear yard the Landscape Officers have recommended that further tree planting is undertaken to soften the development for the existing and prospective residents. Hedging, if achievable, should be provided within the locations indicated as landscape margins as this would help screen the parking for the existing residents.

Subject to the inclusion of a condition requiring that a scheme of hard and soft landscaping is submitted for approval in writing by the LPA, it is considered that the visual amenity of the site and wider street scene will be substantially enhanced.

## **7. Flood Risk and drainage**

Paragraph 155 of the NPPF states that when determining planning applications, Local Planning Authorities should ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere and should only consider development to be appropriate in flood-risk areas where certain criteria are satisfied. Meanwhile, policy EN12 of the UDP states that in assessing development proposals, the Council will seek to

ensure that the proposal will not materially impede the flow of flood water or increase the number of people of properties at risk of flooding.

Policy WWE2 of the emerging CSDP states that development will be required to demonstrate, where necessary, through an appropriate Flood Risk Assessment that development will not increase flood risk on site or elsewhere. Whilst Policy WWE3 outlines that development must consider the effect on flood risk, on and off-site commensurate with the scale and impact.

In terms of drainage Policy WWE4 of the emerging CSDP states that the quantity and quality of surface and groundwater bodies will be protected and Policy WWE5 states that development should utilise the drainage hierarchy.

The City Council is now the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) in respect of major development proposals, with responsibility for matters pertaining to the management of surface water. A Ministerial Statement from the Department for Communities and Local Government (dated 18th December 2014), to be read in conjunction with the policies of the NPPF, sets out that the Government expects decisions on planning applications relating to major development to ensure that sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) for the management of run-off are put in place, unless this is demonstrated to be inappropriate.

In considering planning applications, the LLFA should be satisfied that the proposed minimum standards of operation are appropriate and ensure through the use of planning conditions or obligations that there are clear arrangements in place for ongoing maintenance over the lifetime of the development. Technical Guidance produced by DEFRA (March 2015) sets out non-statutory technical standards for SuDS and this should be used to inform the preparation of a SuDS scheme in association with a development proposal. In this regard, it is recommended that the surface water run-off rate for new development should not exceed the existing greenfield run-off rate for the site.

The application has been accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Drainage Strategy which concludes that the development site is located within Flood Zone 1 (at lowest risk of flooding) and that the finished floor levels will be at least 150mm above adjacent ground level to ensure that there will be no increase in flood risk.

The assessment confirms that surface water runoff from the site will not be increased as a result of the development as the entire site is impermeable both pre- and post-development. With regard to SuDs, the presence of clay indicates a potential for high ground water levels to occur on site. This infers that infiltration-based SuDs are not considered to be appropriate for the site, even in offering partial infiltration. In this respect it is proposed that techniques that provide storage for surface water prior to discharging into Northumbrian Water sewers are utilised on site. SuDs techniques suitable for the site include permeable paving within the parking spaces, tree pits and a rainwater garden and a swale to be incorporated into the southern section of the site layout. An attenuation tank will be used to fulfil the rest of the storage requirements for the site.

In order to ensure no increase in flood risk and to offer betterment compared to the existing situation, the SuDS will be used to limit the runoff rate and volume from the site with surface water being discharged to the local combined sewer at 5l/s north of the site.

The Council's LLFA Officer has agreed the approach taken advising that a recommendation for approval can be given subject to the submission of a verification report to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to first occupation of the development. The proposed development would incorporate SUD's and is not at risk of flooding, the development would

therefore accord with paragraph 155 of the NPPF, Policy EN12 of the adopted UDP and Policies WWE2, WWE4 and WWE5 of the emerging CSDP.

## **8. Implications of development in respect of land contamination/ground conditions**

Paragraph 178 of the NPPF states that planning decisions must ensure that development sites are suitable for the new use, taking account of ground conditions and land instability, including from former activities such as mining and pollution.

Meanwhile, Policy EN14 of the UDP states that where development is proposed on land where there is reason to believe is contaminated or potentially at risk from migrating contaminants, the Council will require the applicant to carry out adequate investigations to determine the nature of ground conditions below and, if appropriate, adjoining the site. Where the degree of contamination would allow development subject to preventative, remedial or precautionary measures within the control of the applicant, planning permission will be granted subject to conditions specifying the measures to be carried out.

Policy HS3 of the emerging CSDP states that development should identify any existing contaminated land and the level of risk that contaminants pose in relation to the proposed end use and it should be demonstrated that the developed site will be suitable for the proposed use without risk from contaminants to people, buildings, services or the environment.

A Phase 1 Desk Top Study was initially submitted with the application whilst a Phase 2 Site Investigation has subsequently been received during the course of the application's consideration.

As set out in the representations of this report, the proposals have been assessed by the Council's Public Protection and Regulatory Services. It is considered that potential land contamination risks do not represent a significant constraint to the development of the site and it has been advised that planning permission can be granted subject to the imposition of the conditions recommended in relation to the undertaking of further detailed site investigations and the submission of a remediation strategy, verification and validation reports and a strategy for dealing with unexpected contamination.

Subject to the imposition of the recommended conditions, it is considered that the implications of the development in respect of land contamination are acceptable, in accordance with the requirements of Policy EN14 of the adopted UDP, Policy HS3 of the emerging CSDP and paragraph 178 of the NPPF.

## **9. Archaeology**

At a National level the NPPF states that:

In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic viability; and
- c) The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

At a local level Policy B11 of the Council's adopted Unitary Development Plan states that:

The City Council will promote measures to protect the archaeological heritage of Sunderland and ensure that any remains discovered will be either physically preserved or recorded. This is reiterated through policy BH9 of the CSDP

The application has been accompanied by an archaeological desk-based assessment which concludes that the development site lies towards the probable core of the medieval village of Fulwell. The report advises that there is a probability that remains associated with the village would have been present within the developable area and whilst the construction of the Fire Station in the 1940's will have impacted any features present on the site, the extent of this disturbance remains unknown. It is therefore recommended that an archaeological trial trenching evaluation be carried out, to a programme decided in consultation with the County Archaeologist, to determine the potential for the survival of archaeological features.

The Tyne and Wear Archaeology Officer has been consulted regarding the proposed development and has confirmed that conditions in respect of trial trenching, post excavation report and publication report be attached to any approval granted.

## **10. Planning obligations**

Paragraph 54 of the NPPF states that Local Planning Authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions or planning obligations - planning obligations, which are usually secured via legal agreements under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), should only be used where it is not possible to use conditions. Paragraph 56 goes on to advise that planning obligations should only be sought where the following tests can be met (also set out at Regulation 122(2) of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010):

- Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- Directly related to the development; and
- Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development;

With the abovementioned policy framework in mind, and having had regard to the consultation responses received, it is considered that the proposed development gives rise to implications in respect of securing a mitigating payment in respect of;

*Education* - The Council's Education and Lifelong Learning team has advised that a financial contribution of £24,883 towards primary, secondary and special educational provision within the locality be requested and secured as part of a S106 agreement.

*Affordable Housing* - In line with the objectives of paragraph 64 of the NPPF and policy H16 of the UDP, the City Council will normally seek to secure the provision of affordable housing as part of new residential development involving 15 or more units. The usual requirement, as recommended by the Council's most recent Strategic Housing Market Assessment, is for 10% of units within a new development to be affordable. In the majority of cases this will be required to be provided on-site but in certain circumstances, a financial contribution can be made to the LPA for offsite affordable housing. Based on a housing scheme of 28 units, 3 affordable units would generally be required.

The Vacant Building Credit (VBC) is outlined within paragraph 22 (Reference ID: 23b-021-20160519) of the PPG (Planning Practice Guidance). It states that, "where a vacant building is brought back into any lawful use, or is demolished to be replaced by a new building, the developer should be offered a financial credit equivalent to the existing gross floor space of relevant vacant

buildings when the local planning authority calculates any affordable housing contribution which will be sought".

This is backed up within paragraph 63 of the NPPF which states that "to support the re-use of brownfield land, where vacant buildings are being reused or redeveloped, any affordable housing contribution due should be reduced by a proportionate amount".

In this instance, as the proposal will result in the removal of a vacant building to be replaced by new housing, the Vacant Building Credit is applicable. The formula for working out the VBC calculates the net change in the existing gross floor space and divides it by the new build floor space X the affordable housing requirement. Taking this calculation into account, a revised figure for 1 affordable unit is shown to be required which has been accepted by the Council's Planning Policy Section. As the provision of one affordable unit would be unlikely to secure interest from an affordable housing provider, the developer has agreed for a financial contribution to be made, in order to provide offsite affordable housing provision. This figure equates to £48,000.

*Offsite play* - As members are aware, UDP policy encourages developers to locate equipped, Children's play areas within new residential development wherever possible. However, it is not considered that the location of a play area within this site is appropriate or practical. The developer has therefore agreed to provide a financial contribution, of (28 x £701) £19,628 as a Section 106 contribution, for the provision of new play facilities or the improvement of existing play facilities in the Fulwell Ward. This off-site provision is considered acceptable and as such complies with policy H21 of the Unitary Development Plan.

It is noted that one of the representations has questioned whether any contributions directed towards offsite play could be channelled into alternative (local) schemes. Whilst this point is noted, there are only certain areas within which financial obligations can be directed and the 3 key tests outlined above, need to be met when seeking Section 106 contributions. In this respect, whilst the Village Green/pond project and improving insulation at Fulwell Community Library are undoubtedly worthy schemes, they are not ones which are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms nor are they directly related to the development.

*Ecology* - The mitigation measures outlined within the 'Report to form an Appropriate Assessment' (E3 August 2019) outline that financial contribution of £569 per unit will be required to fund Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) in relation to the Natura 2000 sites (overall contribution figure of £15,932). This has been accepted by the Council's Ecologist and Natural England. 50% of the contribution will be required to be secured upfront with the remainder paid on completion of the 20th dwelling.

To summarise, a draft Section 106 agreement will be drawn up by the Council's Solicitor which is designed to secure the above. The broad terms of the agreement as detailed above have been agreed in principle by the developer and it is consequently anticipated that the Section 106 agreement will be completed and sealed in the near future, although this will occur after the meeting of the Sub-Committee.

## **Conclusion**

The principle of housing development is considered to be acceptable in this location when assessed against the impact tests set out in the NPPF. In this regard, the proposals are considered to comprise the appropriate re-development of a brownfield site which is sustainably located within an established residential area.

For the reasons set out above, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in terms of urban design, visual and residential amenity, highway access and car parking, ecology/biodiversity impacts, landscape and trees, flood risk and drainage, ground conditions and, in respect of these matters, the proposals are considered to be compliant with the aims, objectives and detailed policies of the NPPF, the up-to-date policies of the Council's UDP and the Council's Residential Design Guide SPD.

Given that the proposed development has been found to be acceptable with regard to all relevant material planning issues, with regard to the overarching aims, objectives and detailed policies of the NPPF, the up-to-date relevant policies of the Council's adopted UDP and Residential Design Guide SPD and the emerging Policies of the Core Strategy Development Plan, it is considered that the scheme would achieve the sustainable development sought by paragraph 11 of the NPPF and should therefore be approved.

### **EQUALITY ACT 2010 - 149 Public Sector Equality Duty**

During the detailed consideration of this application/proposal an equality impact assessment has been undertaken which demonstrates that due regard has been given to the duties placed on the LPA's as required by the aforementioned Act.

As part of the assessment of the application/proposal due regard has been given to the following relevant protected characteristics:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

The LPA is committed to (a) eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

In addition, the LPA, in the assessment of this application/proposal has given due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. This approach involves (a) removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic; (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it; (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The LPA has taken reasonable and proportionate steps to meet the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, as part of this planning application/proposal.

Due regard has been given to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves. Particular consideration has been given to the need to:

- (a) tackle prejudice; and
- (b) promote understanding.

Finally, the LPA recognise that compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under this Act.

**RECOMMENDATION:** DELEGATE to Executive Director of City Development, who is MINDED TO APPROVE the application subject to completion of agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) (as amended) and subject to draft conditions below:

**Conditions:**

1 The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than three years beginning with the date on which permission is granted, as required by section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to ensure that the development is carried out within a reasonable period of time.

2 The development hereby granted permission shall be carried out in full accordance with the following approved plans:

The existing elevations of the Fire Station and Rescue Tower received 20.09.2018;  
The proposed ground and upper floor plans as amended received 21.02.2019 (Plan ref: YH/31A and YH32A);  
The proposed elevations (Unit 1) as amended received 21.02.2019 (Plan ref: YH/33A);  
The site plan as amended received 21.10.2019 (Plan ref: YH30E);  
The swept path analysis plan received 10.10.2019 (Plan ref: 127850/sk0002);  
The bin store details received 03.07.2019 (Plan ref: YH35);  
The balcony detail received 03.07.2019 (Plan ref: 03.07.2019);  
The location plan received 23.07.2018;  
The topographical plan received 23.07.2018;

Reason: In order to ensure that the completed development accords with the scheme approved and to comply with policy B2 of the adopted Unitary Development Plan.

3 Notwithstanding any indication of materials which may have been given in the application, no development shall take place until a schedule and/or samples of the materials and finishes to be used for the external surfaces of the building, including walls, roofs, doors and windows as well as all boundary treatment, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with policy B2 of the adopted Unitary Development Plan and policy BH1 of the emerging Core Strategy Development Plan.

4 The development hereby approved shall not commence until a Construction Environmental Management Plan has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The approved Plan shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Plan shall provide full details in respect of:

1. provision and location of facilities for the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
2. provision and location of facilities for the loading, unloading and storage of plant and materials;
3. measures to control noise, dirt, dust and other airborne pollutants, vibration, smoke and odour during construction;
4. full details of any lighting required during the construction phase;
5. a method statement for the demolition and scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works;

Reason: In the interests of amenity and highway safety to accord with policies B2, EN1 and T14 of the Unitary Development Plan and policies BH2 and ST3 of the emerging Core Strategy Development Plan.

5 The areas illustrated on the submitted plans for the parking of vehicles shall be laid out in accordance with the approved plans prior to the occupation of the dwellings and shall be made available for such use at all times thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and in accordance with Policy T22 of the adopted Unitary Development Plan and Policy ST3 of the emerging Core Strategy Development Plan.

6 The development shall not be occupied until a Car Park Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. For the avoidance of doubt, the management plan shall include details of;

- The provision of signage as required to highlight the operation of the one-way system with the east access as the entry point and west access as the egress point;
- Details of the measures to be put in place to prohibit members of the public from utilising the parking area;
- The physical identification and allocation of the parking bays based on flat numbers for residents and VP for visitors;

At all times thereafter, the approved Car Park Management Plan shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of protecting the amenity of the area, highway and pedestrian safety and to accord with policies T14 and T22 of the Unitary Development Plan and policy ST3 of the emerging Core Strategy Development Plan.

7 No development other than demolition shall take place until a scheme of hard and soft landscaping has been submitted to and approved in writing, by the Local Planning Authority. For the avoidance of doubt the soft landscape scheme shall include a full schedule of planting including numbers/densities and species, to be informed by the enhancement recommendations contained within Section H.2.1 of the Ecological Appraisal and Bat Survey undertaken by E3 Ecology Ltd dated September 2018 and the consultation response received from Council's



Landscape Architect dated 11 November 2019. The approved landscape works shall be completed no later than the end of the first planting season following the first occupation of the development or in accordance with a programme agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the approved landscape works shall be maintained in accordance with the current version of the British Standard 4428 for a period of 5 years commencing on the date of Practical Completion and during this period any trees or plants which die or become diseased shall be replaced in the first available planting season with others of similar size and species and any grass which fails to establish shall be re-established.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with policy B2 of the adopted Unitary Development Plan and policy BH1 of the emerging Core Strategy Development Plan.

8 The development hereby approved shall be carried out in complete accordance with the mitigation measures detailed in Section H (Mitigations) of the Bat Survey Report prepared by E3 Ecology Ltd dated September 2019. Should the demolition work not commence within 1 year of the date of approval, then a further checking survey shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing with the development thereafter carried out in full accordance with updated measures.

Reason: In order to ensure best practice in respect of the demolition work and to accord with policies CN18, CN19 and CN22 of the Unitary Development Plan. NE2 of the Draft Core Strategy

9 No external lighting shall be installed until a lighting plan (as informed by Section H.2, Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy) has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority for agreement in writing. Thereafter, the agreed details shall be implemented and maintained as such thereafter.

Reason: In order to ensure a satisfactory form of development and to comply with policy B2, CN18 and CN22 of the Unitary Development Plan and policies BH1 and NE2 of the Draft Core Strategy.

10 Prior to first occupation of the development, a scaled drawing highlighting the locations of the proposed bat boxes and/or external crevice roost features to be incorporated on/within the building (as informed by subsection H.3 Compensatory Strategy), shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Once approved, the agreed details shall be implemented prior to first occupation of the building and maintained as such thereafter.

Reason: In order to ensure a satisfactory form of development and to comply with policies CN18 and CN22 of the Unitary Development Plan and policy NE2 of the Draft Core Strategy.

11 Prior to the first occupation of the development, a verification report carried out by a qualified drainage engineer must be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, to demonstrate that all sustainable drainage systems have been constructed as per the agreed scheme, namely;

UPDATED\_FRA\_AND\_DRAINAGE\_STRATEGY-917145.pdf (for restricted flow rates, approach to drainage design, flow restriction and proposed sustainable drainage features);  
UPDATED\_FRA\_AND\_DRAINAGE\_STRATEGY-917145.pdf page 111 drawing 127850/2002  
Rev A - proposed drainage layout;

SUDS\_DRAINAGE\_CONSTRUCTION\_DETAILS-917147.pdf (for sections relating to construction of sustainable drainage features);  
DRAINAGE\_MANAGEMENT\_AND\_MAINTENANCE\_PLAN-908486.pdf (for the persons responsible for maintenance, the method of maintaining sustainable drainage features and management of surface water run-off during site stripping and construction), and  
STORM\_SEWER\_DESGIN\_\_REV\_A\_MDX\_-917159 (for reference to the type of vortex flow control and flow rate restriction, see pdf page 6

For the avoidance of doubt, this verification report shall include:

- o As built drawings for all SuDS components - including dimensions (base levels, inlet/outlet elevations, areas, depths, lengths, diameters, gradients etc) and in particular details of access arrangements to the geocellular tank to show that it can be maintained;
- o Construction details (component drawings, materials, vegetation);
- o Health and Safety file;
- o Details of ownership organisation/adoption details.

Reason: To ensure that all sustainable drainage systems are designed to the DEFRA non-technical standards and to accord with policies EN11 and EN12 of the adopted Unitary Development Plan and policies WWE2 and WWE3 of the Draft Core Strategy.

12 Prior to the first occupation of the development (unit 1), the mitigation measures identified in Table 3 of the Noise Assessment Report (ref FH/FFH/001), undertaken by LA Environmental Consultants and dated 6 September 2018, shall be installed in the proposed units with reference to Figure 6 of the report and thereafter maintained for the lifetime of the development to ensure compliance with internal noise criteria as stated in BS8233:2014.

Reason: To ensure that a satisfactory level of amenity is provided to occupants of the new dwellings and to accord with policy B2 of the adopted Unitary Development Plan and policy BH1 of the emerging Core Strategy Development Plan.

13 No groundworks or other development shall commence until a programme of archaeological fieldwork (to include evaluation and where appropriate mitigation excavation) has been completed. This shall be carried out in accordance with a specification provided by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: The site is located within an area identified as being of potential archaeological interest. The investigation is required to ensure that any archaeological remains on the site can be preserved wherever possible and recorded, in accordance with policies B11, B13 and B14 of the Unitary Development Plan and policy BH9 of the emerging Core Strategy Development Plan.

14 The building shall not be occupied until the final report of the results of observations of the results of the archaeological fieldwork undertaken in pursuance of condition (13) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: The site is located within an area identified as being of potential archaeological interest. The investigation is required to ensure that any archaeological remains on the site can be preserved wherever possible and recorded, in accordance with policies B11, B13 and B14 of the Unitary Development Plan and policy BH9 of the emerging Core Strategy Development Plan.

15 The buildings shall not be occupied until a report detailing the results of the archaeological fieldwork undertaken has been produced in a form suitable for publication in a suitable and agreed journal has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to submission to the editor of the journal.

Reason: The site is located within an area identified as being of potential archaeological interest. The investigation is required to ensure that any archaeological remains on the site can be preserved wherever possible and recorded, in accordance with policies B11, B13 and B14 of the Unitary Development Plan and policy BH9 of the emerging Core Strategy Development Plan.

16 The development hereby approved shall not commence until an amended Phase 2 Site Investigation Report has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council as Local Planning Authority (LPA). For the avoidance of doubt, such details shall address the 10 points set out in the Councils Public Protection and Regulatory Services consultation response dated 1 August 2019 and in respect of undertaking a drain survey and investigations to ascertain the potential for fuel tanks to be present on site as per the Public Protection and Regulatory Services consultation response dated 13 November 2018.

Where the LPA considers it necessary, development must not commence until a detailed remediation scheme to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use by removing unacceptable risks to human health, buildings and other property and the natural and historical environment, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council as LPA. The scheme must include all works to be undertaken, proposed remediation objectives and remediation criteria, timetable of works and site management procedures. The scheme must ensure that the site will not qualify as contaminated land under Part 2A of the Environment Protection Act 1990 in relation to the intended use of the land after remediation.

Reason: The condition is required to ensure that the risks from land contaminated to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors in accordance with policy EN14 of the Unitary Development Plan and policy HS3 of the emerging Core Strategy Development Plan.

17 Any remediation scheme approved pursuant to condition number 16 must be carried out in accordance with its terms prior to the commencement of development other than that required to carry out remediation, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the LPA. The LPA must be given two weeks written notification of commencement of the remediation scheme works. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme, a verification report that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out must be produced and approved in writing by the LPA.

Reason: The condition is required to ensure that the risks from land contaminated to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors in accordance with policy EN14 of the Unitary Development Plan and policy HS3 of the emerging Core Strategy Development Plan.

18 In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported in writing immediately to the LPA. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken and when remediation is necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared in accordance with the requirements of condition number 16, which is subject to the approval in writing of the LPA. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme a verification report must be prepared which is subject to the approval in writing of the LPA in accordance with condition number 17. If unexpected contamination is found after development has begun, development must be halted on that part of the site affected by the unexpected contamination to the extent specified by the LPA in writing until this condition has been complied with in relation to that contamination.

Reason: The condition is required to ensure that the risks from land contaminated to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors in accordance with policy EN14 of the Unitary Development Plan and policy HS3 of the emerging Core Strategy Development Plan.

19 The development shall not be occupied until a Traffic Regulation Order has been enacted to introduce waiting restrictions (Mon-Fri 8am - 6pm) on the southern side of Station Road to the front of the site.

Reason: In the interests of highway and pedestrian safety and to accord with policy T14 of the Unitary Development Plan and policy ST3 of the emerging Core Strategy Development Plan.

20 Before first occupation, all first, second and third floor windows within the eastern and western elevations of the building shall be fitted with obscured glazing (minimum of Pilkington Glass level 3 or equivalent) and any part of the windows that are less than 1.7 metres above the floor of the room in which they are installed shall be non-opening. The windows shall be permanently retained in that condition thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of protecting the amenity of nearby residential occupiers and to accord with policy B2 of the adopted Unitary Development Plan and policy BH1 of the emerging Core Strategy Development Plan.

21 The development hereby approved shall not commence until a detailed scheme for the disposal of surface and foul water for the development hereby approved has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Northumbrian Water. Thereafter the development shall take place in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In order to prevent the increased risk of flooding from any sources in accordance with policies EN11 and EN12 of the adopted Unitary Development Plan and policies WWE2 and WWE3 of the Draft Core Strategy.

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**Reference No.:** 19/01565/VA3 Variation of Condition (Reg 3)**Proposal:** **Variation of condition no2 (Approved Plans) of planning approval 17/02294/LP3- to make minor amendments, comprising removal of ramps and steps and raising of ground levels around existing building, alterations to approved pitch location, retention of existing wall to main entrance, coach park design alteration, new bunding, realignment of path and bridle path route adjustment.****Location:** Community North Sports Complex, Kingsway Road, Sunderland, SR5 4BY**Ward:** Redhill**Applicant:** Sunderland City Council**Date Valid:** 1 October 2019**Target Date:** 31 December 2019

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## **PROPOSAL:**

The proposal relates to the variation of condition 2 attached to planning approval 17/02294/LP3, to make minor amendments comprising removal of ramps and steps and raising of ground levels around existing building, alterations to approved pitch location, retention of existing wall to main entrance, coach park design alteration, new bunding, realignment of path and bridle path route adjustment at Community North Sports Complex, Kingsway Road, Downhill, Sunderland, SR5 4BY.

The proposed development affects the Community North Sports Complex, which affords a wide range of formal and informal outdoor sports and recreation facilities across an extensive area of land at the northern edge of the Downhill and Red House housing estates. The complex was originally granted planning permission in the late 1990s (application ref. 97/00034/80), with the approved development involving floodlighting, perimeter fencing, car parking, changing facilities and a gymnasium.

The complex covers an area of approximately 18.3 hectares and is, broadly speaking, bordered by the perimeter roads of Downhill and Red House to the south, an area of grassed/wooded open space to the west, the grounds of Boldon Golf Course and agricultural land to the north and allotments and agricultural land to the east. The northern boundary of the site also represents the border between the City of Sunderland and South Tyneside metropolitan borough. The site is wholly located within the Tyne and Wear Green Belt which, in this area, encompasses the predominantly agricultural land separating the northern housing estates of Sunderland and the villages of East and West Boldon in South Tyneside.

The existing complex comprises a range of grass, artificial and all-weather pitches, all primarily used for football, together with playgrounds, areas of grassed open space, woodland, landscaping and a pond. There is one building at the site, which largely provides changing facilities for players and officials, whilst the complex also benefits from areas of car parking. Vehicular access into the site is from Kingsway Road to the south, via a curving two-lane entry way which narrows into a long, straight single-lane avenue.

Members may recall that the Community North Sports Complex was recently subject to a planning application (ref. 17/02294/LP3) for its development as part of the 'Parklife' programme, a collaborative enterprise between the Football Association, Sport England and Sunderland Council to create a sustainable model for improved football facilities, delivery and participation based around the provision of new Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs) at three 'hub' sites. In addition to the Community North Sports Complex, hub sites are being developed at the Northern Area Playing Fields (Washington) and Ford Quarry.

The application for the development at Community North Sports Complex, which was approved at the Council's Planning and Highways Committee meeting held on 13th March 2018, involved the following works:

- o Engineering and re-grading works to facilitate the provision of 3 no. artificial grass pitches (AGPs), together with associated development;
- o Extension and refurbishment of existing changing pavilion building;
- o Improvements to play facilities, to be focused on the site of an existing play area adjacent to the pavilion building;
- o Provision of additional car parking;
- o New areas of soft landscaping to complement the new development, to include the grassed bunding around the artificial pitches;
- o New mesh fencing;
- o Improvements to grass pitches;
- o A new bin store;
- o Stopping-up of existing bridleways and footpaths and provision of alternative bridleways and barrier treatments

The current application has been made under s73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and it proposes to vary condition 2 of planning permission ref. 18/02294/VA3, which sets out the list of plans the approved development must accord with. The application proposes to vary the list of approved plans to secure permission for a series of minor amendments to the approved scheme. The proposed amendments entail:

- o Ramps and steps to north of existing building removed and ground levels raised to bring level with the adjacent all-weather pitches, surface finishes amended to tarmac;
- o 2 no. new pitches to the north of the building moved eastward by 10 metres;
- o Bridle path route adjusted due to pitch move and extent of embankment to the north-east corner of the new pitches;
- o New pitch to south-east of building moved north;
- o Path profile to east side of building realigned with new pitch location;
- o Existing wall to south of new main entrance to pavilion building retained;
- o Corner of new coach park to west of building adjusted to avoid existing culvert;
- o Bunding to west of all-weather pitch no. 01.

Members should note that at the time of the officer site visit, it was evident that the development of the hub had commenced, and substantial progress has been made.

#### **TYPE OF PUBLICITY:**

Press Notice Advertised  
Site Notice Posted  
Neighbour Notifications

## **CONSULTEES:**

Redhill - Ward Councillor Consultation  
DC North Chair And Vice Chair Consultation  
Sport England  
Network Management  
Environment Agency  
Flood And Coastal Group Engineer  
Environmental Health  
Natural England  
Northumbrian Water

Final Date for Receipt of Representations: **20.11.2019**

## **REPRESENTATIONS:**

**Public consultation** - no representations received.

**Northumbrian Water** - no comments to make.

**Sport England** - no comments to make on the proposed variation of condition.

**Natural England** - no comments to make on the proposed variation of condition 2.

**Environment Agency** - no comments received.

**Council's Flood and Coastal team (in capacity as Lead Local Flood Authority)** - no further comments subsequent to those provided for the initial planning application.

**Council's Highways team** - no objections to the development, advising that the comments for the previous planning application still apply.

**Council's Environmental Health team** - no objections to the development, noting that conditions 15 to 19 of the initial planning permission still require formal discharge.

**Council's Ecology team** - the Extended Phase I Survey submitted with the initial planning application addressed the entire red line boundary site and potential impact of the development on ecology; the development can proceed subject to the adoption of the mitigation and enhancement measures recommended in the survey report. Measures detailed in the soft landscaping proposals and the Arboricultural Impact Assessment should also be adopted and delivered in full.

## **POLICIES:**

In the Unitary Development Plan the site is subject to the following policies;

CN22 - Developments affecting protected wildlife species and habitats  
B2 - Scale, massing layout and setting of new developments  
CN2 - Purpose of the Green Belt in Sunderland

CN3 - Control of development within the Green Belt  
 CN4 - Control of other operations in the Green Belt  
 CN5 - Safeguarding the visual amenity of the Green Belt  
 CN17 - Tree Preservation Orders and replacement of trees  
 EN5 - Protecting sensitive areas from new noise/vibration generating developments  
 EN12 - Conflicts between new development and flood risk / water resources  
 EN14 - Development on unstable or contaminated land or land at risk from landfill/mine gas  
 L7 - Protection of recreational and amenity land  
 T10 - Protect footpaths; identify new ones & adapt some as multi-user routes  
 T14 - Accessibility of new developments, need to avoid congestion and safety problems arising  
 T22 - Parking standards in new developments  
 NA21 - Maintenance and enhancement of land at Downhill for Sports facilities  
 NA29 - Maintenance of the Green Belt  
 NA31 - Planting of tree belts and woodlands, using locally native species  
 NA35 - Identification / protection of locations for strategic multi-user routes

## **COMMENTS:**

The principle of the proposed development of the site to create a playing pitch hub has already been established through the approval of planning application ref. 17/02294/LP3. In determining the initial planning application, regard was given to the full range of material considerations relevant to the proposed development, including the implications of the development in respect of land use and open space/playing pitch policies, its impact on residential amenity, visual amenity, highway and pedestrian safety, ecology and its implications in relation to land contamination and drainage.

The proposed variation of condition 2 of the extant planning permission seeks permission for a series of minor amendments to the approved scheme and it gives rise to fresh implications in respect of a number of the considerations listed above. However, rather than fully revisit all matters previously addressed in the determination of the initial planning application, it is considered appropriate that this report focuses on the matters requiring fresh consideration in light of the proposed revisions to the approved development. For a consideration of the full range of matters listed above, please refer to the Committee report produced in respect of app. ref. 17/02294/LP3.

In considering the revised proposals, regard must be given to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which provides the Government's current planning policy guidance. Development plans must be produced, and planning applications determined, with reference to the NPPF and its over-arching aim of delivering sustainable development.

In terms of local policy, the Council's adopted Development Plan remains its Unitary Development Plan (1998). Of relevance to the current application are UDP policies B2, CN2, CN3, CN4, CN5, CN17, CN22, EN5, EN12, EN14, L7, T10, T14, T22, NA21, NA29, NA31 and NA35.

Members may be aware that the Council has also produced a new Core Strategy and Development Plan (CSDP), which is designed to become the strategic development plan for the City for the period up to 2033. The CSDP has been subject to an Examination in Public by the Planning Inspectorate and subsequent to this, the Council is undertaking public consultation on proposed modifications to the CSDP ahead of possible adoption in early 2020. Given the advanced stage of the adoption of the CSDP, it is considered that significant weight can be given to its policies which are relevant to the current application. In this case, policies SP7, HS1, HS2,



HS3, VC6, BH1, NE1, NE2, NE3, NE4, NE6, ST2, ST3, WWE2, WWE3 and WWE5 are considered to be pertinent.

### **Land use considerations/principle of development**

In terms of land use considerations, as noted earlier in this report, the application site lies wholly within the Tyne and Wear Green Belt. In determining the initial planning application (ref. 17/02294/LP3), it was concluded that development proposals would broadly accord with the policy of the NPPF (now paragraph 141) which requires Local Planning Authorities to plan positively for the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation. It was also found that the proposals would not conflict with the purposes of including the application site within the Green Belt, which are set out at paragraph 134 of the current NPPF, policy CN2 of the UDP and policy NE6 of the CSDP.

Additionally, it was concluded that development such as the new car parking, the surfaces of the new AGPs, the new landscaping and bunding was not inappropriate development in the Green Belt, having regard to what is now paragraph 146 of the NPPF and policy CN4 of the UDP and policy NE6 of the CSDP.

However, paragraph 145 of the current NPPF, policy CN3 of the UDP and policy NE6 of the CSDP all make it clear that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless the building is included in a list of exceptions. In terms of the new buildings included in the development proposals (and to be clear, for planning purposes, the term 'buildings' includes structures such as the fencing and floodlighting, as well as the pavilion extension), and having regard to the exception lists provided by current paragraph 145 of the NPPF and policy CN3 of the UDP, it was concluded that these represented appropriate buildings for outdoor sport and recreation. It was found, though, that the erection of the buildings would cause some limited harm to the openness of the Green Belt, whilst the extensions to the pavilion building were also considered to be disproportionate in relation to the existing building. Consequently, and with reference to what is now paragraph 145 of the NPPF and policy CN3 of the UDP, the development would be inappropriate in the Green Belt.

Current national planning policy (paragraphs 143 and 144 of the NPPF) and policies CN3 of the UDP and NE6 of the CSDP direct that development which is inappropriate in the Green Belt should not be approved unless 'very special circumstances', which clearly outweigh the potential harm to the Green Belt, are found to exist. In this case, the initial planning application put forward a series of very special circumstances which, it was argued, outweighed the harm being caused to the Green Belt.

The very special circumstances put forward included: the Community North site being one of only three suitable in the City for the hub development and the proposals utilising an established sports complex; the role the development would play in arresting the decline in the quantity and quality of football pitches in the City; the business model for the hub reducing the burden on public finances; the development addressing pressing existing and future demand for improved football facilities in Sunderland; the development increasing the availability of pitches in Sunderland, including for football training; the hub having a key role to play in increasing opportunities for inclusive football participation, in line with local and national health and wellbeing policies; and the support for the development from bodies such as the Football Association, the Football Foundation, Sport England, the County FA and the City Council.

It was accepted that the very special circumstances put forward by the applicant clearly outweighed the potential harm to the Green Belt arising from the development. As such, it was concluded that the new buildings did not constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

The amendments proposed by the current application do not seek to enlarge or substantially change the approved buildings; rather, the amendments are primarily concerned with some minor alterations to the positioning of the pitches, which in turn has necessitated changes to the layout of the car and coach parks, footpaths and bridleways, the route of some of the fencing and some changes to the approved landscaping. The alterations proposed are, in the context of the scale of the overall development, minor and it is considered that the amended scheme will not have a materially greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the originally-approved development.

Moreover, it is evident that the very special circumstances found to exist relative to the initial planning application are still wholly applicable to the amended proposals given that the very special circumstances identified primarily centre on the value of the hub in meeting strategic objectives relative to playing pitch provision and participation in sport in the City.

As such, it is considered that the conclusions reached in respect of the initial planning application apply to the current proposals - that being that the limited harm to the openness of the Green Belt arising from the new buildings is outweighed by the very special circumstances applicable to the proposals and that the 'other' development (the pitch surfacing, landscaping, car parking etc.) will not harm the openness of the Green Belt.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development, as amended, is not inappropriate in the Green Belt and that the proposals remain compliant with the objectives of the Green Belt policies within the NPPF, policies CN2, CN3, CN4 and CN5 of the Council's UDP and policy NE6 of the Council's Publication Draft Core Strategy and Development Plan.

In addition, it is considered that the proposed revisions to the approved development will still address and support the objectives of the 'Parklife' programme and the wider sport, open space and playing pitch policies in the NPPF, the Council's UDP, draft CSDP and Playing Pitch Strategy in that the scheme will deliver new artificial playing pitches at an established, sustainable location. In reaching this conclusion, it is noted that Sport England has no objections to the application.

Given the above, it is considered that the proposed revisions to the approved scheme do not give rise to any conflict with the Green Belt and other land use policies relevant to the application site and will still serve to support the 'Parklife' programme. The principle of the development is therefore considered to be acceptable.

### **Amenity considerations**

In terms of visual amenity, section 12 of the NPPF, policy B2 of the Council's UDP and policy BH1 of the CSDP support development which delivers a high standard of design and which is respectful to its surroundings. With regard to this matter, it is considered that the proposed revisions to the scheme will not have a substantially different impact on the visual amenity of the locality than the approved development. The overall area covered by the pitches will remain as approved, with the changes to their position not significantly altering their visual impact, whilst the minor changes to the position of the floodlights will not increase their visual impact either.

The other physical changes to the approved scheme involve revisions to landscaping and areas of grassed bunding, together with other minor changes to the routes and designs of footpaths and bridleways, slight changes to the layout of the coach and car parks and changes to boundary treatments. Again, however, these changes are not considered to have a significant effect on the visual amenity of the area in the context of the extensive scope of the overall development.

In terms of residential amenity, policy B2 of the UDP and policy BH1 of the CSDP require new development to maintain acceptable standards of amenity to existing properties, whilst paragraph 180 of the NPPF, UDP policies EN1 and EN5 and CSDP policies HS1 and HS2 require consideration to be given to ensuring that amenity isn't unacceptably harmed by pollution from sources such as noise and intrusive lighting.

The focus of the new development within the wider Community North Sports Complex site is at its eastern end and the nearest dwellings to this area of the Complex are those of Downhill and Red House Estate to the south and south-west. The nearest dwellings (those fronting Kenya Road) are approximately 85 metres from the development site, with a tree belt providing an intervening buffer between the road and the nearest part of the development site. This distance is sufficient to conclude that the alterations to the approved scheme will not lead to any of these dwellings, or any others in proximity to the development site, experiencing any additional loss of outlook or privacy. In addition, given the distances from the new pitches to the nearest dwellings (over 200 metres), it is considered that the revised development will not cause any properties in the area to experience any additional light spill and nor would light spill have any additional harmful effect on visual amenity.

In terms of noise, it is considered that the proposed changes to the existing planning permission will not materially alter the situation in comparison to the approved development, given that the proposals will involve the same number of playing pitches with the same capacity and the same parking and access arrangements.

With regard to the above comments, it would appear that the revisions to the scheme will not have any appreciably greater impact on visual or residential amenity than relative to the approved development. In reaching this view, it is noted that the Council's Environmental Health team has raised no objections to the development relative to noise and light spill issues. The proposals would therefore accord with the requirements of the NPPF, policies B2 and EN5 of the UDP and policies BH1, HS1 and HS2 of the CSDP.

### **Other considerations**

In addition to the above, consideration should be given to the implications of the development in relation to ecology, trees, sustainable drainage and ground conditions/land contamination.

In terms of ecology, the applicant has submitted a note from their Ecology consultant advising that the revised proposals are not considered to give rise to any fresh concerns or issues relative to ecology and biodiversity. As set out in the 'Representations' section of this report, both Natural England and the Council's Ecology team have raised no objections to the proposed revisions to the approved scheme and there are no additional concerns relative to the trees at the site. It is therefore considered that the development will comply with UDP policies CN17 and CN22 and CSDP policies NE2 and NE3, which together seek to protect trees of value and maintain biodiversity and designated habitat sites.

In terms of sustainable drainage, the Council's Flood and Coastal team, in their capacity as Lead Local Flood Authority, have confirmed the amendments to the approved scheme do not raise any additional concerns are issued relative to flood risk or the approved sustainable drainage strategy for the development and consequently, the proposals will satisfactorily address UDP policy EN12 and CSDP policies WWE2, WWE3 and WWE4, which seek to ensure that new development does not materially increase the risk of flooding.

In terms of ground conditions/land contamination, in determining the initial planning application, it was concluded that adequate information had been provided to be confident that the site could

be developed without posing a risk to persons involved in the development of the sports hub, future users of the hub and the wider public. There is not considered to be reason to reach a differing conclusion relative to the current proposal and in this regard, it is noted that the Council's Environmental Health team have no objections to the revised proposals, subject to the imposition of the relevant conditions attached to the original planning permission. It is therefore considered that the development will comply with the requirements of UDP policy EN14 and CSDP policy HS3.

In terms of highway and pedestrian safety, as set out previously, the revised scheme does not involve any material amendments to the approved access and parking arrangements and so, as confirmed by the Council's Highways team, the current proposals are not considered to give rise to any fresh concerns in respect of these matters and are compliant with UDP policies T14 and T22 and CSDP policies ST2 and ST3.

## **CONCLUSION**

For the reasons set out above, it is considered that the proposed revisions to the approved sports hub development at Community North Sports Complex do not give rise to any fresh concerns in relation to Green Belt and other land use policies and will enable the implementation of the 'Parklife' strategy and associated playing pitch/sports participation objectives. Additionally, subject to the recommended conditions, it is considered that the proposals do not raise any fresh concerns in respect of visual and residential amenity, ecology, sustainable drainage, highway and pedestrian safety and ground conditions/land contamination.

In terms of conditions, given that the alterations to the approved scheme are considered to be acceptable, Members are recommended to agree to the variation of existing condition no. 2. It is also recommended that Members impose all other conditions attached to the original planning permission (ref. 17/02294/LP3) which have not already been discharged by officers since its approval.

Subject to the imposition of these conditions, the development is considered to be compliant with the objectives and requirements and objectives of the relevant NPPF, UDP and CSDP policies as referenced in this report. It is therefore recommended that Members Grant Consent for the variation to condition 2 of the initial planning permission to enable the proposed revisions to the approved scheme, subject to the conditions set out below.

## **EQUALITY ACT 2010 - 149 Public Sector Equality Duty**

During the detailed consideration of this application/proposal an equality impact assessment has been undertaken which demonstrates that due regard has been given to the duties placed on the LPA's as required by the aforementioned Act.

As part of the assessment of the application/proposal due regard has been given to the following relevant protected characteristics:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

The LPA is committed to (a) eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

In addition, the LPA, in the assessment of this application/proposal has given due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. This approach involves (a) removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic; (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it; (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The LPA has taken reasonable and proportionate steps to meet the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, as part of this planning application/proposal.

Due regard has been given to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves. Particular consideration has been given to the need to:

- (a) tackle prejudice; and
- (b) promote understanding.

Finally, the LPA recognise that compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under this Act.

**RECOMMENDATION:** GRANT CONSENT, under Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Regulations) 1992, subject to the conditions below:

### **Conditions:**

1 The development hereby granted permission shall be carried out in full accordance with the following approved plans:

Existing site location plan (overall), drawing no. (10)01 A00;  
Existing site plan (detail), drawing no. (10)02, A00;  
Existing ground floor plan, drawing no. (10)03 A00;  
Existing pavilion elevations, drawing no. (10)05 A00;  
Existing 3D view of pavilion building, drawing no. (10)06 A00;  
Existing roof layout, drawing no. (10)04 A00;  
Amended proposed site plan (overall), drawing no. (D) 1101 Rev A;  
Proposed site plan (detail), drawing no. (10)09 A00;  
Proposed demolition plan, drawing no. (10)07 A00;  
Proposed pavilion ground floor plan, drawing no. (10)10 A00;  
Proposed pavilion elevations, drawing no. (10)12 A00;  
Proposed sections through pavilion building, drawing no. (10)13 A00;

Proposed pavilion roof plan, drawing no. (10)11 A00;  
Proposed bin store elevations and plan, drawing no. (10)15 A00;  
Proposed equipment store, lighting column and fencing elevations, drawing no. 07 01;  
Proposed artificial grass pitches layout, drawing no. 01 01;  
Proposed external lighting layout, drawing no. 08 01;  
Proposed floodlighting plan, drawing no. 04 02;  
Proposed downlight, 'TownGuide' and 'LumiStreet' lighting specification details;  
Proposed security boundary fencing, drawing no. 12 00;  
Proposed drainage layout, drawing no. NF037/DH/003 P1;  
Proposed pervious paving section for parking bays;  
Amended proposed soft landscaping, drawing no. LS000064/029, Rev. C03;  
Proposed grassed mounds plan, drawing no. 13 01;  
Proposed tree protection plans, drawing nos. JKK9869 - RPS-Figures 03.01, 03.02 and 03.03;  
Proposed new path works between AWP 1&2 and building, drawing no. LSNV/17/2187/29460/016 Rev. A;

In order to ensure that the completed development accords with the scheme approved and to comply with policy B2 of the adopted Unitary Development Plan.

2 The development hereby approved shall be undertaken in accordance with the materials schedule agreed pursuant to the discharge of condition 3 of planning permission ref. 17/02294/LP3 (discharge of condition ref. 19/00455/DIS), in the interests of visual amenity and to comply with policy B2 of the Unitary Development Plan.

3 All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the details of landscaping approved pursuant to condition 5 of planning permission ref. 17/02294/LP3 (discharge of condition ref. 19/00455/DIS) shall be carried out in the first planting season following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner, and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation, in the interests of visual amenity and to comply with policy B2 and CN22 of the UDP.

4 The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with Section 5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations from the Extended Phase 1 Survey (February 2018) Version 3 by Durham Wildlife Services, submitted with planning permission ref. 17/02294/LP3, in the interests of nature conservation and to comply with UDP policy CN18.

5 The development hereby approved shall be undertaken in accordance with the biodiversity enhancement measures agreed pursuant to the discharge of condition 8 of planning permission ref. 17/02294/LP3 (discharge of condition ref. 19/01278/DIS), in the interests of nature conservation and to comply with UDP policy CN18.

6 The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with Sections 6 - 10 and associated Appendices of the 'Downhill Community North, Sunderland - Arboricultural Impact Assessment', produced by RPS (ref. JKK9869), dated 16 January 2018, submitted with planning permission ref. 17/02294/LP3, in order to safeguard the existing and retained trees on the site and to comply with UDP policy CN17.

7 The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the Construction Environmental Management Plan approved pursuant to the discharge of condition 10 of planning permission ref. 18/01874/DIS (discharge of condition ref. 18/01874/DIS), in the interests of ensuring a satisfactory form of development and to comply with policies EN1, B2 and T14 of the UDP.

8 In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified, all works within the affected part of the site shall cease until an investigation and risk assessment and, when remediation is necessary, an appropriate remediation scheme have been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority and any necessary remediation is carried out in accordance with the approved details.

The abovementioned is required in order to ensure that risks from land contamination to future users of the land, neighbouring land, controlled waters and ecological systems are minimised and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors, in accordance with policy EN14 of the Unitary Development Plan and paragraph 178 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

9 Prior to the use of the AGPs hereby approved commencing, a Noise Management Plan shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for their written approval. The Noise Management Plan, which should detail measures designed to prevent disturbance to local residents resulting from the approved development, shall include undertakings and procedures for:

An on-site supervisor responsible for the behaviour of patrons of the sports facility and for liaison with local residents;

The control and use of outside areas;

The recording of complaints and response to those complaints;

The annual review of the approved Noise Management Plan and, if necessary, the submission and approval of a revised Noise Management Plan.

The approved Noise Management Plan shall be followed and/or implemented at all times for the lifetime of the development, in order to minimise the risk of noise leading to harm to amenity and to comply with the requirements of paragraph 123 of the NPPF and policy EN5 of the UDP.

10 Amplified music shall not be played within the interior of the pavilion building unless a Noise Management Plan has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. For the avoidance of doubt the management plan will be expected to contain details of the procedures and mitigation measures to be put into place as required to minimise harm to the amenity of the nearest noise-sensitive properties. At all times thereafter the Noise Management Plan shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details in the interests of limiting noise pollution and to comply with paragraph 123 of the NPPF and policy EN5 of the Unitary Development Plan.

11 Within 3 months of the use of the AGPs hereby approved commencing, a validating noise monitoring and assessment exercise shall be undertaken and submitted to the City Council, as

Local Planning Authority, for its written approval. The assessment shall validate the predicted levels of noise in respect of the use of the AGPs and car park activity. In the event the noise levels predicted by the Noise Assessments (prepared by Acoustic Consultants Ltd, December 2017) submitted with the application are exceeded, the assessment shall include details of suggested additional means of attenuation/ mitigation for the consideration and written approval of the City Council. The approved attenuation/ mitigation measures must be in place within one month of obtaining written approval and shall be maintained thereafter for the lifetime of the approved use, in the interests of minimising noise from operations at the site and to comply with the requirements of policy EN5 of the adopted UDP and paragraph 123 of the NPPF.

12 The use of the extended pavilion building hereby approved shall not be carried out outside the hours of 09:00 - 22:45 Monday to Sunday, inclusive of Bank Holidays, in order to safeguard the amenity of nearby occupiers and to accord with the core principles of the NPPF and UDP policies B2 and EN5.

13 The floodlighting to the AGPs hereby approved shall not remain operational outside the hours of 09:00 - 22:00, in the interests of minimising intrusion from artificial lighting at the site and to comply with the requirements of the core principles of the NPPF and policies EN1 and B2 of the UDP.

14 All plant and machinery to the extended pavilion building shall be installed in accordance with the details approved pursuant to the discharge of condition 20 of planning permission ref. 17/02294/LP3 (discharge of condition ref. 19/00781/DIS), in order to protect the amenity of the area and to comply with policy EN5 and B2 of the adopted UDP and the NPPF.