

**At a Meeting of the DEVELOPMENT CONTROL (SOUTH SUNDERLAND)
SUB-COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on MONDAY, 26th NOVEMBER,
2018 at 4.00 p.m.**

Present:-

Councillor Galbraith in the Chair

Councillors M. Dixon, English, Hodson, Jackson, Mordey, Mullen, Porthouse, Scullion, Waller and A. Wilson

Declarations of Interest

18/00474/FUL – Herrington Gate Lodge, Durham Road, Sunderland, SR3 3RJ

Councillor English made an open declaration that he was no relation to the applicants Mr and Mrs English.

Councillor Porthouse declared that he had sent emails in July 2017, prior to the formation of the Save West Park group, to the Members Steering Group, which had registered Ward Members objections to the development on West Park; he did not feel that it would be appropriate for him to be involved in the determination of the application under consideration today given its nature and proximity to West Park and as such withdrew from the meeting during the consideration of this matter.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors D. Dixon, Essl, Scaplehorn, P. Smith and Watson.

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

The Executive Director of Economy and Place submitted a report (copy circulated) relating to the South Sunderland area, copies of which had been forwarded to each Member of the Council, upon applications made under the Town and Country Planning Acts and Regulations made thereunder.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

**17/01809/OUT – Outline planning permission with all matters reserved for the demolition of existing social club and redevelopment for residential accommodation (Use Class C3) (up to 20 units)
Farrington Social Club and Institute Limited, Anthony Road, Sunderland, SR3 3HG**

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

Councillor M. Dixon queried whether there would be any restrictions on the age of occupiers; for example being restricted to over 55s only; and also asked where the section 106 monies for play provision were likely to be spent. The representative of the Executive Director of Economy and Place advised that there had been no information on prospective occupiers provided with the only information available being that there would be 20 residential units with two for social rent. Regarding the play provision a site within the ward would be sought and the preference was for the play areas closest to the development site to be the recipients of the improvements.

Councillor Porthouse commented that there was a play area next to the site which could benefit from receiving the Section 106 monies. He welcomed the development; the club had a long history and used to be very popular however the changing times had seen its use decline until the eventual closure; there had been complaints about vermin and rubbish on the site and it was good to see that the site had been cleaned up.

The Chairman then put the officer's recommendation to the Committee and it was:-

1. RESOLVED that the application be approved for the reasons set out in the report subject to the 13 conditions set out therein and subject to the signing of the section 106 agreement.

**18/00474/FUL – Change of use from residential (C3) for use as pre school play centre (D1) to include two single storey extensions, provision of car parking and associated tree works.
Herrington Gate Lodge, Durham Road, Sunderland, SR3 3RJ**

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

Councillor Hodson queried whether the proposal would be considered acceptable if it had been a lower impact development and whether the use of a temporary structure had been considered. The representative of the Executive Director of Economy and Place advised that there were concerns over the amount of new build extensions proposed and also the impact of the proposal on the greenbelt; there had not been any consideration of the use of temporary structures.

The Chairman then introduced the applicant, Mrs Sarah English, who was in attendance to speak in support of her application. Mrs English thanked Members for undertaking a site visit to see the application site; she hoped that this would have

answered Members questions about how the development would impact on the greenbelt. The extension to the building would be located on what was currently the gravel driveway and as such there would be no damage done to trees or their roots by the extensions. There would be work done with the architect to ensure that there would be measures put in place to protect the trees. There had not been any objections to the proposal from the community but there had been overwhelming support; there had been 8 letters of support submitted and there had been 56 positive comments about the application on the Friends of West Park Facebook page. There would be steps taken to ensure that any harm from the development would be minimised and the benefits of the proposal would outweigh any harm that may occur. It was not an extravagant extension being just enough to allow the building to accommodate the children; she wanted the facility to be small. It was a very different proposal to building large numbers of new houses on an open area of greenbelt. She wanted children to be able to experience the natural environment of the greenbelt. It was intended to be a small safe, warm and welcoming place for children to play and there would be a small space available for parents to wait.

Councillor Hodson commented that the special circumstances for development in the greenbelt being acceptable were subjective and that in this case, having looked at the application, he felt that there would be no harm caused to the amenity of the park or to the trees and that the proposal could not be considered as urban sprawl. There had not been any highways concerns raised and there appeared to be genuine local support for the application. He queried whether there was any scope for Members to be able to approve the application. The representative of the Executive Director of Economy and Place advised that in planning terms any development in the greenbelt was considered to be inappropriate and harmful to the greenbelt; there were some exceptions for developments related to forestry and agriculture. The extension to the existing building was 50percent of the original size of the building and as such was considered to be disproportionate in size. it was up to Members to consider whether they felt that there were exceptional circumstances to justify development within the greenbelt; officers did not feel that there were such circumstances and the absence of a facility of this type in the area was not enough to justify development within the greenbelt.

Councillor Mordey expressed his surprise that the application had still been recommended for refusal given that there would be no harm to the trees and the building would be on what was currently a gravel driveway and that the application was just for a small play facility. He queried whether there was a formal definition of harmful to the greenbelt. The representative of the Executive Director of Economy and Place advised that there was no definition of harm set out in any of the adopted policies however there was no requirement to identify the nature of the harm; the default position was that any development in the greenbelt was harmful to the greenbelt and that special circumstances for why the development should be allowed needed to be shown.

Councillor Jackson commented that the applicant had put forward a good case that the development would allow for the increased use and appreciation of the greenbelt.

Councillor Mordey commented that Members needed to listen to the opinions of local residents and that it was clear that there was public support for this application.

Councillor English commented that the applicant was clearly passionate about the proposal. Normally he would be against any development in the greenbelt however he felt that this was an unusual case which would not cause any harm to the greenbelt. Councillor English, seconded by Councillor Mordey, then moved that the application should be approved.

The Committee's Solicitor then advised Members of the process for where an alternate decision had been moved and asked Councillors English and Mordey to identify the reasons for their alternate motion and also to confirm whether they were happy for Officers to develop a suite of conditions to be attached to any permission granted. Councillor English stated that he felt that it was subjective as to whether harm would be caused and that in his opinion he did not feel that there would be harm caused by the development; he agreed that officers should be allowed to attach an appropriate set of conditions to any consent granted. Councillor Mordey added that the building was to be on the gravel driveway so there would be no impact on the trees and that he felt that it was a proportionate extension.

Councillor M. Dixon queried whether there would be a precedent set by approving this application and the representative of the Executive Director of Economy and Place advised that there would not be a precedent set as any approval of this application would be due to Members considering that there were exceptional circumstances; any other applications for development in the greenbelt would be considered on their own merits and whether there were exceptional circumstances would need to be considered in each case.

The Chairman commented that this was a good business idea however he was concerned that it was the wrong location; he then put the motion to approve the application to the Committee and with:-

9 Members voting for the approval; and

1 Member abstaining;

It was:-

2. RESOLVED that the application be approved as it was considered that the development would not harm the greenbelt and that the proposed extension was proportionate to the existing building and that there would be no trees harmed by the development; Officers were to be given the authority to develop a suite of conditions to be attached to the consent.

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

(Signed) I. GALBRAITH,
Chairman.