

At a meeting of the PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE held in COMMITTEE ROOM 2 on WEDNESDAY, 19th JUNE, 2018 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Scullion in the Chair

Councillors Bell, M. Dixon, English, Francis, I. Galbraith, Haswell, Hodson, Jackson, Mordey, Mullen, Porthouse, Scaplehorn, P. Smith and P. Walker

Declarations of Interest

Bishopwearmouth Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

Councillor Hodson declared that the conservation area was within his ward and he had met with officers during the drafting of the document.

Councillor Jackson declared that she was a member of the Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee, which had considered the report, and she had raised comments at that meeting.

Councillor M. Dixon also declared that he was a member of the Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee, which had considered the report.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Essl, Johnston, Lauchlan, Turner and D. Wilson.

Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 18th April, 2018 and of the extraordinary meeting held on 24th May, 2018

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 18th April, 2018 and of the extraordinary meeting held on 24th May, 2018 be confirmed and signed as correct records.

Report of the meeting of the Development Control (South Sunderland) Sub Committee held on 26th April, 2018

The report of the meeting of the Development Control (South Sunderland) Sub-Committee held on 26th April, 2018 (copy circulated) was submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Councillor P. Smith advised that she had submitted her apologies for this meeting and asked that they be included.

2. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Report of the meeting of the Development Control (North Sunderland) Sub Committee held on 24th April, 2018

The report of the meeting of the Development Control (North Sunderland) Sub-Committee held on 24th April, 2018 (copy circulated) was submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Councillor Francis stated that he had spoken about design standards at this meeting however his comments had not been included in the minutes.

Councillor Scaplehorn stated that he had been in attendance at this meeting.

3. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Report of the meeting of the Development Control (Hetton, Houghton and Washington) Sub Committee held on 24th April, 2018

The report of the meeting of the Development Control (Hetton, Houghton and Washington) Sub-Committee held on 24th April, 2018 (copy circulated) was submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

4. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Bishopwearmouth Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

The Head of Planning and Regeneration submitted a report (copy circulated) which updated Members on the revised Bishopwearmouth Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan which would replace the 2007 Bishopwearmouth Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management

Strategy which was currently adopted planning guidance and would be considered for re-adoption by Cabinet at the meeting on 20th June 2018.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Mark Taylor, Principal Heritage Protection Officer and Judith Miller, Bishopwearmouth Townscape Heritage Project Officer presented the report and advised Members of the consultation that had been undertaken and the changes the new plan would introduce including the changes to the boundary of the conservation area.

Councillor Hodson congratulated officers for all of their hard work and thanked them for the consultation that had been undertaken. He was pleased to see that there would be improvements to signage and repairs carried out to buildings in the area; there was a lot of work needed to be done to the stonework on some of the buildings to ensure that it was preserved. He expressed his praise for the relationship that had been developed with local businesses. The interpretation panels would be important features so he hoped that they would be in prominent places. He welcomed the boundary changes which saw the inclusion of Keel Square into the conservation area and asked why the Crowtree Leisure Centre site was not included considering that there would be redevelopment of the site over the coming years and including it within the conservation area would allow more control over the redevelopment of the site. He referred to the information on the Crowtree site which was still based around the Next store proposals which were not set in stone; he questioned whether the Council should be banking on this development taking place and also whether the proposal fit in with the aspirations for the area. He also questioned what powers there were to protect the heritage of the conservation area and ensure that developments were sympathetic given that there had been developments such as the Travelodge within the conservation area. It was pleasing to see that there were proposals to bring the Town Park into more public use although he was concerned that the green was tucked away forgotten and that the proposals did not appear to improve on this.

Ms Miller replied that the boundary had been set following consultation with the civic society, who had raised concerns which had now been addressed, and in accordance with best practice which stated that only buildings which contributed positively to the area should be included within the boundary and that Crowtree Leisure Centre did not have a positive contribution to the physical appearance of the area. The effects of proposed developments on the conservation area were considered even if they were outside of the conservation area. There was a live planning permission for the Next store and it was known that discussions were taking place around this. There were discussions taking place around the future of the remaining leisure centre building. Advice on town parks had been received from the heritage lottery fund. The conservation area would ensure that there was control over any demolition work within the area and would give the council more control when considering planning applications. Mr Taylor added that the new document would strengthen the existing conservation area.

Councillor Hodson then queried the flexibility of the use of the area and Ms Miller advised that the atmosphere of the area was being looked at as was the future of the Crowtree Leisure Centre building. There was a need to ensure that the surfacing would create a flow through the area. There would be further public consultation undertaken in addition to the two rounds of consultation that had already taken place. Mr Taylor stated that the architects had recognised that the town park was underutilised and measures were being developed to make this area more attractive to visitors. The current pathways would be removed and new paths installed. Ms Miller stated that one of the proposals involved the strengthening of the ring feature around the park as this was a historic feature of the park; it had been suggested that the park be used as a quiet area. The whole green space in this area had been designated as a village green.

Councillor M. Dixon stated that there were a large number of, often elderly, people who would travel across the green space at night when walking from the Empire to the car park at Debenhams; he wanted assurances that there would still be a safe walking route for people to use at night. Ms Miller advised that this had been taken into consideration and the site was not proposed to be used as an entertaining space; any potential misuse was intended to be designed out of the site and this included the improvement of lighting and the widening of the steps to ensure that the site was less isolated.

Councillor Jackson expressed concerns that residents of the North area of Sunderland were cut off from the Minster Quarter by a lack of bus provision into the quarter from the north of the river.

Councillor English commented that it was fantastic to see these plans which would help to bring this site back into use. He queried whether there were any plans to include a sensory garden within the park. Ms Miller advised that this was being looked at in association with the Minster; there would be contrasting colours of planting and improvements to the disabled access to the site.

Councillor Haswell welcomed the plans which would bring this underutilised area back into use. He felt that the plans to improve the steps were vital as these were not pleasant at night. He queried why the conservation area did not include Derwent and Olive Streets and also asked whether there had been any work done in conjunction with the Travelodge as their boundary planting was in a deteriorating condition. Ms Miller stated that a review of the wider area had been undertaken and that it had not been considered appropriate to include Derwent and Olive Streets within the conservation area as they did not have sufficient historic value to be included within the conservation area. The maintenance of the planting around the Travelodge was likely to be covered by a condition on the original planning permission for the hotel.

Councillor Haswell then asked whether Derwent and Olive Streets were originally low quality when built or whether they had been allowed to

deteriorate; Ms Miller stated that it was a bit of both; they were not of high architectural quality. Funding was available for the northern part of the conservation area only. Mr Taylor added that there were no conservation controls in place on Derwent and Olive Streets and that there was a need to be selective with what was included in the conservation area.

Councillor Porthouse also welcomed the plans; he felt that it was good to see that the boundary was being extended and commented that it would have been good to see Derwent and Olive Streets included. He fully endorsed the plans.

Councillor Mordey stated that he believed that Derwent and Olive Streets were included within the Holmeside Masterplan.

The Chairman commented that it was good to see such ambitious plans and it was also good to hear such positive comments from Members.

5. RESOLVED that the report be given consideration and Members comments be noted.

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

(Signed) A. SCULLION
 (Chairman)