

At a meeting of the PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS (WEST) COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre on TUESDAY 30th NOVEMBER, 2021 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Thornton in the Chair.

Councillors Blackett, Fagan, Lauchlan, G. Miller, Peacock, and Price.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Donaghy and Warne.

Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on Tuesday 2nd November 2021.

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on Tuesday 2nd November, 2021 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

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

The Executive Director of City Development submitted a report and circulatory report (copies circulated), which related to the West area of the City, copies of which had also been forwarded to each Member of the Council, upon applications made under the Town and Country Planning Acts and Regulations made thereunder.

(for copy reports – see original minutes)

20/01591/FU4 – Erection of retail units (within Use Class E) and petrol filling station (Sui Generis) with new vehicular access, parking, servicing areas and landscaping. Former Houghton Colliery, Newbottle Street, Houghton-le-Spring

The Planning Officer representing the Executive Director of City Development outlined the proposal to Members of the Committee and the relevant material planning considerations against which the application had been assessed.

Councillor Blackett referred to the comments of the Tyne and Wear County Archaeologist on page 13 of the report with regards to the Anglo Saxon holy well and advised that Durham University had a project ongoing which mapped holy wells across the region, therefore requested if officers or the developer could make contact with the university on this.

The Planning Officer advised that if Councillor Blackett could send him the details he would liaise with the developer over this.

The Chairman introduced Mr Forbes, who wished to speak in objection to the proposal. Mr Forbes informed the Committee that he believed this application to be a monumental, catastrophic error of judgement and that a previous application in the area had been rejected due to being detrimental to the location.

Mr Forbes commented that this development would destroy two acres of trees, impinged on wildlife, affecting bats which were a rare and endangered species.

The service road would be the A182 which was a main road that already had a family run petrol station and there was no demand for a second petrol station. The road could not cope with the additional heavy vehicles this proposal would bring.

Mr Forbes commented that this site had the landfill site across the road, which he believed was a toxic site and a death sentence for the people of Houghton and whilst the proposal would create 100 jobs, would anyone wish for a family member to have to work in those kind of conditions.

Mr Forbes also commented that the application had no substance as retail as we knew it was dead, it breached Council policy on climate change by destroying nearly 2000 trees and in the interest of public safety he urged the Committee to reject this application.

The Chairman introduced Gavin Caldwell-Smith of Lichfields, who wished to speak on behalf of the applicant. Mr Caldwell-Smith advised that the applicant was a locally based business who were pleased to hopefully help regenerate a derelict site that would attract and retain shoppers that would be beneficial to Houghton Town Centre.

Mr Caldwell-Smith commented that despite a difficult 2 years due to Covid they had attracted two key operators to the scheme and would deliver 100 full/part time jobs along with the Construction jobs.

Councillor Lauchlan commented that he felt this was a good scheme that would be beneficial to Houghton and hoped that the Supermarket provider would follow through with their plans this time.

The Chairman enquired if this application were to be approved, what the timescales would be for the supermarket to be on site. Mr Caldwell-Smith

advised that if approval was successful, there were pre commencement conditions to discharge first but it was hoped to start work in spring 2022 with the aim to open in 2023.

Members having fully considered the report, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that Members be MINDED TO GRANT CONSENT under Regulation 4 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992, subject to the 30 conditions contained within the circulatory report and any additional or revised conditions required following the conclusion of discussions with the Environment Agency.

21/02343/LP3 – Change of use of ground maintenance storage area to provide extension to existing café. Works to include new kitchen/server, entrances and seating area. External alterations to include new windows and enlarged terrace area for seating. Herrington Country Park Café, Herrington Country Park, Chester Road, Penshaw, Sunderland

The Planning Officer representing the Executive Director of City Development outlined the proposal to Members of the Committee and the relevant material planning considerations against which the application had been assessed.

3. RESOLVED that consent be granted under Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992, subject to the two conditions contained within the report

21/02381/FUL – Installation and operation of a 20.0MWp Solar Farm, together with all the associated works, equipment and necessary infrastructure. Nissan Motor Manufacturing (UK) Limited, Washington Road, Usworth, Sunderland, SR5 3NS

The Planning Officer representing the Executive Director of City Development outlined the proposal to Members of the Committee and the relevant material planning considerations against which the application had been assessed.

In response to Councillor Lauchlan's query over a previous scheme having been refused in the area, the Planning Officer advised that the proposal in question had been located in green belt land and had been deemed an inappropriate development.

In response to Councillor Peacock's query, the Planning Officer advised that the finished ground of the proposal would be natural grass land.

4. RESOLVED that Members approved the application for the reasons set out within the main report and subject to the 24 conditions listed therein.

Items for Information

Members gave consideration to the items for information contained within the matrix (agenda pages 92-98).

5. RESOLVED that the items for information as set out in the matrix be received and noted;

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

(Signed) M. THORNTON,
(Chairman)