

At a meeting of the PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, CITY HALL on MONDAY 5th JANUARY 2026 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Chisnall in the Chair.

Councillors Dixon, Foster, Haswell, Herron, Scott, and Wood.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G. Miller and D.E. Snowdon.

Minutes of the last Ordinary meeting of the Planning and Highways Committee held on 24th November, 2025 and of the extraordinary meeting held on 15th December 2025

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last ordinary meeting of the Committee held on 24th November, 2025 and of the extraordinary meeting held on 15th December 2025 be confirmed and signed as correct records.

Planning Application 24/02600/FUL – Extensions to front of hotel to provide new spa and pool development, to include first floor gym, spa bar and terrace, works will also include a new external spa garden. George Washington Hotel, Stone Cellar Road, Usworth, Washington, NE37 1PH

The Executive Director of Economy and Place submitted a report (copy circulated) in respect of the above matter.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

The representative of the Executive Director of Economy and Place presented the report advising the Committee of key issues to consider in determining the application.

The Chairperson thanked the Officer for their report and invited questions of the Officer from Members.

Councillor Dixon referred to the noise assessment which had been undertaken and asked why there had not been a further assessment given that the monitoring equipment had been removed during the assessment period. The representative of the Executive Director of Economy and Place advised that information had been received that the equipment had been mistakenly removed by staff however this was at a time when the background noise levels were likely to be at their highest and as such the findings of the assessment were based on only times when the background noise levels were lower which was in effect the worst case scenario for the impact of the proposals on noise levels as at the time the equipment was removed the impact from the proposals on noise levels would be at its lowest.

There being no further questions or comments the Chairperson put the officer's recommendation, set out in the report, to the Committee and it was:-

2. RESOLVED that Members be MINDED to APPROVE the application subject to the draft conditions set out in the report and the satisfactory completion of a Section 106 legal agreement to secure the biodiversity net gain monitoring fee

OR

If the legal agreement has not been satisfactorily completed by 31.03.2026 then REFUSE planning permission for the reason below:

There does not exist a mechanism to provide the relevant planning obligation required to mitigate the impact of the proposed development and make it acceptable in planning terms, namely, to secure a monitoring fee to ensure the delivery and maintenance of significant ecological enhancements to provide Biodiversity Net Gains.

Reason: In the absence of such planning obligations being provided, the proposed development would be contrary to Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended), and policy NE2 and Policy ID2 (planning obligations) of the adopted Core Strategy and Development Plan (2015-2033).

Items for information

Members gave consideration to the items for information contained within the matrix.

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

The Chairperson then closed the meeting having thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions.

(Signed) A. CHISNALL
(Chairperson)