

At a meeting of the PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on TUESDAY 28th September, 2010 at 5.00 p.m.

Present: -

Councillor P. Watson in the Chair

Councillors Ball, Charlton, Copeland, Ellis, Fletcher, M. Forbes, E. Gibson, Howe, Miller, O'Connor, Old, Padgett, Scaplehorn, J. Scott, Snowdon, Tate, Wood and A. Wright.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Francis, G. Hall, Miller and Tye.

In the absence of both the Chair and Vice Chair, Councillor P. Watson was appointed by the Committee to act as Chair for the Meeting.

Minutes of the Last Ordinary Minutes of the Committee held on 20th July, 2010 and of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 3rd August, 2010

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on 20th July, 2010 and of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 3rd August, 2010 be confirmed and signed as a correct record subject to the deletion of Councillor Wood as being present.

Report of the meeting of the Development Control (North Sunderland) Sub Committee held on 31st August, 2010

The report of the (copy circulated) was submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

2. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

**Report of the meetings of the Development Control (South Sunderland)
Sub Committee held on 27th July, 2010 and 17th August, 2010**

The report of the meetings of the Development Control (Hetton, Houghton and Washington) Sub-Committee held on 27th July, 2010 and 17th August, 2010 (copy circulated) was submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

3. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

**Report of the meetings of the Development Control (Hetton, Houghton,
Washington) Sub Committee held on 17th August, 2010 and 7th
September, 2010**

The report of the meetings of the Development Control (Hetton, Houghton and Washington) Sub-Committee held on 17th August, 2010 and 7th September, 2010 (copy circulated) was submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

4. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

**Report for Information : Planning Application for Sunderland Retail Park
– Mountview Securities – Ref No. 08/03336/OUT**

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) for Members information on the current position in respect of the outline planning application submitted on behalf of Mountview Securities for Sunderland Retail Park, Newcastle Road, Sunderland.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr Keith Lowes, Head of Planning presented the report and informed the Committee that the report had been submitted for Members information. Members had at this stage the opportunity to ask questions of fact in respect of the application. Mr. Lowes advised that the Committee should not express any views on the application or a preference for or against the proposal at this stage in the absence of a detailed report otherwise they may disqualify themselves from voting on the application when it was considered for decision.

Mr Lowes advised Members that if they considered it appropriate, they could undertake a site visit on Friday 1st October in the afternoon.

Mr Mattok took Members through the application proposals which are for:-

1).The demolition of the majority of the buildings on the Sunderland Retail Park, apart from the McDonalds restaurant, the Farmfoods/Blockbuster unit and the most northerly of the existing five units in the south-east corner of the site.

2).Construction of a superstore of 16,140 sq m. gross external area, 8,378 sq m. net retail area. This would be a large two storey building 13.5 metres high, located on the northern part of the site. The retail area would be at first floor level, accessed by travelators, with undercroft car parking and adjoining surface level car parking. It would front Newcastle Road with servicing to the rear accessed from Portobello Lane near its junction with Fulwell Road. Additional restricted emergency/service access is also proposed from the northern end of Portobello Road currently affected by an Extinguishment of Vehicular Rights order.

3).The retention and recladding of the Farmfoods/Blockbuster unit (593 sq m. gross external area, 474 sq m. net).

4). The retention and recladding of the most northerly of the five units in the south east corner of the park, referred to at 1) above (1,168 sq m. gross external area 934 sq m. net).

5). The construction of 4 smaller retail units (2,661 sq m. gross external area, 2,129 sq m. net retail area). These would be single storey units located in the south-east corner of the retail park, on the site of units to be demolished and attached to the unit referred to at 4) above. These would be serviced from Fulwell Road.

6). The McDonalds restaurant was to be retained on its existing site.

7). 900 parking spaces, including 45 disabled and 28 parent and child bays are proposed to serve the entire development. These would be located at ground floor level throughout the site, including beneath the superstore.

The landowner, Mountview Securities, have indicated that their preferred operator for the superstore is Tesco Stores Ltd and that the smaller units are likely initially to be occupied by some of the existing occupants of the retail park.

Councillor Wood requested more information in relation to the highways issues and also enquired whether access from the Stadium of Light metro station would be improved as it was not good currently.

In response to the second query, Mr Mattok advised that at the moment the proposal was to include a new ramp from the northern platform to the application site.

Mr Mattok advised that the main access to the site was to be taken from Newcastle Road with other pedestrian and vehicular accesses from Portobello Lane (near its junction with Fulwell Road), Roker Avenue and Shore Street.

The applicant intended to fund and implement a slightly enhanced version of the City Council designed major highway improvement scheme for the adjoining Wheatsheaf gyratory. Bus stops, bus shelters and bus laybys adjacent to the site at Newcastle Rd and Roker Avenue would be created. There were also proposals for a signal controlled pedestrian crossing at Roker Avenue or full traffic lights incorporating pedestrian phases in the vicinity of Shore Street/George Street North.

In response to a question from the Chairman, Mr Mattok confirmed that an additional crossing would not affect the flow of traffic.

5. RESOLVED that

- i) the Committee accept the report for information with a view to bringing a report to determine the application to a special meeting of the Committee currently programmed to be 5th October.
- ii) Members undertake a site visit on 1st October.

Economic Viability of Affordable Housing Requirements

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and the Director of Health, Housing and Adult Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to inform the Committee of the findings of a report which considers the economic viability of securing affordable housing in the city.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr Neil Cole, Planning Policy Officer and Mr Martin Bewick, Strategy Co-ordinator, Housing Service, were in attendance to present the report which would form part of the evidence base of the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy.

In response to a question from the Chairman, Mr. Cole advised that affordable housing and social housing were effectively the same.

The Chairman referred to the Economic Viability Report which suggested that an initial target of 10% provision of affordable housing should be sought on all housing sites and applied city-wide whereby national planning guidance-Housing, recommends a minimum site size of 15 dwellings as a site threshold and stated that this could still lead to a considerable amount of housing that was still not affordable. He felt that there needed to be greater flexibility.

Mr Cole advised that the 10% target would apply to the entire housing development if it exceeds the minimum threshold of 15 houses, so for example if planning permission was sought for 20 houses, 2 would need to be

affordable. If necessary a developer would have to find an appropriate site nearby to meet the affordable housing provision if it could not be provided on site.

With regards to the SHMA conclusion that from 2007/8 to 2011/12 the city has an annual gross shortfall of 388 affordable dwellings, Councillor M. Forbes queried how this number had been reached as it did not appear to correspond with waiting list numbers. She enquired who had carried out the assessment, when it had been undertaken and the basis of the assessment.. Councillor Forbes also questioned whether the figure took into account that fewer mortgages were now available.

Mr Martin Bewick, Strategy Co-ordinator, Housing Service advised that the consultation was undertaken by consultants Arc4 in 2008 in which they had looked at waiting list figures and sent out numerous questionnaires to relevant parties. Housing need was looked at and was offset against Gentoo activity and property numbers in the city.

In response to a request from Councillor M. Forbes, Mr Bewick agreed to find out current waiting list numbers and the number of Gentoo properties that had been demolished since the stock transfer.

Councillor Copeland commented that Gentoo still appeared to be the main provider of social housing and there seemed to be an over reliance on them for affordable housing provision.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Ellis regarding population trends, Mr Cole advised that mid year figures were suggesting an increase in population in Sunderland of approximately 7,000 by 2029. However this figure needed closer examination as the weighting was based on international in-migration.

The Chairman commented that the figure appeared to be very small and Mr Cole advised that there was a need to try to address the reasons for outward migration particularly amongst the working age population.

In response to a question from Councillor Snowdon regarding how often the target for provision of affordable housing was reviewed, Mr Cole advised that this occurred on an annual basis.

Councillor E. Gibson commented that the shared ownership schemes across the city had been very successful and offering such tenure type gave greater opportunity to live in an affordable home.

6. RESOLVED that the Committee note the contents of the Economic Viability of Affordable Housing report so that it can be used:-

- a) as part of the evidence base to inform the emerging Local Development Framework, and
- b) as a material consideration in determining planning applications for housing proposals.

Government's Amendments to Planning Policy Statement 3 – Housing (PPS3) and Implications for the Planning System

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to inform the committee of the recent ministerial statement (9 June 2010) announcing the reissue of Planning Policy Statement 3 – Housing (PPS3) with the following amendments:

- the definition of previously developed (or brownfield) land in Annex B now excludes private residential gardens and
- the national indicative minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare is deleted from paragraph 47.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr Neil Cole presented the report.

Having thanked Mr Cole for his report it was:-

7. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be received and noted.

Durham County Council Local Development Framework Issues and Options Core Strategy Response to Consultation

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which highlighted specific issues arising from Durham County Council's draft Core Strategy that will be of significance to the future development of Sunderland. An interim officer response had already been forwarded to the County Council to meet the consultation deadline.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr Neil Cole presented the report and advised that Durham County Council has published its Core Strategy Issues and Options document as part of its emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) for consultation. As a neighbouring authority, Sunderland City Council is a statutory consultee and as such has been invited to comment. The closing date for comments was the 8th August. A holding letter from the Head of Planning and Environment was submitted by this deadline setting out a provisional response to the consultation pending formal consideration by this Committee.

Councillor M. Forbes enquired whether there were statistics in relation to the numbers of people migrating in and out of the City and the reasons behind them moving out.

Mr Cole agreed to find out the information and advised that when people had been previously interviewed regarding their reasons for leaving, a predominant motive had been that they could not find the right sort of housing in Sunderland.

Councillor Tate referred to the previous Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) in relation to Hetton-le-Hole and Houghton-le-Spring which had previously sought to retain them as Regeneration Towns where only indigenous growth could occur. He was concerned that people would seek to move away from these areas to Durham if more housing was built there.

Mr Cole advised that the RSS had allowed for sustainable growth. The net housing requirements for County Durham were guideline figures only.

Having thanked Mr Cole for his report it was:-

8. RESOLVED that the Committee:
 - i) Endorse the officer's comments as detailed within the report;
 - ii) Authorise officers to forward a copy of this report to Durham County Council as the City Council's formal response to their Core Strategy.

Consultation from Neighbouring Councils on Planning Applications

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to seek the Committee's agreement to responses about to be made to consultations from neighbouring Councils about planning applications affecting sites close to the common boundary with the City of Sunderland.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr Mike Mattok presented the report and advised that where the Council is consulted by a neighbouring authority on a planning application in their area but which may have an impact on Sunderland's interests, the approval of the Planning and Highways Committee is obtained to agree the form of the proposed response.

Sunderland City Council had recently been consulted by Gateshead Council and Durham County Council (Easington Area) on 2 planning applications, each of which Mr Mattok detailed in turn.

9. RESOLVED that the Committee:
 - i) agree the officer's comments outlined in the report which will be sent to Gateshead Council in relation to application no. DC/10/00757/ADV.

- ii) agree the officer's comments outlined in the report which will be sent to Durham County Council in relation to application no. PL/5/2010/0366.

Building Control Revised Scheme of Charges

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to Inform the Committee of changes to legislation relating to building control charges.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr Barry Coe was in attendance to present the report.

He advised that Building Control operates within a competitive and free market which differs from that of other local authority services. Members of the public who require a building control service may take their custom to a private building control service at any time.

The Chairman queried how the cost of the fees was decided and was advised that the Tyne and Wear authorities met to discuss and agree consistent pricing arrangements.

In response to a question from Councillor A. Wright regarding previous competition between authorities, Mr Coe advised that the new partnering scheme allowed for Partner Companies to choose their Partner Building Control Authority as the contact for the submission of all building regulations applications throughout England and Wales. Sunderland was signed up to some major architects. Mr Coe confirmed that, for example, a Sunderland based developer could go to Newcastle Building Control as long as they were signed up as a partner with them and similarly developers outside the Sunderland area partnered with Sunderland Building Control services.

10. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be received and noted.

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

(Signed) P. Tye
Chairman.