

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Development Management Committee on Monday, 6 June 2022 at Civic Suite - Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors S. Hill (Chair), Leck (Vice-Chair), Abbott, J. Bradshaw, Carlin, A. Lowe, Polhill, Thompson and Woolfall

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Hutchinson and Philbin

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: A. Jones, T. Gibbs, A. Plant, J. Eaton, G. Henry and L. Wilson-Lagan

Also in attendance: 22 Members of the public and one member of the press

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE COMMITTEE

		<i>Action</i>
DEV1	MINUTES The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2022, having been circulated, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
DEV2	PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO BE DETERMINED BY THE COMMITTEE The Committee considered the following applications for planning permission and, in accordance with its powers and duties, made the decisions described below.	
DEV3	21/00016/OUT - OUTLINE APPLICATION, WITH ALL MATTERS OTHER THAN ACCESS RESERVED FOR THE ERECTION OF TWO SEMI-DETACHED DWELLINGS AND FOUR DETACHED DWELLINGS ON THE EXISTING CHURCH FIELD AND THE RETENTION OF THE EXISTING SCOUT HUT AT HOUGH GREEN SCOUT AND GUIDE GROUP HALL AND CHURCH FIELD, HALL AVENUE, WIDNES The consultation procedure undertaken was outlined in the report together with background information in respect of the site.	

This application was deferred at the Development Management Committee meeting on 9 May 2022, to allow for a site visit.

The Committee was addressed by local resident Bernard Carr, who spoke in objection to the proposal; he referred to the previous objections made by Mr Walker at the last meeting. He argued the following *inter alia*:

- The field has been used over the past 50 years until it was stopped by the applicant;
- Section 6 of the report should be scrutinised to see why the application should not be approved;
- The boundary of the proposal now included land that the scout hut was in;
- The application is not in accordance with the development plan;
- This green space had an important role in the community and is recognised as an asset of community value;
- The site was not surplus to requirements as claimed;
- He quoted planning policies HE4 and CS21 and said the application was contrary to these, so urged the Committee to refuse the application.

The Committee was addressed by Ms Eren, who spoke in support of the application. In response to comments made at the last meeting regarding monetary worth of the Church of England, she provided the monetary worth of the Scouts, stating that these facts aside, each Parish was an organisation in its own right. She also argued *inter alia*:

- The Church had owned the field for the past 90 years;
- The Scouts had only used the field since the 1950's;
- She clarified that the number of houses on the site was 6, not 10;
- The field would not be used going forward, regardless of the outcome tonight.

Members were then addressed by Janet Paul, who spoke in support of the application on behalf of the applicant. She clarified some issues regarding the background to the application, which was originally submitted in 2019 when the site was designated for residential development in the then UDP. She also stated:

- The plans were amended to retain the Scout hut, following recommendations from planning officers;
- She contradicted the comments that the field was

- used for recreational purposes;
- Only part of the field is used, and this was not throughout the year;
- The 204 objections received related to the first application submitted – this had now been amended and would have satisfied the objectors and their concerns; and
- They would use the proceeds from the sale for specific needs within the community.

She urged the Committee to consider the facts before making a decision.

In response to some of the comments made, Officers explained that the amendment to the plans was so that the existing Scout hut building would be retained; this would be secured by condition. It was also explained that although the application was made prior to the adoption of the new Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (DALP), it must be considered under the new DALP, not the previous Unitary Development Plan (UDP).

Members discussed the application and comments made by speakers and raised concerns over the fact that the application was a departure from the DALP. The proposed development would result in the loss of Greenspace as designated by the Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (DALP) Policies Map. This Greenspace has a Specific Greenspace Category of Amenity Greenspace. The Halton Open Space Study 2020 Quantitative Update is an evidence-based document to accompany the recently adopted DALP. This considered the supply of such sites on the basis of the Area Forum Areas which encompassed the former wards of Broadheath, Ditton, Hale and Hough Green rather than the community area affected by the proposals.

It was commented that there was not a significant concentration of Amenity Greenspace in this area and to the South of the major artery, which is Liverpool Road; the only other amenity greenspace sites were at Brackenwood Drive and Derwent Road. The site is considered to be multifunctional having been used ancillary to a longstanding community building (also located on the site) as well as being a satellite site to Hough Green Park and supporting biodiversity.

It was noted that the protected trees on the boundary of the site would remain, however this does not mitigate for the loss of the Amenity Greenspace. This site whilst not being publicly accessible was considered to have an

important visual and structural role to play particularly for the streetscene in this locality. The loss of the Amenity Greenspace would therefore have a detrimental impact on the visual amenity of this predominantly residential locality.

In conclusion, the Committee agreed that there is not considered to be a surplus of Amenity Greenspace in the recently created Bankfield Ward in which the site is located and to allow the proposal would be contrary to the provisions of Policies HE4, CS(R)18, CS(R)21 and GR2 of the DALP.

After taking into account these considerations the Committee agreed that the harm that would be caused with the loss of Amenity Greenspace in the area outweighed the need for the development. One Member moved a refusal, this was seconded and the Committee voted to refuse the application.

RESOLVED: That the application be refused, due to it being contrary to the provisions of Planning Policies HE4, CS(R)18, CS(R)21 and GR2 of the DALP.

Councillor Polhill declared an Other Registerable Interest in the following item as he had previously met with the applicant and the objectors. He did not participate in the debate or vote on the item.

DEV4 22/000020/FUL - PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE TO USE CLASS C2, EXTENSIONS AND ADAPTATIONS OF FORMER PUBLIC HOUSE TO PROVIDE TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION COMPRISING 5 NO. HOUSES, 5 NO. APARTMENTS AND 3 NO. STUDIOS AND WELFARE FACILITIES FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES AT THE CASTLE, 194 WARRINGTON ROAD, WIDNES, WA8 0AP

The consultation procedure undertaken was outlined in the report together with background information in respect of the site.

Members were referred to the published AB update list, which advised that an updated bat report had been received and observations from the Council's Ecological Advisor on this updated bat report were awaited.

The Committee was addressed by Mr Keirnan, who was a resident of Castle Street and spoke in objection to the proposal. He stated that:

- Work had already started on the site;
- Only the top four houses in the street received letters of consultation;

- He was concerned about the purpose of the building and who the occupants would be and wanted clarification on this;
- He was concerned that the occupants would contribute to anti-social behaviour and have mental health problems; and
- Parking was a concern as it was a one way street near a primary school and restaurants and was a very busy.

It was noted that the persons that would be residing in the properties was not material to the proposal's consideration.

In response to some of the comments, it was confirmed that the application was a proposed change of use to Use Class 2 and although this application was for dwellings providing temporary accommodation for families and individuals, other uses fell within this category. In relation to anti-social behaviour, there was no evidence that a certain 'type' of occupant was responsible for this. In relation to parking, as the building was previously a public house, it can be assumed that this generated a certain amount of traffic in the area. It was confirmed that the consultation letters were delivered in accordance with the regulations and that any works currently in progress on site were not known to the Council.

Members agreed that determination of the application be delegated to the Operational Director as described below and if approved, it be subject to the conditions listed.

RESOLVED: That authority be delegated to the Operational Director – Planning, Policy and Transportation, to determine the application in consultation with the Chair or Vice Chair of the Committee, following the satisfactory consideration of ecology issues including adding any additional conditions required to those listed below.

1. Time limit – full permission;
2. Approved plans;
3. Restriction on use;
4. Construction hours (GR2);
5. Implementation of external facing materials (CS(R)18 and GR1);
6. Submission of landscaping scheme and subsequent maintenance (GR1);
7. Information packs for residents (HE1 and CS(R)20);
8. Breeding birds protection (HE1 and CS(R)20);
9. Electric vehicle charging points scheme (C2);

10. Parking and servicing provision (C1 and C2);
11. Off-site highway works (C1);
12. Implementation of cycle parking scheme (C2);
13. Implementation of drainage strategy (CS23 and HE9);
14. Sustainable development and climate change scheme (CS(R)19);
15. On site waste management scheme (WM9); and
16. Site waste management plan (WM8).

Meeting ended at 7.40 p.m.