DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Development Control Committee on Monday, 8 April 2019 in the Boardroom - Municipal Building, Widnes

Present: Councillors Nolan (Chair), Morley (Vice-Chair), Carlin, R. Hignett, V. Hill, J. Lowe, June Roberts, Thompson, Woolfall and Zygadllo

Apologies for Absence: Councillor C. Plumpton Walsh

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: A. Jones, J. Tully, A. Plant and G. Henry

Also in attendance: Councillors Howard and E. Cargill and 4 members of the public

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE COMMITTEE

Action

DEV36 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2019, having been circulated, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

DEV37 PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO BE DETERMINED BY THE COMMITTEE

The Committee considered the following application for planning permission and, in accordance with its powers and duties, made the decision described below.

DEV38 - 17/00497/FUL - PROPOSED ERECTION OF TWO STOREY BLOCK CONTAINING 4 NO. ONE BEDROOM APARTMENTS IN REAR GARDEN OF 67 MAIN STREET, RUNCORN

It was noted that this application was deferred by the Development Control Committee on 5 March 2019, so that further clarification could be provided on the impacts of this development to the conservation area, and in particular, whether the proposal would be out of character in the conservation area. Consideration of the item was being treated as a new hearing and not a resumed hearing. This meant that representations by speakers could be repeated and the applicant could also speak. Additionally, any

Member not present at the last meeting of the Committee could take part in determining the matter.

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

Officers referred Members to the additional paragraphs to the existing report, highlighted in bold at the beginning of the report. Additionally, the site plans for two previous refusals of planning permission referred to in the last meeting by objectors, were included within the plans pack. It was noted that Members had received a full copy of the retained Conservation Advisor's advice; copies of which were available for members of the public in the public gallery.

Since the publication of the agenda, Officers advised that the concerns they had over certain design features had been addressed, so the amendments would be secured by conditions. They also confirmed that the applicant would retain control over the site to allow the development to be carried out. The reasons for site level and accessibility work not being justified on the site were noted.

The Committee was addressed by Mr Campbell, who represented a community group called *Friends of Halton Village*, objecting to the scheme. He had returned to the Committee to advise that *Friends of Halton Village* had read the updated statement from the Conservation Adviser and the group was still of the opinion that residents of Halton Village should be heard, as they were best placed to know if the development was in keeping with the Village. He insisted that the development would not add character to and was not in keeping with the Conservation Area status of Halton Village. In addition he argued that the plans were poor and questioned the need for this type of dwelling on the property market, in a village setting.

The Committee was then addressed by Mr Groves, who spoke on behalf of the applicant. He stated that the site was set back from the main road and would have no harmful impact on the Conservation Area. He argued that the issues raised were not material planning considerations; the plans were sound with all technical requirements met; and made reference to alterations already made to surrounding properties, despite them all being in the Conservation Area.

Councillor Howard then addressed the Committee, speaking in objection to the proposal on behalf of Halton

Castle Ward colleague, Councillor E. Cargill and local residents. It was noted that the third Halton Castle Ward Member was a Member of the Development Control Committee, and therefore was unable to make (and had not made) any representation regarding the application.

He stated that the fundamental objection to this application was that it would have an adverse effect on the Conservation Area of Halton Village. He complained that although the Conservation Advisor had provided further advice, there was no opportunity for the Committee to question her. He also argued that:

- There were documents to support the concerns of the residents;
- The outbuildings from 71 – 97 Main Street offered no evidence that they were used for habitation in the past;
- These properties were built in an era when large gardens and outbuildings were characteristic;
- Some properties had been modified in the past thus compromising the character of the Village; and
- The residents strongly disagreed with the opinion of the Council's retained Conservation Advisor.

Councillor Howard urged the Committee to refuse the application; stating that the character and heritage of Halton Village Conservation Area should be conserved for future generations.

The Committee discussed the application and referred to the *Halton Village Conservation Area Appraisal* that was produced in 2008. That document was not formally adopted by the Council but it was confirmed that it was a material consideration. In the document number 67 Main Street was considered to be a category B status, where a category A was the highest. The National Planning Policy and Framework (NPPF) document was also quoted in relation to heritage assets; harm to conservation areas and public benefits.

A proposed motion to refuse the application was put forward by Councillor Thompson, but he was advised that proper reasons should be included within a motion. In view of this the Committee agreed to a 10 minute adjournment, to enable a detailed proposed motion to be formulated.

The public left the room during the adjournment during which Councillor Thompson prepared his proposal. No debate between the other Members took place during

the adjournment. After the adjournment the public returned to the room and the meeting was formally re-convened.

Councillor Thompson put forward his proposal which was seconded and agreed by the Committee by majority. Councillor J. Lowe did not speak or vote on this item because she had left the room for a short time during the debate.

RESOLVED: That the application is refused because the Committee considered that the proposed development would cause harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area because of:

1. Impact on the vista from Castle Hill and the visual relationship between the scheduled monument and its surroundings;
2. Impact on visual amenity and visual unity;
3. The proposal is not in keeping with the setting and physical connection of the surroundings;
4. The proposal did not result in public benefits such as to override any harm;
5. The proposal is not in keeping with outbuildings and the historical purpose and uses of outbuildings within the Conservation Area; and
6. In the context of the importance of the Conservation Area the proposal would set a precedent.

Therefore the proposal was contrary to Part 16 of NPPF and BE1, BE2 and BE12 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan and CS20 of the Halton Core Strategy.

Meeting ended at 7.45 p.m.