

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Development Control Committee on Monday, 27 July 2020 via remote access

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

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: A. Jones, J. Tully, A. Plant and I. Dignall

Also in attendance: Councillor Philbin, Mr Moorehouse 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 3 March 2020 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.	
	<i>Councillors Carlin and Zygadlo were excluded from voting on the item as they had joined the meeting late and missed both Officers' presentations to the Committee.</i>	
DEV3	- 19/00534/FUL - PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF EXISTING PHARMACY AND CONSTRUCTION OF MIXED DEVELOPMENT COMPRISING 12 NO. TWO BEDROOM APARTMENTS AND COMMERCIAL UNIT (USE CLASS A1) AT GROUND FLOOR TOGETHER WITH ASSOCIATED PARKING, LANDSCAPING AND ANCILLARY WORKS AT APPLETON VILLAGE PHARMACY, APPLETON VILLAGE, WIDNES, CHESHIRE	

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

The Planning Officer advised the Committee that the main considerations were all set out in the officer report, with the main issue being around parking. It was noted that Highways Officer and the Planning Officer had differing recommendations for the application and the Planning Officers provided details of the Highway Authority's objection and balanced this with other material considerations which led to a recommendation to approve the scheme.

The Highway's Authority Officer addressed the Committee and advised that the provision of parking on the application represented a reduction in basic standards to flats, and if approved would set a new precedent in relation to this. He added that the area already had high volumes of traffic from cars and pedestrians and the lack of parking would pose a danger to highway safety.

In response the Planning Officer advised Members that as per the Council's Unitary Development Plan (UDP) the Council did not have minimum parking standards and this application included the maximum number of spaces required for the number of flats. He added that the site was in a highly sustainable area near the Town Centre and public transport links were excellent. Members were also asked to consider that the peak use for the apartments was likely to be in the evening and weekend, when demand for the car park opposite the site would be at its lowest. He advised that refusal of the scheme could not be sustained when taking into consideration the above and also the benefits in terms of housing provision and visual improvements to the site.

The Committee was then addressed by Mr Moorehouse, the applicant. He advised that they had complied with all HBC planning requirements including parking and had reduced the scheme from 17 to 12 units in response to concerns of Highways. He added that they had included the pharmacy due to public support for this and reiterated comments made already regarding sustainability of the site and that the parking facilities would be more than adequate and serve the customers of the pharmacy and residents of the flats.

Councillor Philbin, Ward Councillor for Appleton, then addressed the Committee objecting to the application. He stated that the application was not just about parking and

referred Members to the joint letter of objection he had forwarded with his Ward colleagues, appended to the report. He objected due to the high volume of traffic already in the area due to the St Bedes School, Church and GP surgery which results in continuous high levels of traffic, not peaks as reported. He urged the Committee to refuse the application as this would add another 12 apartments to the existing 24 and exacerbate the situation.

Members commented on the conflicting recommendations given by the Planning Officer and the Highways Officer. They discussed the transport statement submitted, parking concerns, highway safety issues, accident data in the area and the proposed introduction of a cycle lane in the future.

One Member moved a refusal on the following grounds:

The cumulative level of parking provided across the proposed development would be detrimental to highway safety and pose a danger to pedestrians. The application would overload the capacity of the surrounding highway network. The proposal was therefore contrary to Policies BE13C, TP12 and TP17 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan and paragraph 102 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The motion was seconded and carried, and the Committee voted to refuse the application.

RESOLVED: That the application be refused on the ground outlined above.

Meeting ended at 6.00 p.m.