

Special Planning Committee

Thursday, 16th March, 2023

REMOTE MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Whyte (Chairperson);
Alderman Rodgers; and
Councillors Bower, Carson, Matt Collins, Douglas, Garrett,
Groogan, Hanvey, Hutchinson, Maskey, Murphy and Spratt.

In attendance: Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;
Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor;
Mr. E. Baker, Planning Manager;
Mr. K. Sutherland, Planning Manager;
Mr. D. O'Kane, Principal Planning Officer; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies for inability to attend were reported.

Declarations of Interest

The Chairperson (Councillor Whyte) declared an interest in relation to Item 2, LA04/2021/1672/O, on the agenda, in that Radius Housing had previously been a client and left the meeting while the item was being considered.

Planning Applications

(The Deputy Chairperson, Councillor Maskey in the Chair)

LA04/2021/1672/O Outline planning permission (with all matters reserved) for mixed use development on Sites A, B, C, D. Comprising up to 7,710 sqm GEA mixed use to include tourist hostel, residential, office, retail, commercial including community enterprise, community infrastructure and social enterprise floor space (A1 or A2 or B1 or B2 or C1 or C2 or D1) units on Site A, up to 6,980 sqm GEA of Hotel (C2) floorspace on Site B, the erection of a multi-storey car park comprising of up to 231 spaces (4,130 sqm GEA) and up to 7,130 sqm GEA of employment or community (A1 or A2 or B1 or B2) floorspace on Site C and up to 1,110 sqm GEA mixed use to include residential, office, retail, commercial including community enterprise, community infrastructure and social enterprise (A1 or A2 or B1 or B2 or D1) floorspace on Site D.

Outline planning permission (with no matters reserved)

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for the erection of 94 residential dwellings (social housing). Comprising of 44 residential units on Site A and 50 residential units on Site D/NIE. Access to be provided from Raphael Street and Stewart Street respectively. Along with the provision of landscaping, parking, public open space, pumping station and associated works. Lands at the Gasworks Northern Fringe site; bounded to the north by McAuley Street Stewart Street and Raphael Street; Cromac Street to the west; the River Lagan and Belfast-Newry railway line to the east; and the Gasworks Business Park to the south

The Planning Manager explained to the Committee that the application had been approved at its meeting in February, and that late issues had been raised by the Department for Infrastructure with regard to the private streets determination layout.

He explained that, in relation to Site A of the application, DfI Roads had raised concern that four parking bays would interfere with visibility and would create a highway safety issue. He reported that Radius Housing, the joint applicant, was in agreement with the removal of the four spaces, that would require an amended plan to be submitted.

He reported that DfI Roads had also raised concern with regard to the surface material of the spine roads within Sites A and D. He stated that the proposal had been for the spine road to be finished with paviers, which had been important from an aesthetic and placemaking perspective, and that Radius Housing had already gone to tender for the provision and construction of the roads, in accordance with the plans which had previously been approved by the Committee. He added that Radius Housing was not in a position to make the changes, in accordance with DfI Road's subsequent request, to change the spine road surfaces from paviers to asphalt.

He stated that officers were of the opinion that the removal of the four parking bays on Raphael Street was necessary to secure appropriate visibility at the junctions into the housing site, and that paviers were the preferred spine road surface for reasons that included placemaking and the architectural and design quality of the scheme, however, on balance, it was considered acceptable, when taking into consideration the wider benefits of the scheme.

The Planning Manager responded to questions from Members of the Committee in relation to the replacement of a permeable surface with an impermeable surface and future maintenance of the road surface, and several Members expressed concern with regard to late issues having been raised by DfI Roads in relation to previously approved applications for social housing.

The Committee agreed to the removal of four of the parking bays on Raphael Street. and refused the substitution of paviers for asphalt surface material on the spine road.

The Committee also delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to vary the decision as a compromise, should the applicant and DfI Roads be unable to reach an agreement on the issue of paviers on the spine road.

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(The Chairperson, Councillor Whyte, in the Chair)

Restricted Items

The information contained in the reports associated with the following two items is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the Members of the Press and public from the Committee meeting during discussion on the following items as, due to their nature, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Section 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Consideration of Processes and Final Documentation to support the LDP Plan Strategy Adoption

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an update on the ongoing efforts to adopt the Plan Strategy of the Local Development Plan and referred the Members to the final draft versions of documents that would form the basis of the Plan Strategy to be approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

The Committee endorsed the submission for consideration by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee as the basis for the formal adoption of the LDP Plan Strategy.

Approval of Final Version of the SPG to support the LDP Plan Strategy Implementation

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an update on the preparation of the Supplementary Planning Guidance and referred the Members to the final draft versions for publication.

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the Supplementary Planning Guidance, to a future meeting of the Committee, to be held in April.

Chairperson