

Chairman - Councillor E G R Jones

Present (for all or part of the meeting):-

Councillors:

A D Hobbs

J Hood

R A James

P W Jones

R Kenney

A Nixon

G P K Pardesi

M Phillips

J K Price

C V Trowbridge

Also in attendance - Councillors F Beatty, B M Cross,  
P M M Farrington, A S Harp, W J Kemp,  
J M Pert and M J Winnington

Officers in attendance:-

Mr J Holmes

Mrs V Blake

Miss L Collingridge

Mr A Bailey

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Development Manager

Senior Planning Officer

Solicitor

Scrutiny Officer

#### **PC14 Minutes**

The Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 15 June 2022, were submitted and signed.

#### **PC15 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors F Beatty (Substitute M Phillips), A G Cooper (Substitute R A James), A P Edgeller (Substitute J K Price) and B McKeown (Substitute R Kenney).

#### **PC16 Declarations of Interest/Lobbying**

Councillor J K Price declared that he would be speaking as the Local Ward Member in respect of Application Number 21/35150/COU and would not be participating in the discussion and voting thereon.

All of the Committee declared that they had been lobbied in respect of Application Number 22/35765/FUL.

**PC17 Application 21/35369/HOU - Proposed extensions, alterations and refurbishment of existing detached dwelling - Gorsty Hill Farm, Yarnfield Lane, Yarnfield, Stone, ST15 0NJ**

(Recommendation Approve, subject to conditions).

Considered the report of the Head of Development regarding this matter.

The Development Manager reported upon the need to defer this application due to a forthcoming revised Heritage Statement that would require further consultation. The Committee were informed that they would receive an updated report once this had been received.

It was then subsequently moved by Councillor C V Trowbridge and seconded by Councillor P W Jones that Planning Application Number 21/35369/HOU be deferred pending a revised Heritage Statement.

On being put to the vote the proposal was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that Planning Application Number 21/35369/HOU be deferred pending a revised Heritage Statement.

**PC18 Application 22/35606/FUL - Proposed erection of 1.6m high black powder coated steel railings (part replacement of existing fence) - 6 Mill Farm Barns, Mill Street, Stone, Staffordshire, ST15 8BA**

(Recommendation Approve, subject to conditions).

Considered the report of the Head of Development regarding this matter.

The Development Manager recommended that the Committee undertake a site visit prior to determining this application in order to understand the relationship between the proposed railings and the existing land levels for the pavement on Redhill Road and on the application site.

It was then subsequently moved by Councillor P W Jones and seconded by Councillor R A James that Planning Application Number 22/35606/FUL be deferred pending a site inspection in order to understand the relationship between the proposed railings and the existing land levels for the pavement on Redhill Road and on the application site.

On being put to the vote the proposal was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that Planning Application Number 22/35606/FUL be deferred pending a site inspection in order to understand the relationship between the proposed railings and the existing land levels for the pavement on Redhill Road and on the application site.

**PC19 Application 22/35765/FUL - Proposed change of use from student accommodation to asylum seeker accommodation - Former University Halls of Residence, Stafford Education and Enterprise Park, Weston Road, Stafford, Staffordshire, ST18 0AB**

(Recommendation Approve, subject to conditions).

Considered the report of the Head of Development regarding this matter.

The Committee also considered an addendum report that informed them of additional representations received since the publication of the agenda.

The Development Manager informed the Committee of the receipt of three additional representations and a letter of support received since the publication of the addendum report.

Public speaking on the matter was as follows:-

Mr S Spennwyn raised the following points during his objection to the proposal:-

- Opposed to the location of the proposal
- This was no way in which to treat the local residents
- The local residents had been in close contact with each other about this proposal
- There were serious conflicts with both planning policy and human rights
- Serco had been the subject of a police report into serious security breaches, in which the Government had intervened
- Quoted Articles 8 and 1 of the Human Rights Act that had been tested in court

Ms L Dysch raised the following points during her support for the proposal:-

- Represented Serco that provided housing and accommodation for asylum seekers
- There were no external requirements for this proposal
- This proposal was the first of its kind for Stafford Borough
- The proposal would provide 481 bed spaces and would be regulated by the Home Office
- The accommodation would be staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- There would be on-site health provision
- The demand for public transportation would be greatly reduced by this proposal
- There were low incidences of crime caused by asylum seekers
- There did need to be more facilities for asylum seekers
- Some charities had given their support to this application
- Serco would look after those asylum seekers

- Requested the Committee to uphold the recommendation in the report

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor F Beatty, Milwich Ward Member, addressed the Committee and raised the following issues:-

- This proposal seemed to suggest that the Borough of Stafford was not pulling its weight in terms of provision for asylum seekers
- The building was too dense accommodation for asylum seekers
- The area was surrounded by housing estates containing 400 children
- This proposal would not be the specialist accommodation that was required for the asylum seekers
- Referred to Paragraph 69 of the National Planning Policy Framework
- Quoted the Refugees Survival Trust
- There was no indication of the specialist provision of healthcare, with GP's surgeries in the area already full
- The proposal would harm community cohesion
- Referred to Paragraphs 92 and 139 of the National Planning Policy Framework in relation to the fear of crime
- The comments by the Police effectively recommended blockading the asylum seekers within their accommodation for their own safety
- The support for the asylum seekers was inadequate
- The proposal was not acceptable to local residents

The Committee discussed the application and raised a number of issues, including:-

- The proposal was essentially a prison for the asylum seekers
- The students who used to live there had the support of their families, whereas the asylum seekers had no such support
- The accommodation should have on-suite facilities for all
- There was no laundry or waste provision
- An explanation of the reasons that housing tenants could complain about their accommodation
- The permission would be applied until 2029, by which time it would be permanent
- A school application should have a zero impact, yet this proposal did not
- Suggested that each hotel in the Borough could take up to 10 asylum seekers instead, negating the need for this proposal
- Supported the comments made by the Red Cross and Survival trust
- The proposal represented over intensification of the site
- There would be a permanent loss of education facilities
- The proposal was in contradiction with Paragraphs 92 and 139 of the National Planning Policy Framework in relation to the fear of crime
- Saddened by some of the objections that painted the Borough of Stafford in a poor light
- There was a clear lack of health provision
- The proposal did not provide the adequate support services required

- 80% of all of the consultation comments objected to the proposals
- There was a strength of feeling with the local residents and the need to protect children
- Clarification of the potential reasons to refuse the application

It was then subsequently moved by Councillor C V Trowbridge and seconded by Councillor M Phillips that Planning Application Number 22/35765/FUL be refused on the grounds that proposal, due to its nature and scale, is considered to result in a lack of social inclusivity in the community and would increase the public fear of crime. The proposal, due to its nature, is also considered to be sited in an inappropriate location in close proximity to schools, which results in an increased public fear of crime. The proposal is therefore contrary to Paragraphs 92 and 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021). Additionally, the application fails to demonstrate that the proposal would not lead to a detrimental impact upon local public health service resources.

On being put to the vote the proposal was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that Planning Application Number 22/35765/FUL be refused on the grounds that the proposal, due to its nature and scale, is considered to result in a lack of social inclusivity in the community and would increase the public fear of crime. The proposal, due to its nature, is also considered to be sited in an inappropriate location in close proximity to schools, which results in an increased public fear of crime. The proposal is therefore contrary to Paragraphs 92 and 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021). Additionally, the application fails to demonstrate that the proposal would not lead to a detrimental impact upon local public health service resources.

The Committee took a short comfort break at this point. The recording was paused and re-started again upon the resumption of the meeting.

*Councillor J K Price left his place at the table at this point and took his seat in the public gallery.*

**PC20 Application 21/35150/COU - Proposed change of use of property from Use Class C3 (dwelling houses) to Use Class C2 (Residential Institutions)- 23 Darnford Close, Parkside, Stafford, ST16 1LR**

(Recommendation Approve, subject to conditions).

Considered the report of the Head of Development regarding this matter.

The Development Manager reported upon additional representation received in respect of the proposal.

Public speaking on the matter was as follows:-

Mrs C Beckerleg raised the following points during her objection to the proposal:-

- Had extensive experience as a Team Manager for a Local Authority
- The applicant was putting profits first and the proposal would fail
- There would be a risk to the community
- The proposal would be highly disruptive and would cause disturbances to neighbouring properties
- The proposed building was too small
- There was a large play area nearby that was accessed by many people
- 4 cars could not be parked in the parking area outside the property
- The children would be dysregulated and this proposal would not ease the national crisis for more placements
- The applicant was not aware of all of the risks
- The proposal represented an infringement of human rights

Mr L O'Dywer raised the following points during his support for the proposal:-

- Had 10 years of experience with the company
- This location would be ideal for the company's fourth home
- Young people would be happy to live in the area
- The company had an excellent reputation and was a good employer
- Would wish to connect with local neighbours in order to continue dialogue
- The proposal would be regulated by Ofsted
- All of the company's homes were rated as good
- The proposal met all of the planning requirements
- The applicant had a good working relationship with Staffordshire County Council

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor J K Price, Holdcroft Ward Member, addressed the Committee and raised the following issues:-

- Introduced himself as a Staffordshire County Council Cabinet Member and Corporate Parent
- Such residential homes must be in the right place for all concerned
- There was a need to understand all of the needs of the community and the risk to safeguarding concerns
- The proposal was adjacent to the busy A34 causing major safety concerns
- The adjacent brick wall ran along side the A34
- Speed cameras had been installed on that part of the A34 because of the numbers of deaths
- Did not know whether any of the children would be dependent on drugs or alcohol

- There was only the room to park 3 vehicles outside of the property
- The road was narrow and would be further restricted by deliveries and ambulances
- There would be noise and disturbances by staff handovers
- 82 residents had expressed concerns including not in the right location and putting profit before welfare
- Requested the Committee to refuse the application on the grounds of highways, access, noise, fear of crime and cumulative impact

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor B M Cross, Holmcroft Ward Member, addressed the Committee and raised the following issues:-

- Believed that Policy C3 of the Plan for Stafford Borough applied to new builds only
- The proposal would have an adverse affect on the local amenity
- The comments by Staffordshire Police seemed to express grave concerns
- Quoted all of the comments made by the Staffordshire Police Designing Out Crime Officer
- The applicant arranged a public meeting on a night when Councillors could not attend
- A gap in the adjacent fencing meant that the A34 was easily accessible
- The proposal should be refused on the grounds of incompatibility, fear of crime, cumulative impact and accessibility

The Committee discussed the application and raised a number of issues, including:-

- A similar proposal in another area had not caused any problems
- The area was in a family estate
- Concerns that the A34 was too close by
- This was the wrong building in the wrong location
- There were no objections from either Staffordshire Highways or Environmental Health
- There were no planning reasons to refuse the proposal other than the proximity of the A34
- Clarification that the Staffordshire Children's Board had declared that this was not a suitable location for this proposal
- Confirmation that Staffordshire Highways had considered highway safety as part of their consultation on this proposal
- The proposal would mean that the children would be professionally looked after
- The proposal should be refused on the grounds of noise disturbance, fear of crime, lack of consultation and incompatibility
- If this was a business, it would be in the wrong location
- Clarification of the number of car parking spaces required
- Clarification of the potential reasons for refusal

It was then subsequently moved by Councillor M Phillips and seconded by Councillor R A James that Planning Application Number 21/35150/COU be refused on the grounds that the daily operations of the proposal would have a detrimental impact upon the residential amenity by virtue of noise disturbance from vehicles, resulting in reduced care needs and an increased fear of crime.

On being put to the vote the proposal was declared to be lost.

The Committee then voted on whether Planning Application Number 21/35150/COU should be approved, subject to the Conditions as set out in the report of the Head of Development, which following the Chairman's casting vote, was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that Planning Application Number 21/35150/COU be approved, subject to the Conditions as set out in the report of the Head of Development.

*Councillor J K Price re-took his place at the table at this point.*

## **PC21 Planning Appeals**

Considered the report of the Head of Development.

Notification of the following appeals had been received:-

<b>App No</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Proposal</b>
<b>21/34026/HOU Delegated Refusal</b>	23 Burton Manor Road Stafford ST17 9QJ	Upgrade of conservatory using existing base
<b>21/34152/ANX Delegated Refusal</b>	Grange Barn Broad Hill Befcote	Demolish existing timber double garage, replace with new double garage and granny annexe
<b>21/35123/HOU Delegated Refusal</b>	55 Porlock Avenue Weeping Cross Stafford	Proposed two storey side and single storey rear domestic extension with extended dropped kerb.



Notification of the following appeal decisions had been received:-

<b>App No</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Proposal</b>
<b>21/34390/FUL Appeal Dismissed</b>	The Hough Retail Park Foxearth Sports Prestige Lichfield Road	Retrospective application for proposed amendments to site layout to allow for additional gravelled vehicle display areas and proposed grassed area.
<b>21/33764/COU Appeal Allowed</b>	Osborne House 190B Main Road Milford	The change of use of land from agricultural to purposes incidental to the enjoyment of a dwellinghouse (domestic garden).

The Committee discussed the appeal decisions in respect of Application Numbers 21/34390/FUL and 21/33764/COU.

CHAIR