

DELEGATED

**AGENDA NO
PLANNING COMMITTEE**

DATE 9th April 2008

**REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR,
DEVELOPMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD
SERVICES**

07/3339/EIS

**Land off Green Lane, Yarm,
Proposed 18 no. golf course with associated car parking and outline application for the
erection of club house and driving range.**

Expiry Date: 2 May 2008

SUMMARY

Permission is sought for the creation of a golf course and outline approval for a club house, driving range and ancillary development on land to the south of Greens Lane, Yarm. The site is currently in agricultural use as well as having an operational driving range.

The site falls outside of the defined limits of development, within a Special Landscape Area and adjacent to and within a Site of Nature Conservation Interest.

A total of 3 letters of objection and 4 letters of support have been received in respect to the proposed development. Objections mainly relate to the scale of the club house, the impact of the development on the landscape and traffic related matters whilst comments of support advise the use would be an asset to the area.

The proposed sport and recreational use for the site is one which conforms with Policy EN13 of the Local Plan for development outside of the 'limits of development' as it is considered to be a relatively low impacting use due to the course retaining open green areas and introducing new landscaped areas. The club house, driving range and car park are located at the position of the existing driving range and access point towards the northern edge of the site and as such limit the intrusion of buildings and hard surfacing into the area of Special Landscape Value.

The Head of Technical Services considers that the access from Greens Lane requires the provision of a Ghost Right Turn in order to prevent an undue risk to highway safety. However it is considered that the impact of traffic on Greens Lane, and parking provision and manoeuvring space internally for servicing of vehicles are acceptable.

Additional information is required from Natural England with respect to the schemes impact on protected species.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning application 07/3339/EIS be Approved with Conditions subject to:

- 01. The development hereby permitted shall be begun either before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission, or before the expiration of two years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved, whichever is the latest.***

Reason: By virtue of the provisions of Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 02. Approval of the details of the appearance of the buildings and the landscaping of the site shall be in accordance with the details of a scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before development commences.**

Reason: To reserve the rights of the Local Planning Authority with regard to these matters

- 03 The development hereby approved shall be in accordance with the following approved plan(s); unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.**

Plan Reference Number	Date on Plan
HD/76892/CPL REV A	20 March 2008
GGD-153-1985	28 November 2007

Reason: To define the consent.

- 04. No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title have completed the implementation of a phased programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The agreed scheme should detail provisions to be made for preservation in situ or recording of archaeological remains where found to exist.**

Reason: As the site is of archaeological interest and to comply with the provisions of Policy GP1 of the adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan.

- 05. The proposed development shall not be brought into use until a Ghost Right Turn has been implemented on Green Lane in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.**

Reason: In order to ensure the proposal does not adversely affect highway safety and to comply with the provisions of Policy GP1 of the Stockton on Tees Local Plan.

- 06. No development shall be commenced until a scheme for the provision and implementation of a surface water run off limitation system has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved programme of details before the use commences.**

Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding and to comply with the provisions of Policy GP1 of the adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan.

- 07. Notwithstanding details shown on the plans hereby approved, prior to commencement of construction of the club house a scheme of finished floor levels for the proposed club house shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall indicate existing surrounding ground levels. The development shall be carried out in accordance with these approved details.**

Reason: To take into account the proposed Club House position and impact on adjoining properties and their associated gardens in accordance with Policy HO11 of the Stockton on Tees Local Plan.

- 08. No development shall be commenced on site until a scheme for the generation of on site renewable energy and its future operation and maintenance has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be undertaken in accordance with the details of the approved scheme which shall be retained in operational use for the duration of the development.**

Reason: In order to accord with Governments Objectives laid out in PPS 22 – Renewable Energy.

- 09. No trees or hedges on the site shall be lopped, topped, pruned or felled until the reserved matters of the landscaping for the site has been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to accord with Policy GP1 of the Stockton on Tees Local Plan.

- 10. Notwithstanding details hereby approved and prior to the development being brought into use, the car park associated with the development shall be surfaced and laid out in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

Reason: In order to ensure the car park is adequately provided and to ensure its appearance is suitable for its surroundings in accordance with the provisions of Policy GP1 of the Stockton on Tees Local Plan.

- 11. The external lighting of the site shall be solely in accordance with a scheme of lighting which has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

Reason: In order to adequately control the impact of the development on the landscape in accordance with the provisions of Policy EN7 of the adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan.

- 12. Notwithstanding details hereby approved, there shall be no means of enclosure erected on the site other than those which have been first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

Reason: In order to adequately control the impact of the development on the landscape in accordance with the provisions of Policy EN7 of the adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan.

- 13. The proposed development shall not be brought into use until cycle and bin stores have been provided on site in accordance with a scheme to be first submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.**

Reason: In order to adequately provide for the development in accordance with the provisions of Policy GP1 of the Stockton on Tees Local Plan.

- 14. Prior to the use hereby approved being brought into use a scheme for a ball stop fence to the northern edge of the site and specifically adjacent to the 12th and 13th**

Holes, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall include details of the location, height, style and colour of the fence. The fence shall be retained and maintained in an operational condition on for the life of the Golf Course operation

Reason: In order to ensure the proposed scheme does not unduly affect highway safety and to accord with the Provisions of Policy GP1 of the Stockton on Tees Local Plan.

- 15. Notwithstanding details hereby approved, the development shall not be commenced until details of a remodelled 13th Green have been submitted to and approved in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.**

Reason: In order to achieve adequate levels of safety in accordance with the provisions of Policy GP1 of the Stockton on Tees Local Plan.

- 16. There shall be no discharge of foul or contaminated drainage from the site into either ground water or any surface waters, whether direct or via soakaways.**

Reason: To prevent pollution of the water environment and to comply with the provisions of Policy GP1 of the adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan.

- 17. Notwithstanding details hereby approved, the development shall not be commenced until details of Green and Tee drainage have been submitted to and approved in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.**

Reason: To prevent potential adverse impact on ecology of adjacent SNCI through the use of herbicides, fertilisers and pesticides

- 18. Any facilities for the storage of oils, fuels or chemicals shall be sited on the impervious bases and surrounded by impervious bund walls. The volume of the bunded compound should be at least equivalent to the capacity of the tank plus 10%. If there are multiple tanks then the volume of the compound should be equivalent to the combined volume of the tanks plus 10%. All filling points, vents, gauges and sight glasses must be contained within the bund. The drainage system of the bund shall be sealed with no discharge to any watercourse, land or underground strata. Associated pipe work should be located above ground and protected from accidental damage. All filling points and tank overflow pipe outlets should be detailed to discharge downwards into the bund.**

Reason: To prevent pollution of the water environment and to comply with the provisions of Policy GP1 of the adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan.

BACKGROUND

- 1. The existing site is mainly in agricultural use, having the north western corner operating as a driving range.**

PROPOSAL

2. Planning permission is sought for the provision of an 18 hole golf course with associated car parking and for outline approval for the erection of a club house, driving range and ancillary development.
3. The submitted details show the layout of the proposed golf course, land form, landscaping, water bodies and car parking as well as the location of the club house and driving range. Approval is sought for the access and layout of the site with landscaping, scale and appearance being reserved matters.
4. The club house, driving range and associated car park are shown located in the north western corner of the site nearest to the existing and proposed point of access. Submitted details indicate the footprint of the two buildings. The indicative club house measures 32m in width, 45m in depth having a maximum height of 11.8m. The driving range is shown as having a footprint measuring 19m x 85m and a maximum height of 2.5m.
5. A 111 space car park is located immediately to the north of the driving range whilst an academy course is shown located towards the northern boundary of the site.

CONSULTATIONS

The following Consultations were notified and comments received are set out below:-

One North East. Summarised:

6. Should the application be viewed favourably the agency would request the Local Planning Authority to encourage the developer to pursue the highest standards of quality in the development of the site. In line with Governments objectives to generate 10% of electricity from renewable energy sources by 2010, the application details regarding the provision of renewable energy measures within the scheme should also be provided.

North East Assembly. Summarised:

7. The NEA supports the proposal for the development of a new golf course and facilities and considers the proposed development to be in general conformity with RPG 1 and the proposed changes to RSS. The EA should be satisfied with the proposals, the proposal to incorporate SUDS is consistent with RPG 1 although the proposal would better reflect the objectives of regional planning policy by incorporating energy efficient measures and embedded renewable energy measures. The Local Authority would need to be satisfied that traffic impacts are acceptable.

Tees Archaeology. Summarised:

7. Archaeological concerns can be dealt with as a planning condition.

Northumbrian Water Limited

8. Northumbrian Water has no objections to the proposed development.

NEDL

9. General connection comments

Northern Gas Networks

10. No objections

Castle Leavington and Kirklevington Parish Council

11. Recommends refusal of the application for the following reasons;

The original and revised club house are completely unacceptable, being too intrusive, too big, totally out of keeping with the rural nature of the area and of Leven Valley.

The development could seriously damage the Strategic Wildlife Corridor along West Gill and have a detrimental impact on wildlife.

The proposal fails to mention that the archaeological history of the area goes back to medieval times,

The rural areas of Kirklevington and Castle Levington should be maintained

If the golf course is approved and becomes uneconomic it should be returned to a green field state.

Concerned over increased traffic

The site is outside of the limits of development and should be refused.

Plans to extract water from the Gill area could have detrimental impacts on flora. The lack of cattle and their impacts on growing flora has not been assessed.

Impacts on breeding sparrow Hawks and otters was not appropriately detailed or recorded.

The proposed use of phosphate may affect the River Leven and no mitigation is proposed.

The proposal intrudes into the SNCI.

No consideration has been given to noise generated by grass cutting on the course.

Kirklevington is a village in a rural setting, surrounded by farmland which should be respected as to do otherwise would completely alter the character of the village.

We recommend you refuse this application for the same grounds as refusing the proposed new Yarm School on a nearby site.

The Environment Agency. Summarised:

12. No objections. Conditions recommended relating to surface water run off, SUDS and storage of materials. Advice that the LPA need to clarify Impacts on the SNCI and on protected species.

Natural England

13. Awaiting Comments

The Ramblers Association

14. As far as we can see from the file documents the developer has taking account of our comments made in over May/July last year to protect users of Castle Levington 01 in West and East Gills from wayward golfers (reproduced below).
Provided that this is so (the planning notice in the Gazette made no mention of a public path being affected) we have no objection to the development.
15. We are however disappointed that the council appears to have made no attempt to obtain a planning obligation for more paths or some other community contribution from the developer. We hope that in fact discussions along these lines are proceeding

Spatial Plans Manager

16. It is understood that the applicant seeks full planning consent for the above proposal, the site is situated in a Strategic Gap as designated by the Tees Valley Structure Plan (2004).
17. The transitional arrangements for the migration from the Local Plan to LDF allow LPAs to save policies that are still relevant, until they are replaced. Policy EN15 of the Tees Valley Structure Plan (2004), which relates to the designation of strategic gaps, has been saved. It states that
18. Outside the main built-up areas the following strategic gaps will be maintained between individual settlements to retain their physical identity.
iv) between Yarm and Kirklevington

Point iv) relates to the area in which the site falls. Strategic gaps are designed to prevent settlements from coalescing to maintain their physical identity rather than to prevent appropriate development.

19. Policy EN13 of the Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan (1997), which has also been saved through the transitional arrangements, states that Development outside the limits to development may be permitted where:
 - i) it is necessary for a farming or forestry operation; or
 - ii) it falls within policies EN20 (refuse buildings) or Tour 4 (Hotel Conversions); orIn all the remaining cases and providing that it does not harm the character or appearance of the of the Countryside ; where :
 - iii) it contributes to the diversification of the rural economy; or
 - iv) it is for sport or recreation; or
 - v) it is a small scale facility for tourism.
20. The application represents a sport and recreation use and appears to be in accordance with the policy however, it should be ensured that the development does not harm the character and appearance of the countryside.
21. This is particularly pertinent due to the site's location in close proximity to the Leven Valley Special Landscape Area defined in Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan policy EN7 which states that:

Development which harms the landscape value of the following special landscape area will not be permitted;-

 - a) Leven Valley
 - b) Tees Valley
 - c) Wynyard Park
22. In conclusion, the proposed development is a potentially suitable use for a site outside the limits to development and is an appropriate use to maintain the openness and separate physical identities of settlements. However, it should be ensured that the development does not harm the character or appearance of the countryside.
23. Urban Design Engineers

Following discussions and further information, it has been agreed that this application has no impact on the Green Lane Roundabout. It is necessary for the developer to contribute £23k for a ghost right turn on Green Lane to facilitate the intensification of this manoeuvre. The applicant will therefore be required to enter into a S278 agreement with the Council.
24. Speed survey data has now been received and the visibility splay of 135m at the access is acceptable for the speeds demonstrated. The access width into the site it must be a minimum of 4.1m wide.
25. The revised plans indicate a parking provision of 111 spaces including 7 for disabled users which is acceptable.
26. There is an area indicated on the revised plan for cycle parking, it is preferable that this area be covered and secure and be able to accommodate 2 cycles per 9 holes.
27. An auto track plan is still awaited in order to demonstrate that the area can be serviced.
28. Since the applicant has answered most of the concerns raised in the previous memo, I withdraw the objection subject to a satisfactory auto track plan being received.

Urban Design Landscape.

Initial comments summarised;

29. We agree that with careful design, the proposal would not have a significant adverse visual affect. We accept with the benefit of time that proposed mitigation measures would assist in the integration of this development within its landscape setting.
30. The main area of concern is the scale of the proposed clubhouse and its location. This adverse visual impact though will be reduced by the proposal to carry out extensive screen planting along the northern boundary. In addition, the small mature plantation along Green Lane will effectively restrict views for those travelling along the road in a westerly direction.
31. It is understood that floodlighting is only to be maintained as part of the driving range and no lighting of any nature is to be installed within the golf course itself.
32. Whilst it may be viewed that a golf course is a positive contributor to the landscape, we have taken the view that any impact that removes open countryside is considered as having an adverse visual impact. However, we feel that this impact is slight and therefore adversely insignificant. It is felt that the development will not significantly change the existing shape and form of the site. The course seeks to utilise the existing landform thus minimising any adverse impact upon the surroundings. The large proportion of the site is open gently undulating farmland, occasionally broken up with trees and hedges. The landform falls away towards the south boundary due to the presence of East and West Gill, an area which is designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI). Whilst the SNCI is within the application site boundary, this area is not to be developed and will largely remain unaffected by the proposals.
33. Overall, there are no significant landscape features within the site, with the exclusion of the SNCI, and the overall existing landform will both remain and will also be enhanced by extensive planting and the creation of several water bodies.
34. Overall, the proposed planting will assist in assimilating the development within the existing landscape character of the area. The use of species of local provenance for the planting areas will strengthen the local wildlife corridors and will increase the biodiversity values through the proposed mitigation measures.

Final comments;

35. The recognised safety margins (European Institute of Golf Course Architects - safety margins) between the course and Green Lane are exceeded along the majority of the 12th and 13th holes, however the distance between the 13th green and Green Lane will require extending. This may easily be achieved by some reshaping of the green.

A section 106 agreement will be required or alternatively a unilateral undertaking for the provision of a ball stop safety fence. The council will monitor Green Lane for 12 months in respect of any stray balls which may be contributing to accidents. This monitoring will commence once the course is open for play and if, in the event of an accident occurring which is attributable to the golf course, then the council will require a fence to be erected in accordance with details to be approved."

36. No responses were received from the following consultees:
Tees Valley Wildlife Trust
Councillors
Environmental Health Unit

PUBLICITY

Neighbours were notified. 4 letters of support and 3 letters of objection have been received. Comments received are summarised below:-

Susan Wray, 5 Stonehouse Close' Yarm

Summarised:

Objects to the schemes impact on the high quality landscape, wildlife resource, agricultural land, that the area is not designated for development, that the character and appearance of the landscape will be harmed by this recreational use, that there is no planning gain evident, that public footpaths and cycle ways are insufficient to benefit the residents of Stockton on Tees, that the development will generate significant traffic flows at peak times, that there is no provision for public transport, that the club house at three storeys is too large and will hinder residents enjoyment of the landscape, all of which is protected through policy, there being no evidence to suggest the site does not host priority habitat types or species, that there is no overriding public interest. It is considered that the proposal is contrary to Policy EN7 and EN10 of the Stockton on Tees Local Plan and the Cleveland Structure Plan.

The club house would be presumably licensed for alcohol sales and is in close proximity to residential a area.

David Johnstone, 4 Stonehouse Close' Yarm

I am generally in favour of the proposal for the golf course but must raise objection for the following reasons:

The position of the clubhouse and driving range is unnecessarily close to Green Lane.

The proposed height of the clubhouse is three storeys. A clubhouse of this size size is not necessary to support the golf course. It is therefore reasonable to assume that it is intended to use the building for other purposes which will/could result in unacceptable increase in noise and lighting levels.

The position and size of the clubhouse will have a significant impact on the view from houses that face the golf course.

There are surely more suitable locations for the clubhouse and driving range that would meet the course layout requirements without having such an impact on the residents adjacent to Green Lane.

Richard K. Mackay, 28 Oughton Close' Yarm

As a local resident whose house borders and faces Green Lane and who will be directly affected by the development I wholeheartedly support this development

Sue Welsh, 7 Caterton Close' Yarm

Believes the development will enhance the local area and will protect local wildlife.

Mr A Lee, 5 Urford Close' Yarm

No comments re proposal.

Mr And Mrs Wallace, 3 Carpenter Close' Yarm

No objection to the golf course in principal although have strong objections to the location of the club house and the construction of the club house. The club house faces houses Carpenter Close and is only 110m away from these houses which will obstruct views from these houses and down Carpenter Close.

Most club houses are single storey, why must this be three storey.

The design of the club house is not in keeping or conducive to the area.

Mrs O Vasey-Raine, Hedgeside' Leven Bank Road

Pleased and happy about the proposed use.

Mrs Jayne Stephenson, 9 Hugill Close' Yarm

Fully support the proposal.

PLANNING POLICY

The relevant development plan in this case is the adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan.

Where an adopted or approved development plan contains relevant policies, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that an application for planning permissions shall be determined in accordance with the Development Plan(s) for the area, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the relevant Development Plans are:- *the Tees Valley Structure Plan (TVSP) and the Stockton on Tees Local Plan (STLP)*.

The following planning policies are considered to be relevant to the consideration of this application:-

Policy GP1

Proposals for development will be assessed in relation to the policies of the Cleveland Structure Plan and the following criteria as appropriate:

- (i) The external appearance of the development and its relationship with the surrounding area;
- (ii) The effect on the amenities of the occupiers of nearby properties;
- (iii) The provision of satisfactory access and parking arrangements;
- (iv) The contribution of existing trees and landscape features;
- (v) The need for a high standard of landscaping;
- (vi) The desire to reduce opportunities for crime;
- (vii) The intention to make development as accessible as possible to everyone;
- (viii) The quality, character and sensitivity of existing landscapes and buildings;
- (ix) The effect upon wildlife habitats;
- (x) The effect upon the public rights of way network.

Policy EN4

Development which is likely to have an adverse effect upon sites of nature conservation importance will only be permitted if:-

- (i) There is no alternative available site or practicable approach; and
- (ii) Any impact on the sites nature conservation value is kept to a minimum.

Where development is permitted the council will consider the use of conditions and/or planning obligations to provide appropriate compensatory measures.

Policy EN7

Development which harms the landscape value of the following special landscape area will not be permitted:-

- (a) Leven Valley
- (b) Tees Valley
- (c) Wynyard Park.

Policy EN11

The planting of trees, of locally appropriate species, will be encouraged within the area indicated on the proposals map as community forest. In considering applications for planning permission in the community forest area, the Local Planning Authority will give weight to the degree to which the

applicant has demonstrated that full account has been taken of existing trees on site, together with an appraisal of the possibilities of creating new woodland or undertaking additional tree planting. In the light of the appraisal the Local Planning Authority will require a landscaping scheme to be agreed which makes a contribution to the community forest.

Policy EN13

Development outside the limits to development may be permitted where:

- (i) It is necessary for a farming or forestry operation; or
 - (ii) It falls within policies EN20 (reuse of buildings) or Tour 4 (Hotel conversions); or
- In all the remaining cases and provided that it does not harm the character or appearance of the countryside; where:
- (iii) It contributes to the diversification of the rural economy; or
 - (iv) It is for sport or recreation; or
 - (v) It is a small scale facility for tourism.

Policy EN15 of the Tees Valley Structure Plan

Outside the main built-up areas the following strategic gaps will be maintained between individual settlements to retain their physical identity.

- iv) between Yarm and Kirklevington

Point iv) relates to the area in which the site falls. Strategic gaps are designed to prevent settlements from coalescing to maintain their physical identity rather than to prevent appropriate development.

PPS1: Delivering sustainable development - February 2005

PPS 7: Sustainable development in rural areas - August 2004

PPS 9: Biodiversity and Geological conservation - August 2005

PPG16: Archaeology and Planning - November 1990

PPG17: Planning for open space, sport and recreation - July 2002

PPS 22: Renewable Energy - June 2006

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 37. The existing site is currently in both agricultural use and as a driving range. There is a complex of farm buildings to the central western section of the site, wooded areas to the southern and eastern sections of the site and hedgerows and smaller areas of tree cover throughout.
- 38. There is a designated Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) to the southern section of the site.

MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 39. The site falls outside of the limits of development as defined under Policy EN13 of the adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan. Policy EN13 states that development outside the limits to development may be permitted where amongst other uses, is for sport or recreation or where it contributes to the diversification of the rural economy, providing that it does not harm the character or appearance of the countryside.
- 40. As the proposal relates to a sport and recreation use there is a general policy presumption in favour and the key consideration in assessing the proposal therefore relates to whether the proposed development would harm the character or appearance of the countryside. In

addition, saved Policy EN15 of the Tees Valley Structure Plan (2004), which relates to the designation of strategic gaps states that:

Outside the main built-up areas the following strategic gaps will be maintained between individual settlements to retain their physical identity. iv) between Yarm and Kirklevington

Point iv) relates to the area in which the site falls. Strategic gaps are designed to prevent settlements from coalescing to maintain their physical identity rather than to prevent appropriate development.

41. The application site is also in close proximity to the Leven Valley Special Landscape Area defined under Policy EN7, includes part of a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) designated under Policy EN4 whilst forms part of the Tees Forest designation under Policy EN11 of the Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan. The proposal is considered against these policies and other material planning considerations as follows;

Landscape Impacts

42. The site will retain its openness from built development and shall be in a landscaped form and it is therefore considered that the proposed development would not unduly affect the strategic gap between settlements and is therefore not considered to be contrary to Policy EN15 of the Tees Valley Structure Plan.
43. The site falls within a Special Landscape Area as designated under Policy EN7 of the adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan. This Policy states that '*Development which harms the landscape value of the Leven Valley, Tees Valley and Wynyard Park will not be permitted*'. The use, form and features of these areas are considered to combine to produce a landscape of particular quality and attractiveness and as such any development should not detract from the character of the area. The pre-ambles to Policy EN7 advise that Agriculture and Farm diversification are among the types of development which may be appropriate in Special Landscape areas as well as forestry, sport and recreation.
44. Although the proposed setting out of the site as a golf course will result in a manicured and somewhat uniform appearance to areas of the site, there will remain areas of scrub, areas of native planting and a general openness across the site. The site would remain to be generally free from buildings and hard surfacing, and as such, it is considered that the proposed use of the land as a golf course would not unduly affect the character of the landscape.
45. The main impact of the development is considered to be the built form of the Club House, driving range and car park area. These elements have been positioned at the northern edge of the site which assists in limiting their intrusion into the Special Landscape Area. They are also positioned away from the highway forming the northern boundary of the site, therefore limiting the impacts of the built form as viewed from the north. The proposal indicates tree planting and earth works along the northern boundary which should in time screen the built form as viewed from the highway to the north.
46. In order to reduce the overall impact of the development it is considered that careful selection of materials for buildings (at reserved matters stage) and control over the proposed landscaping scheme and the surface materials for the expanse of car parking are necessary.

47. Although the site is designated under Policy EN11 relating to the planting of native trees as community forest, the proposal does not contribute in this manner, although will result in native tree planting as part of its internal scheme of landscaping.

Highways matters

48. The revised scheme is considered to show adequate access into the site and adequate levels of parking for the proposed development.
49. In view of the access being off a highway which has an accident record of rear end shunts (albeit limited), it is considered that the intensification of the access would need to be supported through the creation of a ghost right turn island which will allow traffic to continue flowing on Greens Lane whilst vehicles wait within the highway prior to making a right turn onto the access road into the site. This requirement has been conditioned accordingly.
50. A speed survey has been undertaken along Greens Lane which has allowed a suitable visibility splay at the junction of Greens Lane and the access road to be determined. The junction achieves this splay and as such is considered to be acceptable.
51. The applicant has supplied an auto track plan which the Head of Technical Services has advise demonstrates that refuse and service vehicles can manoeuvre within the site adequately.
52. Concern was raised regarding stray balls leaving the golf course and entering the adjoining highway from the 12th and 13th tees due to their position and alignment. The recognised safety margins (European Institute of Golf Course Architects - safety margins) between the course and Green Lane are exceeded along the majority of the 12th and 13th holes and the distance between the 13th green and Green Lane will require extending which may easily be achieved by some reshaping of the green. However, in order to ensure that adequate account is taken of this risk, it is considered necessary to require the site operator to agree a scheme of ball stop fencing which could be erected should a problem arise. It is considered appropriate for the council to monitor Green Lane for a period of 12 months in respect of any stray balls which may be contributing to accidents. This monitoring should only commence once the course is open for play and if monitoring indicates there to be a safety hazard then the council will require a fence to be erected in accordance with details to be approved. It is envisaged that landscaping along this northern boundary will mitigate such issues in the longer term and as such any requirement for a fence should be on a temporary basis.

Ecology and Protected Species

53. The site includes and is adjacent to a site of Nature Conservation Importance. Policy EN4 of the Local Plan only permits development of such sites if, there is no alternative site or practicable approach and the impacts are kept to a minimum. Some objections have been raised in respect to the development proposals impact on the SNCI and wildlife in general. However, the actual layout of the course is not indicated as intruding into the SNCI whilst it is further considered that the proposed waterbodies and landscaping which would take place throughout the site will in part positively contribute to this designation. Furthermore, it is considered that the golf course is a relatively low impacting use for this adjoining area. In view of these factors, it is considered that the proposed development would be unlikely to have an adverse impact on the Site of Nature Conservation importance. The ecological report is currently being considered by Natural England and their response will be updated to Committee.

Impact on the amenities of surrounding residents

54. The proposed development is considered to be a relatively low impact use in terms of noise generation whilst is located on the opposing side of Greens Lane which is a relatively heavily trafficked highway. Properties to the north of Greens Lane are located approximately 40m away from the site, 100m away from the proposed car park and 110m away from the proposed clubhouse. In view of the nature of the use and the distance from surrounding properties, it is considered the proposal would not unduly affect the amenities associated with these surrounding properties.
55. Specific objection has been raised in respect to the scale of the proposed clubhouse, which has been reduced in height through the submission of revised elevation plans. Whilst the clubhouse remains to be a large building, it is considered to be a sufficient distance from properties on the opposing side of Greens Lane to not overly dominate their outlook or indeed for the use to have no significant impacts with regard to noise. Landscaping is also proposed between the Clubhouse and these opposing residential properties which should further reduce the overall impact of the buildings.

Other Matters

56. Consultee response from an independent Golf Course Architect have indicated that the recognised safety margins (European Institute of Golf Course Architects - safety margins) between the course and Green Lane are exceeded along the majority of the 12th and 13th holes, however the distance between the 13th green and Green Lane will require extending which may easily be achieved by some reshaping of the green. A requirement for such has been conditioned.
57. One North East have indicated a requirement to provide details regarding the provision of 10% of electricity from renewable energy measures within the scheme which has been agreed with the applicants agent and has been conditioned accordingly.
58. The drainage of the site is of particular concern and details of such have been conditioned in order to prevent pollution of the water environment.
59. Tees Archaeology have advised that any archaeological concerns for the site can be dealt with by condition taking into account the limited affect on the existing landform. An appropriate condition has been recommended.
60. Objection is raised with regard to the potential future reuse of the site were the use to become economically unviable, however, any future reuse could only be considered at the time of a proposal being made.

CONCLUSION

61. As a result of the nature and layout of the use it is considered that the proposed development would not be significantly detrimental to the designated Strategic Gap or the Special Landscape Value of the Area or the Site of Nature Conservation Interest. The proposed development will adequately provide for its demands in regards to access and parking whilst adequate landscaping of the site will be achieved as a result of reserved matters submissions.

62. Additional comments are required from Natural England. These matters will be addressed in an update report to the Planning Committee.

**Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer Mrs Carol Straughan. Telephone No 01642 527026**

Human Rights Implications

The provisions of the European Convention of Human Rights 1950 have been taken into account in the preparation of this report

Financial Implications

None

Environmental Implications

As report

Community Safety Implications.

Not Applicable.

Background Papers.

Adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan (June 1997)

WARD AND WARD COUNCILLORS

Ward	Yarm
Ward Councillor	Councillor J Earl
Ward Councillor	Councillor Mrs J. Beaumont,
Ward Councillor	Councillor A B L Sherris