

**DELEGATED**

**AGENDA NO  
PLANNING COMMITTEE  
19 MARCH 2014  
REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR,  
DEVELOPMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD  
SERVICES**

**14/0093/FUL**

**Billingham Community Centre The Causeway, Billingham  
Proposed new public car park with associated landscaping, lighting, CCTV installation and  
new widened vehicular access and footpath from The Causeway.**

**Expiry Date 12 March 2014**

**SUMMARY**

This application was reported to the Planning Committee on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2014 when consideration was deferred to enable this application to be considered at the same Planning Committee as the proposal for a new care ready housing scheme on the existing car park site

A new care ready housing scheme has been proposed for Billingham Town Centre. The selected site is on the existing public car park which is located off The Causeway, adjacent to the Community Centre in Billingham. This application, if approved would result in the loss of the public long stay car park which provides 92no car parking spaces which comprises of 90no long stay public car parking spaces and 2no disabled car parking spaces. This current application therefore seeks address the need to provide a replacement public car park to serve Billingham Town Centre should the housing scheme be approved.

This application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination under the adopted scheme of delegation due to the scale of the development and as the recommendation is for approval and ten letter of objection having been received from members of the public. The objections are largely on the grounds that the proposed car park will not be safe, will result in a loss of playing field, loss of mature trees and not be within walking distance of the local amenities and facilities.

The concerns from objectors are noted. However the proposed car park would be adjacent to the existing public car park to provide a replacement car parking facility should a scheme for care ready housing be approved on the existing car parking site. A footpath would be provide pedestrian access from The Causeway with the vehicular access being widened. CCTV and lighting is proposed to provide security for the users of the proposed car Park. The Cleveland Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor has raised no objections to the proposal. Existing mature trees will be retained and integrated into the car park layout. As such the Head of Technical Services has raised no objections to the proposed development.

Stockton Borough Councils Leisure and Sports Development Manager has confirmed that although there is a small loss of green space the playing surface will be protected and will be utilised for junior football which meets a strategic need as identified within the Playing Pitch Strategy. Therefore raises no objections to the proposals. Sport England has also been consulted on the proposals and has raised no objections subject to a condition, relating to the pitch being moved prior to commencement of the car park, which is recommended.

The proposed car park is considered to be acceptable in terms of the character and appearance of the surrounding area and it is not considered that it will result in a detrimental impact upon the amenity of neighbouring land users. Furthermore it is not considered that the development will result in any adverse impact upon highway safety. Therefore the proposed development is considered to be in accordance with policy CS2 and CS3 of the adopted Core Strategy.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

***That planning application 14/0093/FUL be approved subject to the following conditions and informatives;***

**01     *The development hereby approved shall be in accordance with the following approved plan(s);***

<b><i>Plan Reference Number</i></b>	<b><i>Date on Plan</i></b>
<b><i>TS-D1-293-01-13</i></b>	<b><i>15 January 2014</i></b>
<b><i>TS-D1-293-01-12</i></b>	<b><i>15 January 2014</i></b>
<b><i>TS-D1-293-01-11</i></b>	<b><i>15 January 2014</i></b>
<b><i>TS-D1-293-01-14</i></b>	<b><i>15 January 2014</i></b>
<b><i>SLDS-834-V1</i></b>	<b><i>15 January 2014</i></b>
<b><i>TS-D1-293-01-08</i></b>	<b><i>15 January 2014</i></b>

***Reason: To define the consent.***

***Conditions to be discharged prior to commencement***

**02.     *Prior to the commencement of development of the car park hereby approved the playing pitch shall be marked out as shown on plan number TS-D1-293-01-12 and retained for the life of the development.***

***Reason: To ensure to sufficient provision***

## **INFORMATIVE OF REASON FOR PLANNING APPROVAL**

The Local Planning Authority have implemented the requirements of the NPPF.

## **BACKGROUND**

1. A new care ready housing scheme has been proposed for Billingham Town Centre. The selected site is on the existing public car park off which is located off The Causeway, adjacent to the Community Centre, Billingham. This current application therefore seeks address the need to provide a replacement public car park to serve Billingham Town Centre should the housing scheme be approved

## **SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

2. The site is to the rear of Billingham Community Centre, which is located just outside the Town Centre of Billingham.

3. The site is currently a green field site which is designated mainly as white land (unallocated in the Local Plan) with a small area of outdoor playing space. The site is surrounded by an open field, residential properties (including the new College Gardens housing site) and Billingham Town Centre to the South East. There is an existing car park adjacent to the Community Centre at present, however an application for Extra Care Housing Scheme has been submitted for planning approval and if approved, this existing car parking facility will be lost.

## **PROPOSAL**

4. Approval is sought for the creation of a public car park to the rear of the community centre which fronts on to the Causeway. The proposal includes landscaping lighting and CCTV. Access will be provided by a widened vehicular access with a footpath from The Causeway.
5. The proposed car park would provide 82 car parking spaces, 5 disability car parking spaces and 2 electric car charging bays. Five lighting columns, measuring approximately 12 metres in height are proposed to illuminate the car park. Proposed CCTV cameras will be located at a height of 10 metres on two of the lighting columns.
6. There are 4 existing mature trees which will be retained within a root protection zone centrally located within the proposed car park. The proposed landscaping scheme includes planting of standard trees around the edge of the proposed car park.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

7. The following Consultees were notified and comments received are set out below:-

### **Sport Development Officer**

8. Although the application site is defined as outdoor playing space the proposed car park will largely be located to the rear of the community centre on land which comprises mature trees. As such it is not considered to form usable playing space. Although there is a small loss of green space the playing surface will be protected and will be utilised for junior football which meets a strategic need as identified within the Playing Pitch Strategy (the site does however retain the capacity to accommodate adult football if required in the future). Therefore the proposed car park will not lead to a loss of a defined playing pitch as the pitch is simply being moved further to the north within land in Council ownership. A condition is recommended to ensure that the pitch is moved prior to the commencement of development of the car park to which this application relates.

### **Councillor Ann McCoy**

9. I have no objections to this proposal

### **Head of Technical Services**

#### **General Summary**

10. The Head of Technical Services has no objections to the proposed replacement car park.

#### **Highways Comments**

11. The proposed car park will replace the existing facility and improve access by widening the access road from The Causeway and providing a footpath; the reduction in provision by 3 spaces is considered acceptable and there are no highway objections.

## Landscape & Visual Comments

12. The proposed car park and the associated landscaping, lighting, CCTV and widened vehicular access and footpath provision are considered acceptable from a landscape and visual viewpoint.

## Sports England

13. It is understood that the site forms part of, or constitutes a playing field as defined in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 (Statutory Instrument 2010 No. 2184), in that it is on land that has been used as a playing field within the last five years, and the field encompasses at least one playing pitch of 0.2 ha or more, or that it is on land that is allocated for the use as a playing field in a development plan or in proposals for such a plan or its alteration or replacement.

Sport England has therefore considered the application in the light of its playing fields policy. The aim of this policy is to ensure that there is an adequate supply of quality pitches to satisfy the current and estimated future demand for pitch sports within the area. The policy seeks to protect all parts of the playing field from development and not just those which, for the time being, are laid out as pitches. The policy states that:

“Sport England will oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or would prejudice the use of, all or any part of a playing field, or land last used as a playing field or allocated for use as a playing field in an adopted or draft deposit local plan, unless, in the judgement of Sport England, one of the specific circumstances applies.”

Reason: Development which would lead to the loss of all or part of a playing field, or which would prejudice its use, should not normally be permitted because it would permanently reduce the opportunities for participation in sporting activities. Government planning policy and the policies of Sport England have recognised the importance of such activities to the social and economic well-being of the country.

The proposal is for a car park that will primarily serve Billingham Community Centre, but also useable by users of the playing field and football pitch.

The location of the proposed car park will encroach on the safety margins of an existing football pitch, but the applicant has shown that the pitch can be slid northwards, to re-establish the necessary safety margins.

As such it is considered that the proposal meets the following exceptional circumstance;

### **E2 - Does not affect quality/quantity of pitches (ancillary to playing field)**

*The proposed development is ancillary to the principal use of the site as a playing field of playing fields, and does not affect the quantity or quality of pitches or adversely affect their use.*

This being the case, Sport England does not wish to raise an objection to this application, **subject** to the following condition(s) being attached to the decision notice (if the Council are minded to approve the application):

*The existing junior football pitch shall be moved northwards (as detailed in the Context Plan) and be made available for use prior to the commencement of the new car park.*

If you wish to amend the wording of the conditions or use another mechanism in lieu of the condition(s), please discuss the details with the undersigned. Sport England does not object to amendments to conditions, provided they achieve the same outcome and we are involved in any amendments. Sports England have confirmed their agreement to the wording of the recommended planning condition.

The absence of an objection to this application in the context of the Town and Country Planning Acts, does not in any way commit Sport England's or any National Governing Body of Sport's support for any related application for grants funding.

## **Cleveland Police**

14. The Borough currently has a large number of safer parking facilities and has for many years achieved the Park Mark® award standard. These are in varying localities, some in similar locations to the proposed facility. Some have good natural surveillance, some have good electronic surveillance and some have a mixture of both with formal and informal surveillance. Crime and incidents in all these car parks are at a very low level and have been for some considerable years.
15. Every new parking facility is different in terms of locale, design and usage. The design of a new facility can never be prescriptive, all have different security requirements. Incorporating physical security features will establish and maintain a safe and non-threatening parking environment.
16. Lighting has a major impact on crime. Increased lighting levels in dark areas can reduce the public's fear of crime and reduce the opportunity for an offender to commit a crime. An even spread of light avoiding shadows plays an important role in providing safety in parking facilities.
17. In new parking facilities, there is the opportunity through design to negate areas of concealment or, at the very least, severely restrict them. The landscaping plan number TS-D1-293-01-11 shows that shrubs will grow to between 20 and 60cm. This complies with the requirement of the Safer Parking Scheme. An open and bright place not only reduces the number of potential hiding places of potential offenders, but also reduces the fear of crime.
18. Natural surveillance is the most effective form of surveillance, where this cannot be achieved CCTV or other measures must be considered. CCTV cameras should cover the vehicle and pedestrian entrances and exits. Suitable management policies must be in place to ensure that the system is compliant with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.
19. As a general guide the following should be considered:
  - CCTV cameras should be capable of providing images from which the person shown can be identified
  - General viewing cameras should have the capability to view the whole of the parking facility.
20. New parking facilities in particular should seek to achieve the required standard set out in the guide lines produced by the British Parking Association.

## **PUBLICITY**

21. Neighbours were notified and comments received are set out below :-

**22. A Cameron**

12 Roseberry Road Billingham  
(Summarised)

Objects as would not feel safe going round the back of a building to access the car park.

**23. A Parry**

High Grange Cottage Roseberry Road  
(Summarised)

Objects as we already have an excellent car park which is visible to visitors. It does not need CCTV. The new proposed car park will be out of sight and not secure. The proposed bushes will aide and bet thieves. I believe there is a covenant on the land that it should remain as sports field.

**24. Patricia Vaughan**

4 Sidlaw Road Billingham  
(Summarised)

Objects as there are trees where the car park is proposed is used as car park. Would like the facility to remain for the youth of the town.

**25. Mrs B Smith**

12 Yenton Close Billingham  
(Summarised)

Objects as there is an existing car park which is highly visible to visitors and does not need CCTV. Therefore I see no need for another car park.

**26. Owner/Occupier**

5 Maria Drive Stockton-on-Tees  
(Summarised)

Objects as it would be further away from the shopping centre. I find it difficult to walk distances and often find car parking to be difficult in Billingham, especially on market days. I would not feel safe having to walk behind the community centre. The proposed bushes are likely to make me feel even more unsafe as these provide a place for people to hide.

**27. John Shucksmith**

43 Sidlaw Road Billingham  
(Summarised)

Objects as there is a perfectly good car park which you are thinking of ripping up. Please don't.

**28. Mrs A Hitch**

46 Brentford Road Norton  
(Summarised)

Objects as I feel my safety would be compromised by using a car park which is out of sight of the road. Even with CCTV if there is no-one to help on hand. The existing car park is safe, well lit and open to view. Visitors will not be able to see the car park behind the building whereas the existing one is clearly visible.

**29. P Hutchinson**

3 Lammermuir Road Billingham  
(Summarised)

Objects on the grounds that users of the car park state that the location of the proposed car park to the rear of the building is detrimental to their safety. It is in an isolated location with bushes and therefore not a safe place to park. The current car park is on open ground visible from highways and accessed on foot from Lammermuir Road. Therefore it feels safe to use.

The extra traffic (coming from both sides of the small road) is a disaster waiting to happen.

**30. Mrs C M Parkin**

14 Roseberry Road Billingham  
(Summarised)

Objects on the grounds the proposed car park is totally unnecessary. Taking away well used green belt to provide car parking is ridiculous. The existing car parking should remain; removing the mature trees is outrageous.

**31. Mr Chris Clough**

181 Whitehouse Road Billingham

Objects on the grounds of:-

- anti-social behaviour/crime
- Car parking issues
- development not suitable for area
- means of access
- Traffic or Highways

The existing car park should remain where it is, this development is totally unnecessary. Elderly and disabled people use the current car park to access the Doctor's surgery and the library via the Pelican crossing on the Causeway. Others use the car park to avoid the dreadful car parking within Billingham Centre. The proposed car park means:-

1. Elderly, infirm and disabled people have further to walk, have more opportunity of accidents with traffic entering and leaving the car park and the proposed development on the existing car park.
2. they have to cross the entrance to the car park to get to the Pelican crossing giving more opportunity to come in close proximity to vehicles. This is currently not an issue as the current car park offers a path directly to the Pelican Crossing.
3. Only 4 disabled spaces are proposed. At least one more is needed to comply with the 6% usually adopted for disabled spaces.
4. In the winter months crime against persons and property may well increase due to the out of the way location of the car park

**PLANNING POLICY**

32. 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 Plan is the Core Strategy Development Plan Document and saved policies of the Stockton on Tees Local Plan

33. Section 143 of the Localism Act came into force on the 15 Jan 2012 and requires the Local Planning Authority to take local finance considerations into account, this section s70(2) Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended requires in dealing with such an application [planning application] the authority shall have regard to a) the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, b) any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application and c) any other material considerations

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

### **35. National Planning Policy Framework**

Paragraph 14. At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking;

For decision-taking this means:

approving development proposals that accord with the development without delay; and where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or-
- specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.

### **Core Strategy Policy 2 (CS2) - Sustainable Transport and Travel**

Accessibility will be improved and transport choice widened, by ensuring that all new development is well serviced by an attractive choice of transport modes, including public transport, footpaths and cycle routes, fully integrated into existing networks, to provide alternatives to the use of all private vehicles and promote healthier lifestyles.

3. The number of parking spaces provided in new developments will be in accordance with standards set out in the Tees Valley Highway Design Guide. Further guidance will be set out in a new Supplementary Planning Document.

### **Core Strategy Policy 3 (CS3) - Sustainable Living and Climate Change**

8. Additionally, in designing new development, proposals will:

- \_ Make a positive contribution to the local area, by protecting and enhancing important environmental assets, biodiversity and geodiversity, responding positively to existing features of natural, historic, archaeological or local character, including hedges and trees, and including the provision of high quality public open space;
- \_ Be designed with safety in mind, incorporating Secure by Design and Park Mark standards, as appropriate;
- \_ Incorporate 'long life and loose fit' buildings, allowing buildings to be adaptable to changing needs. By 2013, all new homes will be built to Lifetime Homes Standards;
- \_ Seek to safeguard the diverse cultural heritage of the Borough, including buildings, features, sites and areas of national importance and local significance. Opportunities will be taken to constructively and imaginatively incorporate heritage assets in redevelopment schemes, employing where appropriate contemporary design solutions.

### **MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

36. The main issues for consideration when assessing the application are the impact upon the amenity of neighbouring properties, character of the surrounding area and implications for highway safety.



37. Ten letters of objection have been received from the general public largely on the grounds that the proposed car park is not easily surveyed from the highway, as it is located to the rear of Billingham Community centre, and as such concerns are raised regarding safety. The distance from the town centre is also raised as a matter for concern and objectors state that the development will result in the loss of playing field and mature trees which are existing on the site. Highway safety concerns are also raised. These objections are addressed below.
38. Councillor Ann McCoy as the Ward Councillor raises no objections to the proposed development.

### **Amenity of neighbouring properties**

39. The proposed car park will replace an existing car park which is currently to the south of the proposed location which is situated to the rear of the existing community centre. The submitted Design and Access statement states that the proposed lighting columns have to be located so as to reduce light pollution, away from residential properties. Furthermore the proposal will be situated away from the shared boundary with neighbouring residential properties which front on to Sidlaw Road and back on to the field. The rear boundaries of these residential properties are enclosed by a mix of boundary treatments including 1.8 metre high fencing and hedges.
40. The residential property directly to the west of the access to the proposed car park fronts on to Lammemuir Road with the side elevation facing towards the application site, approximately 8 metres from the closest car parking space. However the car park is orientated away from the shared boundary with the existing boundary treatments and proposed landscaping providing screening for the proposal
41. There are also residential properties directly to the east of the application site, which form part of the College Gardens development and front on to Verbena Drive. These properties consist of modern housing with 1.8 metre high fencing enclosing the rear garden. The proposed car park will be approximately 8 metres from these neighbouring properties. However it is proposed to provide a significant amount of additional landscape screening in addition to the existing boundary treatments.
42. Billingham community centre is directly to the south-east of the application site. Given the nature and level of activity generated by the Centre it is not considered that the proposed car park will result in a detrimental impact upon the amenity of this neighbouring property.
43. Taking into account the orientation of the car park, screening provided by the existing boundary treatments and the proposed additional landscaping it is not considered that the proposal will result in a detrimental impact upon the amenity of neighbouring residential properties.

### **Highway safety**

44. Concerns raised by objectors relating to highway safety are noted however the proposed car park will replace the existing facility and improve access by widening the access road from The Causeway and providing a footpath. The Head of Technical Services has commented that the reduction in provision by 3 spaces is considered acceptable and there are no highway objections. As such it is not considered that the proposed car park will result in an adverse impact upon highway safety.

### **Character of the surrounding area**

45. The proposed car park is located upon outdoor playing space to the rear of the existing community centre which fronts on to The Causeway. There are residential properties within the vicinity of the application site however the proposal will be adjacent to an existing public car park which is subject to an application for care ready housing. The proposed car park will replace the loss of the existing car park, should the application of the care ready housing be approved. The proposed car park is located directly next to the existing car park within walking distance to Billingham Town Centre with a footpath being provided to allow for pedestrian access. The proposed scheme includes planting adjacent to the car park to soften the visual appearance of the proposals. As the proposal will be located to the rear of the community centre and will be well screened by landscaping, it is not considered that the proposed car park will appear incongruous within the street scene or appear out of keeping with the character of the surrounding area.

### **Impact upon existing trees**

46. Objectors have raised concerns that mature trees on the site will be removed. However the submitted plans show that the four mature trees on the site will be retained with a tree root protection zone. The trees will be centrally located within the proposed car park. The Council's Landscape Architects have no objections to the proposals.

### **Impact upon playing pitch**

47. Objectors have raised concerns that the proposal will result in the loss of playing space. Although the application site is defined as outdoor playing space the proposed car park will largely be located to the rear of the community centre on land which comprises mature trees. As such it is not considered to form usable playing space. Stockton Borough Council's Leisure and Sports Development Manager has confirmed that although there is a small loss of green space the playing surface will be protected and will be utilised for junior football which meets a strategic need as identified within the Playing Pitch Strategy. Therefore the proposed car park will not lead to a loss of a defined playing pitch as the pitch is simply being moved further to the north within land in Council ownership. A condition is recommended to ensure that the pitch is moved prior to the commencement of development of the car park to which this application relates.

48. Sport England does not object to the proposal subject to the imposition of the recommended condition.

### **Residual matters**

49. With regard to the security concerns raised by objectors the Cleveland Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor has raised no objections to the proposal as the Borough currently has a large number of safer parking facilities and has for many years achieved the Park Mark award standard. These are in varying localities, some in similar locations to the proposed facility. Some have good natural surveillance, some have good electronic surveillance and some have a mixture of both with formal and informal surveillance. Crime and incidents in all these car parks are at a very low level and have been for some considerable years.

50. Every new parking facility is different in terms of locale, design and usage. The design of a new facility can never be prescriptive, all have different security requirements. Incorporating physical security features will establish and maintain a safe and non-threatening parking environment.

51. Lighting has a major impact on crime. Increased lighting levels in dark areas can reduce the public's fear of crime and reduce the opportunity for an offender to commit a crime. An even spread of light avoiding shadows plays an important role in providing safety in parking facilities. It is noted that the proposal includes five lighting columns which will illuminate the whole car park.
52. In new parking facilities, the Crime Prevention Design Advisor has commented that there is the opportunity through design to negate areas of concealment or, at the very least, severely restrict them. As such any shrubbery/hedges should not readily grow above 1metre in height. If positioned adjacent to parking bays, this should be reduced to .5 metre. Additionally any trees should not have a tree canopy that is less than 2metres from the ground and should be maintained in the future to this level, as an open and bright place not only reduces the number of potential hiding places of potential offenders, but also reduces the fear of crime. The submitted landscaping scheme complies with this guidance showing shrubs with a height of between 0.2 and 0.6 metres.
53. Whilst it is noted that natural surveillance is the most effective form of surveillance, where this cannot be achieved CCTV or other measures must be considered. CCTV cameras are proposed at two locations, attached to proposed lighting columns, within the car park to provide surveillance of the whole area.
54. Taking into account that lighting and CCTV is proposed as part of the application the proposal is considered acceptable from a designing out crime perspective.

## **CONCLUSION**

55. The proposed car park is considered to be acceptable in terms of the character and appearance of the surrounding area and it is not considered that it will result in a detrimental impact upon the amenity of neighbouring land users. Furthermore it is not considered that the development will result in any adverse impact upon highway safety. Therefore the proposed development is considered to be in accordance with policy CS2 and CS3 of the adopted Core Strategy.
56. It is recommended that the application be approved subject to the recommended conditions for the reasons set out above.

**Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services  
Contact Officer Mrs Helen Heward Telephone No 01642 526063**

## **WARD AND WARD COUNCILLORS**

<b>Ward</b>	<b>Billingham Central</b>
<b>Ward Councillor</b>	<b>Councillor B Woodhouse</b>
<b>Ward</b>	<b>Billingham Central</b>
<b>Ward Councillor</b>	<b>Councillor Ann McCoy</b>

## **IMPLICATIONS**

**Financial Implications:** As report

**Legal Implications:** As report

**Environmental Implications:** As report

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

**Community Safety Implications:** The provisions of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 have been taken into account in the preparation of this report.

**Background Papers:** 14/0093/FUL