

DELEGATED

**AGENDA NO
PLANNING COMMITTEE**

17 AUGUST 2016

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC
GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

16/0846/LAO

Land at Former Blakeston School Site, Junction Road, Norton

Outline application for a crematorium with associated memorial garden, access roads, car park and landscaping with all matters reserved other than access.

Expiry Date: 12 August 2016

SUMMARY

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has received a call in request and the Local Authority has formally agreed to not issue a decision on the application if the Planning Committee is minded to approve the application to enable the Secretary of State to consider the proposal. The Secretary of State will normally only call in the application unless it conflicts with national policy in important ways, or is nationally significant.

The application site is the former Blakeston School playing fields. Junction Road is to the south and directly north of the site is a railway line. To the east is the remainder of the former school fields and beyond is a residential housing estate. To the west is the Roseworth Community and Social Club, Crossley's Bungalow Jewson's Builders Merchants and the Tesco Supermarket. The application site is identified in the local plan as Blakeston School Playing Field.

Outline Planning permission is sought for the erection of a crematorium with associated memorial garden, access roads, car park and landscaping with all matters reserved other than access which will be taken from Junction Road. Indicative plans show the crematorium on the northern part of the site, along with the car park and various landscaping features. 120 car parking spaces will be provided on site and the proposed crematorium is anticipated to provide around 1,500 cremations per year with 6-8 staff. The opening hours for Registration and Bereavement Services linked with the crematorium would be Monday to Saturday 08:30 – 17:30. However the crematorium itself would have an operating time of 09:15 to 16:00 offering approximately 6 services per day. Service times will be approximately 45 minutes apart, and an additional 15 minutes will be allowed for guests to arrive and depart between each service. It is anticipated that the grounds of the crematorium will have suitable summer and winter opening hours to enable families to visit the remembrance gardens.

Stockton has a growing population and the vast majority of people (77%) opt for cremation. A high proportion are cremated at Teesside Crematorium. A feasibility study demonstrated that the demographics in the Borough would reasonably result in around 1000 cremations per year, a minimum of 750 cremations a year is required to ensure sustainability.

103 neighbour consultations letters were sent, and the application was advertised on site and in the local press along with a public consultation event prior to the application being submitted. 4 letters of objection were received from 2 local residents and 2 letters of support/no objections were also received. Comments also came via a Councillors Ward Surgery. Full details of the objections and other consultation responses are detailed in the main body of this report.

The main material considerations in relation to this application are the principle of development and loss of the playing fields, impact on the character and appearance of the area, impact on neighbours, highway safety, drainage, noise, air quality and any other residual matters.

The application site lies within the defined development limits and is an identified playing field and subject to Saved Policy REC1 which generally resists development which would result in the permanent loss of playing space unless it can fulfil certain criteria, one of which is that alternative provision of equivalent community benefit is made available. In addition Core Strategy Policy CS6 seeks to protect and enhance open space, sport and recreation facilities in the Borough.

In 2015, a Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) was developed in conjunction with Sport England and the National Governing Bodies of Sport. Stockton Council is supporting greater football participation by juniors on artificial grass pitches and the application site has been identified as 'disused/lapsed'.

Sport England as consultee on the application initially raised objections. A Playing Pitch Strategy update paper was subsequently provided to them and a public letter of commitment to address the shortfall of pitches. On the basis of the letter and additional information provided Sport England withdrew the objection to the development of the site on the understanding that the work outlined in the correspondence as referred to in the letter is actioned as soon as possible and a meeting be held in the future to agree an implantation programme. This will be actioned by the Council.

Overall it is considered that with the Councils playing pitch strategy and programme to address the shortfall that the proposed scheme is not in conflict with the aims of Policies REC1 and CS6 as alternative provisions are to be made available and the principle of developing this site is acceptable.

The proposed Crematorium is located on the edge of the urban area. The submitted indicative layout plan incorporates a wide landscape buffer to the eastern and western edges which is intended to provide full screening once it reaches maturity. The Junction Road frontage is indicated as formal gates and railings, with tree planting beyond to filter views towards the Crematorium building. It is the intention that a high quality entrance would be formed and these details will be agreed at reserved matters stage along with all other boundary treatment, signage and external lighting. A condition has been recommended to ensure trees are retained and incorporated into the proposed new landscape buffer and detailed landscaping plans are to be submitted as reserved matters.

The nearest residential receptors are Roseworth Estate, Blakeston Court and Crossley's Bungalow which is located close to the new entrance. The 1902 Cremation Act sets out parameters for the location of the crematorium in relation to existing dwellings and the public highway and the indicative plan complies with those parameters.

The indicative plans shows that with the sensitive siting of the building and car park and the introduction of significant landscape buffers that the development could be successfully introduced into the area without having a significant adverse impact on existing or future neighbouring properties. In terms of noise and disturbance whilst the residents may notice the additional traffic drawn to the site, visitors will generally be quiet and respectful, and it is not considered that the amenities of neighbouring residents will be adversely affected by additional noise and disturbance to such a degree to warrant a refusal of the application.

The proposal is outline with all matters reserved other than access. Highway objections have been raised in relation to the scheme and have been carefully considered. The proposed access would be taken from Junction Road, and take the form of a protected right turn ghost island which is acceptable for the type and scale of the development. The Transport Assessment considered daily trip generation of 276 two-way movements which will arrive and depart outside of peak times along with up to 8 staff that would generally arrive and depart within the peak times. These trips would not have a significantly adverse impact on the highway network and no objection is raised on

highway capacity grounds. There are good levels of pedestrian links and public transport near to the site and the submitted information sets out that 120 car parking spaces will be provided to ensure larger services can be accommodated within the site.

Objections have been raised regarding the cumulative impact of the development taking into account the approved housing schemes and the Master Plan for the Harrogate lane and Yarm Back Lane area. The master plan is not actual committed development and any proposed planning applications will be considered and the appropriate mitigation implemented. Concerns have been raised regarding ambulances being held up in traffic, however any emergencies that arise will be dealt with as they are presently with traffic giving way to emergency vehicles and the Ambulance Service have no objections to the proposed scheme Overall it is considered that the proposed development will not have an adverse impact upon highway safety and the proposal complies with the NPPF and policy CS2 of the Core Strategy.

Matters in relation to the railway, ecology, drainage and flood risk, contamination, air quality and archaeology have been considered and with the use of conditions it is considered that the scheme will be acceptable and full details can be assessed at reserved matters stage.

Other concerns have been raised regarding the future operator of the facility, status of the local plan queries were made over Section 106 monies and a Lottery Grant. All queries have been fully addressed in the main report and do not carry any significant weight which would count against the proposal.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee be minded to approve planning application 16/0846/LAO subject to the following conditions and informatives;

01 Approved Plans

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

Plan Reference Number	Date on Plan
TS10125/300 A	31 March 2016
TS10125-101A	31 March 2016
TS10125-100A	31 March 2016
TS10125/200A	4 April 2016
TS10125/201A	4 April 2016

Reason: To define the consent.

02 Reserved matters - Period for submission of details

Application for the approval of reserved matters shall be made to the Local Planning Authority before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

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

03 Reserved Matters - Period for commencement

The development hereby permitted shall be begun either before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission, or before the expiration of two years from the date of approval of the last reserved matters to be approved, whichever is the later

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

04 Reserved matters - Details

Approval of the details of the layout, scale, appearance and landscaping to the site (the reserved matters), shall be in accordance with the details of a scheme to be submitted to, and approved by the Local Planning Authority before development commences.

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

05. Materials

Details of the external materials to be used in the carrying out of this permission shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, prior to the commencement of built development and the development shall not be carried out except in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In order to allow the Local Planning Authority adequate control over the appearance of the development.

06 Means of Enclosure

All means of enclosure associated with the development hereby approved shall be in accordance with a scheme to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority before installation. Such means of enclosure as agreed shall be erected before the development hereby approved is brought into use and retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the locality

07 Permeable materials

Prior to the development, hereby approved being brought into use, the proposed hardstanding, access and parking areas (for 120 cars) shall be constructed in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority before development commences. Such details shall provide for the use of permeable materials or make provision to direct run-off water from the hard surface to a permeable or porous area or surface. The surface shall be retained for the life of the development.

Reason: To prevent increase risk of flooding from surface water runoff in order to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework.

08 Lighting

The development shall not be brought into use until details of any external lighting including type, position and luminance levels has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Any lighting scheme shall be installed strictly in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the locality and to prevent any adverse impact on the operation of the railway.

09 Drainage

Development shall not commence until a detailed scheme for the disposal of foul and surface water from the development hereby approved has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall take place in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding from any sources in accordance with the NPPF.

09 Sustainable Drainage System

Prior to the commencement of the development, or in such extended time as may be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority, details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority for the implementation, maintenance and management of the sustainable drainage scheme, The scheme shall be implemented and thereafter managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details, information required includes the following:-

- (i) Detailed design of the surface water management system;

- (ii) A build program and timetable for the provision of the critical surface water drainage infrastructure;
- (iii) A management plan detailing how surface water runoff from the site will be managed during construction phase.

Reason: To ensure the site is developed in a manner that will not increase the risk of surface water flooding to site or surrounding area

10. Sustainable Drainage System - Management

The crematorium shall not be brought into use until a management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, the plan shall include the arrangements for adoption by any public body or statutory undertaker, or any other arrangements to secure the operation of the sustainable drainage scheme throughout its lifetime, the plan should also include the following:

- A plan clearly identifying sections of the surface water system that are to be adopted by NWL;
- The arrangements for the short and long term maintenance of the Sustainable Urban Drainage elements of the surface water system;
- Funding arrangements for the long term maintenance of the Sustainable Urban Drainage components.

Reason: To ensure that all elements of the Sustainable Urban Drainage are maintained to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

11. Excavations - Railway

Prior to commencement of works, a method statement for any excavations and earthworks to be carried out within ten metres of the railway undertaker's boundary fence should be submitted for the approval of the Local Planning Authority and the works shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of protecting the railway operational needs and integrity of the railway assets

12 10% Renewables

Prior to the commencement of any of the development hereby approved and unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority, a written scheme detailing how much and by what method, renewable energy will be generated from the development, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No building shall be brought into use until the agreed scheme has been implemented in full accordance with the approved details to the written satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority and shall be maintained in an operational manner thereafter in perpetuity unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of promoting sustainable development in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF and Stockton on Tees Core Strategy Policy 3.

13 Construction Management Plan

Prior to the commencement of development a Construction Management Plan shall be submitted and agreed with the Local Planning Authority to agree the routing of all HGVs movements associated with the construction phases and to effectively control dust emissions from the site works, this shall address earth moving activities, control and treatment of stock piles, parking for use during construction and measures to protect any existing footpaths and verges, vehicle movements, wheel cleansing, sheeting of vehicles, offsite dust/odour monitoring and communication with local residents.. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the details provided within the construction management plan unless first agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: in the interest of highway safety and to reduce the impact on the local area.

14 Ecology

There shall be no site vegetation clearance from 1 March - 31 August, unless the project ecologist has first undertaken a checking survey immediately prior to the clearance and confirms in writing to the Local Planning Authority that no active nests are present.

Reason: to conserve protected species and their habitat

15 Soft Landscaping

No development shall commence until full details of Soft Landscaping has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This will be a detailed planting plan and specification of works indicating soil depths, plant species, numbers, densities, locations inter relationship of plants, stock size and type, grass, and planting methods including construction techniques for pits in hard surfacing and root barriers. All works shall be in accordance with the approved plans. All existing or proposed utility services that may influence proposed tree planting shall be indicated on the planting plan. The scheme shall be completed in the first planting season following commencement of the development; or agreed phases; or prior to the occupation of any part of the development; and the development shall not be brought into use until the scheme has been completed to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure a high quality planting scheme is provided in the interests of visual amenity which contributes positively to local character and enhances bio diversity.

16 Tree Protection

No development shall commence until full details of proposed tree protection has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such protection shall comply with (Section 7, BS 5837:2005 and Volume 4: NJUG Guidelines for the Planning, Installation and Maintenance of Utility Apparatus in Proximity to Trees (Issue 2) Operatives Handbook 19th November 2007). The requirements of Stockton on Tees Borough Council in relation to the British Standard are summarised in the technical note ref INFLS 1 (Tree Protection), which is available upon request. Any such scheme agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority shall be implemented prior to any equipment, machinery or materials being brought to site for use in the development and be maintained until all the equipment, machinery or surplus materials connected with the development have been removed from the site.

Reason: To protect the existing trees on site that the Local Planning Authority consider to be an important visual amenity in the locality that should be appropriately maintained and protected.

17 Landscape management

No development shall commence until full details of proposed soft landscape management has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The soft landscape management plan shall include long term design objectives, management responsibilities and maintenance schedules for all landscape areas/ retained vegetation, other than small privately owned domestic garden [delete as required] shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and implemented in accordance with the approved plan prior to the occupation of the development or approved phases. Any vegetation within a period of 5 years from the date of from the date of completion of the total works that is dying, damaged, diseased or in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority is failing to thrive shall be replaced by the same species of a size at least equal to that of the adjacent successful planting in the next planting season. Landscape maintenance shall be detailed for the initial 5 year establishment from date of completion of the total scheme regardless of any phased development period followed by a long-term management plan for a period of 20 years. The landscape management plan shall be carried out as approved

Reason: To ensure satisfactory landscaping to improve the appearance of the site in the interests of visual amenity.

18 Hard Landscaping

No development shall commence until full details of proposed hard landscaping has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This will include all external finishing materials, finished levels, and all construction details confirming materials, colours, finishes and fixings. The scheme shall be completed to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority and in accordance with the approved details within a period of 12 months from the date on which the development commenced or prior to the occupation of any part of the development. Any defects in materials or workmanship appearing within a period of 12 months from completion of the total development shall be made-good by the owner as soon as practicably possible.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to control details of the proposed development, to ensure a high quality hard landscaping scheme is provided in the interests of visual amenity which contributes positively to local character of the area.

19 Levels

Notwithstanding the submitted plans, prior to the commencement of development, details of the existing and proposed levels of the site including the finished floor levels of the buildings to be erected and any proposed mounding and or earth retention measures (including calculations where such features support the adopted highway) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. Attention should be given to existing vegetation and surrounding landform.

Reason: To ensure that earth-moving operations, retention features and the final landforms resulting are structurally sound, compliment and not detract from the visual amenity of the area, the living conditions of nearby residents or integrity of existing natural features and habitats.

20 Street Furniture

Prior to the installation, details of any street furniture associated with the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority Such street furniture as agreed shall be erected before the development hereby approved is occupied.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the locality.

21 Phase II site investigation

No development hereby approved shall be commenced on site until a Phase II site investigation and associated remedial works has been undertaken in accordance with a scheme of such which has first been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the agreed scheme has been implemented in full. The scheme shall include but not be restricted to detailing the following components;

- A preliminary risk assessment identifying previous uses, potential contaminants, conceptual model indicating sources, pathways and receptors and potentially unacceptable risks arising from contamination at the site.
- A site investigation scheme to provide information for a detailed assessment of the risk to all receptors that may be affected, including those off site.
- The results of the site investigation and detailed risk assessment and, based on these, an options appraisal and remediation strategy.
- A verification plan providing details of the data that will be collected in order to demonstrate that the works set out in the remediation strategy are complete and identifying any requirements for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action.

Reason: In order to address the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 109 and 121.

22. Unexpected land Contamination

In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified, works must be halted on that part of the site affected by the unexpected contamination and it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken to the extent specified by the Local Planning Authority prior to resumption of the works.

Reason: To ensure that contamination is adequately dealt with should it be discovered during construction

23. Construction Hours

Working hours on the site shall be restricted to between the hours of 08:00-18:00 on Mondays-Fridays, 08:00-13:00 on Saturdays and not at any time on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the occupiers of the adjacent properties

24. Operation of the Crematorium

Cremation/funeral services shall only operate between the hours of 09:15 to 16:00 hours Monday to Friday and shall be scheduled to a frequency not greater than 1 service per hour.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to ensure the free flow of traffic.

INFORMATIVE OF REASON FOR PLANNING APPROVAL

Informative: Working Practices

The Local Planning Authority has worked in a positive and proactive manner and sought solutions to problems arising in dealing with the planning application by gaining additional information required to assess the scheme and by the identification and imposition of appropriate planning conditions.

Informative: Highways Transport and Environment

Section 278: the detail design of the site access junction works would be subject to a Section 278 Agreement.

Land Drainage Consent: If it is proposed to discharge surface water into an ordinary watercourse land drainage consent will be required from the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). Land drainage consent is separate application that could take up to 8 weeks for completion and no works on the watercourse can proceed until consent has been approved by the LLFA

Informative: Northumbrian Water

A surface water sewer crosses the site and may be affected by the proposed development. Northumbrian Water do not permit a building over or close to their apparatus. As the layout of the site is only indicative at this stage, you should contact NWA directly to discuss protection of this asset before any detailed designs of the site take place.

Informative: Network Rail

Attention is drawn to the consultation response from Network Rail dated 26 April 2016 which contains a substantial amount of information on their requirements.

BACKGROUND

1. Information submitted to support the application provides background information for the proposal scheme. Stockton has a growing population and the current population is estimated at 194,119. By 2033, based on most recent trends, it is projected to increase to 213,000 and by 2037 to 216,000 (Based on ONS local authorities population projections, published 29th May 2014).

2. In England, the vast majority of people opt for cremation over burial. Figures indicate that the cremation rate is just over 74%. In a significant and growing number of cases, cremations are themselves followed by the formal burial of cremated remains at cemeteries, crematoria and churchyards. Of those deaths registered in Stockton the rate for those choosing cremation is 77%. A high proportion of Stockton's residents are cremated at Teesside Crematorium – latest figures indicate 76% of all those who are cremated from Stockton do so at Teesside. It is reasonable to expect that a large proportion of those cremations would have been carried out in Stockton if a facility existed in the Borough.
3. The Institute of Cemetery & Crematorium Management feasibility study into the possibility of a new crematorium commissioned in 2008 demonstrated that the demographics in the Borough would reasonably result in around 1000 cremations per year. It is generally recognised by modern crematorium developers that a minimum of 750 cremations a year is required to ensure sustainability.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

4. The application site is the former Blakeston School playing fields. There are some areas of shrub and tree planting on site, however it is mostly grass.
5. Junction Road is to the south and directly north of the site is a railway line. To the east is the remainder of the school fields which are indicated for future development and beyond is a residential housing estate. To the west is the Roseworth Community and Social Club, Crossley's Bungalow Jewson's Builders Merchants and the Tesco Supermarket
6. The application site is identified in the local plan as Blakeston School Playing Field.

PROPOSAL

7. Outline Planning permission is sought for the erection of a crematorium with associated memorial garden, access roads, car park and landscaping with all matters reserved other than access. The access will be taken from Junction Road. To accommodate vehicular access to the site, a new ghost island priority right turn is proposed from Junction Road.
8. Indicative plans show the crematorium on the northern part of the site, along with the car park and various landscaping features. There will be two chapels for crematorium services within the main building, with associated remembrance gardens and landscaping. It is envisaged that services will alternate between the two chapels. Car parking spaces will be provided on site and the proposed crematorium is anticipated to provide around 1,500 cremations per year with 6-8 staff.
9. The proposed opening hours for Registration and Bereavement Services linked with the crematorium would be Monday to Saturday 08:30 – 17:30. However the crematorium itself would have an operating time of 09:15 to 16:00 offering approximately 6 services per day. Service times will be approximately 45 minutes apart, and an additional 15minutes will be allowed for guests to arrive and depart between each service.
10. The gardens of remembrance will be designed to provide strewing areas and sections for the interment of cremated remains. It is anticipated that the grounds of the crematorium will have suitable summer and winter opening hours to enable families to tend their graves and visit the remembrance gardens.
11. The application is supported by a range of documents including a Planning Statement, Ecological Assessment, Archaeological Assessment, Flood Risk Assessment, Transport Assessment and Road Safety Audit, and a Geotechnical/Geo-Environmental Interpretative Report.

CONSULTATIONS

12. The following Consultees were notified and the most up-to-date comments received are set out below:-

13. **Spatial Planning & Regeneration**

As you will be aware section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires an application for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless the material considerations surrounding the proposal indicate otherwise. The development plan for Stockton on Tees Borough is made up of policies from the adopted Core Strategy (2010) and saved policies from Local Plan Alteration Number One (2006).

Policies of relevance to this application which are considered in detail in this response are:

- Saved Local Plan Policy REC1: Relates to the tests for development which would result in the permanent loss of playing space.
- Core Strategy Policy CS6: identifies that the quantity and quality of open space, sport, and recreation facilities throughout the borough will be protected and enhanced.

As you will be aware, the NPPF includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development which requires proposals in accordance with the development plan to be approved without delay. Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF, or specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted. Paragraph 215 of the NPPF states that development plans adopted under the Town and Country Planning Act should give due weight to "relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with this framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given)."

In this instance, the relevant policies in the Development Plan, as specified above, are generally consistent with national planning policy (NPPF para 73/74). In addition to these policies, the determination of the application should consider other planning policies and material considerations relating to the design of the development, amenity of residents, highway impact, amongst other things.

Open Space: Policy CS6 is supported by the Open Space, Recreation and Landscaping SPD which provides guidance on standards for open space based on a PPG17 assessment of open spaces and built facilities in the Borough - this site is identified as Blakeston School Playing Field (Outdoor Sports Facility). The SPD provides standards for the level of outdoor sports facilities. However, in accordance with guidance in the NPPG the Council have undertaken a Playing Pitch Strategy (2015) which will replace this element of the SPD. Within the 2015 Stockton-on-Tees Playing Pitch Strategy, in line with Sport England and the Football Association, Stockton Council are supporting greater football participation by juniors on artificial grass pitches (AGP's). As such the former Blakeston School has been identified within the strategy as a 'disused/ lapsed' once AGP provision is sufficient to accommodate mini/youth football.

14. **Highways Transport and Environment**

Highways, Transport and Environment, subject to the comments below, have no objection to the outline application for a crematorium with associated memorial garden, access roads, car park and landscaping with all matters reserved other than access. The proposed site access would take the form of a Protected Right Turn junction, as shown on drawing ref TS10125/201 Rev A, and this is considered acceptable for the scale of development. Should the application be approved, the detail design of the site access junction works would be subject to a Section 278 Agreement.

A Transport Statement has been submitted in support of the application and this has demonstrated that the net increase in two traffic flows, during the AM and PM peak periods, would result from staff movements only as all other trips would be outside of the peak periods. This scale of trip generation during the peak periods, which equates to an additional

8 trips, would not have a significantly adverse impact on the highway network, and in the context of NPPF, no objection is raised on highway capacity grounds.

A Construction Management Plan should be agreed prior to construction commencing on the site and this should be secured by condition.

The indicative site layout is considered acceptable. It includes extensive soft landscape areas to separate different areas of the crematorium and memorial gardens and formal gates and railing. A wide landscape buffer to the eastern and western edges of the site, would, on maturity provide full screening of the Crematorium building from views afforded from these directions. Tree planting on the Junction Road frontage would also serve to filter views towards the Crematorium building.

As part of any reserved matters application a detailed landscape plan will be required including full details of all pedestrian and vehicular routes, proposed levels, hard and soft landscaping, boundary treatments, signage and external lighting. This information should be secured by condition.

Confirmation is required of the method of providing 10% embedded renewable energy supply backed up with data on estimated energy demand and how this will be offset or reduced and this should be secured by condition.

A Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted in support of the application. Detail regarding the management of surface water runoff from the proposed development should be secured by condition.

15. The Environment Agency

Application is outside the scope of applications that the EA will provide comments for, therefore no comments will be made.

16. Sport England (final letter – the previous objections can be viewed on line)

I have reviewed the letter and the commitment to address the shortfall of pitches. On the basis of the letter I am willing to withdraw Sport England's current objection on the understanding that the work outlined in previous correspondence referred to in the letter is actioned as soon as possible. To that end I would welcome an invite to my colleague David McGuire to meet with the team who will be overseeing this work as soon as possible to agree an implantation programme. Please note that it is unlikely public funding can be used in the delivery of the proposed programme of works to mitigate the loss of playing field.

17. Environmental Health Unit

I have checked the documentation provided and have no objection in principle to the development. I will assess the Air Quality and Noise Assessments when submitted as part of the full planning application.

18. Contaminated Land Officer

I note the application is outline in nature and therefore am not able to consider fully all aspects of the proposal as some final detail is not known. However, the Arup Phase I Investigation Report (July 2015) does cover the known elements in a thorough and robust manner and makes conclusions based upon stated assumptions which will have a bearing on risk assessment e.g. no burials to take place on site. With this in mind, the report is accepted as having addressed the requirements of Phase I of the Environment Agency (EA) and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) guidelines on conceptual Risk Assessment, namely -

No development shall be permitted to start until a staged approach to the investigation, carried out by a qualified environmental consultant, is recommended. This would normally include the following steps: -

Phase I desk study and site reconnaissance including conceptual site model, which may lead to,

Phase II staged intrusive site investigation and characterisation, which in turn may lead to,

Phase III risk management (which may involve remediation and validation);

subject to the proposals within Section 9 of the report being adopted, one of which is the continuation of Phase II work.

19. Network Rail

With reference to the protection of the railway, Network Rail has no objection in principle to the development, but below are some requirements which must be met,

Drainage: All surface and foul water arising from the proposed works must be collected and diverted away from Network Rail property. In the absence of detailed plans all soakaways must be located so as to discharge away from the railway infrastructure. The following points need to be addressed:

1. There should be no increase to average or peak flows of surface water run off leading towards Network Rail assets, including earthworks, bridges and culverts.
2. All surface water runoff and sewage effluent should be handled in accordance with Local Council and Water Company regulations.
3. Attenuation should be included as necessary to protect the existing surface water drainage systems from any increase in average or peak loadings due to normal and extreme rainfall events.

It is expected that the preparation and implementation of a surface water drainage strategy addressing the above points will be conditioned as part of any approval.

Fail Safe Use of Crane and Plant: All operations, including the use of cranes or other mechanical plant working adjacent to Network Rail's property, must at all times be carried out in a "fail safe" manner such that in the event of mishandling, collapse or failure, no materials or plant are capable of falling within 3.0m of the nearest rail of the adjacent railway line, or where the railway is electrified, within 3.0m of overhead electrical equipment or supports.

Excavations/Earthworks: All excavations/ earthworks carried out in the vicinity of Network Rail property/ structures must be designed and executed such that no interference with the integrity of that property/ structure can occur. If temporary works compounds are to be located adjacent to the operational railway, these should be included in a method statement for approval by Network Rail. Prior to commencement of works, full details of excavations and earthworks to be carried out near the railway undertaker's boundary fence should be submitted for the approval of the Local Planning Authority acting in consultation with the railway undertaker and the works shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved details. Where development may affect the railway, consultation with the Asset Protection Project Manager should be undertaken. Network Rail will not accept any liability for any settlement, disturbance or damage caused to any development by failure of the railway infrastructure nor for any noise or vibration arising from the normal use and/or maintenance of the operational railway. No right of support is given or can be claimed from Network Rails infrastructure or railway land.

Security of Mutual Boundary: Security of the railway boundary will need to be maintained at all times. If the works require temporary or permanent alterations to the mutual boundary the applicant must contact Network Rail's Asset Protection Project Manager.

Fencing: Although the existing NR fence is adequate in preventing trespass the developer may wish to soften or alter its appearance as part of the boundary treatments for the site. It should be noted that our fence should not be altered or moved in any way and nothing should be put in place to prevent us from maintaining our boundary fence as we are obliged to do so in law. It is our experience that most developments seek to provide their own boundary enclosure so as to avoid such future problems. It would also help to reduce the impact of railway noise. We would advise that the developer should provide a trespass proof fence adjacent to Network Rail's boundary (minimum 1.8m high) and make provision for its future maintenance and renewal. Network Rail's existing fencing / wall must not be removed or damaged.

Method Statements/Fail Safe/Possessions: Method statements may require to be submitted to Network Rail's Asset Protection Project Manager at the below address for approval prior to works commencing on site. This should include an outline of the proposed method of construction, risk assessment in relation to the railway and construction traffic management plan. Where appropriate an asset protection agreement will have to be entered into. Where any works cannot be carried out in a "fail-safe" manner, it will be necessary to restrict those works to periods when the railway is closed to rail traffic i.e. "possession" which must be booked via Network Rail's Asset Protection Project Manager and are subject to a minimum

prior notice period for booking of 20 weeks. Generally if excavations/piling/buildings are to be located within 10m of the railway boundary a method statement should be submitted for NR approval.

OPE: Once planning permission has been granted and at least six weeks prior to works commencing on site the Asset Protection Project Manager (OPE) MUST be contacted, contact details as below. The OPE will require to see any method statements/drawings relating to any excavation, drainage, demolition, lighting and building work or any works to be carried out on site that may affect the safety, operation, integrity and access to the railway.

Vibro-impact Machinery; Where vibro-compaction machinery is to be used in development, details of the use of such machinery and a method statement should be submitted for the approval of the Local Planning Authority acting in consultation with the railway undertaker prior to the commencement of works and the works shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved method statement

Two Metre Boundary Consideration should be given to ensure that the construction and subsequent maintenance can be carried out to any proposed buildings or structures without adversely affecting the safety of, or encroaching upon Network Rail's adjacent land, and therefore all/any building should be situated at least 2 metres from Network Rail's boundary. This will allow construction and future maintenance to be carried out from the applicant's land, thus reducing the probability of provision and costs of railway look-out protection, supervision and other facilities necessary when working from or on railway land.

Encroachment: The developer/applicant must ensure that their proposal, both during construction, and after completion of works on site, does not affect the safety, operation or integrity of the operational railway, Network Rail and its infrastructure or undermine or damage or adversely affect any railway land and structures. There must be no physical encroachment of the proposal onto Network Rail land, no over-sailing into Network Rail air-space and no encroachment of foundations onto Network Rail land and soil. There must be no physical encroachment of any foundations onto Network Rail land. Any future maintenance must be conducted solely within the applicant's land ownership. Should the applicant require access to Network Rail land then must seek approval from the Network Rail Asset Protection Team. Any unauthorised access to Network Rail land or air-space is an act of trespass and we would remind the council that this is a criminal offence (s55 British Transport Commission Act 1949). Should the applicant be granted access to Network Rail land then they will be liable for all costs incurred in facilitating the proposal.

Trees/Shrubs/Landscaping: Where trees/shrubs are to be planted adjacent to the railway boundary these shrubs should be positioned at a minimum distance greater than their predicted mature height from the boundary. Certain broad leaf deciduous species should not be planted adjacent to the railway boundary. We would wish to be involved in the approval of any landscaping scheme adjacent to the railway. Where landscaping is proposed as part of an application adjacent to the railway it will be necessary for details of the landscaping to be known and approved to ensure it does not impact upon the railway infrastructure. Any hedge planted adjacent to Network Rail's boundary fencing for screening purposes should be so placed that when fully grown it does not damage the fencing or provide a means of scaling it. No hedge should prevent Network Rail from maintaining its boundary fencing. Lists of trees that are permitted and those that are not permitted are provided below and these should be added to any tree planting conditions:

Acceptable: Birch (*Betula*), Crab Apple (*Malus Sylvestris*), Field Maple (*Acer Campestre*), Bird Cherry (*Prunus Padus*), Wild Pear (*Pyrus Communis*), Fir Trees - Pines (*Pinus*), Hawthorne (*Cretaeagus*), Mountain Ash - Whitebeams (*Sorbus*), False Acacia (*Robinia*), Willow Shrubs (*Shrubby Salix*), Thuja Plicatata "Zebрина"

Not Acceptable: Acer (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), Aspen - Poplar (*Populus*), Small-leaved Lime (*Tilia Cordata*), Sycamore - Norway Maple (*Acer*), Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus Hippocastanum*), Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea Sativa*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Black poplar (*Populus nigra* var, *betulifolia*), Lombardy Poplar (*Populus nigra* var, *italica*), Large-leaved lime (*Tilia platyphyllos*), Common lime (*Tilia x europea*) A comprehensive list of permitted tree species is available upon request.

Lighting: Where new lighting is to be erected adjacent to the operational railway the potential for train drivers to be dazzled must be eliminated. In addition the location and colour of lights

must not give rise to the potential for confusion with the signalling arrangements on the railway. Detail of any external lighting should be provided as a condition if not already indicated on the application. Network Rail is required to recover all reasonable costs associated with facilitating these works.

I would advise that in particular the drainage, boundary fencing, method statements/OPE, lighting and landscaping should be the subject of conditions, the reasons for which can include the safety, operational needs and integrity of the railway. For the other matters we would be pleased if an informative could be attached to the decision notice. The method statement will need to be agreed with Asset Protection Project Manager

20. Natural England

Natural England has no comments to make on this application.

21. Tees Archaeology

The applicant has submitted a desk based archaeological assessment in support of the planning application, in line with the advice given in the NPPF (para. 128). I have read this document and note its contents. I agree that the development area contains no known heritage assets. The report suggests that there is a low to medium archaeological potential for prehistoric to Roman period activity. This potential will have been reduced to some extent by any landscaping works and drainage that took place during the creation of the existing playing fields. I have looked at the proposed plan for the crematorium and memorial garden and note that new build is limited to two discrete areas and the proposed access road. Given the low archaeological potential and the relatively small scale of the expected ground disturbance I do not think there will be a significant impact upon archaeological remains. I therefore have no objection to the proposal and have no further comments to make.

22. Northumbrian Water Limited

In making our response Northumbrian Water (NW) assess the impact of the proposed development on our assets and assess the capacity within Northumbrian Water's network to accommodate and treat the anticipated flows arising from the development. We do not offer comment on aspects of planning applications that are outside of our area of control.

Having assessed the proposed development against the context outlined above we have the following comments to make:

The planning application does not provide sufficient detail with regards to the management of foul and surface water from the development for NW to be able to assess our capacity to treat the flows from the development. We would therefore request the following condition:

Condition: Development shall not commence until a detailed scheme for the disposal of foul and surface water from the development hereby approved has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Northumbrian Water. Thereafter the development shall take place in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding from any sources in accordance with the NPPF.

How To Satisfy The Condition: The Developer should develop their Surface Water Drainage solution by working through the Hierarchy of Preference contained within Revised Part H of the Building Regulations 2010. Namely Soakaway; Watercourse, and finally Sewer. If sewer is the only option the developer should contact NW to agree allowable discharge rates & points into the public sewer network.

For information only: We can inform you that a surface water sewer crosses the site and may be affected by the proposed development. Northumbrian Water do not permit a building over or close to our apparatus. As the layout of the site is only indicative at this stage, we ask the applicant to contact us directly to discuss protection of this asset before any detailed designs of the site take place.

23. Northern Gas Networks

Northern Gas Networks has no objections to these proposals, however there may be apparatus in the area that may be at risk during construction works and should the planning application be approved, then we require the promoter of these works to contact us directly

to discuss our requirements in detail. Should diversionary works be required these will be fully chargeable.

24. National Grid

National Grid has identified that it has apparatus in the vicinity of your enquiry which may be affected by the activities specified. As your proposed activity is in close proximity to National Grid's Transmission assets we have referred your enquiry/consultation to our Asset Protection team for further detailed assessment. We request that you do not commence work or take further action with regards to your proposal until you hear from us. We will endeavour to contact you within 21 days from the date of this response.

Asset Protection Comments :National Grid has no objections to the above proposal which is in close proximity to a High Voltage Transmission Overhead Line – YYJ and our High Pressure Transmission Underground Cable.

25. Councillors Beall and Councillor Inman

Cllr Inman & I are totally supportive of this much needed facility for the Borough on this site. Through our many resident contacts, we have gauged strong local support from both within and outside the Ward. The issue of traffic flow on Junction Rd appears to have been addressed through the protected right hand turn into the site planned for westerly flowing traffic.

26. Northern Powergrid

No comments received

27. University Hospital Of North Tees

No comments received

28. Durham County Badger Group

No comments received

29. Councillor Nigel Cooke

No comments received

30. Councillor Norma Stephenson

No comments received

31. Councillor Norma Wilburn

No comments received

32. Councillor David Wilburn

No comments received

33. Councillor J Gardner

No comments received

PUBLICITY

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

35. John Latimer, 1A Countisbury Road Norton

I object to this application. This site should be retained as public open space. Stockton BC's long term plans for the area served by existing roads Junction Road / Harrowgate Lane/ Darlington Back Lane / Yarm Back Lane has inadequate provision for road network infrastructure. The claim of the Transport Statement, included with the application, is that there is a negligible increase in traffic arising from this development of 1.5%, which is below a trigger point of 5%. This is a very blinkered approach to the wider Master Plan, where each individual application may fall below the trigger of 5% but whose aggregate will eventually

amount to far in excess of 5% or indeed 5% of 16910. The trigger point of 5% now applies to 16910 but what will it be in year 2030 after the addition of many developments with an individual impact of <5%? For example after the 1.5% increase the 16910 to 17164 that becomes the new benchmark against which the trigger is assessed. If the effect of the crematorium traffic is 1.5% the effect of the Master Plan is unimaginable with Councillor David Wilburn's "permanent gridlock" (see below) a distinct possibility? Stockton BC has a duty to immediately assess the final aggregate of its Master Plan and inform the public of that aggregate percentage. This will inform the public of what to anticipate that the reported existing traffic flows may become in future years if Stockton BC Master Plan reaches fruition when forecast. The Master Plan envisages that the existing local road network will only be improved at the junction of Durham Road / Junction Road / Harrowgate Lane and at the junction of Darlington Back Lane / Yarm Back Lane. Current public responses to extant and appealed planning decisions express a fear of gridlock. Stockton BC professionals have not allayed those fears, which many see as the creation of an effective ring road from A19 Norton to A66 Elton. This is what Councillor David Wilburn said to me about the approved planning application for 13/2387/OUT | Outline application for proposed development of approximately 350 residential dwellings and associated access. | Summerville Farm Durham Road Stockton-on-Tees TS21 3LP: *Thank you for your informative letter. In a perfect world all infrastructure would be in place before houses were built - with the current massive underfunding of Local Government this will never now be the case. I was happy to speak against the creeping additional housing on the Free School site but thought the initial development off the Harrowgate Lane site would be an exciting opportunity for the area. I would not myself wish to live next to a humming Sub Station or under those enormous pylons but many may. As you say this must - in the future - lead to improvements in local roads if we are not to live in permanent gridlock.* Traffic noise and pollution should also be high on the agenda of a responsible Council.

Letter : Please add SBC document <https://www.stockton.gov.uk/media/6200/crematorium-faq.pdf> to the planning application document file. There is a public perception that this planning application concerns the development of a municipal crematorium, which is not the case, as is shown in the Stockton BC document under the heading "If planning is granted what happens next". This planning application is no more than a marketing pitch by Stockton BC to developers of privately, not municipally, operated crematoria of whom there are no more than a handful in the UK. It must be assumed that Stockton BC has already been in contact with this handful of potential developers who have not yet swallowed the proposition so Stockton BC is intensifying its marketing efforts by being the source of media stories such as <http://www.gazettelive.co.uk/news/plans-stockton-crematorium-move-forward-11193962>, which purports to show not only a public appetite for a crematorium in the municipality of Stockton Borough but a public appetite for this specific location, which Stockton BC wishes to dispose of to meet its budgetary targets set some years ago in its Medium Term Financial Plan. The Stockton BC document under the heading "Previous consultation included a cemetery. Why is there no cemetery now?", refers to ground constraints on the site, which are not explained other than that the total area for burials equated to 12.3 years. Did Stockton BC consider the whole site which it is splitting in half with the other half being sold by Stockton BC for the potential development of 80 houses and a Lidl Supermarket. Stockton BC is in the statutory process, much delayed by Stockton BC, which this planning application effectively sidesteps, of formulating a local plan, which it is obliged to submit to public consultation then a public inquiry by a Planning Inspector appointed by the Government before it is approved by a Government Minister and formally adopted by Stockton BC. Part of that developing plan includes the use of the former Blakeston School site for housing and cemetery, however this is still far away from formal adoption, which is the responsibility of the delay by Stockton BC. The, much delayed, statutory process began years ago with Stockton BC undertaking the required Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, which it informed statutory consultees of and the is how Sport England responded to the proposal for the Blakeston School site in November 2011: "Sport England's concerns with this site are twofold. Firstly the red edge includes more than just buildings and hardstanding, with the western end including land that we consider was last used as playing field. Secondly Sport England also protect playing field from development that will prejudice

its use. The retained playing field will still need to be serviced by changing accommodation, car parking, and equipment storage facilities in order to operate properly, and these ancillary areas will be lost to redevelopment". In the mind of Sport England Stockton BC may be free to redevelop the buildings and hardstandings for alternative uses, subject to Government Minister, Department of Education, approving disposal but it is not free to dispose of the playing fields and that these would need to have changing facilities provided if the existing facilities were demolished. Stockton BC had received a grant from the Big Lottery Fund (New Opportunities Fund) of Big Lottery Fund May 2013: "I informed you that we did not hold any information about grants awarded through the Spaces for Sports and Arts programme as this was administered by Sport England. I have however searched our records which indicate Stockton on Tees Borough Council were awarded £307,699 for improved sports facilities at Blakeston School through the New Opportunities Fund ("NOF") for P.E. and Sport programme in July 2003. The funding was originally for a new dance studio and fitness suite, provided with a covered link between the changing rooms and sports hall, and to improve the changing facilities at Blakeston School. The grant was transferred to North Shore Health Academy when the Council took ownership of the former Blakeston site". Stockton BC were concerned enough in a report to Cabinet to say, but were allowed to sidestep any clawback by the Big Lottery Fund. The £307,699 from 2003 was written off by the act of demolition by Stockton BC: "If the community facilities were to be removed, then it is recognised that the issue of possible grant claw-back would need to be addressed. A strong case would be made in mitigation that new and greatly enhanced community and sports facilities have been developed at the new Academy Site (including MyPlace). If enacted, the grant conditions would require repayment of part/all of the current market value and again a robust case would be made that the market value is effectively nil".

Stockton BC, in granting planning permission for housing development at The Elms, Blakeston Lane, imposed a planning condition, Section 106, that provided a community benefit of a contribution of £97000 to provide a discrete community entrance to the built community sports facilities at Blakeston School and had given itself planning permission, 05/0703/FUL | Erection of new entrance lobby/reception | Blakeston Community School Junction Road Norton Stockton-on-Tees TS19 9LT, which it subsequently abandoned, not collecting the available £97000, because of its change of plans for the former Blakeston School site that brought about demolition. The mindset of Stockton BC has been set since the pre 2010 election decision by the Government of the day to fund North Shore Academy relocation under its Building Schools for the Future programme, which was rescinded by post 2010 election Government after which funding for North Shore Academy was reinstated. The drive within Stockton BC to have this site disposed of for redevelopment is primarily its own financial needs. It shows no qualms about writing off public money that wasn't its own, or turning down a contribution that would have retained community facilities, because if it had it would lose the potential of the sale value adding to its own coffers. It would, if it could, offer the whole site for housing development because this is its maximum value but it is having, in the first instance, to look to the development of a crematoria and remembrance gardens because of the constraints it sees to redevelopment uses that statutory consultees may have e.g. protection of playing fields by Sport England. If a private developer of a crematorium doesn't come forward and Sport England has given its blessing to this use, Stockton BC will then turn its attention to using the site for housing. The locality will lose green space in its entirety. Is that were residents really want to end up. Come on Stockton BC be transparent with the public and also bring forward the statutory local plan without further delay so the public can have its say and correct what was printed in the Evening Gazette about a public consultation: "Consultation on the crematorium plan will come to an end at the beginning of May, before councillors make a decision". Stockton BC Monitoring Officer confirms that there is no open current consultation.

Letter 3: The exchange between Stockton BC and Sport England on the use of this site goes back to SHLAA in year 2011 with Sport England response copied below. At this time there was evidence of two conflicting schemes in the minds of departments within Stockton BC. The planning department was minded to retain the community sports facilities at the Blakeston site and incorporate into the proposals for housing development, which was more or less in accord with Sport England response. The Executive, even at this time, saw the

disposal value of the Blakeston site as the driver of policy and this mindset has come to fruition as was indicated in its Medium Term Financial Plan statements. Stockton BC received a Lottery grant circa £300000k which was invested in the Blakeston community facilities. At the point of decision for demolition there was concern that that Lottery grant would have to be paid back out of the proceeds of disposal, however, the Lottery Fund agreed not to reclaim, so the grant was effectively written off. Stockton BC had also planned for a Section 106 planning condition, on planning application 03/2954/OUT, contribution of £97000 to build a discrete community entrance and actually carried out the design, applied for planning permission, 05/0703/FUL which was granted. This was abandoned and the contribution never collected confirming that the policy of Stockton BC has always gone in the direction of wholesale disposal of the Blakeston site. In parallel with the Blakeston site The Executive set its mind on the disposal of the William Newton School (Education Centre) site and this has followed a similar path to that of the Blakeston site with it now being at the point of sale for housing development. Stockton BC has recognised that these losses of open space playing fields were, until abrupt closure, in regular use as local league football facilities and made the following observation in a report: "The report to Cabinet in May 2013 contained a specific recommendation that this former school field should be made available in part for affordable housing. However, subsequently an opportunity has arisen to develop for affordable housing the nearby Abbey Hill Workshops Site. This alternative would allow the Frederick Nattrass Site to be retained as open space, which in turn would protect the amount of open space in that area and also supports the preferred option for the EDC Site, which would include development of the area of the site not required for school use". Inspection of the Frederick Nattrass site suggests that although the grass is cut regularly that it is not open to the public because it remains permanently locked. There is no pitch marking or goal posts. A junior football team is sometimes seen training / playing here but it brings its own portable junior sized goal posts / nets. This team may have to clamber over the fence to gain entry? I draw a similar conclusion to this to that of Sport England, i.e. that Stockton BC is ahead of itself in its drive to dispose of these sites for alternative uses, which is the result of its financial needs rather than its duty to maintain adequate playing fields for public use. On the horizon, Stockton BC has on its mind a massive urban extension within a mile of the Blakeston site that will need servicing with sports facilities. Perhaps Stockton BC should retain and redevelop the facilities it has chosen to abandon at the Blakeston site? Please add this to Documents file, 16/0846/LAO.

36. Susan Latimer 1A Countisbury Road Norton

This is not an appropriate site for a crematorium. Any crematorium developed within the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees should be located in a pleasanter countryside setting, which is away from commercial activity and because of its countryside setting has the time needed for screening to propagate. Teesside Crematorium is in a pleasant setting, which was the case from the outset and the recent development of the privately operated crematorium at Kirkleatham, Borough of Redcar and Cleveland is in the countryside away from urban developments. I lived at Rudyard Avenue, Roseworth from the 1950s to 1970s and my childhood memories of the playing field that Stockton BC now wishes to benefit from its sales value to a private developer of crematoria is that I and other children used it as an adventure play area where, for example, we made dens. This field should be retained as public open space. Stockton BC does not seem to have found a crematoria developer willing to buy this site because the applicant is Stockton BC. Stockton BC has issues to overcome arising from the history of use of this field, which may mean that it is attempting to construct a case for change of use from playing field to crematorium and memorial gardens with an eye on eventually disposing of the site for the more lucrative sale to a developer of private houses. Giving itself planning permission for the current application and constructing the access will lead to an extant permission, which will remove Sport England from any future consultation process. The case for housing development will be that the planned use for a Crematorium and Memorial Gardens didn't come about as originally hoped and that the land is suitable for other uses. The public of Stockton-on-Tees, more particularly those living in the area surrounding this site, will lose a green space, which they maybe can only attempt to save by asking Stockton BC to register it as village green, see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/town->

and-village-greens-how-to-register or "there is an alternative means of protecting land through the planning system. The new Local Green Space designation empowers local communities to protect green spaces of local importance without the need to meet strict statutory criteria. Sites may be designated for a variety of reasons, including their setting, nature conservation benefits, or their quietness. Local communities will be able to identify green spaces through their local and neighbourhood plans, which will then receive protection equivalent to Green Belt, ruling out new development other than in very special circumstances. Consideration within the local planning process will ensure that the new designation will complement and not undermine investment in homes, jobs and other essential services". Stockton BC should return to a consultation process that asks the public if it prefers to retain this site as public open space or develop it for crematorium and memorial garden. The limitation of the consultation process undertaken has not indicated to the public that this site can, if that is the preference, remain as public open space. I object to this planning application.

37. Comments via Councillor David Wilburn's Ward Surgery

At a recent surgery a woman expressed some concerns about corteges proceeding up Junction Road towards the Crematorium with the large number of emergency vehicles (she suggested 10/hour) competing for the same space and possibly being subject to considerable delays. She is/has been a Night Matron in A&E and says lives can be lost in minutes and even seconds in the arrival of the ambulance at A&E. Her initial reaction was that the Crematorium should go somewhere else. I said that this was most unlikely at this stage but suggested that if drivers were informally directed to travel up Durham Road to the Horse and Jockey and access the Crem from that direction, this would possibly solve/ reduce this problem. She was happy that this was a big improvement so I thought I would pass this on to you and the development team for consideration.

38. Mr And Mrs T McRitchie 77 Blakeston Court Stockton

No objections - I think it is a good idea

39. Barbara Robinson 10 Riccarton Close Stockton

No objection

PLANNING POLICY

40. 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. 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

National Planning Policy Framework

41. 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.

Local Planning Policy

42. The following planning policies are considered to be relevant to the consideration of this application.
43. Core Strategy Policy 1 (CS1) - The Spatial Strategy
1. The regeneration of Stockton will support the development of the Tees Valley City Region, as set out in Policies 6 and 10 of the Regional Spatial Strategy 4, acting as a focus for jobs, services and facilities to serve the wider area, and providing city-scale facilities consistent with its role as part of the Teesside conurbation. In general, new development will be located within the conurbation, to assist with reducing the need to travel.
44. Core Strategy Policy 2 (CS2) - Sustainable Transport and Travel
1. 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.
45. Core Strategy Policy 3 (CS3) - Sustainable Living and Climate Change
2. All new non-residential developments will be completed to a Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) of 'very good' up to 2013 and thereafter a minimum rating of 'excellent'.
3. The minimum carbon reduction targets will remain in line with Part L of the Building Regulations, achieving carbon neutral domestic properties by 2016, and non domestic properties by 2019, although it is expected that developers will aspire to meet targets prior to these dates.
4. To meet carbon reduction targets, energy efficiency measures should be embedded in all new buildings. If this is not possible, or the targets are not met, then on-site district renewable and low carbon energy schemes will be used. Where it can be demonstrated that neither of these options is suitable, micro renewable, micro carbon energy technologies or a contribution towards an off-site renewable energy scheme will be considered.
5. For all major developments, including residential developments comprising 10 or more units, and non-residential developments exceeding 1000 square metres gross floor space, at least 10% of total predicted energy requirements will be provided, on site, from renewable energy sources.
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.
46. Core Strategy Policy 6 (CS6) - Community Facilities
1. Priority will be given to the provision of facilities that contribute towards the sustainability of communities. In particular, the needs of the growing population of Ingleby Barwick should be catered for.

3. The quantity and quality of open space, sport and recreation facilities throughout the Borough will be protected and enhanced. Guidance on standards will be set out as part of the Open Space, Recreation and Landscaping Supplementary Planning Document.

47. Core Strategy Policy 10 (CS10) Environmental Protection and Enhancement

3. The separation between settlements, together with the quality of the urban environment, will be maintained through the protection and enhancement of the openness and amenity value of:

i) Strategic gaps between the conurbation and the surrounding towns and villages, and between Eaglescliffe and Middleton St George.

ii) Green wedges within the conurbation, including:

- _ River Tees Valley from Surtees Bridge, Stockton to Yarm;
- _ Leven Valley between Yarm and Ingleby Barwick;
- _ Bassleton Beck Valley between Ingleby Barwick and Thornaby;
- _ Stainsby Beck Valley, Thornaby;
- _ Billingham Beck Valley;
- _ Between North Billingham and Cowpen Lane Industrial Estate.

iii) Urban open space and play space.

9. New development will be directed towards areas of low flood risk, that is Flood Zone 1, as identified by the Borough's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). In considering sites elsewhere, the sequential and exceptions tests will be applied, as set out in Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk, and applicants will be expected to carry out a flood risk assessment.

10. When redevelopment of previously developed land is proposed, assessments will be required to establish:

- _ the risks associated with previous contaminative uses;
- _ the biodiversity and geological conservation value; and
- _ the advantages of bringing land back into more beneficial use.

48. Saved Policy REC1 of the adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan

Development which would result in the permanent loss of playing space will not be permitted unless:

- (i) Sports and recreation facilities can best be retained and enhanced through the redevelopment of a small part of the site, or
- (ii) Alternative provision of equivalent community benefit is made available, or
- (iii) The land is not required to satisfy known local needs.

MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

49. The main material considerations in relation to this application are the principle of development and loss of the playing fields, impact on the character and appearance of the area, impact on neighbours, highway safety, drainage, noise, air quality and any other residual matters.

Principle of Development

50. The application site lies within the defined development limits as identified within the Local Development Framework, however the site is an identified playing field and subject to Saved Policy REC1 which generally resists development which would result in the permanent loss of playing space unless it can fulfil certain criteria, one of which is that alternative provision of equivalent community benefit is made available. In addition Core Strategy Policy CS6 seeks to protect and enhance open space, sport and recreation facilities in the Borough.

51. In 2015, a Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) was developed in conjunction with Sport England and the National Governing Bodies of Sport. Stockton Council are supporting greater football participation by juniors on artificial grass pitches (AGP's) and the former Blakeston School has been identified within the strategy as a 'disused/ lapsed'.

52. Sport England were consulted and initially raised objections as the development of the land was not considered to accord with any of the exceptions to Sport England's Playing Fields Policy or with Paragraph 74 of the NPPF. Following further discussions with Sport England and other Governing Bodies, a Playing Pitch Strategy update paper was subsequently provided to them demonstrate the impact of playing pitch developments that have taken place in the Borough since the completion of the PPS in July 2015 and a public letter of commitment to address the shortfall of pitches.
53. On the basis of the letter and additional information provided Sport England have withdrawn their objection to the development of the site on the understanding that the work outlined in the correspondence as referred to in the letter is actioned as soon as possible and a meeting be held in the future to agree an implantation programme. This will be actioned by the Council.
54. Overall it is considered that with the Councils playing pitch strategy and programme to address the shortfall, it is considered that the proposed scheme is not generally in conflict with the aims of Policies REC1 and CS6 as alternative provisions are to be made available.

Landscape and Visual Impact

55. The proposed Crematorium is located on the edge of the urban area, on part of the former Blakeston School site. There are a number of publicly accessible viewpoints which currently have views of the site. An indicative layout plan accompanies the application which incorporates a wide landscape buffer to the eastern and western edges of the site which is intended to provide full screening of the development once it reaches maturity. The Junction Road frontage is indicated as formal gates and railings, with tree planting beyond to filter views towards the Crematorium building. It is the intention that the entrance would be formed with high quality decorative gates and railings with brick piers and these details will be agreed at reserved matters stage along with all other boundary treatment, signage and external lighting.
56. There are some lower quality existing trees and shrubs around the perimeter of the site and the Landscape architects have advised that the trees should be retained and incorporated into the proposed new landscape buffer. A condition has been recommended to this regard.
57. Highways Transport and Environment have raised no objections to the proposal from a landscaping standpoint subject to a number of conditions including the provision of detailed landscaping plans which have been recommended.
58. Overall it is considered that the proposed development with careful consideration of the reserved matters will result in a high quality scheme which will not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area and with the introduction of a formal landscaping scheme will result in an attractive development that would be a benefit to the area.

Impact on neighbours

59. The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that planning should be a means of finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives. We should always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.
60. The nearest residential receptors are located to the south (Roseworth Estate), to the east (Blakeston Court) and Crossley's Bungalow which is located to the south west close to the new entrance. It should be noted that the 1902 Cremation Act sets out parameters for the

location of the crematorium in relation to existing dwellings and the public highway and the indicative plan complies with those parameters.

61. The indicative plans shows that with the sensitive siting of the building and car park and the introduction of significant landscape buffers that the development could be successfully introduced into the area without having a significant adverse impact on existing neighbouring properties. It should be noted that the adjacent site is indicated as a future development site and again the indicative plans show a landscaping buffer to the eastern boundary which will provide adequate screening to the development site.
62. In terms of noise and disturbance whilst the residents may notice the additional traffic drawn to the site, visitors will generally be quiet and respectful, and it is not considered that the amenities of neighbouring residents will be adversely affected by additional noise and disturbance to such a degree to warrant a refusal of the application.
63. In summary given the nature of the development it is considered that that the scheme would not harm the amenities of nearby residents or occupiers of commercial premises through noise or disturbance and will not have an adverse effect on the visual amenities of these residents.

Air Quality

64. As this application is outline an air quality report has not been submitted with the application and the Councils Environmental Health Officers are satisfied that this could be dealt with as part of the reserved matters application. Modern cremators now have sophisticated pollution abatement and are governed by the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Environmental Permitting (England & Wales) Regulations 2010 as a prescribed process and require authorisation.
65. All new crematoriums must achieve compliance with the current standards from the start of operation. These matters are outside the planning process, covered under separate legislation. It is therefore considered that the development will not result in an adverse impact on air quality.

Impact on highways

66. The proposal is outline with all matters reserved other than access. A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit and a Transport Statement supports the application. Highway objections have been raised in relation to the scheme which were forwarded to and considered by the Highways Transport and Environment Team to consider.
67. The proposed access would be taken from Junction Road, and take the form of a Protected Right Turn ghost island. Highways Transport and Environment have advised that the junction arrangements are acceptable for the type and scale of the development and detailed design works would be subject to a s278 Agreement. This has been added as an informative.
68. The Transport Assessment (TA) has been formulated using the TA submitted in support of the Kirkleatham Crematorium application in Redcar and a figure of 23 vehicles (46 two-way trips) has been proposed which equates to a daily trip generation of 276 two-way movements which will arrive and depart outside of peak times due to the proposed operational times for the crematorium of 09:15 to 16:00. It is also anticipated that the operation of the crematorium would require between 6 and 8 staff who would generally arrive and depart within the peak times.
69. The existing traffic flows on the B1274 Junction Road have been taken from data available from an Automatic Traffic Count which was undertaken in November 2013. The net increase

in two traffic flows, during the AM and PM peak periods, associated with the proposed development would result from staff movements only as all other trips would be outside of the peak periods. The increase equates to 0.61% (AM) and 0.59% (PM) during the respective peak periods which equates to an additional 8 trips. These trips would not have a significantly adverse impact on the highway network, and in the context of NPPF, no objection is raised on highway capacity grounds.

70. Objections have been raised regarding the cumulative impact of the development taking into account the approved housing schemes and the Master Plan for the Harrogate lane and Yarm Back Lane area. The Master Plan is not actual committed development and any proposed planning applications will be considered and the appropriate mitigation implemented.
71. Concerns have been raised regarding ambulances being held up in traffic, and a suggestion was made that traffic is directed via Durham Road. Whilst this is noted the traffic cannot be directed in this way. Any emergencies that arise will be dealt with as they are presently with traffic giving way to emergency vehicles. North East Ambulance Service were consulted during pre-application consultations and raised no objections to the proposed scheme
72. There are good levels of pedestrian links and public transport near to the site and the submitted information sets out that 120 car parking spaces will be provided to ensure larger services can be accommodated within the site. Highways Transport and Environment consider this level of car parking provision to be acceptable and a condition has been recommended to ensure this car parking level is provided.
73. To ensure minimal adverse impact during construction the provision of a Construction Management Plan can be secured by condition and this has been recommended.
74. Overall it is considered that the traffic impact assessment has been evaluated and it is considered that the proposed development will not have an adverse impact upon highway safety and the proposal complies with the NPPF and policy CS2 of the Core Strategy.

Impact on the railway

75. The indicative plan shows the development located south of an existing railway line and Network Rail has been consulted on the proposed development. Whilst no objections have been raised the response contained a substantial amount of information which has been brought to the attention of the applicant. A condition has been recommended covering land stability and protecting the railway as requested. Final details of landscaping, drainage and many of the other matters raised can be considered at the reserved matters stage or as part of the discharge of conditions where Network Rail will be consulted for comments to allow them to consider the protection of their assets.
76. Overall it is considered that the proposed development will not have an adverse impact on the railway line and its operation subject to the recommended conditions and the applicant being mindful of the requirements contained in Network Rail's response.

Impact on Ecology

77. An Ecology Habitat and Protected Species Risk Assessment supports the application which confirms the site consists predominantly of improved grassland with scattered hawthorns on its boundaries and a small area of scrub. The land is considered to be of low ecological value.
78. The report makes two recommendations one of which is for the scheme to deliver biodiversity gains in accordance with guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework,

and that scrub is retained where possible and is not damaged or removed during the bird breeding season.

79. It is considered that the biodiversity gains could be achieved through the provision of substantial new blocks/buffer strips of native trees and shrubs and a condition requiring a landscaping scheme has been recommended to this effect. In addition a condition has been recommended to ensure that clearance works are undertaken outside of the bird breeding season or only after a checking survey by a qualified ecologist.
80. Natural England has raised no objections and given the land is considered to be of low ecological value it is not considered that the proposed scheme will have an adverse impact on ecology. In addition the biodiversity value of the site is likely to increase through the provision of large areas of landscaping and the proposal therefore complies with the NPPF and policies CS3 and CS10 of the Core Strategy.

Impact on Drainage and Flood Risk

81. A Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted to support the application. The site is situated within an area identified as Flood Zone 1 however; the Environment Agency flood maps highlight a small risk of surface water flooding to the north eastern corner of the site.
82. As this application is in outline, a detailed scheme in relation to foul and surface water drainage can be submitted at reserved matters stage and can be secured by condition. Northumbrian Water and The Councils flood risk management team have considered the proposal and raised no objections in principle subject to conditions which have been recommended.
83. It should be noted that surface water sewer crosses the site and this has been added as an informative for the applicant's attention.

Impact on Archaeology

84. An archaeological assessment supports the planning application, and the views of Tees Archaeology have been sought. The development area contains no known heritage assets and report suggests that there is a low to medium archaeological potential for prehistoric to Roman period activity.
85. Given the low archaeological potential and the relatively small scale of the expected ground disturbance Tees Archaeology raised no objections to the proposal and it is considered there will be no significant adverse impact on Archaeology.

Impact on Contamination

86. A Phase 1 Ground Investigation Geotechnical and Geo-Environmental Interpretative Report accompanies the application which has been assessed by the Councils Contaminated Land Officer who has raised no objections subject to the recommendations as made in the report being adhered to. A condition has been recommended to ensure the applicant progresses to a stage two report along with the standard unexpected land contamination condition.

Other Considerations

87. Due to the site area the application is considered to be a major development and therefore in accordance with local policies CS3 the development should provide 10% of the predicted energy requirements from renewable sources. This requirement is sought by way of condition.

88. Comments have been made regarding the future operator of the facility, however this is not a planning matter and neither is the query regarding the land not being used as a cemetery which after investigations was not considered feasible.
89. Suggestions have been made that the proposal waits until the local plan is in adopted, however there is no requirement for this and each application is dealt with on its own merits.
90. Queries were made over Section 106 monies from a 2006 planning permission for The Elms to pay the sum of £97,000 to be applied strictly towards the cost of the construction of a community reception area at Blakeston School approved under planning permission reference 05/07031FUL. This money was not paid as the permission was not implemented.
91. Queries regarding a Lottery Grant awarded to the Blakeston School is outside the scope of this Planning Application.
92. Comments regarding any other future development on the land are noted but will be subject to a separate application and determined in accordance with planning policy at that time.

CONCLUSION

93. Overall it is considered that with the Council's commitment to adhering to the playing pitch strategy and programme to address the shortfall the principle of development is acceptable and not in conflict with the aims of policies REC1 and CS6. The proposed access is considered acceptable and the development would not give rise to any adverse highway safety issues.
94. The proposal would not unduly impact on heritage assets, existing amenity and privacy or adjoining land uses to a degree which would warrant refusal and would provide landscaping via reserved matters which would support ecology and bio-diversity. It is also considered that the scheme would not increase risk of flooding and would therefore be in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and the Development Plan and constitutes sustainable development.
95. All other matters are considered acceptable in principle and have been adequately addressed through the imposition of conditions or can be dealt with through detail to be submitted at reserved matters stage.

Director of Economic Growth and Development Services
Contact Officer Mrs Elaine Atkinson Telephone No 01642 526062

WARD AND WARD COUNCILLORS

Ward Roseworth

Ward Councillor(s) Councillor J Beall

Ward Councillor(s) Councillor Miss B Inman BEd BA ADPSE

IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications: *As detailed in the report this is the preferred option to address the local crematorium need in the area.*

Legal Implications: *There are no known legal implications in determining this application.*

Environmental Implications: *The assessment of the application has taken into account the impacts on flooding, ecology, the general character and appearance of the area. It is considered that there would be no undue impacts and the scheme would improve biodiversity in the area. Detailed considerations are listed within the 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. It is considered that no existing residents would be severely affected by the proposed development sufficient to warrant refusal of the application.*

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

The Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

National Planning Policy Framework

Stockton on Tees Local Plan Adopted Version June 1997

Core Strategy Development Plan Document March 2010

Application File and Relevant History as referred to in the report.

SPD3 – Parking Provision for Developments