

Planning Committee

A meeting of Planning Committee was held on Tuesday, 27th February, 2018.

Present: Cllr Norma Stephenson O.B.E (Chairman), Cllr Mick Stoker (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Chris Clough (Sub Cllr Helen Atkinson), Cllr Derrick Brown, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Sally Ann Watson (Sub Cllr Elsi Hampton), Cllr Julia Whitehill (Sub Cllr Tony Hampton), Cllr Gillian Corr (Sub Cllr David Harrington), Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Paul Kirton, Cllr Marilyn Surtees, Cllr Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr David Wilburn

Officers: Greg Archer, Bob Cowell, Simon Grundy, Martin Parker, Peter Shovlin, Emma Leonard (EG&DS), Julie Butcher (HR,L&C) Sarah Whaley (A,D&ES)

Also in attendance: Applicants, Agents, Members of the Public

Apologies: Cllr Helen Atkinson, Cllr Elsi Hampton, Cllr Tony Hampton, Cllr David Harrington

P **Evacuation Procedure**
92/17

The Evacuation Procedure was noted.

P **Declarations of Interest**
93/17

Councillor Sally Ann Watson advised the Committee in relation to item 17/2942/FUL Yarm School, The Friarage, The Spital, The erection of a footbridge that she had attended a meeting of the Egglecliffe Area Residence Association where Councillor Watson was asked for some Planning Committee procedural advice. Councillor Watson was not predetermined and reserved the right to speak and vote on the item.

P **Draft minutes from the Planning Committee Meeting which was held on the**
94/17 **17th January 2018.**

Consideration was given to the Draft Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting which was held on the 17th January 2018 for approval and signature.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved and signed as a correct record by the Chair.

P **17/2942/FUL**
95/17 **Yarm School, The Friarage, The Spital**
The erection of a footbridge (for school use only) across the River Tees
and the formation of grass playing pitches with associated access

Consideration was given to a report on planning application 17/2942/FUL, Yarm School, The Friarage, The Spital, Yarm.

Full planning permission was sought for a bridge and grass playing pitches with associated access.

The consultees that had been notified and the comments that had been received were detailed within the main report.

Neighbours were notified, and the comments received were detailed within the main report.

The planning policies and material planning considerations that were relevant to the consideration of the application were contained within the main report.

The Planning Officers report concluded that the impacts of the proposal had been considered against national and local planning guidance and the development as proposed was considered to be in line with general planning policies set out in the Development Plan, was acceptable in terms of highway safety, did not adversely impact on the neighbouring properties and character of the Conservation Area, Heritage assets, ecological habitat, archaeology, flooding and was recommended for approval with conditions. It was considered that there were no adverse impacts which significantly and demonstrably outweighed the benefits of granting planning permission in this case.

Members of the Committee were presented with an additional written submission from Dr Paul Williams MP for Stockton South, who objected to the application and also a written list of reasons as to why the Committee should refuse the application from Shane Sellers, Chairman of Eggescliffe Area Residents Association. It was agreed by the Chairman of the Planning Committee that both submissions could be distributed to Members for consideration.

- Objectors were in attendance at the meeting and given the opportunity to make representation. Their comments could be summarised as follows;

- An objector read out the letter which had been submitted by Dr Paul Williams MP for Stockton South, details of which were attached as an appendices to the main committee report.

- The Chairman of Eggescliffe and Eggescliffe Council which was the Parish Council for the majority of the application site, informed the Committee that even if some of the objections submitted within the report could be met by the further work envisaged by the proposed conditions, the Parish Council would still fundamentally object to the change in that part of the quiet area of the riverside which would happen if the whole of the application went ahead.

- The Parish Councils attention had been drawn to a swept path analysis for moving long vehicles such as cranes to the site via Eggescliffe Village. The Parish Council had written to the Major Projects Officer of Stockton Borough Council informing him that the Parish Council was the proprietor of the Village Green in Eggescliffe which was a registered Village Green and the Parish Council resolved that they would not allow construction vehicles to come onto the Green. The swept path analysis they had seen meant, any long vehicle making a turn, out of Butts lane would be in danger of damaging the wall of Eggescliffe Hall with its rear end and to take a path to avoid that, the vehicle would have to go onto the Green and get close to, and overhang the railings around the Village Cross which was a listed building. The Committee heard that it was a criminal offence to drive onto the Village Green without lawful authority and therefore it was not seen how it would be possible to take any heavy plant to site.

- An objector from SK Transport Planning Ltd addressed the Committee on traffic and transport matters and made reference to three previous applications submitted by Yarm school which were refused and the reasons for refusal. In

2013 Yarm school submitted an almost identical application which the Committee refused on 4 reasonable and valid grounds including the adverse impact of construction on Eggescliffe Village, listed buildings and deliverable construction vehicle access. The latest application still had construction vehicles routing through Eggescliffe Village in the same manner as previous applications.

- Concerns relating to construction vehicles remained, with 30 listed buildings, a tight street pattern and restricted carriageway widths. The route was considered wholly unsuitable for construction access.

- Previous submissions made by the applicant had stated that parts of Butts Lane within Eggescliffe were of sub-standard width and access onto the site both vehicular and pedestrian was severely constrained due to its location adjacent to the River Tees.

- The Applicants solution to construction traffic appeared to greatly underestimate the size, volume and timescale required to construct the bridge. The Applicant had only confirmed circa 20 delivery movements per construction plant and equipment. The application was silent on any movement associated with any material imports and development of the pitches.

- It was also considered that the Applicants estimates of an average single tractor and trailer delivery less than once a week was a significant underestimation.

- All the plant vehicles referenced within the application were of a size that would impact on the listed buildings and village farm and would need to cross third party land. No swept path analysis had been provided showing how the plant would access the site, however previous technical workers had confirmed that a crane could not access the site without over running third party land conflicting with listed buildings and over running the Green.

- There were concerns in relation to the applicant adopting a piece meal approach to the overall development proposals east of the River.

- The application put forward offered no public use of the bridge therefore offering no sustainable travel benefits to the local community.

- Yarm School had some of the best sporting facilities for students in the North East both on and off site. Those facilities were not available for community use and any Local Authority ran school or Academy would be proud to have a third of what Yarm School had, yet they wanted more.

- In January 2013 Stockton Borough Councils Planning Committee unanimously refused a similar planning application by Yarm School. One of those reasons for rejection was that the proposed development would adversely affect the openness and amenity value of the Green Wedge by the introduction of maintained playing fields with associated paraphernalia and noise.

- The application did not mitigate the reasons for refusal back in 2013 but substantially reinforced it. If approved there would be eight maintained pitches that would affect the openness and amenity value of the Green Wedge and

would also bring with it the associated paraphernalia and noise. It was felt that the application still fell foul of core policy CS10.3.

- Yarm School had allegedly listened to the views of local residents and yet over the last five years had consistently declined to attend any public consultation organised by the community to discuss their development proposals.

- Members were asked not to be misled by those who had made representation in support of the application as many of those supporters were directly or indirectly linked to Yarm School.

- It was highlighted that there was a small number of pitches belonging to Teesside High School within the Tees Heritage Park and also a golf club. Teesside High School had been on its current site since 1945 and Eaglescliffe Golf Course which was founded in 1914 had moved to its current location in 1928, both long before the establishment of the Tees Heritage Park or the Green Wedge. This could not be a reason to approve Yarm Schools proposed application.

- Based on information provided by Yarm School which was almost identical to their previous refused applications, it was impossible to see how the Planning Committee could come to any other decision than a refusal on the same grounds as previously.

- Yarm and Egglecliffe were two Conservation Areas which faced each other and were separated by the River Tees at possibly one of the most spectacular sections with beautiful views of the medieval bridge, viaduct, Norman church and rolling land adjoining the river. This was considered to be the most sensitive part of the Tees Heritage Park. The Conservation Areas could not happen by accident, they were approved by far sighted Councillors who had recognised the outstanding and unique characteristics of the area. Those Councillors decided to protect the area for all time. Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) Stockton group came up with the concept of the Heritage Park which joined together both Conservation Areas. Committee Member Doug Nicholson was tasked with bringing this to fruition and succeeded in making the Tees Heritage Park official council policy. CPRE Stockton group was now integrated into CPRE North East who had submitted a lengthy representation opposing the application as did the friends of Tees Heritage Park. Members were asked to bear in mind that CPRE were an official consultee and theirs and the Friends of Tees Heritage Park's critical opinions should carry great weight, certainly more so than supportive reports prepared and paid for by the applicant. There was no doubt that the spectacular views in both Conservation Areas from Yarm Dock to the river side walks on both sides of the river would be impeded by the construction of this totally unnecessary additional bridge as there was already a beautiful listed bridge up stream. Policy EN7 clearly stated that development which harms the landscape value of the Tees Valley special landscape area would not be permitted, therefore on those grounds alone the application should be refused. In addition it was contrary to a number of other Stockton policies that would harm the character and appearance of Yarm and Egglecliffe Conservation areas.

- Reference was made to the main committee report where it stated that more distant views of the structure maybe be possible from properties on the

southern edge of Egglecliffe Village although the impact on this view would be negligible. The objector showed a slide with photographic evidence from a garden on the southern edge of the Village to Members which indicated that if approved the bridge would undoubtedly cut off the extended river view from those homes.

- Rejection of the application was sought in relation to the negative impact the application would have on the quantity and quality of the open space of the Tees Heritage Park.
- There would be a negative effect on the wellbeing of the local community for which many visited the tranquil and peaceful setting for health purposes.
- The use of the area for sports playing fields would have a negative impact on a considerable area around the site as the noise would travel a substantial distance along both ways of the river valley.
- The obstruction of the views along the river valley as a result of the construction of the bridge would be immense when taken to the level of the public footpath. The obstruction due to rugby posts and any subsequent fencing would also obstruct the open spaces.
- The proposed development could set a precedent for a pattern of further development which could affect Stockton Council's desire to protect and enhance the tranquil River Tees, Leven and Bassleton Beck corridors, within the Green Wedge. Core Policy SD51 stated that 'developments would not be permitted where they would lead to unacceptable impacts on the character and distinctiveness of the Boroughs landscape'. It was suggested that the proposed development would lead to a significantly unacceptable impact on this area of the Boroughs landscape. The whole character of a quiet tranquil and natural riverside walk would be completely changed by the inclusion of a footbridge and maintained sports pitches with all of the associated paraphernalia of goal posts, fences, painted lines and maintenance and storage facilities. The Emerging Stockton on Tees Local plan and NPPF supported the protection of valued landscapes and areas of tranquillity such as the Tees Heritage Park and Green Wedge, proposed developments within and adjacent to those areas of tranquillity should be designed to avoid any impact to those areas mentioned. The introduction of 8 maintained and manicured playing pitches and wooden footbridge would bring increased noise to an area previously unaffected by this which was contrary to both the Emerging Local Plan and the NPPF.
- If the proposal was to be accepted then it would be the local community which would lose and any community access to the sports facilities would be the crumbs off the table. For the whole of the rest of the Teesside citizens and tourists who use the Heritage Park and the Teesdale Way, there would be no benefit whatsoever. Walkers would be at risk from sporting equipment such as rugby and cricket balls as there was to be no high fencing, and in addition there would also be disruption to wildlife in the local area particularly a family of deer which spent time in the area.
- A resident of Egglecliffe Village explained that he had reviewed the three planning applications which had been put forward since June 2012 by either Yarm School or Theakston's which had either been withdrawn or refused, and

where the screening opinion in July 2012 had resulted in the recommendation for an environmental impact assessment. All of those applications had at least one thing in common which was that the site was recognised as a special landscape area and Green Wedge and the need to carefully manage, protect and enhance it. The latest application together with its twin 17/2948 was effectively a hybrid of the earlier applications including playing fields and bridge that were previously refused, importantly however the latest application was requested for Yarm School use only. One of the key documents which had been provided to support the application was the Planning Statement where the resident made reference to 5.1 to 5.4 which referred to the NPPF and the presumption in favour of sustainable development, this application however was in fact an addition to the existing extensive and high quality sports facilities therefore it was argued that it was not consistent with the intent of the NPPF regarding sustainability. Sections 5.6 to 5.8 of the planning statement were highlighted where reference was made to the core strategy development plan and included several policies CS2 on sustainable travel and CS6 on community facilities. As the proposal was for Yarm School use only and was adding new playing fields it was not agreed that the proposal supported those policies. Sections 5.9 to 5.20 referred to the local plan, safe policies and emerging development plan, those policies highlighted the very reasons that the earlier applications were refused, namely the negative impact on the landscape value and the loss of their open nature. They also emphasised their need to deliver accessible routes for pedestrians, cyclists and other users. It was failed to be seen how a bridge for Yarm School use only, would support those policy objectives. The statement in section in 5.20 stated that 'the current application proposal could assist with the Councils aspirations for a new river crossing as the bridge could if required in the future be adapted to enable its use by the public', this statement was contradicted by a later statement in section 6.72 and 6.73 that referenced another of the reasons the previous application was refused, namely the loss of residential amenity caused by noise and Anti-Social disturbances. It was felt that the planning statement was confusing and inconsistent.

- The proposal which had already been rejected by the Planning Committee was for the few at the expense of many. The proposed site for the bridge was within direct proximity of Minerva Mews which would adversely impact on amenity of existing residents through additional noise and general disturbance. The fact that the bridge would be used 6 days a week meant that there would be constant foot traffic across the bridge, which would also mean that the noise generated from the sports would be constant as noise travels a long way across the river. With Many elderly residents in Minerva Mews who would not be at work when the pitches would be in use they would be subjected to constant noise and disturbance in their homes.

- On the far bank of the river it was highlighted that groups of youths were already seen gathering nightly on the various benches, swimming, drinking and listening to loud music whilst smoking what appeared to be marijuana.

- The bridge would create a shelter and another gathering point therefore increasing the problem of Ant-Social Behaviour. The bridge would also create another potential diving platform for those who chose to swim in the river. Swimming in the river was dangerous and the last thing needed was something to encourage those who chose to swim at risk.

- The aim of the NPPF and Stockton Borough Councils policy ENV7 was to 'avoid an unnecessary increase in the noise that negatively impacts on the health and quality of life as a result of new developments and identify and protect areas of tranquillity', this bridge and the playing fields would do neither of those things, they would destroy an area of tranquillity and directly impact on many peoples quality of lives, with Minerva Mews residents suffering greatly.

- In relation to traffic, anyone who new Yarm and Eggescliffe Village would be aware of the chronic traffic problems which already existed due to the drop off and pick up points at Yarm School. The road running around the attractive listed curved wall at Eggescliffe which was the only access to the Green was only passable by single traffic, and unable to see oncoming traffic the road must be navigated with care, therefore the addition of construction vehicles and material delivery traffic would only exacerbate the problem. Even when completed, a pitch complex of this scale would require constant maintenance creating serious additional traffic problems.

- It was also doubted that there would be the ability to stop foot access through Eggescliffe in relation to spectators attending matches on the pitches and would therefore further impact on parking in the Village.

- It was highlighted that there were six significant material planning considerations for refusal which already existed from 2 previous applications which were rejected by the Planning Committee. It was felt that the six material planning considerations were sufficient grounds to refuse the current application, however there were other relevant considerations that applied in this case, which were;

1. that the application could set a precedent for future developments that would affect Stockton Councils desire to protect and enhance the tranquil River Tees, Leven and Bassleton Beck corridors.

2. that the Planning Committees previous decision to refuse two similar applications where material planning considerations that must be taken into account when making the decision on the proposal .

3. the proposal was significantly lacking in detail of how people with disabilities could gain access to the playing pitches from the wooden bridge.

4. the development would harm a valued rural landscape and would result in an unacceptable impact on the character and distinctiveness of an area of tranquillity within the Borough.

- It was highlighted that Yarm School had indicated that they had taken into account the views of Councillors and residents regarding the application by reducing the number of playing pitches. This was misleading, local residents, Town and Parish Councils had objected to all four planning applications, and the Planning Committee had also refused 2 previous applications which demonstrated that neither residents nor Stockton, Town or Parish Councillors, felt that the proposal was a suitable development for the location and would not accept a reduction in the number of playing fields as a compromise.

- Residents and Councillors had a responsibility to protect Green Wedge from unnecessary development, there was no appetite for this development and Yarm School already had first class sporting facilities on and off site, therefore there was no need for the school to intrude onto the Green Wedge.
- It was felt that the applicant had failed to mitigate any of the material planning considerations which would legally justify each refusal.
- An objection was raised in relation to the fact that Yarm School had suggested that the proposed development was a facility for community use, however there was no clear plan as to what that community use was, this could be that the playing fields were open to residents from 2.00 am to 3.00 am each Tuesday morning, and this may satisfy and fulfil their obligation to planning. There was no suggestion as to how much this facility would cost residents to use, how they would be insured to use it and their contribution to the ground.
- When the Princess Alexandra Auditorium went before Planning it was suggested that it would be used for community performances. Yarm Schools hire policy now stated that applications for hire would now only be considered if the nature of the hire met with the school ethos and or artistic policy.
- The current playing fields on Aislaby Road also had a very unwelcoming sign stating 'Yarm School Aislaby Road Playing Fields Private'. As far as inclusive access for the school, the bridge to nowhere, may have been designed to be accessed by those with mobility disabilities, however access by individuals with those disabilities was significantly lacking. Once the bridge was crossed over there would be no access for wheelchairs or for those unstable on their feet from the bridge to the proposed pitches. The bridge was proposed to end at the public right of way at the Teesdale Way which was no more than a muddy track which was not possible for those with mobility disabilities.
- Many people including tourists benefitted from the Teesdale Way.
- It was felt that the Applicant would pay lip service to the needs of the local community if the application was approved and a valuable natural asset would be lost, of which Yarm had very few left.
- A local resident highlighted as an Asthma sufferer the affects that the current traffic congestion had on his condition, and that at certain times of the year it was difficult to walk through Yarm as it exacerbated his condition. The walk along the proposed site and the local river bank was a breath of fresh air.
- Should competitions be held against other schools, fleets of coaches would be used which currently parked on the main road, if the current application was approved where would these coaches park?
- If the development was essentially for the use of the school then this was disgraceful. Most of the population of Yarm resided on the west bank of the river and this would be where they would get access to the walks which had been previously talked about.
- The west bank of the river had flood control, however it only went as far as Yarm School. Some residents had had to make their own arrangements in

relation to flood control where the bank had been slightly raised. When water came approximately a third up the residents garden he was aware that the other side of the river bank had burst its and the proposed site for the playing fields would be completely flooded.

- The first two weeks in January 2018 were monitored by a local resident where the proposed pitches were meant to be. The pitches were covered in snow and when the snow melted the fields were covered in 2 to 3 inches of water. The water would take some time to percolate its way down into the soil and this would restrict any possibility of play on the site.

- The idea of building a development on a flood plane was a ridiculous idea. There was evidence given by Eaglescliffe Golf Club which justified objections raised in relation to flooding.

- Members were asked to consider a planning precedent which had been set at the Supreme Court, Richborough Estates Vs Cheshire East Council 10th May 2017. The Planning Inspector upheld Councillors earlier decision of refusal and stated that 'the presumption in favour of sustainable development in the absence of an up to date Local Plan for a five year housing supply pertain only to housing applications, plans previously designed for none housing purposes were deemed still up to date, there was no NPPF golden thread or presumed approval'. The parallel with the proposed application for the bridge and associated playing fields in the Heritage Park were self-evident.

- The Campaign to Protect Rural England stated that the Heritage Park was of such importance and value that it should be considered Green Belt.

- The Teesdale footpath ran through the proposed area alongside the river. The path was used by many people including those dealing with the stresses of daily life. The walk was in the Conservation Area of Yarm and Eaglescliffe where it was calm, tranquil and quiet. The walk started through gentle woodland and opened out at the bend in the river to a wide open space, surrounded by trees on one side and a vista of trees across the river. It was the open space which was proposed as the playing fields, but it was that spot also that deer could be seen, woodpeckers could be heard and skylarks had recently been spotted. The RSPB had reported that skylarks had declined by 72% between 1972 and 1996 in their preferred habitat of farmland.

- The application was opposed by the Town Council, the Ramblers Association and, Campaign to Protect Rural England, all recognising the negative impact of the proposed development.

- In 2014 a report in the Lancet stated that almost two thirds of the urban area that would exist by 2030 was yet to be built, therefore it was vital that the opportunity be taken to create healthy and sustainable urban environments. Where the city was been seen as a source of contention, confusion and disorder, the rhythms of the natural world offered the hope of cure and relief. There was a duty of care for future generations to protect the area from development.

- A request was made that if the application was to be approved then the bridge be made open to all members of the public and there be the installation of a

decently constructed pathway into Ingleby Barwick.

The Chairman of Tees Heritage Park addressed the Committee. His comments could be summarised as follows:

- Tees Heritage Park was all about improving the wellbeing of the community, providing an area to relax and be calm, a place to escape the hurly burly of life and enjoy the beautiful river valley, its wildlife, landscape and its history. It included all the green spaces which remained between Stockton and Yarm and had the Tees and the famed Teesdale Way as its spine. It was now within the River Tees Rediscovered Partnership Project and on-going funding was being used to promote walks, nature activities and education which had really taken off and was being increasingly used. The proposal today was at complete odds with what the project was trying to achieve. The visual impact of the bridge and the enclosure of such a huge chunk of land comprising of what amounted to a 25 acre sports complex would totally overwhelm the special character of the area.

- The noise and the intense activities throughout the year would effect a large area of the Heritage Park and the calmness and tranquillity would be gone forever.

- The school already had extensive sports facilities on site and within walking distance and was already highly successful across a wide variety of sports. The existing playing fields had good vehicle access and parking for visiting teams and spectators. The existing facilities were perfect for sharing with other users.

- It was well established that connecting with nature was good for one's health and, Government White Paper, The Natural Choice had recognised the need to safeguard the natural areas everyone cherished. The NPPF had a chapter devoted to it including one particular relevant section which stated that 'identify and protect areas of tranquillity which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason'.

- It was felt that the Secretary of State would support a rejection of the proposed application and therefore the Committee were requested to refuse the application.

The Applicants Agent was in attendance at the meeting and was given the opportunity to make representation. His comments could be summarised as follows:

- Yarm School had been a part of the Town since the late 1970's, playing an important role in the development of the area.

- Yarm School was the region's leading independent school and had recently won the top category in every aspect for its educational provision by the Independent Schools Inspectorate.

- Yarm School needed to keep facilities up to date to remain attractive. In recent years the school had added some buildings which had been recognised nationally for their excellence including the Princess Alexandra Auditorium.

- Yarm Schools main playing fields were located some distance away, south of Yarm at Green Lane. This was preventing the school from being a true campus development with all of its facilities in one place.

- Currently, students walked to the pitches which could take 20 minutes or transported by minibus which was time consuming and wasting significant lesson time. There were also road safety issues related to walking as there were a number of roads to cross.

- It was appreciated that the application had raised passionate objections and concerns locally, but just as passionately the school believed that the proposal would deliver significant benefits to pupils without causing detrimental harm to the area.

- Past proposals may have been too ambitious and therefore the school had listened and scaled back the current proposal, and where possible, concerns had been addressed.

- The application restricted the bridge to private use only removing previous concerns of Anti-Social Behaviour, there were lockable gates proposed at each end of the bridge which would only be used when the school was using it which addressed concerns from residents that students would use it as a short cut.

- The pitches were to be natural, there would not be any artificial pitches. There would be natural boundaries with hedging and fencing. There was to be no other buildings on the site, and all equipment would be stored at Yarm School.

- There was to be no flood lighting and the school was happy to restrict the use of the pitches to 7.00 pm with no use on bank holidays. Car parking facilities would be utilised within the school site however would still require an element of queue and use. The school was in active discussions with sports teams and therefore the facility would not just be for Yarm School only.

- During the assessment of the scheme the very detailed committee report prepared by Officers fully addressed all relevant issues including those raised by objectors. There were no objections by statutory consultees or the Councils own internal departments.

- The wooden bridge would be constructed of hardwood and would add character to the area providing attractive additional landscape and was fully supported by Historic England.

- The pitches themselves would be an appropriate use of the Green Wedge and the playing fields would remain open green space and would not harm the overall character of the Tees Heritage Park and the addition of indigenous hedgerows would enhance it. The Environment Agency had confirmed that the proposed pitches were an acceptable and compatible use in the proposed location.

- Members were urged to support the application.

Officers were given the opportunity to respond to comments/issues raised by Members of the Public. Their responses could be summarised as follows:

- In terms of issues raised relating to the impact on Conservation Areas, Heritage, listed buildings etc., Historic England's specialist staff and the Councils own Historic Buildings Officer had considered the proposal and raised no objections.

- Where concerns were raised relating to landscape visual, the Councils Landscape Architect had no objections and it was considered that the proposal would not result in coalescence of the settlements and would not harm the openness or the amenity of Green Wedge and would not detrimentally alter the character of the Tees Heritage Park.

- In relation to community use, that was subject to a planning condition in relation to hours and pricing which would be subject to a consultation with Sports England.

- in terms of flood risk the Environment Agency and the Councils own Surface Water Management Team had fully considered the proposal and had no objection. The pitches construction and drainage was subject to a separate planning condition.

- Where concerns had been raised relating to amenity, the bridge was set over 18 metres away from neighbouring properties at Atlas Wynd and it was considered that given the transitory and time limited nature of the use and additional landscape which would screen the bridge, this would mitigate against any potential impact.

- Regarding operation of the pitches themselves, all access to the pitches would be controlled. Pitches would only be used in daylight hours and a condition preventing the use of the pitches beyond 7.00pm was to be recommended.

- The Councils Environmental Health Team had not raised any objections in terms of noise.

- The bridge was DDA compliant.

- With regards to setting a precedent for future applications, each application was considered on its own individual merits.

- In terms of crime and disorder and Anti-Social Behaviour, Cleveland Police had not raised any objections.

- Regarding the construction, it was expected that there would be an impact as with any other construction activity, however this would be temporary in nature and the construction management was the subject of a controlling condition to identify suitable measures to mitigate as far as reasonably possible against the temporary impact against residents of Egglecliffe.

- Regards the tracking and the movement of cranes though Egglecliffe Village. Engineers had assessed the tracking and they were satisfied that vehicles could be moved without damaging the listed buildings, nor had any evidence been presented that construction could not be achieved because of encroaching on the Village Green. Land ownership and access rights was a civil matter.

- The detailed comments made by SK Planning on behalf of the Eggescliffe Area Residents Association had been shared fully with Stockton Councils Engineers who did not support the representations which had been made.

- In terms of ecology, the development would result in the loss of agricultural land which had limited ecological value and existing trees and shrubs would be largely retained and landscape and enhancement works proposed would result in a net increase in biodiversity and Natural England had raised no objection.

- There was to be a car park management plan.

- Regarding concerns raised relating to the Highway Network the Councils Engineers had highlighted that there would be a small net benefit to the Highway Network as a result of using the pitches on the proposed site and not Green Lane.

Members were given the opportunity to make comments / ask questions. These could be summarised as follows:

- Clarity was sought as to whether Yarm Town Council supported or objected to the application as there seemed to be contradictory information within the committee report.

- The Officers report detailed that Cleveland Police had recommended that the developer make contact with the Police in relation to crime prevention. Questions were raised as to whether this had happened.

- Reference was made to maintenance and emergency access arrangements where it was stated that should planning be approved a condition was required to the track which would be gated to prevent visitors to the playing pitches using the access.

- Concerns were raised in relation to how emergency vehicles would get access to the pitches as it wouldn't be possible over a wooden bridge therefore would it be through Eggescliffe Village? This was also not considered suitable due to the tight roads and listed buildings.

- Regards the gated access to the track, how would this be managed and who was responsible for it as it would need to be open during matches for emergency access should it be required, and therefore how would this stop spectators parking in Eggescliffe Village and using the track?

- The current Yarm School pitches on Green Lane were fit for purpose and easily accessible for existing teams, whereas Eggescliffe Village was unable to afford access yet it was where the emergency access was.

- Relocation implied that the old pitches would no longer be used, could these be conditioned to remain pitches for future?

- in January 2013 the Planning Committee refused a similar application due to a narrow entrance close to a listed building, nothing had changed. The application clearly had issues to the Conservation Area of Yarm and Eggescliffe and the

site itself was part of the Tees Heritage Park. Campaign for Rural England, The Ramblers Association and Sport England were all unable to support the application.

- Had other accesses been looked at such as the footpath along the Blue Bell Public House, where there were signs that the footpath was unstable, had any monies been secured to help improve that?
- The community use scheme should be part of the proposed application, as it wasn't known if that scheme would be acceptable to the public.
- The travel plan was mentioned briefly in the report, there was no real detail available.
- In an Audit carried out by Stockton Council in 2008 the area was described as unique and irreplaceable. Yarm Town Council opposed the application and there were 280 letters of objection. Could something considered to be irreplaceable really be altered?
- This was the Tees Heritage Park, which took a lot of hard work to set up, it was unique and irreplaceable. The area required protecting.
- Clarity was sought in relation to the DDA compliance as the access to the bridge was not considered to be compliant.
- Concerns were raised in relation to the noise generated by parents at matches such as rugby and also the fact that during the winter month's very little play would happen after 4.00pm due to dark nights and the lack of lighting.

Officers were given the opportunity to respond to Members comments. These could be summarised as follows:

- It was clarified that Yarm Town Council objected to the scheme.
- It was not known if the applicant had contacted Cleveland Police.
- In terms of emergency access that would depend on the nature of the injury whether it would be by the bridge or access via Egglecliffe that would be up to the Emergency Services to decide.
- In terms of the travel plan there was a condition to update the travel plan.
- There was already a condition in relation to the community use agreement which would be discharged in conjunction with Sports England.
- No condition could be applied to the pitches at Green Lane to keep them as pitches should they no longer be required. Should a future application be proposed on the Green Lane site then it would be considered on its own individual merits.
- It was confirmed that the bridge was DDA compliant and that the access was a level area and therefore the only requirement was that the bridge was compliant.

- In terms of the comments made in relation to dark nights and noisy spectators, it was explained that permitted development rights had been removed to install any fencing etc. as that would have a detrimental impact on the openness of the area. Lighting was prohibited, should any application for lighting come forward in the future then this would be scrutinised carefully and at this stage the Council would not be supportive of it.

- In terms of the community use it was understood that the school were having discussions with organised sports groups, that condition would only be discharged if the Council as well as Sports England were satisfied that it provided adequate and sensible community provision of the pitches.

A vote took place and the application was refused.

RESOLVED that planning application 17/2942/FUL, Yarm School, The Friarage, The Spital The erection of a footbridge (for school use only) across the River Tees and the formation of grass playing pitches with associated access be refused for the reasons as set out below;

In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority the proposed bridge would result in an unnecessary intrusion into the landscape/riverscape along the banks of the River Tees adversely affecting the character of the surrounding area contrary to policy CS3(8) of the Core Strategy and saved policy EN7 of the adopted Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan.

In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority the proposed development is contrary to Saved Policy EN7 and Saved Policy EN24 of the Adopted Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan in that it is considered by virtue of the nature of the development it would harm the landscape value of the special landscape area of the Tees Valley which will not be permitted and harms the character and appearance of the Egglecliffe and Yarm Conservation Areas.

Due to unforeseen circumstances the remainder of the meeting was cancelled by the Chairperson and the following items were unable to be considered at this meeting.

P **17/1020/FUL**
96/17 **1-2 Aislaby Road, Egglecliffe, Stockton-on-Tees**
Erection of 5no terraced dwellings, 1no detached dwelling, associated
access and parking (demolition of existing buildings)

P **18/0147/SEC**
97/17 **117 High Street, Norton, Stockton-on-Tees**
Section 211 notice for the removal of 6 trees to the rear

P **1. Appeal - Mr C Boulton - 14 Glaisdale Road, Yarm, TS15 9RN**
98/17 **17/1279/RET - DISMISSED**
2. Appeal - Mrs Tracy Godden - Land To The Rear Of 108 Junction Road,
Norton, TS20 1QB
17/1487/FUL - ALLOWED WITH CONDITIONS
3. Appeal - Henry Taylor - Millstone Cottage West End Farm, Mill Lane,

Long Newton, TS21 1DQ

17/1300/RET - DISMISSED

4. Appeal - Mr Alan Moffitt - 10 Low Church Wynd, Yarm, TS15 9BA

17/1638/RET - DISMISSED

**5. Appeal - Simon Studholme & Sarah Hirst - Land North Of Thorpe
Thewles, Durham Road, Thorpe Thewles, TS21 3JN**

17/0943/OUT - ALLOWED WITH CONDITIONS AND COSTS ALLOWED

**6 - Appeal - Mr Gary Hutchinson - Rear Of 42 Junction Road, Norton, TS20
1PW**

17/0872/FUL - ALLOWED WITH CONDITIONS AND COSTS REFUSED