

Planning Committee

Wednesday, 27th March, 2024

Members present: Councillor Garrett (Chairperson);
Councillors Anglin, Bradley, Carson, Doherty,
P. Donnelly, Doran, S. Douglas, Ferguson, Maskey,
McCann and Nic Bhranair.

In attendance: Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;
Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor;
Mr. K. McDonnell, Solicitor (Regulatory And Planning);
Mr. E. Baker, Planning Manager;
Ms. B. Russell, Planning Officer; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported for Aldermen Lawlor, McCullough, Rodgers and Councillor Groogan.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Committee Site Visits

Note of Committee Site Visits - 26th March, 2024

The Committee noted the Committee site visits.

Planning Application

LA04/2023/2890/F: Proposed demolition of existing buildings and erection of a housing development comprising of 43No. social housing units including dwellings and apartments (Cat 1), car parking, landscaping including an equipped children's play area, and all associated site and access works - Christ the Redeemer Parish Hall and lands immediately north and west of Christ the Redeemer Church, Lagmore Drive

The Planning Manager explained that the application was before the Committee at its meeting on 19th March, however, consideration of the application was deferred in order that the Committee could undertake a site visit. He reported that a site visit had taken place on 26th March.

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He outlined the application to the Committee and highlighted the following key issues for consideration:

- Principle of development;
- Protection of open space;
- Loss of community infrastructure;
- Housing density;
- Affordable housing;
- Housing mix;
- Adaptable and accessible accommodation;
- Design and placemaking;
- Impact on the heritage assets;
- Climate change;
- Residential quality and impact on amenity;
- Provision of new open space;
- Access and transport;
- Environmental protection;
- Flood risk and drainage;
- Waste-water infrastructure;
- Natural heritage; and
- Section 76 planning agreement.

He stated that there were no objections from statutory consultees and that, since the publication of the Committee report, eight new representations had been received that cited concerns with regard to the loss of a community facility for Girl Guides and childcare, impact on existing businesses and voluntary organisations which operated from the existing hall, traffic disruption, parking and over supply of housing in the area. The additional eight objections had brought the total number received to 106.

The Planning manager reported that an email had been received from an after school club which stated that the church had offered land to facilitate the Little Saints out of School Club, however, further financial aid would be required to enable the purchase of a mobile facility and they had proposed that the Financial Developer Contribution should be allocated to assist the organisation to relocate to the church land and continue to offer the service to the local community. He advised the Committee that this option, should the Committee be minded to agree, would require separate planning permission.

He informed the Committee that DfI Roads had confirmed the acceptability of the amended Private Streets Determination drawings and that the Section 76 planning agreement was being prepared without prejudice to the decision of the Planning Committee in view of time constraints.

He stated that, having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal was considered, on balance, acceptable and that it was recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to conditions.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. M. Bell, a local resident speaking in objection to the application, to the meeting.

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Mr. Bell stated that he had lived in the area for many years and had watched the area develop. He explained that he had concerns as to who would be occupying the proposed dwellings, citing concern that it would be located close to a primary school.

He stated that local residents recognised the need for social housing, but the provision of a playpark would not offset the loss of green space to Lagmore residents.

He explained that traffic and parking was already an issue in the area and residents had been advised by the PSNI to park in the church carpark rather than on the roads. He stated that residents concern with the loss of parking space and risk to children's lives had been ignored.

He concluded by urging the Committee to reject the application and put the safety of local residents and school children first.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. P. Stinson and Ms. D. Lyle from Turley to the meeting.

Ms. Lyle stated that she welcomed the officer recommendation to approve the application and explained that she and her colleagues had worked proactively with Planning officers to provide a design and layout which would be acceptable and represented a quality residential environment.

She stated that the proposal had been informed by a detailed PAD process where the principle of housing on the site had been accepted. She reported that Newpark had sought the view of the Lagmore community early in the application process through a voluntary Pre-Application Community Consultation event, despite it not having been a statutory requirement, and that feedback from the event had been positive, with residents supportive of additional housing provision in the area.

She stated that the collaborative approach to the design and layout of this development with officers had resulted in improvements to the scheme which positively utilised the site's potential to deliver much needed affordable units.

She explained that the development would provide a mix of family homes and apartments, directly informed by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive which supported the development as it would meet an acute and pressing need for affordable housing.

She concluded by stating that the development was supported by green travel measures, promoted within the travel plan submitted with the application, to reduce reliance on private cars and that DfI had no objections to the development.

A number of Members sought clarification on what mitigations would be in place to alleviate traffic, particularly around the school and the loss of facilities for local community groups.

Mr. Stinson explained that the community consultation was well attended and that residents had indicated they were supportive of the proposal.

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The Committee agreed to grant planning permission, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement to secure the development as social housing, open space management, green travel measures and financial developer contribution which should be used to mitigate the impacts of the development and shall be flexible in terms of how it was used to mitigate the loss of community facility and/or loss of open space.

The Committee delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement, use of the financial developer contribution and to deal with any other issues that might arise provided that they were not substantive.

Chairperson