

The application seeks full planning permission for the demolition of Nos.57 and 59 Stafford Crescent and their replacement with 4 No. 2 bed townhouses. The application site falls within the urban area of the Borough as indicated on the Local Development Framework Proposals Map.

The application has been brought to the committee at the request of two Councillors due to concerns regarding overdevelopment, materials out of character with existing properties and precedent.

The 8 week determination period expires on the 1st February, however an extension of time has been agreed until the 4th February 2022.

RECOMMENDATION

PERMIT subject to conditions relating to the following matters:-

- 1. Time limit condition**
- 2. Approved Plans**
- 3. Materials**
- 4. Boundary treatments**
- 5. Hard and soft landscaping**
- 6. Provision of parking and driveways**
- 7. Construction hours**
- 8. Electric vehicle charging provision, and**
- 9. Waste storage and collection arrangements**

Reason for Recommendation

The location of the proposed townhouses represents a sustainable location for new residential development within the Borough and is therefore acceptable in principle. In all other respects it has been demonstrated that the proposed development, subject to appropriate planning conditions, represents a sustainable form of development that would not harm the character of the area, the amenity of existing and future occupiers or cause highway safety implications. The proposals accord with development plan policies and the guidance and requirements of the NPPF.

Statement as to how the Local Planning Authority has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner in dealing with this application

The development is considered to be a sustainable form of development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and therefore no amendments have been sought.

KEY ISSUES

The application seeks full planning permission for the demolition of Nos.57 and 59 Stafford Crescent and their replacement with 4 No. 2 bed townhouses. The application site falls within the urban area of the Borough as indicated on the Local Development Framework Proposals Map. A separate application for the erection of 2no bungalows has been submitted to the rear of the application site under planning application reference 21/01094/FUL.

The main issues in the consideration of the application are:

- The principle of residential development in this location;
- Design and impact on the character and form of the area,
- Impact on residential amenity levels of neighbouring occupiers,
- Parking and impact on highways safety

The principle of residential development in this location:

Policy H1 supports new housing in the urban area of Newcastle and Kidsgrove with Policy ASP5 of the Core Spatial Strategy (CSS) setting a requirement for at least 4,800 net additional dwellings in the urban area of Newcastle-under-Lyme by 2026.

Policy SP1 of the CSS states that new development will be prioritised in favour of previously developed land where it can support sustainable patterns of development and provides access to services and service centres by foot, public transport and cycling. The CSS goes on to state that sustainable transformation can only be achieved if a brownfield site offers the best overall sustainable solution and its development will work to promote key spatial considerations. Priority will be given to developing sites which are well located in relation to existing neighbourhoods, employment, services and infrastructure and also taking into account how the site connects to and impacts positively on the growth of the locality.

The NPPF seeks to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes. It also sets out that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This site is located in an established residential area of the Borough with good links to the shops and services of Newcastle town centre and there are regular bus services that run frequently and close to the site.

The Council is currently able to demonstrate a five year supply of specific deliverable housing sites, with the appropriate buffer, with a supply of 5.2 years as at the 1st April 2020. Development for residential purposes on this site is supported by policies of the Development Plan and it is considered that the site provides a sustainable location for residential development.

Design and impact on the character and form of the area

Paragraph 126 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

Paragraph 130 of the framework lists 6 criterion, a) – f) with which planning policies and decisions should accord and details, amongst other things, that developments should be visually attractive and sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.

Policy R3 of the Urban Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) states that new housing must relate well to its surroundings, it should not ignore the existing environment but should respond to and enhance it, exploiting site characteristics. Policy R5 goes on to state that "buildings must define the street space with a coherent building line that relates to existing building lines where they form a positive characteristic of the area [and] infill development should generally follow the existing building line". R12 states that residential development should be designed to contribute towards improving the character and quality of the area.

Policy CSP1 of the Core Spatial Strategy seeks to ensure that new development is well designed to respect the character, identity and context of Newcastle's unique townscape and landscape including its rural setting and the settlement pattern created by the hierarchy of centres. Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Urban Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document provides further detailed guidance on design matters in tandem with CSP1.

No.57 and no.59 Stafford Crescent form part of a row of semi-detached two storey dwellings which have a uniform appearance. The proposed town houses have a more traditional appearance than the existing properties along Stafford Crescent and include some detailing around the proposed fenestration, which is welcomed in design terms. The proposed townhouses respect the established building line of the street scene and the general height and massing of the proposed properties is not dissimilar to other dwellings found in the area.

Whilst it is recognised that demolition of the properties and their replacement with a more traditionally designed group of townhouses would lead to some contrast of the application site with the neighbouring dwellings, it must be recognised that the existing properties to be demolished are of a limited architectural quality which do not positively contribute to the character of the area.

Subject to conditions which secure acceptable facing materials and boundary treatments it is considered that the design of the proposal is acceptable and in accordance with development plan policies and the guidance and requirements of the NPPF.

Impact on residential amenity

Paragraph 130 of the NPPF lists a set of core land-use planning principles that should underpin decision-taking, one of which states that planning should always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) Space about Dwellings provides advice on environmental considerations such as light, privacy and outlook.

The distance between the proposed townhouses and nearby properties would accord with the requirements of the Council's Space around Dwellings SPG, and it is therefore considered that there would be no significant adverse impact on the amenity of the occupiers of the existing nearby dwellings.

Whilst it is recognised that the townhouses would have a garden length less than the existing dwellings, notwithstanding this, an acceptable level of outdoor space would be available for drying washing, sitting out and gardening and it is considered that the level of private amenity space would be sufficient for the proposed development and in all other respects the proposed development would comply with the Council's SPG.

Parking and impact on highway safety

Paragraph 111 of the NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts of development would be severe.

The development site lies in a row of semi-detached properties and each townhouse will be served by 2 parking spaces which meets the requirements of the Council's parking standards. No representations have been received from the Highway Authority however the proposed driveway arrangements would not be dissimilar to that of other nearby properties. In the absence of any evidence to suggest that the proposal would create or aggravate on street parking or traffic problems and subject to suitable conditions relating to surfacing materials, it is considered that the proposed development is acceptable in highway safety terms and in accordance with the guidance and requirements of the NPPF.

Reducing Inequalities

The Equality Act 2010 says public authorities must comply with the public sector equality duty in addition to the duty not to discriminate. The public sector equality duty requires public authorities to consider or think about how their policies or decisions affect people who are protected under the Equality Act. If a public authority hasn't properly considered its public sector equality duty it can be challenged in the courts.

The duty aims to make sure public authorities think about things like discrimination and the needs of people who are disadvantaged or suffer inequality, when they make decisions. People are protected under the Act if they have protected characteristics. The characteristics that are protected in relation to the public sector equality duty are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

When public authorities carry out their functions the Equality Act says they must have due regard or think about the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't
- Foster or encourage good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't

With regard to this proposal it is considered that it will not have a differential impact on those with protected characteristics

APPENDIX

Policies and proposals in the Development Plan relevant to this decision:

Newcastle under Lyme and Stoke on Trent Core Spatial Strategy 2006 - 2026 (Adopted 2009)

Policy SP1: Spatial Principles of Targeted Regeneration
Policy SP3: Spatial Principles of Movement and Access
Policy ASP5: Newcastle and Kidsgrove Urban Neighbourhoods Area Spatial Policy
Policy CSP1: Design Quality
Policy CSP3: Sustainability and Climate Change

Newcastle under Lyme Local Plan 2011

Policy H1: Residential Development: Sustainable Location and Protection of the Countryside
Policy T16: Development – General Parking Requirements

Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

Planning Practice Guidance (2018)

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Urban Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (2010)

Relevant Planning History

21/01094/FUL Erection Of Two Bungalows – pending consideration

Consultation Responses

The **Environmental Health Division** raise no objections regarding land contamination.

No comments have been received from the **Highway Authority**.

Representations

One objection has been submitted by a neighbouring property, who raises the following concerns:

- Impact on residential amenity
- The proposal is overdevelopment of the site
- Visual impact
- Impact on residential amenity

Applicants/agents submission

The requisite plans and application forms including a supporting statement have been submitted.

All of the application documents can be viewed on the Council's website using the following link:

<http://publicaccess.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/online-applications/PLAN/21/01095/FUL>

Background Papers

Planning files referred to
Planning Documents referred to

Date report prepared

20th January 2022