

Full planning permission is sought for the erection of a new village hall comprising 2no. function rooms and associated ancillary services, with outdoor amenity space and parking provision.

The application site is located within the urban area of Knutton, as indicated on the Local Development Framework Proposals Map.

The 8 week period for determination of the planning application expired on 23rd May 2024, however an extension of time has been agreed until the 24th of June.

RECOMMENDATION

PERMIT the application subject to conditions relating to the following matters:-

- 1. Standard time limit for commencement of development;**
- 2. Approved plans;**
- 3. Facing and roofing materials;**
- 4. Boundary treatments;**
- 5. Landscaping Scheme;**
- 6. Provision of parking areas;**
- 7. Secure cycle storage;**
- 8. Electric vehicle charging provision;**
- 9. Highway & Environmental Construction Management Plan (CMP);**
- 10. Noise management plan**
- 11. Provision of bat and bird boxes and sparrow terraces as per enhancements plan;**

Reason for Recommendations

The proposal represents redevelopment of a vacant brownfield site within a sustainable location. The development is an acceptable design and relates to the adjacent approved residential development, utilising the vehicular and pedestrian access arrangements, and will not result in an adverse impact on residential amenity.

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

Additional information has been submitted, and the proposal is now considered to be a sustainable form of development in compliance with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Key Issues

This proposal seeks full planning permission for the erection of a village hall on a vacant brownfield site on High Street in Knutton. The building would comprise two main function rooms with reception hall, bar, kitchen, storage and toilet facilities. The proposal also includes outdoor amenity area and parking, with access served from the new residential development on the adjacent part of the vacant site. There are 22 car parking spaces indicated on the revised plan, including parking allocated for disabled drivers and parent and child spaces, and separate cycle parking.

The site currently comprises a vacant car park and grassed area associated with the former school buildings that have been cleared from the site. There is an existing gated access point, railings, trees, hedge and security fencing to the site boundaries. The site is located on High Street, in a mixed residential and commercial area, with Newcastle Enterprise Centre adjacent, shops and a garage opposite. The residential development subject of application Ref. 23/00771/FUL will be constructed on the remainder of the vacant land.

Classification: NULBC UNCLASSIFIED

The application site is located within the urban area of Knutton, as indicated on the Local Development Framework Proposals Map.

The main issues to consider in the determination of the application are as follow:

- Is the principle of development acceptable?
- Design and visual impact
- Impact on Amenity
- Impact on Highway Safety

Is the principle of the proposed development on the site acceptable?

Paragraph 97 of the NPPF states that to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.

Policy SP1 of the Core Spatial Strategy indicates 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 location of the site in respect of its proximity to nearby services and public transport links, is considered to represent a sustainable location for the proposed development. As the proposal would provide a function which would benefit the local community in a sustainable location, the development is considered to be acceptable in principle, subject to other material planning considerations.

Design of the development and impact on the area

Paragraph 131 of the NPPF 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 135 of the NPPF 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 CSP1 of the Core Strategy requires that the design of the development is respectful to the character of the area.

The development comprises a building of traditional design and form with a pitched roof arrangement and the majority of glazing and porch entrance on the elevations facing into the site and the amenity space to the northwest and southwest. The southeast elevation would be blank and northeast elevation with only top-opening windows. It would be constructed in red brick with grey metal roof and windows. The building would be located close to the boundaries with High Street and the Newcastle Enterprise Centre, with parking to the rear, served from the new access road that forms part of the recently approved residential development.

The proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of the scale, massing, design and materials, and would be in keeping with the adjoining buildings and the area.

Whilst the main entrance to the building is located on the side elevation, the building is located close to High Street and it would be visible from the highway and clearly legible as a community facility. The car parking is set back and partly screened by the new planting, thus it would not appear dominant and detract from the character and appearance of the main building or housing scheme on the adjoining site.

The building and car parking area would be softened by the proposed landscaping scheme, with hedges bounding the site and new tree planting. The amenity area comprises elements of soft and hard landscaping, along with cycle parking and bin storage.

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Internally, the 2 main rooms would enable a range of uses, with associated kitchen, bar and toilet facilities. The glazing would ensure adequate natural light and ventilation is provided.

It is considered that the proposal would provide an important local community facility and the scale and design would not adversely affect the character and appearance of the area, with provision of designated parking and amenity space. Subject to conditions to control the external facing materials, it is considered that the proposal would comply with local planning policy and the requirements of the NPPF.

Impact on adjoining residential amenity

Paragraph 135 (f) of the NPPF states that development should create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

The application site is large enough to accommodate the community centre and associated parking and amenity space. The majority of the glazing would be on the southwest elevation serving the main function rooms, and opening on to the amenity area.

The site is located in a mixed residential and commercial area off High Street. The new housing associated with ref: 23/00771/FUL will be located to the northwest and west of the building and to the southwest of the car park.

The applicant has provided some additional details regarding the proposed opening times – between 9am and 10pm 7 days a week. The typical uses will be functions, meetings and group activities and the smaller function room may also serve as a drop-in community doctor/ dentist surgery.

Whilst the Environmental Health comments are noted regarding the need for a noise assessment and the potential noisy uses such as amplified music and vocal amplification systems; it is considered that these matters can be sufficiently addressed by condition of a noise management plan. The building is not directly adjoining any residential properties, and the proposed hours should ensure that noise and disturbance from vehicles is limited.

Details of the external lighting scheme are being prepared; however this can also be conditioned.

Therefore, subject to appropriate conditions, it is considered that the proposal would not harm adjoining residential amenities and would comply with the relevant criteria in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Highway Safety

In the consideration of proposed development, paragraph 115 of the NPPF states it should be ensured that safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved and that significant impacts on the transport network or on highway safety can be mitigated.

Paragraph 116 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.

Policy T16 of the Local Plan asserts that development which provides significantly less parking than the maximum specified levels will not be permitted if this would create or aggravate a local on street or parking problem.

The plans have been amended following consultation comments from the Highway Authority in order to ensure that the proposed community centre can share the access off High Street that will serve the residential development (ref: 23/00771/FUL). Changes have been made to the parking layout and single entry/exit point to the parking area, along with details of cycle parking and the tracking of large vehicles (deliveries or refuse collection). The tracking plan indicates cars and refuse vehicles can manoeuvre within the car park.

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The Highway Authority have been consulted on the amended details however no comments have yet been received. Any additional representations made by the HA will be brought to the attention of the committee through a supplementary report. Subject to any conditions required by the HA, the proposal can be adequately accessed with sufficient car and cycle parking provision.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered acceptable in highway terms. The proposal would provide appropriate access for the proposed community centre and the adjacent dwellings and adequate parking and turning space to ensure that the development would not result in issues of highway safety or onstreet parking. Accordingly, the proposal complies with policy T16 of the local plan and the requirements of the NPPF.

Other matters

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal sets out that the construction of the community centre will result in loss of a small number of trees and hedgerows; however, it is considered that the landscaping scheme will mitigate this loss with additional planting. Furthermore, the representation regarding swift boxes is noted, and it is considered that a condition should be added in this regard.

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 approved Development Plan relevant to this decision:-

[Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy \(CSS\) 2006-2026](#)

Policy ASP5: Newcastle and Kidsgrove Urban Neighbourhoods Area Spatial Policy
Policy CSP1: Design Quality

[Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan \(NLP\) 2011](#)

Policy T16: Development – General Parking Requirements

Other Material Considerations include:

[National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\) \(2023\)](#)

[Planning Practice Guidance \(NPPG\) \(2019\)](#)

[Supplementary Planning Documents \(SPDs\)](#)

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

Relevant Planning History

Adjoining site - Land At High Street / Acacia Avenue: 23/00771/FUL Full planning application for a residential development with associated access, internal infrastructure, landscaping and wider works – Permitted subject to S106 and conditions

Views of Consultees

The Highway Authority had initial concerns regarding the access, parking, pedestrian and cycle connectivity and operational/ service arrangement of the development. The applicant was advised to ensure that the proposal related to the most up-to-date plan for the adjacent residential development (23/00771/FUL), for which it shares vehicular and pedestrian access in order that this scheme ties in with the adjoining development.

Details of cycle parking have been provided and the Highways Authority is satisfied with this provision.

The Environmental Health Division raised initial objections as there was insufficient information on which to assess the application and its effects on amenity. They requested further information on how the venue would operate, type of activities and management of the activities, an acoustic assessment to determine the potential impacts of the activities and a noise management plan based upon the recommendations of the acoustic assessment.

Staffordshire Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor: Detailed advice given regarding best practice and the principles of Secured by Design guidance, which could be incorporated into the building design and amenity area to provide appropriate security and surveillance.

The Coal Authority advises that the site falls within the Coal Authority's defined Development Low Risk Area. Therefore, there are no specific comments, but in the interest of public safety, attention is drawn to the Coal Authority's Standing Advice note.

Comments were also invited from The Council's **Landscape Development Section**, the **County Minerals Officer** and **Staffordshire Wildlife Trust**; however in the absence of any comments being received by the due date it must be assumed that they have no observations to make on the application.

Representations

One letter of representation has been received with the respondent making comments on the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and recommending a condition that at least 10 swift bricks should be incorporated into the building to help support this and other bird species in decline.

Background Papers

Planning files referred to
Planning Documents referred to

Date report prepared

29th May 2024