

PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE

MONDAY 23rd MARCH 2026

Minutes of the meeting of the **PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE**, held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe, Newton Aycliffe on **MONDAY 23rd MARCH 2026 at 7.00pm.**

PRESENT

Councillor John Woodward (Chairman) and
Councillors: Jaci Beddard, Tony Beddard, Arun M. Chandran and Andy Hill.

OFFICERS

Amanda Donald (Corporate and Policy Officer)
Vikki Anderson (Corporate Assistant)

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor Carl Robinson.

11. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Neil Collinson, Phillip Hawkins, Jackie McFadden and Anne Woodward.

12. MEMBERS' DISPENSATIONS

No applications for dispensations had been received.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

14. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

One member of the public expressed an interest in hearing officers comments on the SEN school project and Biogas.

15. MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Andy Hill seconded by Councillor Tony Beddard, and it was

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Sub-Committee, held on the 22nd July 2025, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

16. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Members considered the undermentioned planning applications:

- a) **DM/26/00324/HAZ** - Application for hazardous substances consent - Emerald Biogas Preston Road Aycliffe Business Park DL5 6AB

The Corporate and Policy Officer explained that the Hazardous Substance Authority (HSA) for this application is Durham County Council. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Inspector has raised several concerns so currently it appears that the application will not be approved as it stands. The HSE would not be able to start an assessment with the current information, but no further updates have been received on the planning portal.

Councillor Tony Beddard asked why the HSE picked up various points, but the HSA had not. He raised concerns that the application seems to keep changing in specification and that there may be the possibility of approval by default due to a deadline for the application. Councillor Beddard observed that a parish council may request a planning application to be considered by a planning committee, rather than this be a delegated decision, and have a representative on that committee.

Councillor Arun M Chandran agreed with Councillor Tony Beddard but questioned whether a Town Council can call it to a committee, suggesting that Durham County Council councillors representing Aycliffe could do this. He raised concern that this is listed as a Biogas operation, but the request to store or process hazardous substances seems to be expanding its function wider than was originally submitted. He questioned whether this would attract more traffic and hazardous substances being brought into the town. He asked the Corporate and Policy Officer to produce an update on the website to inform the public and advise them how to contact Durham County Council with any questions.

The Corporate and Policy Officer advised that as a Town Council we may request a planning application to be considered by a planning committee meeting but would clarify the mechanism for doing so and approach the county councillors for Aycliffe. It would be advisable to await further input from Emerald Biogas and the HSE before publishing a public update as the status of the application was uncertain. This will be closely monitored, and members will be kept updated.

- b) **DM/26/00499/FPA** - Change of use from vacant shop (use class E) to betting office (sui generis) - 62 Beveridge Way Newton Aycliffe DL5 4DS

The Corporate and Policy Officer identified that this shop is the former Bon Marche shop in the town centre. Ladbrooks has requested to move from its current premises in the town centre to this larger vacant premises. There will therefore be no increase in the number of betting shops in the town centre.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Arun M. Chandran, seconded by Councillor Tony Beddard; and

RESOLVED – that the following response be submitted to the planning authority:

The Town Council considered this application at a meeting of the Planning Sub-Committee on Monday 23rd March 2026. There were no comments or objections to this proposal.

- c) **DM/26/00440/FPA** - Refurbishment of the existing school to create a new 50 place (SEN) primary school, including the creation of additional parking provision (requiring the removal of specified trees), formation of a new pedestrian entrance, installation of new windows and doors, erection of 2.4m high perimeter fencing, provision of new vehicle and pedestrian access gates, and installation of external lighting - Horndale Infant School, Scholars Path Newton Aycliffe DL5 7HB

The Corporate and Policy Officer clarified that this proposal includes removing a small number of trees. Internal work is currently being carried out and the work should be completed by the new school year.

Councillor Tony Beddard asked if the school was owned privately or by Durham County Council. The Corporate and Policy Officer believe it was owned by Durham County Council but would check this.

Councillor Andy Hill asked if the trees being removed would be replaced. The Corporate and Policy Officer would also check this.

Councillor Tony Beddard commented that the proposed 2.4m fence appeared excessively high and expressed concern that it may prompt complaints from nearby residents. While acknowledging the need for appropriate security measures, he requested that a comment be submitted highlighting that the height of the fence may not be desirable for local residents.

Councillor Arun M Chandran agreed that the height of the fence could be visually intrusive and asked if nearby residents had been consulted.

The Corporate and Policy Officer clarified that nearby residents had been notified about the application and that no objections were currently showing on the planning portal. It was agreed that a comment would be made regarding the height of the fence.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Tony Beddard, seconded by Councillor Arun M. Chandran, and

RESOLVED – that the following response be submitted to the planning authority:

The Town Council considered this application at a meeting of the Planning Sub-Committee on Monday 23rd March 2026 and would make the following comment:

The considerable height of the perimeter fence may not be desirable for local residents. However, the Town Council welcomes the provision of this much-needed facility for SEN children.

- d) **DM/26/00441/FPA** - Partial change of use to dog grooming parlour - 26 Defoe Crescent Newton Aycliffe DL5 4JP

Councillor Arun M Chandran observed that presumably customers would arrive by car with an appointment and queried if this may create parking issues in the street. The Corporate and Policy Officer identified that the property had sufficient car parking spaces to accommodate this.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Arun M. Chandran, seconded by Councillor Andy Hill, and

RESOLVED – that the following response be submitted to the planning authority:

The Town Council considered this application at a meeting of the Planning Sub-Committee on Monday 23rd March 2026. There were no comments or objections to this proposal.

- e) **DM/26/00487/FPA** - Change of use from warehouse (Use Class B8) to indoor padel centre for three singles courts (Use Class E(d)). - Safestyle UK Unit 12 Northfield Way Aycliffe Business Park Newton Aycliffe DL5 6EJ

The Corporate and Policy Officer advised that the application demonstrated sufficient parking for the amount of customers using the facility at any one time, so suggested that no objections be made. This was agreed.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Andy Hill, seconded by Councillor Tony Beddard, and

RESOLVED – that the following response be submitted to the planning authority:

The Town Council considered this application at a meeting of the Planning Sub-Committee on Monday 23rd March 2026. There were no comments or objections to this proposal.

17. DELEGATED DECISIONS

Information regarding delegated decisions made by the planning authority was received.

CHAIRMAN