

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

ASHINGTON & BLYTH LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **Ashington & Blyth Local Area Council** held in the Briardale Community Centre, Briardale Road, Blyth, Northumberland, NE24 5AN on Wednesday, 14 February 2018 at 5.00 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor G Webb
(Chair, in the Chair for agenda items 1-2 and 9-11)

Councillor B Gallacher
(Planning Vice-Chair in the Chair for items 2-8)

MEMBERS

D Campbell
E Cartie
G Davey
S Davey
J J Gobin

K Nisbet
K Parry
J Reid
E Simpson
T S Wilson

OFFICERS

G Fairs
U Filby
D Fraser

J Hitching
M Ketley
D Laux
J Murphy
K Norris
L Spark

Highways Development Manager
Solicitor, Regulation
Programme Officer (Highways Safety)
Senior Sustainable Drainage Officer
Head of Planning Services
Head of Technical Services
Principal Planning Officer
Democratic Services Officer
Communications Support Assistant

ALSO PRESENT

M Bulman, Solicitor (observing)
C Harvey, Planning Officer (observing)
14 members of the public
1 public speaker

72. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Grimshaw, M Purvis, L Rickerby.

Chair's initials

Ashington & Blyth Local Area Council - 14 February 2018

73. MINUTES

(a) Minutes of 13 December 2017

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Ashington & Blyth Local Area Council held on Wednesday, 13 December 2017, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

(b) Minutes of 10 January 2018

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Ashington & Blyth Local Area Council held on Wednesday, 10 January 2018, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

Councillor Gallacher in the Chair

74. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor G Webb declared an interest in application 17/04659/VARYCO as he was a member of Blyth Town Council. He would withdraw from the meeting for that item only and would take no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

Councillor E Cartie declared an interest in application 17/04659/VARYCO as she was an acquaintance of the applicant.

Councillor J Reid declared an interest in application 17/04659/VARYCO as he was a member of Blyth Town Council. He also declared an interest in application 17/03231/FUL and would withdraw from the meeting for those two items taking no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

75. DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The report requested Members to decide the planning applications attached to the report using the powers delegated to it. Members were reminded of the principles which should govern their consideration of the applications, the procedure for handling representations, the requirement of conditions and the need for justifiable reasons for the granting of permission or refusal of planning applications. The procedure at Planning Committees was appended for information.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

At the Chair's request, the committee agreed that the agenda be re-ordered as follows:

76. 17/04659/VARYCO - Variation of condition 1 pursuant to planning permission 16/02735/FUL in order to extend time frame for seawall works.

Councillors Reid and Webb left the meeting.

Judith Murphy, Principal Planning Officer, introduced the above application with the aid of a slide presentation. It was noted that the application was before members due to the sensitive planning history of the site including previous enforcement action.

Attention was drawn to Condition 01 of the report which provided details of works to be completed by 3 key dates. The application was recommended for approval on that basis and subject to a further Section 106 agreement being entered into in accordance with those revised dates.

Members' Questions

In response to questions the following information was provided:

- If the applicant did not follow the timeline of the 3 key dates he would be in breach of conditions and enforcement would take place.
- There had been genuine reasons why the applicant had been unable to complete the works and his own house was most at risk if he did not comply.
- The red line boundary for the site covered all of the properties in that row. In terms of potential implications, the worst case scenario of formal enforcement action would be demolition of the properties. However, if the applicant did not comply officers would look at expediency and a range of options would be available to them.
- The personal circumstances of the neighbours was not something which the planning committee could consider.
- The applicant had required more time due to the constraints of the wintering bird season. The dates in Condition 01 coincided with the winter bird period and it was set out clearly what must happen and when.
- The proposal did not affect the coastal path which did not go through the port.
- All of the land was in the applicant's ownership and he had the right to stop public access.

Councillor G Davey proposed that the application be approved in line with officer recommendation and on condition that updates be provided to members on a regular basis, after each key date, so that they could monitor the progress made. He said that other residents would have bought their properties in good faith and it must be ensured that the work went ahead.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Campbell.

On being put to the vote the motion was unanimously agreed and it was:

RESOLVED that

- (1) the application be granted planning permission subject to the conditions, with reasons, set out in the report and subject to a further Section 106 agreement being entered into in accordance with those revised dates.
- (2) Members be updated through a report to committee after each key date, so that they could monitor the progress made.

Councillor Webb returned to the meeting.

Councillor Nisbett entered the meeting.

77. 17/03231/FUL - Retrospective change of use to provide a hard standing area for a temporary overspill car park, 1A Sussex Street, Blyth, NE24 2BD

Judith Murphy, Principal Planning Officer, introduced the above application with the aid of a slide presentation. The application was before members as the proposal had been submitted by Arch.

Members were asked to disregard the reference to the Emerging Core Strategy in paragraph 7.5 as this document was now withdrawn. Members were also advised that the two conditions attached at the end of the report were not relevant as the application was retrospective.

In response to a question it was stated that the car park was not for the use of anyone specific.

Councillor Cartie proposed that the application be granted permission in line with officer recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Parry.

Councillor Cartie stated that parking was a problem in that area and this was much needed.

Upon being put to the vote the motion was unanimously agreed and it was:

RESOLVED that the application be Granted permission.

Councillor Reid returned to the meeting.

78. 17/02792/COU - Proposed development of an Early Years Centre including associated parking, landscaping and outdoor space for children. Land south of Ashington Minors Nursery, Ashington.

Mark Ketley, Head of Planning Services, introduced the above report which had been brought before members asking them to reconsider their decision in December 2017 when they had been minded to refuse the application, mainly on car parking grounds and resultant impact on the local highway network. Officers

had since taken advice from an independent highways expert who was concerned that the reason for refusal was not robust enough and the report set out 2 options for members to consider.

The Head of Planning Services and Principal Planning Officer summarised the report with the aid of a slide presentation.

Following the presentation, Katie Watson spoke in support of the application and her comments included the following points:

- It was important for the committee to understand how vital it was for the children and families of Ashington that the application to create additional childcare places was approved.
- To reject the application could have a devastating impact on life chances of any young children.
- Social mobility was a key challenge for the Council and to reject such an opportunity was to ignore a need that had been well proven.
- Ensuring sufficiency of childcare was a statutory function of the Council and to reject the proposal would put the Council at risk of not meeting its duty.
- An additional 125 Full Time Equivalent places for summer 2018 were needed.
- The current provision could not cope with demand.
- The area was identified as an area of high need for the capital grants from Educational Funding Agency.
- The grant did not come from taxpayers or from core funding, it was a central government grant. To turn such a grant down was unprecedented and would put further applications at risk.
- There were no other suitable sites for that kind of development across Ashington.
- Central Primary School had the space and a keen, highly motivated management team who saw the development of the project as essential to the long term future of vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
- The school had an excellent track record of providing high quality provision for under 5's.
- No other site or team of staff could be found which would meet the sufficiency need within the available budget.
- If refused it would be extremely damaging to current Ashington parents and children, and those yet to come.
- Without the development eligible working parents in the area would not be able to access the child care they needed and were legally entitled to.
- The Local Authority would not meet its statutory duty to secure a free minimum amount of early learning and care for all eligible 2, 3 and 4 year olds for those parents who wanted it.
- She appealed to all members of the committee to consider the proposal very carefully and balance it against the handful of potential objections to the scheme which were based mainly parking issues.

Members' Questions

- A member referred to the last meeting when the committee had put forward a suggestion to re-open a gate in the wall to the rear of the site onto a footpath which led to a safe place to park. He said it was not an expensive proposal but the officer who had attended the meeting from education was set against it. He queried why a small footpath and a gate could not be provided then parking would be on the main road and would be safe.
- A member asked for details about the independent expert and where he had got his information from. In response the Head of Planning Services said the independent advice was from a lady engineer at a company called WSP.
- The Highways Development Manager said that, from a highways point of view, the highways authority gave advice to the local planning authority about the implications of the development. As had been said there were parking issues within the area but, in a sense, that made it more difficult to provide evidence that this particular development would cause additional harm as there were already existing issues.
- A member pointed out that the committee had already determined the application and, as such, could they be accused of predetermination? In response the Solicitor said the committee could consider the proposal again with new evidence and review the decision made. If members had an open mind when considering the new evidence there would not be an issue.
- A member said the committee was not against the proposal to build the school but queried why the suggestion about the gate in the wall, as previously mentioned, could not go forward? A member added that all schools had traffic issues but, in this case, a solution was available before the school was built. In response, Sue Aviston, Head of School Organisation and Resources, said officers would need to negotiate that as the footpath was on a school playing field and they may struggle to obtain permission from Sports England. A member suggested that ownership be looked at as he was aware that the former Wansbeck District Council had repaired that footpath many years ago.

The Solicitor stated that the committee was only looking at land inside the red boundary line which was in the applicant's control. She suggested that a short adjournment take place to discuss the possibilities.

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm when the Planning Vice Chair and officers left the meeting for discussions.

The meeting reconvened at 5:54 pm.

The Head of Planning Services said officers had considered the question raised about the footpath link from Milburn Road to the development site and in order to do that they would have to use a grampian condition. A condition could therefore be specified that a footpath must be provided before occupation of the development.

The Head of School Organisation and Resources pointed out that it was a day nursery with staggered start and pick up times. There would not be a huge

amount of parents arriving at 9:00 am and picking up at 3:00 pm, times would be flexible and it would not operate like a school.

In response to a question about double yellow lines, the Highways Development Manager said that any alterations to Traffic Regulation Orders were subject to publicity then consideration and were normally outside of the planning process.

Councillor Parry proposed that members withdraw the previously agreed refusal reason and be minded to approve the application subject to the conditions, with reasons, set out in the original committee report and subject to a grampian condition to create a footpath link from Milburn Road to the development site. The motion was seconded by Councillor Wilson.

Discussion ensued and members made the following points:

- Residents of Sycamore Street were worried about their children playing in the street, there was already a considerable amount of traffic from the existing school and bingo hall and the proposal was only acceptable if there was an alternative route for the children to get to school.
- All schools had problems with traffic, this should be considered when proposals were put forward and he would have been happy to make a stand with this application.
- Staggered times could be worse.
- The consultation for the grampian condition should take place as soon as possible with costs incurred by education.
- The situation must be sorted out before the new school was built. Parking must be addressed and so must the safety of children.

On being put to the vote the motion was unanimously agreed and it was:

RESOLVED that

- (1) The previously agreed refusal reason be withdrawn and members be minded to approve the application subject to the conditions set out in the original committee report.
- (2) An additional grampian condition be added to secure a footpath link from Milburn Road into the site.

79. PLANNING APPEALS UPDATE

The above report provided information on the progress of planning appeals.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

On the conclusion of development control business at 6:05 pm, Councillor Gallacher vacated the Chair. Councillor Webb chaired the remainder of the

meeting which commenced immediately after the planning business and consisted of other Local Area Council business.

OTHER LOCAL AREA COUNCIL BUSINESS

80. COMMUNITY CHEST AWARDS

A presentation of certificates was made to recipients of Community Chest Funding. Councillor Simpson, Vice Chair, presented a certificate to representatives of the following local organisations who had received funding from the community chest scheme:

- The Little Gem Arts and Crafts Gallery
- Parkhead and Wansbeck Powersports
- Blyth Stroke Support Group
- Headway Arts
- Butokakan Judo Club
- Friends of the Dales School

The Chair thanked the representatives for their hard work and the committee gave them a round of applause in recognition of their efforts. The recipients and Councillor Simpson left the meeting in order for photographs to be taken.

81. REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR LOCAL SERVICES

David Laux, Head of Technical Services, presented the above report which set out details of the draft Local Transport Plan (LTP) programme for 2018-19 for consideration and comment by the Local Area Council prior to final approval of the programme. (A copy of the report is attached to the signed minutes as **Appendix B.**)

Details of the programme were detailed in the Summary, Appendices A - H. In addition officers were expecting to receive further funding and were continuing to work on proposals for the Blyth Relief Road and Ashington/Blyth/Tyne railway.

Members and Town/Parish Councils, who had put forward proposals, would be contacted and given progress of schemes and explanations as to why they had not got into the programme if they were not successful.

Any comments from members were welcome.

Members raised the following issues and responses were given:

- Pothole Fund - there seemed to be some confusion. Feedback from inspectors would help elected members.

Normal regimes of inspection were undertaken on all roads using all available resources. The Ashington/Blyth area had put forward the least priority sites but officers still carried out their own inspections and repair.

- What was the current situation regarding the request for a roundabout or traffic signals at Ellington Road Ends - Ashington/Pegswood Road? It was a dangerous junction and there seemed to be an easy fix.
A feasibility study was currently underway to take the matter forward. It was agreed that an update would be provided to Councillor Grimshaw when available.
- Resurfacing roads - repairs were not lasting. Holes were not being packed so the same potholes re-emerged.
The material was laid and rolled in (not packed into individual holes) but it was acknowledged that if repairs were not lasting that would be of concern.
- A request had been made for a pedestrian crossing at the Railway line, Roseneath Court about 2-3 years ago and nothing had been heard back.
Comments noted.
- Laverock Hall Road (former bus only route) some people wanted it left open, others wanted it closed. What was the current position?
The option of having the road for buses only was proving difficult, bus gates had been considered as closing the road off would mean losing bus services. It was difficult to solve but work was ongoing.
- Home Zone, Cowpen Play Area, had not been included.
Noted.

Members congratulated officers for the excellent job they had done and for their quick response to problems raised.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

82. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday, 14 March at Northumberland YMCA, North View, Ashington, NE63 9XQ.

The meeting closed at 6.35 pm

CHAIR.....

DATE.....

Ch.'s Initials.....

Ashington & Blyth Local Area Council - 14 February 2018