

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

ASHINGTON & BLYTH LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **Ashington & Blyth Local Area Council** held in the Collingwood Suite, Newbiggin by the Sea, NE64 6HG, Northumberland on Wednesday, 11 April 2018 at 5.30 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor G Webb
(Chair, in the Chair for agenda items 1 - 3 and 7 - 8)

Councillor B Gallacher
(Planning Vice-Chair in the Chair for items 4 - 6)

MEMBERS

E Cartie
G Davey
J J Gobin
L Grimshaw
J Lang
K Nisbet

K Parry
M Purvis
J Reid
L J Rickerby
T S Wilson

OFFICERS

H Bowers
M Bulman
J Murphy
J Sanderson

Democratic Services Officer
Solicitor, Regulation
Principal Planning Officer
Senior Planning Manager - Planning Policy

ALSO PRESENT

10 members of the public
3 public speakers
1 press

83. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Campbell, S Davey and E Simpson.

84. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Ashington & Blyth Local Area Council held on Wednesday, 14 February 2018, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

Councillor Gallacher referred to planning application 17/04659/VARYCO- variation of condition 1 pursuant to planning permission 16/02735/FUL in order to extend time frame for seawall works and reassured members that the condition would be followed up and members would be updated of developments..

Councillor Wilson referred to planning application 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 and the the traffic management works. The Planning Vice Chair advised that Planning and Highways Officers would get back to him regarding his query.

Councillor Grimshaw referred to the LTP Programme and her query regarding the current situation at Ellington Road Ends. She had received no response. It was advised that this would be referred to Highways.

85. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

The following declarations of interest were received in respect of planning application 18/0030/VARYCO:-

Councillor G Davey declared a non-pecuniary interest as he had previously been a Board member of Arch.

Councillor G Webb also declared a non-pecuniary interest as he had also previously been a Board member of Arch.

Councillor Reid declared an interest as he was a Board member of Arch and would withdraw from the meeting for that item only and take no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

Councillor B Gallacher in the Chair.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

86. 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.

Councillor Reid withdrew from the meeting

87. 18/00307/VARYCO - Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) of application 16/02377/VARYCO to increase number of 3 bed dwellings along Quay Road elevation with overall number of units on site remaining the same in order to make project financially viable.

Judith Murphy, Principal Planning Officer reminded members that the application already had permission and agreement was being sought on the variation to the application. She referred to handouts circulated before the meeting which contained informatives which had been omitted from the report. She continued to introduce the above application with the aid of a slide presentation.

Following the presentation, the Chair introduced Diane Carr, who spoke in objection of the application. The key points included:-

- There had been several versions of the application, the latest being the worst
- The additional dwellings would not be aesthetically pleasing and tantamount to erecting a barrier
- The height of the dwellings was at least 9 m and presumably higher than that as they would have to be raised above the tidal level
- The newest plan had an extra 3 parking spaces
- There was no recreation area
- The area to the south would be used as a site compound
- Overcrowding with cars with no places for bins
- Congestion, particularly in the summer months with visitors to the park
- It would spoil the heritage site of Blyth
- Congested traffic would make it dangerous for emergency vehicles
- She urged members to reject the application

Janet Tomlin also spoke in objection of the application and her key points were:-

- The link to the comments on the website had not been working
- The report inferred that Blyth Town Council had not objected and she requested that be looked into
- There would be no parking spaces along Quay Road with the additional houses
- People parked at the front of their houses and this would further increase the amount of parking on Quay Road
- The parking in the area was already a problem, particularly when the car park was busy and could be fatal if there was an emergency
- The reduction of the view of the Highlight lighthouse would be reduced
- Since the original plans had been passed, there had been problems with water and Northumbrian Water had confirmed there was not sufficient water pressure without a new water main being put in
- There was no green area left
- Congestion from parking

- Quay Road was beginning to look like an extension of the car park and the development would exacerbate that
- The site was a premier historic site

Councillor Eileen Cartie spoke as Ward Councillor and her comments included the following points:-

- She did not believe the plans were minor variations as there would be more buildings to the front
- The addition of dwellings would take away the view from the Grade II Listed Building, the Highlight lighthouse
- The massive traffic implications
- Parking on the lifeboat route
- Reduction of open space
- Privacy issues
- The new dwellings were modern houses within a relatively older area of Blyth which needed to be preserved
- There had already been other buildings erected, eg, The Boathouse restaurant adding to more traffic in the area
- What would the compound area be used for?
- The area was very condensed and there were other areas ripe for development
- The distance between car parking spaces and the relevant houses
- Blyth Town Council had made comments even though they had not been listed
- Would like to see the application rejected or deferred

Councillor Cartie having spoken in respect of the application subsequently took no part in the debate or decision in respect of the application.

Tim Bailey from Xsite Architects was in attendance on behalf of the applicant and spoke in support of the application:-

- Since 2013 when site first came into being, the ambition for the site was to have a flagship development of mixed used and offer bespoke space for business people from NAREC. The final phase had always been proposed to be residential
- The site already had permission, the principle of the development whad been established through permissions and this variation of condition. The condition needed to be varied in response to the housing market
- The front terrace had been raised off the Quay Road edge, but no other detail had changed
- The traffic and parking issues had improved as many of the parking spaces not allocated, were now allocated to residents. Highways had not made any objections to the variation
- The contemporary nature of the riverside frontage reflected the ambition of the area
- The site was not part of the conservation area
- He hoped members would approve the variation

Members' Questions

In response to questions the following information was provided:

- The Principal Planning Officer would check the system regarding the comments from Blyth Town Council
- In response to the comments regarding the highways issues, it was reiterated that the variation was for the internal reconfiguration and the issues raised would have been considered at the original approved application. The approved application could not be revisited and only the relocation of the 3 dwellings and minor amendments to the application could be considered
- The original application would have taken into consideration the proximity of neighbouring sites and in terms of emergency vehicles, there was no greater impact on the roads at the site
- When notifications were sent out the public had 21 days to respond. On occasion the planning portal system did go down but only for short amounts of time and there had not been any long term problems with the system
- Every opportunity was given to members of the public to comment via site and press notices. The maximum level of notification was carried out
- The Principal Planning Officer could not comment whether Blyth Town Council's comments had been received but it was stated in the report that no comments had been received
- If there were no highways grounds for objection, then there could be no objection
- The application was for a small reconfiguration of internal layout
- The application had changed in response to demand
- If members were minded to refuse the application, it could only be refused on the layout and not the application itself

Some concerns were raised by members regarding the lack of information in respect of comments from Blyth Town Council.

Councillor Parry proposed that the application be approved which was seconded by Councillor Nisbet.

Discussion took place in respect of parking issues, the building being in a conservation area and the residents reasons for not supporting the application.

On checking the planning portal it had been discovered that Blyth Town Council had submitted comments on 6 April which was after the report had been finalised. It was confirmed that an objection had been raised on the view of the river being lost and the site should be more of a prestigious standard.

On being put to the vote, 5 members voted in support of officer recommendation and 6 voted against.

Councillor G Davey proposed to refuse the application and that the site went ahead in its original format, which was seconded by Councillor Grimshaw. The

reasons for refusal were loss of amenity land between housing and loss of residents view.

Debate then followed of which the key details were:

- The amount of parking spaces/bays
- Loss of view
- The historic site of the town
- Loss of amenity
- Concerns that the relocation of houses would cause a 'wall' effect

The motion was then put to the vote, and agreed by nine votes in support of refusal with 2 abstentions.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the application be **REFUSED** on loss of amenity land between housing and loss of residents' view.

Councillor Reid returned to the meeting.

88. PLANNING APPEALS UPDATE

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

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

89. NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL PLAN: UPDATE AND SPRING 2018 CONSULTATION

The Local Area Council received a report which provided an update of the Northumberland Local Plan and details of the Spring 2018 Local Plan Consultation. (A copy of the report and presentation are enclosed with the minutes as Appendix B).

Joan Sanderson, Senior Planning Manager - Planning Policy explained the progress to date following the withdrawal of the Northumberland Core Strategy in July 2017, the Council had been working on the preparation of a new plan which would be in place until 2036. She outlined the work that had been undertaken which included updates to existing evidence base studies, a 'call for sites' consultation, review and development of draft policies by the LDF Working Group, engagement with Neighbourhood Plan Groups to ensure compliance with Neighbourhood Plans and the Local Plan.

Over 600 comments had been received to the 'call for sites' consultation, a number of which were already in the SHLAA. A sustainability appraisal scoping report had been completed and was currently out for consultation with statutory consultees.

The Council had been requested to accelerate its plan preparation programme by up to 3 months following the exchange of correspondence with the Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government regarding concerns about the Council's failure to adopt a 2004 Act Local Plan.

Members were informed that a spatial survey consultation had commenced on 28 March 2018 and would end on 2 May 2018. Views were sought on preferred locations for housing and employment as well as key issues that the Local Plan should address. The survey page had received 1,700 hits and 314 people had registered their details to date.

Members were given a demonstration of the online survey and how it worked. Although the survey could be completed anonymously, provision of contact details would enable details to be added to the Local Plan database for notification of future consultations and updates about the plan. Hard copies of the survey would also be available.

In response to members' comments the following responses were provided:-

- All comments would be taken into consideration
- Hard copies of the survey would be available in Information Centres and libraries. In addition there had been press releases and all town and parish councils had been written to
- It would be a huge expense for the survey to be delivered to all households
- The option for the information being available at supermarkets would be looked into for future consultations
- There had been 1,700 hits but as yet it was unknown where they had come from
- The 707 housing figure was based on Government Standard methodology and a range of growth option scenarios were currently being tested as part of the Economic and Housing Growth Options evidence base study work.
- In response to a member query, the Senior Planning Manager could not comment on the impact of the garden village. If the number put in the plan resulted in economic decline, it would not be passed by the Inspector. The Government agenda was all about growth and the implications of housing numbers and results would have to be examined
- In response to the comment regarding the housing figures, the Senior Planning Manager could not comment as the results from the Economic and Housing Growth Options evidence base study works was still awaited. In respect of the housing figures these would be debated at examination
- A lot of the policies in the withdrawn Core Strategy were being revisited and redrafted and brought up to date where necessary, the key issues had been housing and employment
- The draft document was going through the LDF Working Group and would be presented to scrutiny and cabinet before being consulted upon
- Saved policies from the Local Plans in south east Northumberland still existed and Wansbeck and Blyth Valley local policies were the starting point for planning decisions in those areas

- In the future officers would be working with neighbourhood plan groups to ensure that the emerging Local Plan and neighbourhood plans fitted together
- There would be drop-in sessions during consultation stage on the full draft plan, as previously, where members of the public could talk to officers

RESOLVED that the contents of the report and presentation be noted.

90. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday, 16 May at Northumberland YMCA, North View, Ashington, NE63 9XQ.

The meeting closed at 7.09 pm

CHAIR.....

DATE.....