

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

ASHINGTON & BLYTH LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **Ashington & Blyth Local Area Council** held in at Northumberland YMCA, North View, Ashington, NE63 9XQ on Wednesday, 12 February 2020 at 5:30 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor G. Webb
Chair

MEMBERS

E Cartie
G Davey
S Davey
B Gallacher
J J Gobin
L Grimshaw

J A Lang
K Parry
M Purvis
J Reid
E Simpson
T S Wilson

OFFICERS

L M Bennett
D Hadden
J Murphy
D Rumney

Senior Democratic Services Officer
Solicitor
Principal Planning Officer
Principal Programme Officer

78. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Campbell, K Nisbet and L Rickerby.

79. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Ashington & Blyth Local Area Council held on Wednesday, 15 January 2020, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

80. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Planning Vice Chair, Councillor Lang, declared an interest in planning application 19/00260/FUL due to him being a member of Newbiggin Football Club. He therefore withdrew from chairing the planning section of the meeting and would leave the meeting for that item, taking no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

81. DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Planning Vice Chair 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. (Report attached to the signed Minutes as Appendix A.)

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

82. 19/00260/FUL - Proposal for the erection of a new single storey sports clubhouse for the use of AFC Newbiggin with associated car park, storage container, 3m high mesh fencing and full size football pitch on the field north of Central Parkway (as amended 25.07.2019), land east of Grace Darling Campus, Cleveland Avenue, Newbiggin by the Sea, Northumberland.

Judith Murphy, Principal Planning Officer, introduced the application and provided a brief overview.

Lynn Burns addressed the meeting speaking in support of the application. Her key points included the following:-

- She was Secretary of AFC Newbiggin and was speaking on behalf of the club.
- The club currently had no facilities and needed them to help the club grow and meet the aspirations of the club members.
- The safety of their young players was paramount and the fenced off area would provide this.
- Currently, motorbikes and cars could drive over the field and there had already been an accident.
- The club house would provide changing facilities, toilets, tuck shop etc. and was essential to safeguard the younger players.
- Newbiggin by the Sea was an area of high deprivation, child poverty and obesity.
- They aimed to encourage a pride in the community and raise the profile of the club and self esteem in the young players.
- There had been a senior team for over 100 years which had won many trophies.
- The senior team had done well in the league, however, had dropped to a different league due to the lack of facilities.
- If these improvements were allowed then further new players would be attracted to the club.

In response to questions from Members the following information was provided:-

- The distance to houses on one side of the site was 24 metres and on the other 34 metres.

- Work on this application had been ongoing for some time. No further consultation had been carried out other than what was legally required. Site notices had also been provided as per normal practice.
- The land was owned by Northumberland County Council and managed by the Estates Department.
- There was no further information on whether access to drainage and power supply was close by. No objections had been raised by the Lead Local Flood Authority, subject to appropriate conditions.
- Highways had raised no objections to the amount of parking available and so was felt to be adequate for the anticipated use.
- The height of the fence had been specified by the applicant and it was not clear whether that was to meet specific requirements. It would be possible to include a condition requiring that the height of the fence was to be agreed.

Councillor B Gallacher proposed the officer recommendation to grant the application. This was seconded by Councillor K Parry.

Debate then followed and key points raised included:

- Disappointment was expressed that consideration had not been given to wider issues relating to the effect the proposal could have on the rest of Newbiggin by the Sea and the leisure centre.
- The club currently used facilities at Newbiggin Sports Centre. Active Northumberland was investing in Newbiggin Sports Centre whilst proposing cuts elsewhere, however, this investment was on the basis of the continued use of its facilities by the club.
- This proposal should come back to Members with further information from Officers about the wider implications of the potential impact of the loss of public open space on the town as a whole and on the sports centre.
- It was stressed that these issues were outside the planning process and it was important to focus on the application and its compliance with planning policy. If the proposal was not supported then there must be strong planning reasons why it should not go ahead.
- Reference was made to paragraph 7.7 of the report referring to the emerging draft Northumberland Local Plan relating to 'the loss of land or buildings used for recreational use or the loss of Protected Open Space' and that the proposal did not outweigh the loss of the existing open space.
- Members were reminded that the emerging draft Northumberland Local Plan was not yet adopted and so could not be used to refuse a planning application at this time. In this instance the appropriate Local Plan was the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

Councillor B Gallacher withdrew his motion to grant the application. This was agreed by Councillor K. Parry.

Councillor G Davey proposed that the application be refused as the proposal did not outweigh the loss of open space and was against the emerging draft Northumberland Local Plan. The application should come back to Members along with information from Officers of other departments of the Council about the wider issues for Newbiggin by the Sea. There was no seconder, therefore, this motion failed.

- Members were referred to Policy REC3 which related to playing fields and it was reiterated that even if the required Officers, not otherwise involved in the planning

process, attended a future meeting and provided further information it was very unlikely to change the Planning Officer's report and the recommendation would remain the same.

- If consideration of the application was further delayed, then the applicant would be able to appeal against non-determination and costs could be awarded against the Council.

Councillor J Reid proposed that the officer recommendation to grant the application subject to an additional condition relating to the height of the fence. This was seconded by Councillor K Parry.

On being put to the vote, it was agreed by 10 votes in favour with 1 abstention, that it be

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** for the reasons and with the conditions as outlined in the report with the addition of a condition relating to the fence height, the wording of which would be delegated to the Director of Planning in consultation with the Chair.

A Member commented that whilst supporting the recommendation, it was to be hoped that this did not prove to be a catalyst for the subsequent closure of Newbiggin Sports Centre.

83. PLANNING APPEALS UPDATE

Members received information on the progress of planning appeals. (Report attached to the signed Minutes as Appendix C.)

Judith Murphy, Principal Planning Officer, provided information about the S.106 Panel Meetings for Sport and Play, which had been requested at the site visit on the previous day. This information would be forwarded on to all Members of the Ashington and Blyth Local Area Council.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

OTHER LOCAL AREA COUNCIL BUSINESS

84. LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

Members received a report detailing the draft Local Transport Plan (LTP) programme for 2020-21 for consideration and comment prior to final approval of the programme.

The following comments were made:-

- Construction costs had increased since the six year plan was introduced and this would have an effect on the amount of work that could be carried out.
- The works outlined on the schedule would still be carried out.
- C and U roads were designated in the 1950s and were at the lower end of the hierarchy from A roads. Many were in rural areas but they were also found in urban areas.

- Members had been requested to provide details of schemes they would like to be included in the 2020-21 LTP Programme by 17 February 2020. This timetable was extremely tight and it was requested that a reminder about the deadline be sent to Members.
- There was a funding allocation of £15 million over two years and a programme was being developed based on asset management principles.
- A programme was being developed with the intention of spreading fairly across the five Local Area Council areas.
- Microsurfacing was very cost effective when done in the right place and serves to prolong the life of the road surface.

RESOLVED that the report and comments be noted.

85. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday, 11 March 2020 at Newbiggin Sports and Community Centre (time to be confirmed).

The meeting closed at 18.22

Chair _____

Date _____