

**NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**CASTLE MORPETH LOCAL AREA COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the **Castle Morpeth Local Area Council** held in the Council Chamber on Monday, 11 September 2017.

**PRESENT**

Councillor E. Armstrong  
(Chair, in the Chair)

(Chair, in the Chair for agenda items 1 - 3 and 8 - 15)

(Planning Vice-chair Councillor S Dickinson in the chair for items 4 - 7)

**COUNCILLORS**

Bawn, D.L  
Beynon, J.A  
Dickinson, S.  
Dodd, R.R.  
Dunn, L.  
Foster, J.D.

Jackson, P.A.  
Jones, V.  
Ledger, D.  
Sanderson, H.G.H.  
Towns, D.J  
Wearmouth, R.

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Bennett, Mrs L.M.  
Laughton, R.  
Marron, H.  
Masson, N.  
Murphy, J.  
Paul, G.  
Sinnamon, E.  
Strettle, R.  
Wardle, S.

Senior Democratic Services Officer  
Planning Officer  
Senior Planning Officer  
Principal Solicitor  
Principal Planning Officer  
Director of Planning and Economy  
Senior Planning Manager  
Senior Economic Policy Officer  
Neighbourhood Services Area  
Manager

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE**

Brown, K.  
Dunbar, K.  
Seymour, S.  
Fryer, Inspector S.

BID Project Manager  
Morpeth Pre-BID Steering Group  
Morpeth Pre-BID Steering Group  
Northern Area Command (Police)

### **39. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Castle Morpeth Local Area Council held on Monday, 14 August 2017 as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair with the following amendments:-

#### **Planning Application No. 17/00794/COU**

The first sentence of the fourth paragraph should be amended to read

‘The Principal Planning Officer explained that the applicant had provided an amended plan showing car parking and screening but had not contacted Northumbrian Water as requested at the June meeting.’

#### **Planning Application No. 17/01842/FUL**

It was noted that this application was not being considered under delegated powers as the applicant was a Councillor.

It was also noted that the building could not be seen from publicly accessible areas.

### **40. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS’ INTERESTS**

Elizabeth Sinnamon, Senior Planning Manager, declared an interest in planning application 17/02238/FUL. She left the Chamber and took no part in the discussion or decision.

Councillor J. Beynon declared a personal, non prejudicial, interest in agenda item no. 12 as he was a member of the pre-BID Steering Group.

### **DEVELOPMENT CONTROL**

### **41. DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The report explained how the Local Area Council was asked to decide the planning applications attached to this agenda using the powers delegated to it and included details of the public speaking arrangements. (Report attached to the signed minutes as Appendix A).

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted

**42. 17/00772/OUT**

**Land at South Croft Stables, Ulgham - 25 dwellings all matters reserved.**

Haley Marron, Senior Planning Officer, introduced the application and provided a brief overview.

Mr. Arthur Warlow spoke in objection to the application and his key points were:

- This part of the precious Green Belt should be saved.
- It was encouraging that the new Council administration was happy to take into account the views of the local residents.
- A petition against another similar development at Ulgham had been forwarded to the Inspector at an Appeal hearing and had demonstrated the views of the residents of Ulgham.
- The committee was urged to reject the application

Councillor Jim Scott (Ulgham Parish Council) spoke in the local member slot and his main points were:-

- There were concerns about the transparency of the applicants/developer.
- There were inaccuracies in the applicant's statement.
- The site was not a brownfield site. The application referred to the site as being used as a riding school but it had not actually been a riding school for 20 years. There was a condition that no business was operated from the site.
- There was no evidence of any business on the site, no accounts and no business rates were paid.
- The National Valuation Officer stated that the the site was 'residential band E'.
- The boundaries were inaccurate and included trees which were actually outside the site. Some of these trees were ash trees and were in good condition.
- The bat survey had not been updated.
- Highways issues had not been addressed and there was a gross underestimation of the amount of traffic that would be generated and a junction had very restricted visibility.
- There was not a shortage of housing in the area.
- The gas assessment report was not satisfactory.
- Most of those in support of the application were related to the applicants and lived in the USA or out of the area.

Robert Murphy (agent) then spoke in support of the application and his key points were:

- The Council's Strategic Planning Committee had approved planning applications which lay outside settlement limits.
- This site did not extend into the open countryside.
- The report relied on a recent appeal decision at Lynebank, Ulgham, however, this case was different.
- Ulgham was not in the Structure Plan and there was no evidence it was in the Green Belt.
- The site provided six affordable housing units, would provide supply chain jobs and result in additional Council Tax receipts.
- The Committee was asked to approve this application.

Members asked questions of officers and the key points from responses were:

- It was not possible to provide the planning history of Ulgham House as it was not part of this planning application site.
- Any S.106 obligations required to make the development acceptable in planning terms should also be set out in the Officer Report for Member consideration.
- This site was in the Green Belt.

Councillor D.L. Bawn moved the officer recommendation to refuse the application. This was seconded by Councillor D.J. Towns.

Debate then followed and the key points from members were:

- The Core Strategy had been withdrawn but it was important to realise that the Green Belt could still be protected and it was not a 'free for all' for developers.
- The development would be highly visible from Ulgham Lane, did not integrate with the settlement because it was detached from it and represented encroachment into the open countryside.

On being put to the vote, it was agreed unanimously that it be

**RESOLVED** that the application be **REFUSED** for the reasons outlined in the report.

**43. 17/02238/FUL**

**Proposal to Convert and Extend the existing detached garage & study to create a 2 bed bungalow at Land East of Monks Lodge, Mitford.**

Richard Laughton, Planning Officer, introduced the application and provided a brief overview.

Paul Conn (agent) spoke in support of the application and his key points were:

- The applicants had lived in the area for many years and had undertaken considerable refurbishment work to their current house. They now wished to downsize as their current house and garden were too large for them.
- All the refurbishment works had been done in a sympathetic manner.
- The applicants did not want to leave the area and so proposed to convert the garage into a home.
- The application complied with local and national planning policies.
- The bungalow would be of traditional design using natural materials and the scale and character would be appropriate to the area.
- The site was a sustainable location near Morpeth.
- The size of the building was within that which was permitted.
- The committee was requested to approve the application.

Members asked questions to officers and the key points from responses were:

- On balance, it was felt that the building would be in keeping with the area in terms of scale, design and materials. It was subservient to the original building.

Councillor E. Armstrong moved the officer recommendation to grant the application. This was seconded by Councillor R.R. Dodd.

Debate followed and the key points from members were:

- It was noted that the Senior Planning Manager had declared an interest in this application.
- As the development was considered to be subservient to the existing building, it complied with local planning policies and so should be approved.

On being put to the vote, it was agreed by 11 votes for to 0 against with 1 abstention, that it be

**RESOLVED** that the application be **GRANTED** for the reasons and with the conditions as outlined in the report.

**44. 17/01149/FUL  
62 dwellings at field east of The Nursery, Medburn.**

Members noted that this application had been withdrawn to allow a site visit to be held.

## **OTHER LOCAL AREA COUNCIL BUSINESS**

*On the conclusion of the development control business at 4.40 pm, the meeting adjourned as the remainder of the agenda consisted of other Local Area Council business scheduled to begin at 6pm.*

### **45. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions from the public.

### **46. PETITIONS**

Members were informed that, since the previous meeting, no new petitions had been received, there were no reports due on petitions previously received, nor any updates due on petitions previously considered.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

### **47. LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES**

The Chair explained that this item enabled members to raise issues about services provided by the Local Services group with the area managers from Technical Services and Neighbourhood Services.

The following issues were raised:-

- Local Services was thanked for the pragmatic and prompt response to the removal of flytipping.
- A chevron road sign at Birney Hill on the Stamfordham Road which had been totally covered by overgrown vegetation had now been dealt with after being reported.
- Potholes were marked up as needing attention and it was always planned to repair them as quickly as possible.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS - CORPORATE**

### **48. ANNUAL POLICING UPDATE**

Inspector Sue Fryer was in attendance to give an overview and answer questions about policing in the Castle Morpeth area.

Inspector Fryer referred to the changes in Police Station opening hours which had been out to public consultation and explained the reasoning behind the move. She made the following points:-

- Northumbria Police had 27 police stations and 11 of these were open on a 24/7 basis. This was one of highest numbers of front offices open to the public outside the Metropolitan Police area.
- Some front offices were open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. or 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- The changes were needed due to changes in the way people communicated with the Police.
- Use of the 101 phone number and online reporting was more prevalent. People usually preferred to see a police officer in their own home and at a convenient time.
- The Improvement Team had looked closely at the level of demand along with the ability to give a professional service and the changes to front office opening were made based on two year's direct data of usage.
- The Chief Constable was committed to providing an outstanding service to all and the investment into online and social communications would enable this to be done.

Inspector Fryer responded to members' comments and queries as follows:-

- Times had changed and fewer people actually visited a police station to report a problem. It was considered better to invest in the 101 telephone number.
- If a person attended a police station late at night they could contact a police officer by using a yellow telephone box outside the police station which was linked directly to the control room. All officer locations were known and if an officer was in the building they would be able to talk directly to the member of the public.
- It was unfortunate that some members had experienced difficulties in using the 101 telephone number. There had been investment to provide more call takers. Also a method of filtering calls was being considered whereby calls relating to custody would be directed to a standalone number. Times of peak demand were being looked at in an effort to ensure that staff were on duty at the right time.
- It was acknowledged that 101 call takers may not be local and so not have local knowledge. This was due to the service being more centralised.
- It was important that the public was made aware of the improvements to the 101 service.
- Police officers had been given mobile phones and were encouraged to give out their numbers and e-mail addresses. This would enable the public to speak directly to an officer rather than going through the 101 system.
- Increasing public satisfaction was a priority.

The Chair thanked Inspector Fryer for her attendance.

#### **49. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND ECONOMY**

##### **MORPETH BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID)**

Members received a briefing regarding Business Improvement Districts (BID) and a presentation relating to the development of the Morpeth BID proposals. (Attached to the signed minutes as Appendix B).

Geoff Paul, Director of Planning and Economy, introduced the report and explained that there were approximately 300 BIDs active nationally at present. Three of these BIDs were in Northumberland, two of which are at the proposal stage (Blyth and Morpeth) whereas Hexham bid is operational. Consultation was ongoing and a more detailed report would be produced and submitted to the Castle Morpeth LAC later in the year. The ballot was scheduled to take place in January 2018.

Ken Dunbar, BID Project Manager, provided a presentation outlining the BID proposals for Morpeth. (A copy of the presentation is file with the signed minutes). The main areas covered were:-

- Why a BID for Morpeth?
- The proposed boundary
- An initial proposal for the Morpeth BID
- What a BID could do for Morpeth
- Strategic approach to car parking
- Events and entertainment
- Market what already have
- Eat and Drink Morpeth
- Strategic approach to signage
- Other ways of raising standards based on feedback from businesses
- Details of the June-July, August-September and October-November work programmes

Members raised a number of issues for discussion with representatives of the Morpeth pre-BID Steering Group:-

- Morpeth had a problem with boy racers using the town as a race track. This spoiled the town and although a relatively minor problem it was one which was consistent. It was reported that this was an area that the BID could address and it was known that BIDs in other towns and cities had worked well with the Police.



- Could CCTV be used to monitor anti social behaviour in the town? It was hoped to encourage more footfall in the town centre during the early evenings.
- Some businesses would view the levy as just another tax on business. However, they may change their views if the benefits of the scheme were tangible. Businesses in Newgate Street and New Bridge Street had concerns about shoplifters and boy racers.
- There was a lack of understanding at the amount of effort required from volunteers in the business community currently to make things happen. The independent shops were the lifeblood of the town whereas the multiples played less of a role.
- Many businesses had had a positive attitude towards the Morpeth BID and there had not been the same level of negativity as seen in some towns.
- The BID was a way of providing funding for the good of the town.
- Even the 'NO' campaign believed that the right BID would be good for the town but had differing views on how the bid might operate.
- It was important for as many as possible to vote in the ballot in January 2018.

The Chair thanked the representatives of the Morpeth pre-BID Steering Group for their attendance.

**RESOLVED** that

- (1) the report and presentation be noted.
- (2) a further detailed report summarising the BID proposals be submitted to the Castle Morpeth Local Area Council later in the year.

## **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

### **50. LOCAL AREA COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME**

Members received the latest version of agreed items for future Local Area Council meetings. (A copy of the report is filed with the signed minutes as Appendix C)

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

### **51. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Monday, 9 October 2017, at 4.00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Morpeth.

This meeting would deal with planning matters and would be followed by a joint meeting with Parish and Town Council representatives.

**CHAIRMAN** \_\_\_\_\_.

**DATE** \_\_\_\_\_.