

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, 9 October 2017.

PRESENT

Councillor E. Armstrong
(Chair, in the Chair)

COUNCILLORS

Bawn, D.L.
Beynon, J.A.
Dodd, R.R.
Foster, J.D.

Jones, V.
Ledger, D
Wearmouth, R.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Bennett, Mrs L.M.
Masson, N.
Patrick, M.
Rawlinson, A.
Sinnamon, E.

Senior Democratic Services Officer
Principal Solicitor
Highways
Principal Planning Officer
Senior Planning Manager

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Hitchin, J.

Lead Local Flood Authority

52. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S. Dickinson, L. Dunn, P.A. Jackson, H.G.H. Sanderson and D.J. Towns.

53. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Castle Morpeth Local Area Council held on Monday, 11 September 2017 as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

54. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of Members' interests.

Ch.'s Initials.....

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

55. DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The attached 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

56. 17/01149/FUL

Proposed detailed planning application for 62 dwellings including associated access, infrastructure and open space (amended plans and documents)

Field east of The Nursery, Medburn, Northumberland (Appendix B)

Ann Rawlinson, Principal Planning Officer, introduced the application and provided a brief overview. She explained that paragraphs 7.9 and 7.10 of the report had been from a previous version of the report and read out the following revised version:-

‘Officers consider that, at the present time, a significant supply of housing land can be demonstrated across the County as a whole with much of this supply benefitting from planning permission. In this regard, as of the 31 March 2017 there were extant planning permissions for approximately 12,400 dwellings. Furthermore, housing completions have accelerated in recent years. 1,531 new housing completions were achieved during 2016-17 with an average of 1,323 dwelling completions per annum over the last 3 years. Therefore, in the context of paragraph 49 of the NPPF, the tilted balance in Paragraph 14 is not engaged on the grounds of housing land supply. Due to the level of supply, officers are confident that the strong delivery that has been achieved recently will continue. Whilst the development of the site would add to the existing supply of housing land, and there is a five year supply in the county, the need to ensure a 5 year housing supply is a minimum and not a maximum and, therefore, additional housing can be permitted providing it is sustainable.’

Members were also updated as follows:-

- At the time of writing the report, limited weight had been given to the Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan. However, the Plan had now been agreed and so full weight could be given in considering the application.

On further consideration it was felt that the Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan had no further bearing on the proposal or recommendations.

- The highways matters had now been resolved and so could be removed from the recommended conditions.
- Delegated authority was sought for the Head of Planning Services to make minor amendments to condition no. 2.

Mrs Margaret Chaytor spoke in objection to the application, and her key points were:

- The existing properties, Windy Ridge, Ash Grove and Medburn Lodge were all 1½ stories high but would be surrounded by seven homes of 2½ stories high.
- There were no facilities, pavements or footpaths in Medburn and the C345 was a narrow road frequently used by cyclists, runners and horse riders. There was an infrequent bus service.
- The development was not sensitive or desirable and would destroy the area. The addition of a further 62 properties was excessive in an area of healthy housing supply.
- The Avenue was unsuitable for HGV vehicles and had three 90 degree bends. New access points should be provided.
- SUDS ponds may be dangerous to children.
- A plan needed to be drawn up for the whole hamlet of Medburn.
- Residents were losing faith in the planning process and hoped that the Committee would give appropriate consideration to residents' views

Councillor Sue Johnson (Ponteland Town Council) spoke in the Parish Council member slot and her main points were:-

- Ponteland Town Council had significant concerns regarding the scale of proposed development and considered it would have a detrimental impact on the character of the hamlet of Medburn.
- The proposal was contrary to Policy MBH2 of the Castle Morpeth Local Plan as the site was neither brownfield, nor infill, and was not within the curtilage of existing properties.
- 62 further dwellings and associated access would have a detrimental impact on the agricultural/rural character of the settlement. This was contrary to Policy H15 of the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan.
- There were no services or facilities in Medburn with only a limited bus service and poor paths for cyclists and pedestrians.
- The development would have an overwhelming and adverse impact on the settlement and the C345.
- Medburn could not cope with the number of already approved, proposed and ongoing development. The constant approval of development in Medburn was excessive.
- The Avenue and the junction should be improved.
- The range of house types were not acceptable and this was of crucial importance. A standard estate layout had been used and this was not satisfactory.

- The safety of residents had not been considered and there should be two points of entry to the development.
- Two SUDS ponds were proposed near to where children lived.
- The development could be opened up to alleviate problems on the Avenue and the elevation of the field should be reconsidered to prevent overlooking.

Martyn Earle (agent) spoke in support of the application and his key points were:

- The planning framework encouraged the delivery of housing.
- The recent decision at New Hartley demonstrated that the five year supply of housing could not be demonstrated without the Strategic Plan in place.
- Policy H15 of the Castle Morpeth Local Plan supported developments within settlement limits and this proposal fell within that policy. It was an infill site and was situated outside the Green Belt.
- The recommendation for approval followed a close working relationship during which amendments had been made to the scheme, resulting in a respectful proposal.
- A hedge had been included to the south and east of the site.
- Surrounding infrastructure was key and an S.106 agreement had been agreed on.
- Highways had no objections. The C345 was an adopted road and the new capacity could be accommodated.
- There would be substantial environmental, economic and social benefits to the area with £13 million being brought into the local economy by new residents.
- There was a need for large family homes in the area.

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

- Policy MBH2 of the Castle Morpeth Local Plan required development on a brownfield or infill site within the curtilage of existing properties. It was recognised that this proposal conflicted with that and so should be seen as a departure from the Local Plan. Judgement had been made on what weight should be given to Policy MBH2 and whether the proposal conformed with more up to date policies. The NPPF did not seek to restrict development and it was well accepted that not all Medburn's developments were on brownfield or infill sites. Less weight had been given to this policy in the assessment.
- There would be a condition requiring a Construction Method Statement to be approved and all construction would be required to access the site via the Nursery and not the Avenue. It was normal for developers to construct an access road and this would be designed to adoptable standard. During construction the road would be maintained by the developers and thereafter adopted by Northumberland County Council.

- The recommended separation distance within the Local Plan between properties always assumed that the site was flat and, therefore, a judgement had to be made as to appropriate separation distances if the land is not flat. The minimum separation to a habitable window is 20 metres but in this case 23 metres was proposed. As such the change in change was appropriate given the minimum separation distance would be exceeded. Condition 22 restricted the future construction of extensions without a planning approval.
- At an earlier appeal the Inspector had ruled that a development of 14 properties was acceptable, however, that was all that had been applied for and should not be seen as a restriction on other development sites.
- No contribution was being requested from the developer for maintenance of the Avenue or the main road leading to the Avenue. The size of the development did not require two points of access.
- Legal advice was being sought following the appeal decision at New Hartley given that the Council took the view that there was a healthy housing five year housing supply.

Councillor E. Armstrong then moved the officer recommendation to grant the application. This was seconded by Councillor E. Ledger

Debate then followed and the key points from members were:

- It was 'open season' on Medburn and although there had been growth historically, it had previously been bit by bit. The Avenue was in terrible condition and not adopted. This would worsen if it was used by construction traffic.
- The opportunity to improve the infrastructure at Medburn had been missed and it was to be hoped it would be addressed in the future.
- The application was not quite in keeping with the rest of Medburn with the density being slightly tight and more like an estate with no character.
- 62 houses would completely change the hamlet and many were too close to existing houses. Even if the field was levelled it would still potentially lead to overlooking.
- The application should be refused as it was not infill or limited. The proposal would double the size of Medburn and with further proposed developments the hamlet would triple in size.
- The estate plan was out of keeping with Medburn which was an agricultural village with individual properties.
- The road condition was not good enough and would have too much traffic.

On being put to the vote, it was agreed by 4 votes for to 2 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 and the following amendments:-

- Removal of the highways conditions

- Delegated authority should be delegated to the Head of Planning Services and the Chair to make minor amendments to condition no. 2.

57. 17/02770/OUT

Outline Planning Permission (All Matters Reserved) - Proposed construction of a new dwelling.

Harrison Hall, The Avenue, Medburn, Newcastle Upon Tyne, Northumberland, NE20 0JD (Appendix C)

Ann Rawlinson, Senior Planning Officer, introduced the application and provided a brief overview. Members were asked to note that the officer report gave limited weight to the Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan. However, the Plan had now been agreed and so full weight should be given to it. It was not considered that it had a bearing on the officer's assessment of the proposal or the recommendation.

Councillor Sue Johnson (Ponteland Town Council) spoke in objection to the application and her key points were:

- Ponteland Town Council objected as the proposal was contrary to Policy MBH2 of the Castle Morpeth Local Plan as the site was not brownfield, infill or within the curtilage of existing properties.
- The property would be on agricultural land and represent a new development on a greenfield site where only infill on brownfield sites was allowed.
- Medburn was a small settlement without any services and only a limited bus service. There were poor paths for cyclists and pedestrians.
- The proposal was also contrary to Policy H15 of the Castle Morpeth Local Plan
- There would be an adverse impact on the C345 which was a narrow country lane and the only access road to Medburn.

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

- It was not normal to have a very restrictive condition restricting access to construction traffic to a single dwelling. A Construction Method Statement would be required as part of another condition if the application was approved.
- It would be classed as 'unreasonable' to place further conditions on the developer with regard to the condition of the Avenue.

Councillor R.R. Dodd moved the officer recommendation to grant the application. This was seconded by Councillor D. Ledger.

Debate then followed and the key points from members were:

- It would be possible to vary condition 13 relating to delivery times during construction although it would not normally be done for a single property.
- The times could be restricted to 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. It was noted that this would be a restriction that could be appealed by the developer and so it would be preferable to retain the conditions as for a single property.
- The position of this property at the end of the Avenue would have an effect on every house on the avenue. As the property was furthest away a contribution to the upkeep of the Avenue should be sought.

On being put to the vote, it was agreed by 6 votes for to 0 against with 2 abstentions, that it be

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

58. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Monday, 13 November 2017, at 4.00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Morpeth.

CHAIRMAN _____.

DATE _____.