

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, 8 January 2018.

PRESENT

Councillor E. Armstrong
(Chair, in the Chair)

COUNCILLORS

Bawn, D.L.
Beynon, J.A.
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

Lally, D.
Bennett, Mrs L.M.
Best, N.
Laux, D.
Maughan, A.
Murphy, J.
Rose, J.

Sawyer, L.
Sinnamon, E.
Wood, T.

Chief Executive
Senior Democratic Services Officer
Archaeologist
Head of Technical Services
Solicitor
Principal Planning Officer
Economic and Inclusion Policy
Manager
Business Support Manager
Senior Planning Manager
Senior Planning Officer

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Dunbar, K.
Langton, L.
Twedde, D.

Morpeth Pre-BID Steering Group
Northumberland Community Bank
Galliford Try

82. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S. Dickinson.

83. MINUTES

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

84. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor V. Jones declared an interest in planning application 17/04325/VARYCO, as the applicant was Northumberland County Council and she was the Portfolio Holder for Adult Wellbeing & Health. She took no part in the discussion or decision.

Councillor D. Ledger declared an interest in planning applications 16/02756/FUL and 17/00884/FUL as he was a personal friend of the applicants/agents.

Councillor R. Wearmouth declared an interest in planning application 17/04325/VARYCO as he was Chairman of the Development Company.

Both Councillors Ledger and Wearmouth left the Chamber and took no part in the discussion or decision.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

85. 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.

An additional paper was circulated to Members at the meeting which contained further information relating to planning applications 16/02756/FUL and 17/00884/FUL.

86. 16/02756/FUL

Erection of two no. dwellings (amended description and amended plans received 09.11.2016, supplementary information received 22.11.16 and 23.11.16) and addendum report.

Land South Of Old Smithy, Widdrington Village, Northumberland, (Report attached to the signed minutes as Appendix 1)

Judith Murphy, Principal Planning Officer, introduced the application and provided a brief overview. Nick Best, Archaeologist, explained that, following

concerns that the site was of archaeological significance, assessment had been carried out by way of a desk based assessment using historical maps and two evaluation trenches. Details of findings were highlighted in the report. It had been concluded that the archaeological remains identified were of local importance only.

Members had no questions.

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

Debate then followed and the following comments were made:

- This was the second time that the application had been brought back before Members and all of the concerns raised had been explored. The recommendation should be agreed.

On being put to the vote, it was agreed by 9 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.

87. 17/00884/FUL

Conversion of existing Grade II listed building to accommodate 13 No. self contained residential apartments (C1 use class) and development of 4 dormer bungalows (3 no. 3 bed and 1 no. 4 bed) within former car parking area. Revised plans and information and description.

94 Newgate Street, Morpeth, NE61 1BU. (Report attached to the signed minutes as Appendix 2)

Judith Murphy, Principal Planning Officer, introduced the application and provided a brief overview and the following updates:-

- The handout circulated earlier to Members had highlighted a technical error in the report relating to the use class of the residential apartments and it should be C3 rather than C1.
- A further 21 day consultation period on this change had commenced, and the recommendation in the report amended accordingly.
- Six further objections (some from previous objectors) had been received along with 18 letters of support.
- Comments raised referred to the inappropriate development, loss of amenity, over development, loss of mature trees, 22 parking spaces would be displaced resulting in added congestion, overshadowing of existing properties, maintenance access concerns to nos. 1 and 3 Orchard Mews, massing of proposed dormer bungalows, overlooking of Fern Cottage, poor re-design of listed building, the listed status of Kirkville would be detrimentally affected and treatment of the boundary along Butchers

Lonnen is not clear. The Local Lead Flood Agency had no objections subject to appropriate conditions.

- The Environment Agency had no objections subject to a flood risk assessment being carried out.
- Morpeth Town Council objected on the grounds of inconsistent development, overmassing, car parking, and the development was not consistent with the Neighbourhood Plan.

Colin Wardle spoke in objection to the application and his key points were:

- Loss of mature trees which were important to the town and the setting of a Grade II Listed Building.
- The area had Conservation Area status.
- There would be a loss of parking spaces.
- Loss of amenity and privacy at Kirkville, Orchard Mews and Fern Cottage.
- The development was inappropriate and there was harm to the setting of a Listed Building in order to build two dwellings.
- Public safety issues, reduced visibility.
- The proximity to 1 Orchard Mews was not shown correctly on the plan.

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

- Concern regarding bundalows to the north of the site which were within 5 metres of other buildings.
- His application to extend his garage was refused despite being 25 metres away from other buildings. There were double standards.

Peter Tilson spoke in objection to the application and his key points were:

- Concern at the displaced parking spaces. The parking area was not informal and had been used for 16 years. The displaced vehicles could pose a danger to pupils walking to and from school.
- The proposals fall short with regard to the separation distances between properties and nothing had been done to ameliorate this.
- Trees on the site would be affected.

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

- The Conservation Officer had considered the peripheral development in relation to the Grade II Listed Building.
- The trees to be retained were highlighted on a plan for Members' information.
- Obscure window glazing would be provided to windows at ground level. This would be part of any approved plans.
- The current parking on the site was not formalised under any regulation or order.
- The development would have its own gated parking.
- The applicant would be required to provide mature native species trees as approved by the Tree Officer. If the trees were to fail, then the applicant

would be obliged to replace them. The trees would not be subject to a Tree Preservation Order.

- The separation distance of 16 m would normally be considered substandard, however, the layout allowed oblique positioning of the dwellings so resulting in no risk of loss of light. This had been the subject of a great deal of discussion and revisions to the scheme.
- Officers were unable to comment on the previous application for a garage extension referred to by an earlier speaker.

Councillor R.R. Dodd moved the officer recommendation to grant the application. This was seconded by Councillor P.A. Jackson.

Debate then followed and the key points from members were:

- The development of the Listed Building itself was a very good scheme and it was a unfortunate that the bungalows were also part of it.
- There were benefits to the scheme but the impact on the trees and heritage impacts meant that the decision would be finely balanced.
- The two bungalows were very close to existing properties and overshadowed them.
- The applicant had made significant design changes, however, the two bungalows would cause harm to the amenity of residents, the Conservation Area and heritage assets.
- The applicant and objectors were commended for their professional approach.
- It was important to be mindful that it was unlikely that a decision to refuse could be successfully defended at appeal.
- There had been considerable negotiation regarding this application since it was received in March 2017, and the applicant could already have appealed.

On being put to the vote, the proposal to grant permission was lost by 3 votes for to 4 against with 3 abstentions.

Councillor D. Towns proposed, seconded by Councillor D. Bawn, that the application be refused on the grounds that the dormer bungalows would harm the amenity of residents, the Conservation Area and hertigate assets.

Members debated the proposal and made the following comments:-

- There was not enough separation between the properties. The applicant was encouraged to make further changes to the scheme which may be acceptable.
- The impact of the proposal on the conservation area, the loss of trees and on the impact on the Grade II listed Kirkville would be unacceptable.
- The harm caused the scheme would outweigh the good, at present.

On being put to the vote, the proposal to refuse permission, was agreed by 4 votes for, 2 against and 4 absentions.

RESOLVED that the application be **REFUSED** due to the harmful impact on the amenity of residents, harm to the Conservation Area and neighbouring heritage assets.

88. 17/03723/VARYCO

Variation of condition 1 (approved plans) pursuant to planning permission (16/02972/REM) in order to introduce additional Type 4 houses in lieu of Type 2 houses. In addition to provide final versions of the houses to be used.

Land South Of Aiden Grove And Lynemouth Road, Lynemouth Road, Ellington, Northumberland. (Report attached to the signed minutes as Appendix 3)

Judith Murphy, Principal Planning Officer, introduced the application and provided a brief overview. She added that, if approved, it would be subject to the carry over of the S.106 agreement or submission of a Deed of Variation.

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

- The amount of affordable housing contained within the scheme was outlined in the report.
- It was stressed that Members were not being asked to consider the planning merits of the scheme, just the variation and the principle of moving the positioning of dwellings on the site.
- The trigger point for the provision of affordable housing was contained in the S.106 Agreement. Affordable housing would be triggered when the 100th unit was built.

Councillor D. Bawn moved the officer recommendation to grant the application. This was seconded by Councillor H.G.H. Sanderson.

On being put to the vote, it was agreed by 9 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.

89. 17/04325/VARYCO

Variation of conditions 5 (car parking) and removal of condition 18 (revised layout) and removal of conditions 20 and 21 pursuant to planning permission 16/04329/FUL in order to remove the requirement for the area to be sealed (in order to allow rainwater percolation) and to retain the optimum locations for the dwellings. Land South Of Sea Lodge, Cresswell, Northumberland. (Report attached as Appendix 4)

Tamsin Wood, Senior Planning Officer, introduced the application and provided a brief overview. Members were informed that conditions 19 and 20 should be deleted.

There were no questions.

Councillor R. Wearmouth then moved the officer recommendation to grant the application. This was seconded by Councillor H.G.H. Sanderson.

On being put to the vote, it was agreed by 10 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.

OTHER LOCAL AREA COUNCIL BUSINESS

On the conclusion of the development control business at 5.30 pm, the meeting adjourned as the remainder of the agenda consisted of other Local Area Council business scheduled to begin at 6pm.

90. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair explained that this item provided an opportunity for members of the public to speak.

Parish Councillor D. Cotton, Lynemouth Parish Council

Parish Councillor Cotton wished to speak about the Northumberland Community Bank and the Chair agreed that he be permitted to speak when this item was discussed later on the agenda.

91. 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.

Grit Bins

Councillor L. Dunn referred to a grit bin in her Division which was not fit for purpose with the contents either being frozen or the bin full of water. The bin was situated near OAP bungalows and a nursery school.

David Laux, Head of Technical Services, and Councillor H.G.H. Sanderson, Portfolio Holder for Environment & Local Services agreed to investigate if details of the exact location were provided.

Potholes

Councillor J. Foster queried whether there was a backlog of pothole repairs as she was aware of many comments that they were being reported but not acted on.

It was reported that there was no specific backlog but it was acknowledged that the recent bad weather would have caused more potholes to appear. David Laux agreed to investigate further if details were provided.

Councillor R.R. Dodd added that many such issues were caused by there being too much water on the roads. David Laux commented that the department was trying to keep ditches and gullies clear but that this work was very labour intensive. Councillor H.G.H. Sanderson added that a meeting was to be held later in the week but that there could be no immediate solution.

Gritting

Councillor L. Dunn reported that there had been two collisions on the C123 Lynemouth Road and a near miss on the Lynemouth roundabout on Friday, 5 January 2018. She had reported this to Local Services asking for the road to be gritted. There was also a lot of water running off the fields onto the road in this area.

David Laux explained that the Council used the special winter maintenance weather forecast which had not indicated that temperatures on the coastal area would drop to freezing and so officers had correctly not planned to grit there. However, temperatures dropped massively between 5.30 / 6.00 a.m. and once this information was received, it took time to mobilise the gritters. David Laux agreed to look at the issue of water on the road.

DISCUSSION ITEMS - CORPORATE

92. REPORTS OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR - PARTNERSHIPS AND DEVOLUTION

Northumberland Community Bank

Members received a presentation from Lauren Langton, Chief Executive of the Northumberland Community Bank explaining the financial products and services of the Northumberland Community Bank that were available to all residents. (Report attached to the signed minutes as Appendix C)

The Chair welcomed Lauren Langton to the meeting. She raised the following points:-

- The Bank had an ambitious Business Plan and in order to be financially self sustaining it must grow substantially. This would be a challenge but Northumberland deserved to have local ethical lender.
- A formal launch was expected to take place in April 2018
- The bank would offer savings and loans and help people budget.
- They would improve the IT and management processes and whilst aiming to grow, costs must be kept down. The bank had small resources but aimed to use them where needed most.
- The bank would have a personal touch and be accessible to all.
- It was aimed to increase the savings balance with the bank and this year's target was £700,000. The maximum deposit allowed by regulators was £7,500 and that was also the limit of any loan.
- The key message of the bank was to save as well as borrowing.

The Chair invited Parish Councillor D. Cotton to speak. Parish Councillor Cotton stated that he had been involved with a credit union for 25 years. It was staffed by volunteers. The first credit union was set up in Cramlington and he had seen an advert for it and joined and then saved regularly. The credit union had now been taken over and was known as the Northumberland Community Bank, but that he had not been informed. However, this problem had now been overcome and he fully supported the bank and hoped that Northumberland County Council would also support it.

Members welcomed the presentation and the following comments and responses were made:-

- The Northumberland Community Bank was very welcome particularly at a time when most of the major banks were withdrawing and closing branches.
- It was hoped that the bank's expansion continued.
- The Bank had a basic website which needed to be updated and there was no-one specifically dealing with marketing. Help in creating marketing material would be welcome.
- The Bank had an office in the town hall in Ashington and it was hoped to have a presence in all areas of Northumberland.
- The County Council was developing localised Facebook pages and twitter channels and would be able to use these to offer support.
- Presentations would be available to other Town and Parish Councils.
- The Community Bank was slightly different to a Credit Union but they did collaborate and were not in competition. Both were businesses with a social purpose.
- It may be useful for a presentation to be given to the Town and Parish Council Liaison Working Group on 1 February 2018 as this would give an opportunity to make contact with other Town and Parish Councils.

RESOLVED that the presentation be welcomed and noted.

93. REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Corporate Plan, Medium Term Financial Plan 2018-21 and Budget 2018-19

Members received a report and presentation informing them as to the content of the draft Corporate Plan, the proposed budget strategy for the Medium Term Financial Plan, and its implication for setting the Council's budget for 2018-19.

Councillor P.A. Jackson, Leader of the Council, and Councillor Nick Oliver, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services gave a presentation highlighting the proposed budget strategy for the emerging Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and the draft Corporate Plan. (Report and Presentation are attached to the signed minutes as Appendix B).

The presentation covered the following areas:-

- The Corporate Plan would lay out the direction of the Council over the next 3½ years.
- The operating principles were; Financial Prudence, Resourceful, Listening and Considering, Empowering, Collaborative, Service Integration, New ways of working and Income Generation
- The five key themes of the administration were; Living, Enjoying, Connecting, Learning, Thriving
- The inherited position - £65 million pressures
- Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement
- Council Tax Proposed 2.99% increase
- Funding Analysis 2014-2022
- Gross Expenditure by Service 2018-19
- Summary of Identified Savings by Category 2018-2020
- MTFP Cumulative Savings
- Capital Programme 2018-2021
- Capital Investment
- Capital Spend Comparison
- Debt Servicing Costs
- The Next Steps
 - Invite views from Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Local Area Councils
 - Final version to be considered by full Council in February 2018 alongside the Medium Term Financial Plan
 - Subsequent preparation of Service Planning Frameworks

The following issues were raised:-

- The loan to Arch.
- Not much could be done regarding the inherited debt but it would be dealt with as effectively and prudently as possible.

- Although block grant had fallen over the years, due to other funding streams, in real terms income was largely static.

RESOLVED that the report and presentation be received.

94. REPORTS OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR - PARTNERSHIPS AND DEVOLUTION

North of Tyne Devolution

Janice Rose, Economic and Inclusion Policy Manager, gave a presentation outlining the content of the North of Tyne devolution deal recently announced by Government and detail the processes for the subsequent creation of a North of Tyne Combined Authority and the election of a Mayor in May 2019. (The presentation is attached to the signed minutes.)

The presentation covered the following areas:-

- A previous developing deal with seven North East Councils had collapsed although a positive relationship had been retained.
- It was announced in November 2017 that Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle would combine to form a North of Tyne Combined Authority.
- Deal Content
 - Governance - directly elected mayor from May 2019
 - Investment Fund - £20m pa to help long term planning and would be aligned geographically.
 - Themes - focus on employment, education and skills, health, housing, digital connectivity
 - Transport - the current arrangements with Tyne & Wear and Nexus would be retained.
- Governance Review
- Consultation - runs between 14 December 2017 and 5 February 2018
- Provisional Timetable

RESOLVED that the presentation be received.

95. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND ECONOMY

Morpeth Business Improvement District (BID)

Members received a briefing regarding Business Improvement Districts (BID) and background regarding the development of Morpeth BID proposals. (Report attached to the signed minutes as Appendix D).

Ken Dunbar, Morpeth Pre-BID Steering Group, made the following points:-

- A large majority of local businesses were happy with the Morpeth BID proposal.
- The level of consultation carried out had exceeded that required.
- The views of local businesses had been listened to and, although they did not all agree, it had been ensured that they all understood the proposals.
- The boundary had been amended and no longer included County Hall
- Every effort had been made to ensure the proposal and business plan was the best it could be.
- The ballot would take place in March 2018 and the result announced in early April

RESOLVED that the report be received.

96. STREET LIGHTING

Lynsey Sawyer from the Street Lighting section and Dawn Tweddle from the main contractor, Galliford Try, were present to answer Members' questions about street lighting in Northumberland.

- Councillor R.R. Dodd referred to a faulty light in Ponteland which flashed every few seconds.

Lynsey Sawyer explained that there was a four day target to deal with these issues but that it could take longer in certain circumstances. For instance, if the light was an LED, it would have to be referred to the contractors, Galliford Try. She was unable to comment on the specific light in question but agreed to investigate further if she was given more details.

- Councillor J. Foster asked why it had taken 10 weeks to provide a temporary power supply in Stakeford Lane?

Lynsey Sawyer explained that it depended on whether it was dealt with by Northumberland County Council or Northern Power Grid. Once investigations had been carried out any work had to be added to the programme of works and this took six weeks. In this case, it was likely to have been dealt with by Northern Power Grid who had a 35 working day turnaround time.

- Councillor H.G.H. Sanderson, Portfolio Holder for Environment & Local Services, commented that many delays were not always within the control of Northumberland County Council. A lot of work was being done to improve the service.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

97. 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 E).

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

98. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Monday, 12 February 2018, at 4.00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Morpeth

CHAIRMAN E. ARMSTRONG

DATE 12 February 2018