

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL
CASTLE MORPETH LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **Castle Morpeth Local Area Council** held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF on Monday, 11 June 2018 at 4.00pm.

PRESENT

Councillor S. Dickinson
(Vice-chair (Planning), in the Chair)

COUNCILLORS

Armstrong, E
Beynon, J.A
Ledger, D

Sanderson, H.G.H.
Towns, D.J (part)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Bird, M.
Filby, U.
Horsman, G.
Laughton, R.
Patrick, M.

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

Sinnamon, E.

Nine members of the public and one member of the press were in attendance.

20. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bawn, Dodd, Dunn, Foster, Jackson, Jones and Wearmouth.

21. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Castle Morpeth Local Area Council held on Monday, 14 May 2018 as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Vice-chair (Planning).

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

22. DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The attached report explained how the Local Area Council needed 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.

23. 18/00483/DISCON

**Discharge of condition 17 attached to planning permission reference 14/01442/OUT - construction method statement including provision of enclosed site compound for a period of 24 months with haul road, contractor buildings, car parking and materials store on land south of Ashcroft adjacent to former Northumbria Police HQ site, relating to redevelopment of former police HQ site to provide a mix of retained Northumbria Police operational functions and buildings and up to 263 dwellings
Former Northumbria Police HQ, Ponteland, Northumberland, NE20 0BL**

Geoff Horsman, Senior Planning Officer, introduced the application and provided a brief overview using a slides presentation. Prior to his introduction, Mr Horsman advised that a further objection had been received since the agenda for the meeting had been published, in addition to the 16 letters previously received, but the late letter did not raise any new issues.

Debra Crosby, objector, then spoke in objection to the application, of which her key points were:

- many other objectors were not able to attend this meeting due to work commitments
- in paragraphs 7.9 and 7.10 of the report, the Planning Officer acknowledged that the proposal constituted an inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Very special circumstances needed to exist for members to approve the application. 7.13 of the report stated that the green area at the heart of the site, which was a possible alternative location, was a local green space where development would only be permitted in very special circumstances. If the very special circumstances existed, then they did for the green area as well as the Green Belt, and the Green Belt should thus not be built on. If very special circumstances did not exist the proposal should be rejected, and if they did exist then it should also be rejected as the green area was a more suitable location
- in 2.4 the report stated that a proposal was required that protected the amenity of the existing residents. The proposal failed to satisfy this requirement because, as the conclusion stated, there would be some adverse impact from the proposals on nearby residents. The amenity of the local residents could be protected by locating the compound on the green area or elsewhere within the former police headquarters site
- the proposal should be rejected; in doing so this would strengthen the County Council's aim to protect the Green Belt.

Marie Lodge, supporter then spoke in support of the application, of which her key points were:

- planning permission was already in place for the development. This decision only concerned the condition associated with the siting of the compound and haul road. If this proposal was not agreed, construction vehicles would access the development via the current main entrance, which entailed construction vehicles passing closer to existing residential properties. This would also add eight months to the construction period. The site compound and road haul would be maintained for a maximum of two years; beyond then internal road works would have progressed sufficiently to allow siting of the compound within the development area
- there were significant demolition works to be undertaken within the development boundary; key existing buildings needed demolition to allow the internal road network to become operational. Until such time, an access point was required to progress the works to both the roads and dwellings. The haul road was most important for maintaining 24 hour operational access for the police. The road haul would be two way allowing construction and police vehicles to access and egress the development safely
- currently the compound could not be located within the central green due to its designation as a 'Local Green Space' within the Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan. The only other possible location within their control, a small area of car parking in the south east corner, was not viable as it had to be their first phase of development and was the only part delivering a sales frontage, which important for quicker sales; it was the first area that practically allowed access to commence the development ahead of the internal road network being developed; without the haul road, access to the south east corner would be impossible until the internal road network was completed; access to the south east corner was required to deliver the Section 106 commitment to providing 26 affordable houses. Another possible plot of land was within Northumbria Police's control and it was not in the applicant's gift to offer a solution there presently
- the staff car park would be 76m away and the compound 100m away from the nearest residential property. Visual screening to the car park would be provided by a landscaped 2m high green screen. Windows in the northern elevation of the site cabins would be obscured so existing residential properties would not be overlooked. The waiting area for deliveries had been moved as far south along the haul road to maximise the distance from the nearest residents
- the haul road could not be accessed closer to the North Road due to complications that this would bring for diverting the main fibre optic cables providing telecommunications to the police headquarters, making this option unviable. The greenfield land was agricultural there would be minimal impact on ecology or wildlife. The land would be returned to its original state at the end of the two year period. The trees to be removed to accommodate the access point would also be replaced. The proposals presented provided the safest and quickest access into the development.

(Councillor Towns had arrived at the meeting at 4.10pm, and confirmed that he would not participate in any discussion/decision about the application)

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

- a number of other options had been explored but in the case officer's view there weren't any real alternatives. The village green area was not appropriate as it was a designated green space in the Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan and also adjacent to Grade Two listed buildings. The car parking to the south east of the site was not within the control of the applicant. It was also key that the delivery of a concentration of affordable housing there was to be provided early in the process. It would also result in issues regarding the reconfiguring of access to the site
- if the applicant wanted to extend the construction time beyond the temporary two year period proposed by this application, they would have to reapply and again argue for any further exceptional circumstances. This could not however be dealt with using an informative, as it was the discharge of a condition
- the applicant could be asked to give their consideration to any alternative sites that could be used beyond the two year site compound agreement.

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

Debate then followed of which the key points from members were:

- members mostly agreed to a consensus that the site should reluctantly be allowed for the site compound, but that a strong signal be given to the developer to ensure that the work was completed within the agreed two year timescale if more suitable sites could not be found
- one member indicated that he was not happy to support the recommendation, as he considered that too much was being done to help the developer, when instead the developer should be trying to negotiate with other land owners such as the police to find another location.

On being put to the vote, the motion to grant the application was agreed by four votes for to one against, and it was thus:

RESOLVED that the application be GRANTED with condition 17 of planning permission reference 14/01442/OUT being discharged in part for a temporary period of two years in respect of the submitted details as outlined in the report.

24. URGENT BUSINESS (if any)

Prior to application 18/00836/OUT being considered, the Vice-chair (Planning) referred to the discussion at the previous meeting about land ownership in Medburn, for which Legal Services had since confirmed that the unadopted road and its upkeep were the responsibility of local householders. A note with information from the Land Registry was being produced for the local member, who could then discuss/take this forward.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

25. 18/00836/OUT

Proposed detached two storey dwelling

Land East Of Prospect Farm, The Avenue, Medburn, Northumberland, NE20 0JD

Richard Laughton, Planning Officer, then introduced the application and provided a brief overview with the assistance of a slides presentation.

Councillor Jones, the local member, had sent her apologies for the meeting but had asked for her objections to be taken into account. All members present confirmed that they had read her representations, copies of which were circulated at the meeting (copy attached to the official minutes of the meeting).

Robin Wood then spoke in support of the application, of which his key points were:

- the Ordnance Survey mapping used in the committee report was out of date; the application site was now completely surrounded by housing on all three sides. It was literally a square parcel of land surrounded by development and thus an infill site in its simplest form
- given the context which existed it was clear that the site, possibly unlike others more recently proposed in Medburn, was not extending into open countryside and was clearly within the settlement
- it had to be considered a sustainable location as this view had been confirmed by three Secretary of State inspectors, of which the most recent decision was taken in April 2018. The precedent set by inspectors had to be respected and there had been no policy change since the most recent decision
- the site had planning permission granted in 2014 which had only recently lapsed, so the applicants were simply seeking to obtain the same consent again on site
- highways engineers had already acknowledged that the traffic from this development had already been taken into account in previous decisions. They had no issues with the volume of traffic generated from a single dwelling and effectively treated the application as a renewal. There were no sustainable grounds for refusal on highways or any other grounds. It complied with the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) and there were no new material considerations on the site.

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

- the application was considered to be an infill site because it was a linear formation between two properties, and there were properties to the north of the site also. It met NPPF stipulations regarding brownfield land and infill sites
- the application was for one house; the site could accommodate two, but the area had a pattern of large houses. If another application was subsequently received proposing an extra house on site, it would have to be looked at separately; this was not something to be taken into account when considering this application at this meeting
- Medburn had a wide settlement boundary, so developments had been considered acceptable, but members' concerns about some matters regarding other recent applications were acknowledged.

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

Debate then followed of which the key points from members were:

- as the previous application had lapsed, it was important that a substantial number of the applications recently approved did not all begin construction at the same time
- Medburn's character had been impacted by much garden grabbing and had some very narrow lanes.

On being put to the vote, it was agreed by three votes for, one against, with two abstentions that it be:

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** subject to the conditions outlined in the report.

26. APPEAL UPDATE

Members receives information on the progress of planning appeals. (Report enclosed with the official minutes as Appendix D.)

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

27. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on Monday, 9 July 2018 in the Memorial Hall, Ponteland.

CHAIR _____.

DATE _____.