

**NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL**

**CRAMLINGTON, BEDLINGTON AND SEATON VALLEY LOCAL AREA COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the **Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley Local Area Council** held in the Community Room at Concordia Leisure Centre, Forum Way, Cramlington, Northumberland, NE23 6YB on Wednesday, 19 July 2017 at 5.00 p.m.

**PRESENT**

Councillor C Dunbar (Chair in the Chair)

**MEMBERS**

W Crosby  
W Daley (Part)  
S E Dungworth  
B M Flux  
M E Richards

M Robinson  
M D Swinburn  
I C F Swithenbank  
R J Wallace

**OFFICERS**

N Armstrong  
S Bucknall  
U Filby  
I Hedley  
P Hedley  
T Kirsop  
D Lally  
R Laughton  
D Laux  
L Little  
M McCarty  
E Sinnamon

Principal Planning Officer  
Highways Delivery Manager  
Solicitor (planning part of meeting)  
Community Regeneration Officer  
Chief Fire Officer  
Community Regeneration Manager  
Interim Chief Executive  
Planning Officer  
Head of Technical Services  
Democratic Services Officer  
Deputy Chief Fire Officer  
Senior Planning Manager

**ALSO PRESENT**

Press/Public: 12 Planning : 7 Other

**13. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hepple and Pidcock.

Chair's initials .....

*Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley Local Area Council - 19 July 2017*

## 14. MINUTES

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley Local Area Council held on Wednesday, 28 June 2017, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

## 15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Dungworth declared an interest in application 16/02030/FUL as she was speaking as the Ward Councillor and on behalf of Seaton Valley Parish Council and would take no part in the deciding of the application. Councillor M Richards declared an interest in application 17/01535/FUL as she was speaking as the Ward Councillor and would take no part in the deciding of the application.

## DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

### 16. DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The report 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.

An additional report was circulated to Members of the Committee which provided information on the impact on Officer reports of the withdrawal of the submitted Core Strategy for examination which was agreed by Council on 5 July 2017. It was highlighted that this did not change any of the recommendations on the applications to be considered.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

### 17. 16/02030/FUL

**Proposed demolition of existing Beresford Lodge, creation of new 37 bed Beresford Lodge (Re-submission) (as amended by plans received 22/03/2017), Beresford Lodge, Beresford Road, Seaton Sluice, Whitley Bay, Northumberland, NE26 4RJ**

The Principal Planning Officer introduced the application to the meeting with the aid of a powerpoint presentation. Updates were provided as follows:-

- A further representation had been received from a resident at Fort House reiterating original objections to the amended plans on grounds of overshadowing of the adjacent site which is of historic interest.
- Highways Development Management had advised that the proposed level of car parking provision was acceptable and it was therefore proposed to

amend condition 5 to refer to the plans if approved rather than requiring submission of further details.

Deborah Wise addressed the meeting speaking on behalf of residents of St Mary's Wynd in objection to the application. Her comments included the following:-

- The development of the care home was in principle acceptable and she acknowledged and thanked the applicant for the amendments that had been made to the original plans, but felt that these did not go far enough to mitigate the harm on residential amenity.
- She did not feel that the proposal was in accordance with the Blyth Valley Local Plan and did not agree with paragraph 7.23 as it was considered that the development would have significant detrimental impact on the amenity of residents as at present the view is open, far reaching and unobstructed.
- The amended application was higher and had a larger footprint than the original and she felt that this was significant and demonstrable harm to the outlook and would have an overbearing and detrimental effect on neighbouring properties.
- She requested that the Committee defer the application in order to allow Members to visit the site to see the current outlook.
- She highlighted that Beresford Road was a busy main route which already took a long time to access from adjacent properties. The construction traffic and the larger facility would generate extra traffic with more delivery vehicles. Larger vehicles already reversed into the site which caused a hold up on Beresford Road and therefore more consideration was required in relation to paragraphs 7.28 and 7.29.

Councillor Dungworth addressed the meeting as the local Ward Councillor and representative of Seaton Valley Parish Council speaking in objection to the application in its current form. Her comments included the following:-

- She advised that Beresford Lodge was a well regarded, good resource with a good rating from the CQC and was home to a number of local residents.
- The site had a long planning history with constraints and was a difficult site to develop. This proposal still compromised the heritage and listed building structures including the Water Tower the view of which was protected in legislation, the Delaval Arms and the Fort House, including the wall. She considered there was insufficient information provided on the harm to the wall.
- She had concerns that if this application was acceptable then the whole landscape could be eroded. It was acknowledged that the applicant had worked with Officers to provide solutions but she considered there were still too many compromises to be made. Whilst the height had been reduced the proposed development would still be the highest in the area, be larger in terms of mass and would overshadow the listed buildings.

Councillor Dungworth took no further part in the determination of this application.

Mr Chawla, the applicant, addressed the meeting speaking in support of the application. His comments included the following:-

- He had been an occupational therapist in elderly care since 1988/89 and had opened this care home which initially had no competition and had done very well and had a Band 1 CQC rating, but was struggling now.
- The current room sizes were too small and they could offer no extra facilities unlike newer homes.
- The four existing double rooms were not accessible, could not be modified and did not comply with current legislation regarding room size.
- The home now had to compete with larger care homes in Blyth and Cramlington which all offered larger rooms.
- This was the only care provision within Seaton Sluice of which 20% of the population was above 65 years of age. There was a need for a larger care home in Seaton Sluice.
- This application had been developed through consultations with the Planning Officers and English Heritage.
- The development would improve the quality of life for residents by providing larger rooms, en suite facilities, a sensory room and garden and would put Seaton Sluice back on the map.
- The development would not take place immediately as they had a duty of care to current residents and full consultation would take place regarding their rehousing.

The following information was provided in response to questions from Members:-

- The original application had been amended and the current proposal was for a two storey development with no dormer windows although it was still a larger building both higher and with more mass than the current building.
- A section of the wall would be retained although some would be lost. The wall was not listed in its own right but due to its proximity with other listed buildings was given some status. There would be some harm, however it was considered this was outweighed by the public benefit of the amended scheme.
- No coal risk assessment was required and standard advice in relation to the general area was included as an informative to any permission granted. The applicant was aware of the nature of the area and structural consultants had identified remedial work if the application was granted. Building Regulations would need to be met in relation to foundations but this was not a planning matter.

Councillor Flux proposed that a site visit should be held in order to allow Members to understand the size, scale, massing and impact on heritage assets of the proposed development. This was seconded by Councillor Swinburn.

A vote was taken as follows: For - 7; Against - 0; Abstention - 1

**RESOLVED** that the application be **DEFERRED** for a site visit to be undertaken.

**18. 17/01535/FUL**

**Proposed erection of a timber stable block and construction of outdoor riding arena, Mare Close, Seghill, Northumberland.**

The Planning Officer introduced the application to the meeting with the aid of a powerpoint presentation. Updates were provided as follows:-

- With regard to flood risk and paragraph 7.25 of the report, the red line boundary had been amended to accommodate the repositioning of the stables outside of the flood zone by approximately 3m. This was not considered to be a large material change which would warrant re-consultation and the assessment conducted within the report was still applicable. The amendments were shown within the presentation.
- Condition 2 would be updated to show the recently amended plans.
- Condition 3 should be amended and reworded to be more concise. It was now recommended to state: "The development shall not be used other than for private recreational use, and shall not be used for any commercial activity".
- It was also recommended that a condition be added so that the details of any external lighting to the stables should be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority in the interests of amenity and highway safety.
- An additional objection had been received from Mr Russell Pickering who wished to speak at committee but was unable to attend. Further to his initial objection, he had raised concerns as follows:
  - the proposal's proximity to the burn and to possibly affecting the children's play area due to contamination;
  - the fear that the existing shelters would not be removed and the applicant would use the site commercially if the application was approved;
  - the existing land was for agricultural purposes and not equestrian use therefore a change of use application should be applied for if this was not the case; and
  - the applicant should maintain the hedges rather than letting them grow in order to hide the proposed development.

Councillor L Bowman from Seaton Valley Parish Council addressed the meeting. His comments included the following:-

- The Parish Council had a concern that there was already an outstanding permission for a steel barn and that if this development was also allowed that both schemes could be built.
- Concern was expressed that the development was not for personal use as there was already 3 stables with 13 horses on the site and the proposal for additional stables could be used for business purposes.
- Concern was expressed regarding foul waste and methane being produced from the development which was on a beautiful spot on the Seaton Burn.

Councillor Richards addressed the meeting speaking as the local Ward Councillor. Her comments included the following:-

- She advised that she spent a great deal of time using that particular road and had great respect for the green belt.
- She advised that she had spoken to 203 nearby residents regarding the proposal, none of which had any objection to the application.
- She asked that the application be approved as the horses needed somewhere to stay but requested that an amendment be made to the application to provide three or four trees to hide the impact of the stables.

Councillor Richards took no further part in the deciding of this application.

Darren Smith, landowner and applicant addressed the meeting speaking in support of the application. His comments included the following:-

- He wished Members to note that he had nothing to do with Wooden Willy's Farm or the Seaton Delaval Equestrian Centre. As the adjacent landowner to the latter he was well aware of problems associated with it and had faith in the Enforcement Team to deal with the situation.
- This application was for personal use only, on 16 acres of land which he had worked hard to make an asset to the area by repairing the hedges and boundaries and digging out ditches. He worked with DEFRA to ensure that hedges were cut correctly.
- He had sought pre-application advice from the Planning Officers.
- He regretted the erection of the original stables and wish to remove them and replace with better which would have less of an impact on the area.
- He was distressed regarding comments made of illegal activities undertaken on his land and asked not to be judged on the wrongdoings of other people.

The Senior Planning Manager advised that Colin Lawson who had registered to speak had been unable to attend and had asked that his objections be brought to the attention of the Members. These included:-

- The sensitive location of the site and that the proposed development would be visible from the A190.
- The Green Belt would be compromised.
- The site would be used for the staging of events.
- The relationship of the landowner and connection to other businesses.
- There were 5 other equestrian facilities in the area.
- Asked that the application be refused.

Members were reminded of the protocol regarding late representations and public speaking and were advised that these objections were very similar to his written submission.

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

- It was clarified that the Parish Council objections and the concern over the potential for an approval to set a precedent for commercial use and future unauthorised development was not a material planning consideration and the application could not be refused based on the assumption that the applicant might carry out works that were unlawful or not in accordance with the approved plans.
- A condition had been recommended to restrict the permission to private use and the applicant would need to submit a separate planning application to the Local Planning Authority to apply for commercial use. The enforcement team would also investigate any unauthorised development.

Councillor Flux proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the application with the changes to conditions outlined above which was seconded by Councillor Robinson.

A vote on the recommendation to approve with the changes to conditions outlined above was unanimously agreed.

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

The Chair advised that a five minute break would take place at this point to allow those who wished to leave to do so. The meeting recommenced at 6.15 pm

## **LOCAL AREA COUNCIL BUSINESS**

### **19. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Keith Thornton, Bedlington advised of his disappointment that comments made at the previous meeting were of a political nature. He considered Councillors should be there to represent their constituents and not to make political points.

Paul Hedley, Bedlington advised of overgrown grass and hedging causing an issue for residents using the new bus stop close to Chester Court Care Home which he considered was in a dangerous location. Councillor Robinson advised that the Council had agreed to remove a section of the hedge and Councillor Christine Taylor of West Bedlington Town Council advised that this situation was already being addressed and the Town Council had been fully updated.

John Coulson, Cramlington asked what was the position with the previous St. Peter's School as there was a lot of anti social behaviour and vandalism occurring at the site. This would be reported to Property Services to ensure that the building was secure.

The Chair advised that Adam Hogg would receive a written response to his submitted question.

## **20. PETITIONS**

### **a) Receive any new petitions**

No new petitions were received.

### **b) Consider reports on petitions previously received:**

No reports were required.

### **(c) Receive any updates on petitions previously considered**

None received.

### **(d) Overview of Petitions Report 2013-2017**

The report (attached to the minutes as Appendix B) provided an overview of petitions which had been considered through the council's petitions protocol from 1 April 2013 - 31 March 2017.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

## **21. LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES**

No issues were raised.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS - CORPORATE**

## **22. NORTHUMBERLAND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE : 'FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN 2017-2011**

The Committee received a presentation from the Chief Fire Officer on the draft Fire and Rescue Plan 2017 – 2021. (A copy of the power point presentation and draft plan which was provided for Members were enclosed with the minutes).

Paul Hedley, the Chief Fire Officer explained that a statutory duty was placed on every Fire Authority to produce a Fire and Rescue plan, also known as an Integrated Risk Management Plan. The plan identified fire and rescue risks in the area and how these would be mitigated.

The presentation included a breakdown of main incident types, resources and how this had changed in recent years along with performance against incident types. A number of areas were identified where they hoped to reduce incidents and risks including further collaborative working with partners, use of shared sites, expansion of community work, lead on issues in respect of wildfires. Reference



was also made to national emerging issues and the inspection programme that was being undertaken with partners in building control, housing, health and education to assess whether any properties were at risk following the Grenfell Tower fire.

Consultation on the plan had commenced on 10 July 2017 and would run until 1 September 2017. Councillors and members of the public were encouraged to respond to the survey or provide feedback to allow the fire and rescue service to better shape and deliver their service.

Questions from the committee and members of the public and responses were as follows:-

- A member of the public commented that there would be no facility for mass decontamination after 1 October 2017 and questioned how many appliances would be maintained 24 hours 7 days per week at stations within the South East Area. The Chief Fire Officer advised that there were currently two appliances at West Hartford and Pegswood and a further retained service at Pegswood with 98% of incidents requiring the use of three appliances or less giving capacity for other incidents. He considered there was a good model at present. There were 21 appliances within Northumberland and fire cover must be balanced across the County with resources being moved across the County as necessary. It was commented that whilst the financial constraints were understood there was still a question whether three fire engines was sufficient to provide cover and resilience in the South East area due to the industrial risk. The Chief Fire Officer reiterated there were 5 appliances and there were also mutual aid arrangements with neighbouring services.
- In response to a question regarding stress and unsocial hours, it was clarified that there were four watches at both West Hartford and Pegswood stations who worked a rolling rota of two days and two nights on then four days off with day staffed stations working during the day for four x 10 hour shifts and respond to pager alerts during four x 14 hour night shifts.
- The decision by the previous administration to lose one fire engine which had now been supported by the new administration could have only been made in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer and it was questioned whether it was the correct decision to make. The Chief Fire Officer advised that it was his professional opinion that there was still a safe and resilient service with processes in place to balance the service with the option of bringing cover in from another service. The Fire and Rescue Plan was about managing risk and providing reassurance that there was suitable and the right spread of equipment and training provided to mitigate the foreseeable risk. However there was always the potential for a catastrophic event which would test all resources and incidents which may stretch the service but he was confident that the Plan would be effective and manage the risk.
- In respect of the improvement in performance between 2003 - 2017, Councillor Dungworth and questioned whether this would have been possible without the safety improvements made to motor vehicles since

2003 and how sustainable were the reductions without more safety improvements being made. The Chief Fire Officer advised that more detailed information was provided in the Plan however the latest figures could be provided.

- The local election in May and subsequent changes to the administration had delayed consultation on the Plan and this was as early as it had been possible for it to be undertaken.
- Changes to the way performance was to be inspected had been announced following debate and concerns regarding peer group inspections and a more robust inspection regime was to be introduced. Northumberland was the smallest service both in terms of resources and budget and even if it was grouped with similar there would still be a disparity.
- If partnerships were to proceed whereby the service turned out in support of other agencies notably emergency medical response on behalf of NEAS then cost recovery would be expected to be implemented.
- In respect of concerns regarding the levels of cuts and the subsequent capacity to deliver, the Chief Fire Officer advised of the multifaceted approach to mitigate the losses such as increasing the capacity for volunteers, deployment of staff, partners delivering on the service's behalf and the use of well directed resources. Risks would continued to be assessed and an annual refresh of the Plan would allow resources to be re-focussed if required.

The Chair thanked the Chief Fire Officer for his attendance and presentation.

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

### **The Community Chest**

The report (attached to the minutes as Appendix C) outlined changes proposed to the future operation of the Community Chest.

Councillor Dungworth advised that she could neither note or support the proposed changes as she had serious concerns regarding the significant changes which did not support communities most in need. She highlighted the extra funding that had previously been provided to support social welfare centres in the south east of the County and that poorer areas were less likely to apply and be successful for grant aid as they often did not have the skills or the capacity to complete the application process. She did not think that a Local Area Council was the correct place for this report to be agreed as it should be considered and discussed by Council.

The Interim Chief Executive advised she understood the concerns raised but that the budget had always been based on population. She further advised that more publicity should be provided around the support available from the Council to groups in respect of the completion of applications and that this could be done via the Voluntary Sector Group. It was clarified that the Business Chair would receive comments on the proposals until 26 July 2017 and a copy of the minutes of this

meeting would be forwarded to him.

Members considered that Group Secretaries should be contacted to provide appointments to the Grant Panels.

**RESOLVED** that the above comments be forwarded to the Business Chair.

## **24. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LOCAL SERVICES AND HOUSING DELIVERY**

### **Local Pothole Fund 2017-2018**

The report (attached to the minutes as Appendix D) was introduced by David Laux, Head of Technical Services and provided information on the introduction of a Northumberland Local Pothole Fund as a pilot scheme for 2017-2018. The Local Pothole Fund was a £500k fund to be allocated towards the permanent repair of areas suffering from repeat pothole failure and/or localised drainage issues, with potential locations for repair to be identified by local Councillors.

It was confirmed that due to time restraints the information would be also available electronically and Members could upload photographs of potential areas for repair. The different types of repairs to potholes and machinery used was outlined.

**RESOLVED** that:

1. The new initiative to fund improvements to the County's roads be noted; and
2. Members consider the needs within their own Wards and put forward locations to be considered for repair.

## **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

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

A list of agreed items for future Local Area Council meetings was circulated (copy attached to the signed minutes as Appendix E). The work programmes for LACs had been discussed at the Chair's Briefing earlier that day. Members could put forward items for inclusion on the agenda which would then be considered by the Business Chair.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

### **26. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting was to consider Planning Applications only and would be held on Wednesday 23 August 2017 at 5.00 pm at Concordia Leisure Centre, Cramlington.

Apologies for that meeting were provided by Councillors I Swithenbank and R Wallace.

**CHAIR** \_\_\_\_\_

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