

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, 23 August 2017 at 5.00 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillor B Pidcock (Planning Vice Chair in the Chair)

MEMBERS

W Crosby
W Daley
C Dunbar

S E Dungworth
B M Flux
M Robinson

OFFICERS

N Armstrong
U Filby
K Norris
E Sinnamon

Principal Planning Officer
Solicitor
Democratic Services Officer
Senior Planning Manager

ALSO PRESENT

Press: 0
Public: 5

27. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hepple, Richards, Swinburn, Swithenbank and Wallace.

28. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley Local Area Council held on Wednesday, 19 July 2017, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

Chair's initials

Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley Local Area Council - 23 August 2017

29. 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. She would take no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

30. 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.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

31. 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

Neil Armstrong, Principal Planning Officer, introduced the above application and referred to a site visit which had taken place the previous morning. He summarised the report with the aid of a slide presentation.

Deborah Wise, objector, spoke against the application and her comments included the following points:

- She was speaking on behalf of local residents, particularly those who lived in St Mary's Wynd, and thanked members for attending the site visit.
- She reiterated that the development of the care home, in principle, was acceptable but residents were objecting to the size and overbearing nature of the proposal.
- Amendments to the original plans did not go far enough to adequately mitigate the harm on residential amenity.
- The proposal did not comply with the Blyth Valley Local Plan and residents did not agree with the officer's comments in paragraph 7.23 of the report.
- At present the outlook of residents at numbers 6, 7 and 8 was open, far reaching and unobstructed. The proposal would change that, the properties would be obstructed by the overbearing and dominant new building, having a detrimental impact on residential amenity.
- The site visit had made it clear how close the proposed building would be to no. 8 and she had been surprised how close it would actually be.
- Access was another concern, Beresford Road was now a main commuter route with heavy traffic so there would be issues with construction traffic and with extra traffic generated by the larger facility. Large vehicles needed

to reverse into the site and that held up traffic on Beresford Road which could potentially cause problems for emergency vehicles.

- Highways impact should be given further consideration in paragraphs 7.27 and 7.28 of the report.
- She hoped the committee would consider these issues now that they had had the benefit of a site visit.

Councillor Dungworth addressed the meeting as the local Ward Councillor and representative of Seaton Valley Parish Council. Her comments included the following points:

- She thanked members for participating in the site visit and said she would like to draw their attention to the issues which had been highlighted.
- The area was the highest point for views of the south east coastline which would be disturbed by the height and massing of the proposed building in comparison to the current building which was more house size.
- In terms of separation distance, she too was surprised by how far the proposed building would be brought forward.
- The proposed fronting of the new building would be very commercial and was not in keeping with the character and appearance of the area.
- The access road would be very narrow with a sharp left turn off Beresford Road. At the site visit the previous day, she had seen some members having to reverse out onto the main road.
- Groundworks could lead to damage of existing foundations of neighbouring properties and foundations of the listed buildings.
- Removing part of the boundary wall would open up an option for development of the adjoining land.
- She could not believe that a solution could not be found without having such a detrimental impact on the local community.
- Residents had behaved impeccably throughout and had put forward valid and responsible arguments in objection to the application.
- Too many compromises were needed with regard to the character of the area, heritage assets and the impact on residents of St Mary's Wynd.

Councillor Dungworth took no further part in determination of the application, taking no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

Mr Mukesh Chawla, the applicant, then spoke in support of his application and his comments included the following points:

- He had been an occupational therapist since 1988/89. Beresford Lodge had been built in 1987/88 but people had different needs then and there had been no ensuite facilities.
- The current room sizes were too small and did not comply with current legislation.
- Four bedrooms could not be accessed due to the lack of lift access and steep stairs and, although he had sought advice from many architects, the property could not be adapted.

- There were currently only 16 habitants which did not make the care home viable.
- Although the property did not meet all needs, they had still been awarded a Band 1 CQC rating from Northumberland County Council Social Services Department.
- In 2012 they had been granted planning permission to build a replacement care home but had not been in a position to proceed at that time and permission had lapsed.
- For the new scheme, consultation had taken place with the Planning Department, English Heritage and Highways.
- All rooms in the new building would be larger with en-suite facilities and there would be a sensory room and garden. It would, however, still be a small care home in comparison to others in Cramlington and Blyth.
- With regard to concerns about increased deliveries and vehicles, he gave assurances that there would be no change to what currently took place, i.e. bins would still be emptied twice a week, dry food would be delivered once a week, fruit and vegetables, three times a week and there would be no increase in transportation.
- Seaton Sluice had a population of around 3 ½ thousand, 15% of which were over 75 years of age. A lot of these people had to go to other areas for care as there was currently not enough provision in Seaton Sluice.
- This was a beautiful location, very close to shops, a post office and local pub.
- He sincerely requested members to support the application.

Members' Questions

In response to questions, the following information was provided:

- Recommended guidance stated that the distance between new properties and existing properties should be around 20 - 21 metres where principal windows faced each other. Although there was only 17 metres between the side elevation of the new building and the gable end of no. 8 St Mary's Wynd, the applicant had offered to make 1 window obscurely glazed, which could be secured by condition. Officers had considered the impact on amenity and light and did not consider it would be harmful enough to warrant refusal of the application.
- In terms of legislation, protecting the view of the water tower (as referred to by Councillor Dungworth at the previous meeting), the legislation referred to was not specifically for the water tower but applied to all heritage assets and had been assessed in conjunction with Historic England and the Council's Conservation Team. The setting of the heritage assets had been assessed as set out in the report.
- Before the application was amended the eaves level for the second floor bedrooms had increased substantially, this had been amended so that the eaves level was now similar to the existing building but there was an increase in ridge height and massing.

The Planning Vice Chair expressed concern that, on the site visit, members had visited the care home and some people had not been aware of the nature of the visit. A number of objections had been received from the relatives of residents and he hoped that residents had not been disturbed, offering his apologies on behalf of the committee, if that had been the case.

With regard to the planning history set out in the report, the Planning Vice Chair stated that it would have been helpful if dates of applications had been provided.

In response to questions from the Planning Vice Chair, the following information was provided:

- Page 5, comments on amended plans, were the comments of the Parish Council and reference to future applications was not relevant as every application was assessed on its own merits.
- The closure of Holywell Care Home was not relevant to this application.
- In paragraph 7.16 of the report, officers were acknowledging that amendments to the plans had reduced the harmful impact on heritage assets.
- With regard to there being no reference to Napoleonic tunnels in the report, it was stated that colleagues in archaeology had recommended that no development or archaeological mitigation should commence on site until a written scheme of investigation based on the brief had been approved in writing by them, which would be secured by a planning condition.

Councillor Robinson moved acceptance of the officer's recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Dunbar. Councillor Robinson stated that, in his opinion, the wall had lost all of its integrity as a historic structure and presumed that views from the water tower were only from a public access point of view. He also felt that concerns regarding separation distances were not valid enough to warrant refusal. Councillor Dunbar agreed, stating that the wall had been altered so much it no longer looked historic and the benefits of the new care home outweighed the harm caused.

A member echoed the comments made stating that initially he had been concerned about separation distances but, given what had been said, he would not vote against approval.

Councillor Daley referred to condition 16 b) on page 21 of the report and proposed that, if members were minded to approve the application, this be tightened up to include investigations to see what impact Napoleonic tunnels would have.

The Senior Planning Manager advised that would need to be agreed by the proposer and seconder.

In response to a question from the Vice Planning Chair, the Principal Planning Officer stated that the written scheme could not be agreed without approval of the conservation team as part of a discharge of condition application. There was

nothing referred to in the proposed planning condition specifically relating to Napoleonic tunnels but the condition allowed for a wide range of investigations.

Councillor Robinson said he was not minded to amend his motion as he believed condition 16 to be adequate.

In response to a further question reference was made to the first paragraph of condition 16 which stated that each stage had to be complete and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before it could be discharged, therefore, no further work could be carried out until the first stage of the condition had been implemented. There were a number of other schemes where archaeology had been a key issue and the conservation team had requested more investigations in order to obtain a further understanding. At this stage the archaeological team would have carried out a number of investigations but the subject of Napoleonic tunnels would be discussed with them.

It was noted that once the condition was discharged, the decision would be in the public domain and published on the Council's website.

Upon being put to the vote the motion was unanimously agreed and it was:

RESOLVED that permission be **GRANTED** subject to the conditions, with reasons, set out in the report.

The meeting closed at 6:00 pm.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____