

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 Netherton Social Club, Netherton Lane, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 6DP on Wednesday, 20 September 2017 at 4.00 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillor M Robinson (Vice Chair in the Chair for items 32 -34 and 38-44)

Councillor B Pidcock (Vice Chair Planning in the Chair for items 35-37)

MEMBERS

W Crosby
W Daley
B M Flux

A Hepple (part)
M D Swinburn
R J Wallace

OFFICERS

M Carle
T Garnick

Highways Delivery Area Manager
Neighbourhood Services Area
Manager

M Ketley
D Lally
J Murphy
K Norris
J Nugent

Head of Planning Services
Interim Chief Executive
Principal Planning Officer
Democratic Services Officer
Specialist Services Planning
Manager

P Bracken

Solicitor, Regulation

ALSO PRESENT

Press: 0

Public: 56 (for planning part of agenda)

4 (for other Local Area Council business)

32. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dunbar, Dungworth and Richards.

Chair's initials

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33. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley Local Area Council held on Wednesday, 23 August 2017, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hepple declared an interest in item 5, 17/00389/FUL - Change of use to caravan storage including erection of boundary fence and access roads as supplemented by drainage strategy plan received 18/05/17 and amended by site layout plan received 08/06/17 together with cabin details, land between A189 and B1505, Cramlington, Northumberland as he had registered to speak against the application and would take no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

35. DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Chair explained the reasons why the public were required to register to speak in advance of the meeting and pointed out that venues for meetings were booked well ahead of agendas being set.

Councillor Robinson then vacated the Chair, for the Planning Vice Chair, Councillor Pidcock, to chair the development control section of the agenda.

The Vice Chair Planning explained the process and procedure for planning applications being heard and asked members and officers to introduce themselves.

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.

Due to the large amount of public in attendance for the following application, the agenda was re-ordered to discuss it first.

36. 17/00389/FUL - Change of use to caravan storage including erection of boundary fence and access roads as supplemented by drainage strategy plan received 18/05/17 and amended by site layout plan received 08/06/17 together with cabin details, land between A189 and B1505, Cramlington, Northumberland.

Judith Murphy, Principal Planning Officer, introduced the above application and summarised the report with the aid of a slide presentation.

Councillor Allan Hepple spoke as ward member and his comments included the following points:

- The application had generated a considerable amount of concerns from local residents.
- He was representing his constituency and asking members to refuse the application because of the adverse impact it would have on local residents, for reasons of highways safety, risks to children attending the large primary school and Cragside Nursery school on the nearby estate and intensification of the site.
- The B1505 road was already congested and was a main bus route. The slow movement of caravans would lead to increased congestion in an area used by blue light ambulances for the emergency hospital.
- The entrance of the site would be almost opposite South Field Lea estate which had a busy junction.
- If approved there would be no restrictions on access, caravans could use the site 24 hours a day, 7 days per week.
- No reference had been made to the impact on Moor Farm Roundabout and the nearby mini roundabout.
- The Bay Horse public house was 100 m to the north and a nearby bend in the road was a well known accident black spot.
- No. 56 Wreay Walk was less than 50 m away from the site.
- The proposal did not comply with the Human Rights Act 1998.
- The site was only 40 m wide, how could it accommodate 1500 caravans? It would be overuse of the site and with no access or egress restrictions it would be intensification of the site.
- If members were minded to approve the application he requested them to include a Section 278 agreement in order to mitigate problems on the estate.

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

Caitlin Newby, Hedley Planning Services, spoke in support of the application and her comments included the following points:

- She thanked members for the opportunity to speak in support of the application representing her client, Mr Burke, the applicant and welcomed the recommendation of the Planning Officer to approve the application.
- The officer's report was thorough and had addressed objectors' concerns comprehensively.
- Statutory consultees had concluded that the proposal was acceptable and policy compliant.
- It would provide an economic benefit to Cramlington and towards the wider tourism goal of the County.

- Sites such as these kept large caravans out of residential areas where they could be a nuisance for space and parking.
- There was a previously permitted use on the site for car parking and access which would result in a similar impact to that proposed. The proposed scheme would be secure and there would be no uncertainty for its use.
- They had worked closely with the Highways Authority who had no objections to the proposal.
- Members were respectfully requested to note that there had been no objections raised by Statutory Consultees, the application was in accordance with national and local policy and no adverse impacts were envisaged that would outweigh the benefits.
- She asked members to determine the application favourably and support the officer's recommendation.

Members' Questions

In response to members' questions the following information was provided:

- The upsurge of vehicles was likely to be seasonal and was not envisaged to be a concentrated flow.
- It was acknowledged that the site would be alien to the area but it was detached from the housing estate and not linked to any other site. It was a linear area of land which was not currently used for anything and officers had not found any real planning reasons as to why the proposal should not be accepted.
- The site would not be visually apparent, it would be screened.
- Clarification was provided regarding visibility splays which were measured on the expected length of vehicles and how long they would take to manoeuvre onto the road. It was confirmed that some of the landscaping would need to be removed.
- It was confirmed that the response from Highways did not factor in the Moor House Farm roundabout as it was not considered that it would be affected by the site.
- The Council would not be able to control the size and width of caravans using the site.
- Highways Officers were not present but the Principal Planning Officer said it would be usual for them to take everything into consideration and that the B1505 was a diversion route for the A189 when accidents occurred.
- It was acknowledged that the B1505 was already a busy road but Highways Officers did not consider that the proposal would increase traffic enough to cause additional harm.
- The benefits to the economy would be the generation of 3 - 4 jobs on site.
- Officers could not confirm if the site would require 1500 caravans to make it viable but suggested that the applicant had looked into it and the site could accommodate up to 1500 caravans. It was further confirmed that there was no upper limit but that a condition for such could be imposed.
- The main Moor Farm Roundabout would be something for Highways England to consider, the smaller mini roundabout would be looked at by the Council's Highways Officers but only if it was considered there would be a

significant increase in traffic flows. Because this was for caravan storage it was not considered that a Transport Assessment was needed given that the proposal would be unlikely to result in significant and continuous additional traffic flows onto the network. There was no evidence of it being an accident black spot as it had not been included in the survey.

- It was confirmed that there was scope to look at the type of fence used to make it more visually acceptable.
- Northumberland was on the coast and caravans were already used seasonally which the Council had no powers to stop. The Highways Authority did not consider that the impact of the proposal would be significant enough to warrant refusal.

Councillor Pidcock moved that the application be deferred as he felt there had been some confusion regarding the public speaking process and deferring the application would provide an opportunity for the public to have their say.

Councillor Daley did not support the proposal to prolong determination and said he had a counter proposal.

Councillor Pidcock withdrew his motion.

Councillor Daley moved that the application be refused which was seconded by Councillor Flux.

Councillor Daley said he had lived in Cramlington for 25 years and was extremely familiar with the site. He had been amazed by the number of caravans proposed for the site and by the lack of access and highways information provided. He was also amazed that the Moor Farm roundabout and smaller mini roundabout had not been factored into the report and that there had been no test done for a number of different sized vehicles, which was worrying in terms of highways safety. It was the right application but in the wrong place.

There was also potentially a risk of creating a bottleneck and access to the hospital being blocked. His grounds for refusal were access, highways safety and over-development of the site.

Councillor Flux said he was happy to second the motion as it was an extremely busy road and queues would form waiting for caravans to make the sharp right turn into the site. He felt that it was a proposal for an industrial site.

Members commented as follows:

- The committee was not 'anti-business', if it had been a reasonable proposal members would have supported it.
- It was the right proposal on the wrong site, if it was away from the busy road and away from children it would have been supported. It should be on an industrial estate.

- The next option to turn off would be at Klondyke, 2 - 3 caravans at that exit would almost back up onto the spine road which would be another safety nightmare.

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

RESOLVED that the application be **REFUSED** for the following reasons:

- (i) Access
- (ii) Highways Safety
- (iii) Over-development of the site.

37. 17/01940/FUL - Proposed loft conversion with dormer with change of use on the ground floor from use A1 to A5 and use C3 on the first and second floor, 1 Front Street, Klondyke, Cramlington, Northumberland, NE23 6RF.

Joe Nugent, Specialist Services Planning Manager, introduced the above application and summarised the report with the aid of a slide presentation.

Mrs Margaret Watson spoke in support of the application and her comments included the following points:

- She had purchased the shop in June 2009 and during that period the premises had been rented out on two separate occasions.
- Firstly a wedding/party gift shop and latterly a hair salon with a tattoo parlour upstairs. Neither of the small businesses had been able to make ends meet and had left.
- The last tenant vacated on 31 December last year and the shop had been empty since.
- Over the last 9 months the shop had been broken into twice. It was heartbreaking when that happened, not only clearing up the mess but having to put everything right again.
- The Klondyke was well known for its diverse number of takeaway businesses, each having a critical part to play in supporting the local area.
- Over the last few years there had been the opening of the new hospital located directly behind the shop.
- The key objective was not to have older style shops and businesses struggling to survive. Her application was to refurbish the existing building, providing accommodation and the foundation for someone to run a successful long term business.
- She had provided Noise and Odour Assessments together with details of opening times.
- She had the benefit of off street parking and the facility of a large public car park located to the rear of the shop.
- She urged members to support her application and thanked them for listening.

Members' Questions

In response to questions, the following information was provided:

- Whatever type of hot food was served would be mitigated by condition 3.
- There was flexibility around opening hours in order to offer diversity to the shop owner.
- The premises would only be open until 12 am for amenity issues.
- Although economic benefits had not been explored, that type of use was well established and there would be 2 - 5 employees. The owners were actively trying to use the premises.
- Parking to the rear was for access to the premises, public parking was to the front.
- Clarification was provided regarding the position of the door in relation to the bollards.
- The core strategy referred to in paragraph 7.7 of the report was the Blyth Core Strategy.

Councillor Flux moved that the application be approved in line with officer recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Daley.

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.

Councillor Hepple left the meeting at 5:10 pm.

On the conclusion of the development control business at 5:10 pm, Councillor Pidcock vacated the Chair and the meeting adjourned until 6:00 pm. Councillor Robinson then returned to the Chair and the meeting resumed beginning with public question time.

OTHER LOCAL AREA COUNCIL BUSINESS

38. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Stephen Stanners, Chair of Seaton Valley Parish Council

Mr Stanners said that on 9 August his Council had sent a letter to the Deputy Leader asking for information on Northumberland County Council's position regarding new builds for Astley High School and Holywell Village First School. He asked if that letter had been received.

In response the Deputy Leader stated that a letter had been sent two weeks after that and shared with Councillor Dungworth. There was no guarantee of a new high school but some outline work to consider a new build at Astley High had been carried out in the last 3 weeks prior to the elections in May. Schemes had been put forward by the previous administration but there had been no formal sign off. He acknowledged that the schools had had been neglected for a number of years and referred to meetings which had taken place between himself and the

headteachers. Officers had been requested to work with headteachers to develop a robust business case. A further meeting in that regard would take place the following Friday between the headteachers, Sue Aviston, Head of School Organisation and Resources and Andy Johnson, the Interim Director of Children's Services. He assured Mr Stanners that he would then look into the business case.

Keith Dalton, Bedlington

Mr Dalton had been informed that Local Area Councils would be held specifically for the public to find out how the Council worked and to provide information to local residents. However, the public were becoming disinterested as the meetings were not as informative as those held previously. Not all public wished to attend planning meetings which could over-run and he felt these should have a separate identity. He also mentioned that refreshments were no longer provided, only water was available.

In response the Deputy Leader said there would be a scrutiny review of the Local Area Councils in November or December and Mr Dalton's comments would be noted for consideration. The Chair added that he had raised some similar concerns which would also be reported to the scrutiny review.

Adam Hogg, Bedlington

Mr Hogg again raised the ongoing issue of problems surrounding the entrance and exit of St Benet Biscop school. He welcomed the scheme to widen the road at the exit but said buses seemed to be turning right as well as left and mounting the pavement. The situation remained the same at the entrance and he asked when the issue would be resolved.

The Chair said he was not aware of any further actions to be taken. The Highways Delivery Area Manager confirmed that the left turn and road widening scheme were complete and there was a pedestrian crossing to be installed. After further discussion the Chair said the situation needed to be resolved and he would follow it up with officers.

Christine Taylor, Bedlington

Mrs Taylor said she was the Mayor of West Bedlington Town Council and wished to record her appreciation and thanks to Councillor Richard Wearmouth who had agreed to make a presentation to the people of Bedlington regarding the Tesco site on 28 September. She also thanked Councillor Daley for his input.

Mrs Taylor suggested that speed restrictions of 20 mph should be imposed on the stretch of road from the Red Lion public house passed the schools which would go a long way to help with traffic calming measures.

Victoria Thompson, Bedlington

Ms Thompson raised concerns that parents were being asked to pay £53 per term for children from St Benet Biscops to attend swimming lessons in Blyth after the closure of the St Benet Biscops pool. She had been informed that it would cost £30,000 to rectify the problems and queried if that would be possible and if it belonged to Northumberland County Council.

In response the Chair said he had requested the current position from the portfolio-holder as the headmaster had erected a gate which would preclude anyone from using the pool. Once that information was forthcoming he would share it with Ms Thompson.

The Deputy Leader said it was his understanding that the pool had been closed due to legionnaires' disease, however, he had made a note and would look into it. He requested Ms Thompson's contact details so that information could be provided to her as there was currently a review of Active Northumberland taking place. He added that the pool was privately managed and had been available due to the goodwill of the school so it was a complicated situation.

Keith Dalton, Bedlington

Mr Dalton reiterated that the public had become disinterested in the meetings which should be more informative as well as bringing in external organisations such as the Police, Fire Brigade and Ambulance Service to provide updates. The Chair said he had raised similar issues himself and asked for agendas to include items such as economic regeneration.

It was reiterated that there would be a scrutiny review of the Local Area Councils in November or December and that all comments would be considered.

Adam Hogg, Bedlington

Mr Hogg queried the current position regarding the Ashington Blyth Tyne Line and asked if the current administration was 100% in support of the plans.

The Deputy Leader confirmed it was and gave total assurance of the administration's commitment. He said the Leader had signed a memorandum of understanding and a bid would be submitted.

39. PETITIONS

This item was to:

a) Receive any new petitions:

Installation of Speed Cameras and Traffic Calming in Rothesay and Victoria Terrace, Bedlington.

The Chair reported that, following the recent tragic events in Bedlington caused by a speeding motorist along Victoria/Rothesay Terrace, an electronic petition had gone live calling for traffic calming measures to be installed along that route. A report in response to the petition would be brought to November's meeting.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

b) Consider reports on petitions previously received - there were no reports to consider.

c) To consider updates on petitions previously considered - there were none to consider.

40. LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES

The agenda item provided an opportunity for members to raise any issues about services provided by the Local Services Group with the area managers from Technical Services and Neighbourhood Services present. The area managers had principal responsibility for highway services and environmental services, such as refuse collection, street cleansing and grounds maintenance, within the geographic boundaries of the area committee.

Members did not raise any issues, however, upon being informed that Terry Garnick, Neighbourhood Services Area Manager, would be retiring the following Friday, the Deputy Leader asked that the work he had done in Cramlington for the Northumbria in Bloom silver and gold awards be formally recognised. On behalf of members he conveyed thanks to Terry for the good work he had carried out and wished him well for the future.

DISCUSSION ITEMS - CORPORATE

41. ANNUAL POLICING UPDATE

The Committee received a verbal update from Jon Caisley the Acting Inspector for Blyth, Cramlington and Bedlington. He stated that, in general, the amount of crime had increased over the last 12 months which was mainly attributed to a change in crime recording rules brought in by the Government and an increase in victim confidence to come forward following several high profile cases and celebrities speaking about their experiences. It had led to an increase in the reporting of domestic violence and sexual offences.

In Cramlington the main priority was to concentrate efforts on youth disorder. Youth disorder issues had been highlighted in specific areas and a range of tactics had been deployed to tackle them. Work was being carried out with the Town Council and partners to try and find a long term solution to the issues. There were also a number of harassment issues and low level neighbour disputes but it was noted that the high population in such a small area could result in a false reading.

In Seaton Valley there had been a rise in burglaries due to the public leaving their doors and windows open. People had been advised against this and nighttime patrols had been increased with additional high visibility and plain clothes patrols.

Overall, Bedlington had been quiet although there had been on-going problems regarding damage to vehicles following a series of tyres being punctured

overnight. Initially it had been thought that may be due to the tragic events in Rothesay Terrace but incidents had been on-going. Overall in Bedlington no specific crime was higher than another.

With regard to the recent reduction in opening hours for front offices, it was pointed out that a great deal of work had been done prior to the decision being taken to see how often they were used. Savings had to be identified and it was considered that the reduction would have a minimal impact as there were other ways of contacting the Police.

Questions were invited and responses were as follows:

- *Dissatisfaction with the 101 service and the best way to receive feedback.*
In addition to dialling 101, reports could be made directly to the Police and Crime Commissioners office or through many other routes. Problems should be reported until they were sorted.
- *The number of police officers had been cut significantly, there was low morale in the force and resources were not available to deal with issues such as speeding motorists.*
Shift patterns had been changed so that more Police were present at night and less through the day. A lot of changes had been made in the last two years.
- *The Police were dealing with people who had mental health problems who should be looked after by professionals in their field.*
There had also been a number of changes in that area, Police worked with a mental health triage, in conjunction with the NHS, a system which was brought in 2 years ago and was working really well to ensure people with mental health issues were being helped rather than arrested.
- *At the last Police update it was obvious that local areas were parliamentary constituency areas and Bedlington had lost an officer whilst Ashington gained more.*
That decision was made by the Chief Constable and his staff but more recently Bedlington had received really good coverage as officers could be deployed to Ashington, Bedlington, Cramlington and Seaton Valley in equal response times due to pooled resources. Police officers would be deployed to areas of demand. Neighbourhood teams had not changed, officers were assigned to an area and given tasks in that area.
- *What was the role of the offices in Cramlington Manor Walks?*
It was a neighbourhood policing office. Councillors could go there and ask to meet up with officers monthly or on an ad-hoc basis. LMAPS meetings no longer took place so face to face contact should be encouraged and Acting Inspector Caisley would look into setting meetings up.

The Chair thanked Acting Inspector Caisley for his attendance.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Ch.'s Initials.....

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42. LOCAL AREA COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME

A list of agreed items for future Local Area Council meetings was circulated. (A copy is attached to the minutes as Appendix B).

The Deputy Leader referred to concerns regarding the lack of items for the agenda and said members had the opportunity to suggest agenda items through the Chair.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

43. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chair reported that the next meeting would include the Joint meeting with Parish/Town Councils and would take place on 18 October 2017 at Netherton Club, Bedlington. The time would be confirmed depending on the planning applications to be considered.

44. URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair reported that himself and Iain Hedley, the Community Regeneration Officer, had requested volunteers from the Local Area Council to sit on the Community Chest Panel. To date only one response had been received, although he had copied in the secretaries of each political group. He therefore asked if members could get back to Iain Hedley or himself with a response as soon as possible.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____