

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, 1a Netherton Lane, Bedlington, NE22 6DP on Wednesday, 17 October 2018 at 5:00 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillor C Dunbar
(Chair, in the Chair for items 41 - 42 and 46)

Councillor B Pidcock
(Planning Vice-Chair, in the Chair for items 43 - 45)

MEMBERS

W Crosby
W Daley
B M Flux
M Richards (part)

M Robinson
M D Swinburn
I C F Swithenbank

OFFICERS

M Bulman
F Churchill
G Horsman
J Murphy
K Norris

Solicitor
Interim Director of Planning
Senior Planning Officer
Principal Planning Officer
Democratic Services Officer

Public: 4
Press: 0

41. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dungworth and Wallace.

42. MINUTES

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

43. 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.

44. 17/02012/OUT - Outline Planning Permission with all matters reserved for the erection of two dwellings, Land West of 62 Station Road, Station Road, Stannington, NE61 6NN

Geoff Horsman, Senior Planning Officer, introduced the above application which had been considered at the meeting on 19 September and deferred for members to undertake a site visit. Mr Horsman summarised the report with the aid of a slide presentation.

Councillor Richards entered the meeting at 5:23 pm during consideration of the application and did not participate in any of the debate or voting thereon.

Carol MacLennan addressed the committee to speak in support of the application and her comments included the following points:

- She was in attendance with her sister Suzan and thanked the committee for the opportunity to speak again in support of their application.
- She thanked those who had attended the site visit. She hoped they had found it to be worthwhile, that they had appreciated the unique circumstances of the proposal and why it would not have an impact on the Green Belt.
- There were already two buildings and the site, which was previously developed land, was surrounded by trees and hedges.
- It was now mid October and you could not see into or out of the site.
- Views were very limited, it was difficult to get any direct views.
- The land rose to the east of the site so any house built on it would appear lower than those to the east.
- All trees and planting on the boundary would be retained and the site would provide a charming, lovely place to live.
- It had taken them 3 years to get to this point and they were only trying to improve the site.
- If the application was approved they requested pre-commencement conditions to ensure certainty of permission.

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

- With regard to the recommendation to refuse the application, point 3 relating to insufficient information being provided was included because of a range of ground contamination issues which would need to be investigated to ensure the site could be safely developed and outstanding concerns from the Ecologist. If members voted against officer recommendation wording would need to reflect that they were “minded” to approve the application subject to full investigations taking place and a report, to be scrutinised by the Public Protection and Ecology teams, to ensure they were satisfied that two dwellings could be satisfactorily accommodated on the site. Should the committee decide to refuse the application then that reason for refusal would have to be included as, to-date, the information had not been provided by the applicant.
- It was acknowledged that the applicants had chosen not to undertake the surveys at this stage as they considered it would be a waste of money to do so if the application was refused.
- It was acknowledged that the Council had granted planning permission for other proposals along Station Road but, as stated at the site visit and earlier in the presentation, each application had to be considered on its own merits as each application was different. Officers did not feel this site was acceptable in terms of the Green Belt.
- If members decided to go against officer recommendation and were minded to approve the application, conditions would need to be resolved in due course. Members could specify that there should be conditions about limiting the height of the proposed buildings. The applicants had said they would be willing to accept conditions about height restrictions so that the proposed dwellings did not exceed that of the existing buildings and that the proposed dwellings would not exceed the height of those to the east of the site.
- Although the Wansbeck District Council Local Plan was 11 years old and the Structure Plan was 13 years old, considerable weight could still be afforded to them. The Structure Plan had been superseded by the WDC Local Plan which gave a detailed Green Belt boundary. The proposal site was within the Green Belt on the WDC Local Plan and policies within it were in accordance with current Government guidance and the NPPF.
- A number of factors had to be considered in order to satisfy the Green Belt test and even if the buildings were not visible they would still affect the openness of the site. Looking from the west, the buildings would be seen and screening would not hide the development entirely. Members also had to consider how the development would sit in the surrounding built context. There would always be an impact when development was within the Green Belt.
- The site had been in the Green Belt since the publication of the WDC Local Plan in 2007 and since then had been clearly defined as being in the Green Belt.

Councillor Robinson moved that members be minded to approve the application subject to conditions.

The Senior Planning Officer reiterated that if members were to go against officer recommendation there would be outstanding matters to address. He provided details of these which were summarised by the Solicitor as follows:

- Issues of land contamination and ecology to be addressed to the satisfaction of officers in Public Protection and Ecology;
- Sport and play provision contribution to be secured through a Section 106 Agreement in accordance with the Wansbeck District Council Local Plan;
- Any necessary conditions.

Councillors Robinson and Swithenbank agreed the motion be amended to include those points.

Discussion ensued about the complexities involved and delegated conditions. The Interim Director of Planning stated she would not be comfortable for conditions to be delegated as it was only an outline application and it was the principle of the development which was being considered.

In response to a question as to whether the application would be determined by delegated authority or be brought back to the committee once the issues had been addressed, it was stated that would depend on wording used. At that point Councillor Robinson added to his motion that the application be brought back to committee for full approval which was seconded by Councillor Swithenbank.

Members then debated the proposal and the following points were made:

- Officers may be disappointed if members supported the motion but if the motion was agreed officers would need to advise members about conditions to ensure they were comprehensive and unrestricted.
- The site was within the Green Belt and, although there was considerable sympathy for the applicants, it should not be judged differently to others in the Green Belt. The Green Belt was there for a reason and this site had not been developed for a very long time.

In summing up Councillor Robinson acknowledged that the site was in the Green Belt but said there were extenuating circumstances. In his opinion, the environmental argument and the argument about views did not stack up. The land was classed as brownfield land because of its previous use and for those reasons he had taken a different view to officers.

Upon being put to the vote members agreed the motion FOR 6; AGAINST 2; ABSTENTIONS 0 and it was therefore:

RESOLVED that members were minded to approve the application subject to the following:

1. Issues of land contamination and ecology to be addressed to the satisfaction of officers in Public Protection and Ecology.

2. Sport and play provision contribution to be secured through a Section 106 Agreement in accordance with the Wansbeck District Council Local Plan.
3. Any conditions necessary to be approved by the committee at a later date.

45. PLANNING APPEALS UPDATE

Members received information on the progress of planning appeals.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

46. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday, 21 November - venue and time to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 6:00 pm.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____