

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

CRAMLINGTON, BEDLINGTON AND SEATON VALLEY LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

At a meeting of Cramlington, **Bedlington and Seaton Valley Local Area Council** held in Netherton Social Club, 1a Netherton Lane, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 6DP on Wednesday, 20 March 2019 at 5:00 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor C Dunbar, Chair in the Chair for agenda items 1 - 3 and 7 - 14

Councillor M Robinson, Vice-Chair in the Chair for agenda items 4 - 6

MEMBERS

W Crosby
S E Dungworth (part)
B M Flux

M D Swinburn
I C F Swithenbank
R J Wallace

COUNCILLORS ALSO PRESENT

Cllr R Wearmouth, Economic Development, Portfolio Holder

OFFICERS

H Bowers
G Fairs
T Gribbin

D Hadden
R Laughton
J Murphy

Democratic Services Officer
Highways Development Manager
Neighbourhood Services Area
Manager
Lawyer
Planning Officer
Principal Planning Officer

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

K Dunbar, Managing Director, Advance Northumberland Developments
R Schofield, Head of Project Management, Advance Northumberland
Developments

Press: 1
Public: 75

82. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Daley, Hepple and Richards.

83. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley Local Area Council held on Tuesday, 19 February 2019, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

84. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Swinburn declared a prejudicial interest in planning application 16/803567/FUL as he would be speaking on behalf of the residents and would withdraw from the meeting whilst the item was being discussed.

Councillor Dunbar then vacated the Chair, for the Vice-Chair Councillor Robinson to chair the development control section of the agenda, as was the arrangement for all Local Area Councils.

85. 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. (Report attached as **Appendix A**).

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

86. 16/803567/FUL

Demolition of existing school building and caretakers bungalow and redevelopment for 19 no. new homes and associated car parking and landscaping.

St Paul's Catholic Academy, Doddington Drive, Hall Close Dale, Cramlington, Northumberland, NE23 6DF. (Report attached as Appendix B).

Richard Laughton, Planning Officer informed Members of a number of amendments to conditions and proposed the inclusion of a new condition all of which were circulated to the Committee.

A five minute recess took place to allow Members time to read the amendments.

The Planning Officer then read out the amendments:-

Condition 2: plans for 16,17,18.19 and 21 would be removed as they were not considered necessary.

Condition 7: remove and amend the wording of condition 10 to impose the agreed discharge rate in the most recent Flood Risk Assessment

Condition 10 was to be amended as follows:

Prior to the first occupation of the development, a verification report carried out by a qualified drainage engineer must be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, to demonstrate that all sustainable drainage systems have been constructed as per the agreed scheme as detailed on drawing number CCE-1834 01 Rev P6 Proposed Engineering Layout Dated 07/03/19 and Micro drainage calculations St Paul's 12-12-18..MDX received 14/02/2019 by Coast Consulting Ltd.

The verification report shall include:

As built drawings for all SuDS components - including dimensions (base levels, inlet/outlet

Elevations, areas, depths, lengths, diameters, gradients etc)

As built drawings of the rediverted field drain

Construction details (component drawings, materials, vegetation);

Health and Safety file

Details of ownership organisation/adoption details.

Reason: To ensure that all sustainable drainage systems are designed to the DEFRA non technical standards

Condition 17: remove “or between the hours of 08:00-18:00” to “outside the hours of 08:00 -18:00”

Condition 20: remove “No development shall” to “The development shall not be occupied”

Condition 30: to be amended to include the correct plot numbers with permeable paving and should be read as:

Notwithstanding the details contained within the application the driveways to plots 1,8,9,10,11,1,.18 and 19 shall be constructed using permeable materials and maintained as such in perpetuity.

Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding from any sources in accordance with the NPPF.

A new condition was recommended to be imposed in order to remove permitted development rights for new and replacement hardstanding on each plot:

Notwithstanding the provisions of Schedule 2, Class F, of the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order 2015 as amended (or any subsequent Order amending, revoking or re-enacting that Order), no new hardstanding shall be installed or existing hardstanding altered without the prior grant of planning permission from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding from any sources in accordance with the NPPF.

Members were informed of an error on page 10, paragraph 7.27 of the report which should read:-

“There would be a change to the appearance of the site with new housing, residents and traffic however it is considered the development will be of such a scale that would not be to the detriment of residential amenity”.

The Planning Officer continued to introduce the report with the aid of a powerpoint presentation and maps.

Following the presentation, Councillor Swinburn, Ward Councillor, spoke on behalf of residents and raised the following key points:-

- The significant change beside an established estate causing local concern
- The school had been there for many years and the replacement by 3 and 4 bedroom houses was causing apprehension to nearby residents
- Objections raised were for many issues from character of housing, to failing to meet Cramlington’s housing need
- There were already approved properties in Cramlington of this type which were 3 times the government requirement figures
- The most significant concern was access to the site, both for the demolition, the build and the development itself
- After a strong campaign by residents and discussion between Councillors and the developer, the residents were very grateful that when the alternative demolition application was passed in June 2018 it included the separate access point requested off the existing Dudley Lane roundabout and Old Dudley Lane. Thanks were conveyed from the residents as it meant that hazardous waste and other material would not have to go through the estate
- The demolition of the empty school had also put an end to the continuous anti-social behaviour problems that had plagued the site on a daily basis, not only to residents but also emergency services
- Estates built in the late 60’s, early 70’s were designed for a one car family based on a small car. The majority of today’s cars did not fit into garages on the estate and the roads and verges were very congested with most families now having 2 or even 3 cars
- In the past few weeks an issue had been raised with Highways on the estate to try and resolve current congestion who had advised that they had no solution for this

- When the school had existed, there had been parking for 5 vehicles during term time only. There were no turnaround possibilities in this narrow estate and it was not used by parents as a drop off area as they used a nearby car park accessed from another estate
- The road in question was accessed by a very busy staggered junction off Dudley Lane which served less than 110 properties already, some of which did not have any parking area of their own. Doddington Drive was also the specified access to Seven Oaks Park fields for any events and was regularly used for parking by taxis
- The plan was now to extend this usage with properties adding close to 50 spaces which would be used 24/7, with almost half of the properties with no garages
- The estate plan was very narrow with blind bends already causing issues for existing residents
- The solution would be to use the new roads just put in place by the developer and make those the exclusive access for the new development
- Councillor Swinburn requested the Committee defer the application and carry out a site visit before making a decision

Karen Read, KLR Planning Ltd (agent) spoke on behalf of the applicant:-

- The application had initially been submitted in September 2016 but due to some legal issues, was unable to be progressed
- The building had started to deteriorate and become a risk so early approval sought to demolish building.
- One of the issues highlighted was access to Doddington Drive. A separate temporary road created for demolition clearance would also be used for the proposed development to ensure minimum disturbance and comply with the relative planning policies
- The established Brownfield site was well connected to shops and services and easy access to public transport
- The redevelopment of the site complied with the NPPF and the emerging Local Plan
- The applicant had agreed to enter into a S106 agreement to secure a financial contribution towards affordable housing provision off site and a coastal mitigation scheme
- Ms Read requested that the Committee approve the application as in the officers report

Members Questions

In response to questions, the following information was provided:

- There were 23 trees on the site and 18 trees would be removed to facilitate the development. This had been discussed with the applicant and a landscaping scheme would be added as a condition
- No specific site had been designated at present for the affordable housing contribution
- Consultation had taken place with the Flood Authority and a new condition would be imposed to remove permitted development rights for new and replacement hardstanding on each plot. If this was not complied with

- enforcement action could be taken
- In respect of paragraph 7.53, a further plan had been submitted regarding the haul road layout and signage but this did not form part of the planning process. However, the Council's Technical Services/Area Highways division were able to deal with traffic management issues if they arose on the highway network as a separate issue to planning.
- Doddington Drive was the existing access and although some residents were not happy, significant impact would have to be taken into consideration whether to refuse the application however, there had been no comments from highways

Councillor Flux proposed that the application be deferred and requested that a site visit take place to allow Members to review the access, this was seconded by Councillor Swithenbank. Upon being put to the vote, the motion was unanimously agreed and it was therefore:-

RESOLVED that the application be deferred for a Member's site visit to review the access.

87. PLANNING APPEALS UPDATE

Members received information on the progress of planning appeals. (**Appendix C**).

Members received information on the progress of planning appeals.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

On the conclusion of the development control business, the meeting adjourned for 30 minutes. The remainder of the agenda consisted of other Local Area Council business which commenced at 6:05 pm.

Councillor Dunbar in the Chair.

88. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Keith Dalton, Bedlington raised a concern regarding the bus stop at Meadowdale which had been brought to the attention of officers at NCC by his Ward Member on numerous occasions without a response. The bus stop had been pulled down by children and not replaced, with nowhere to erect a bus timetable.

The Director for Local Services was unaware of the details and would have to check with the bus operator however, it was up to the bus operator whether they would stop there.

89. PETITIONS

- (a) No new petitions had been received.
- (b) There were no reports to consider.

(c) There were no update on previous petitions.

90. LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES

Members received updates from the Area Managers from Neighbourhood Services and Technical Services.

Environmental Enforcement and Environmental Campaigns Update (Appendix D).

Members received a report on dog control enforcement and the Green Dog Walkers' Campaign in September 2018. The report provided an update on environmental enforcement and the Council's environmental campaigns (copy attached to the signed Minutes as Appendix E).

Councillor Glen Sanderson, Cabinet Member for Environment and Local Services updated Members on dog control and environmental enforcement and outlined the key issues in the report.

Councillor Dungworth joined the meeting at 6:10 pm.

Neighbourhood Services update:

Tony Gribbin, Neighbourhood Services Area Manager reported that winter services would continue up to the end of March/early April. Work had been completed on the salt barns on Cowley Road, Blyth. A number of completed tarmac works had taken place in Bedlington and Red Row and resurfacing at the A189, Cramlington and Sleekburn Industrial Estate.

Drainage works had been carried out in Seghill and Cramlington.

A Member conveyed his thanks to Neighbourhood Services staff for the work they had carried out around the Beaconhill area during the winter months.

In response to a query regarding outstanding lighting issues in Bedlington, the Director for Local Services advised that the Council was still working with Galliford Try and it was hoped that work would be completed in July.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Local Services informed the Committee of resurfacing which had been carried out trialling the use of plastic flakes.

Following the reorganisation of waste services, feedback had been positive. Garden waste had resumed and preparations were in place for grass cutting.

A Member stated that she had not been aware that the garden waste had resumed as she had not received any correspondence, the Neighbourhood Services Area Manager would follow this up.

RESOLVED that the information be noted and issues raised by Members be followed up by Local Services.

DISCUSSION ITEMS - LOCAL

91. Bedlington Town Centre Redevelopment

Members were provided with a presentation on the progress of the Bedlington town centre redevelopment.

Ken Dunbar, Managing Director, Advance Northumberland explained the dateline of progress and the works carried out from October 2018 to January 2019 and the next steps from March to May 2019 and Autumn 2019.

Following the presentation Members raised the following concerns:-

- A Member referred to the number of people at the meeting which showed how important the matter was to residents. He was disappointed that no firm date had been mentioned as several start dates had been mentioned over the last 3 / 4 years and residents had only found out that the work had stopped last week when the contractor had removed cabins and machinery.

Mr Dunbar understood the disappointment and stated that in delivery terms, the scheme was being delivered in a relatively short timescale. He apologised for the lack of communication and stated that Advance Northumberland would work with the Council to ensure messages were delivered and it was hoped that the Anchor Tenant would be in place shortly.

- Can you give any guarantees when the development will go ahead ?

Mr Dunbar stated that he could not give a guarantee but Advance were working as hard as they could to have the scheme delivered and trying to attract good brand retailers.

- Why the development was being stopped and started ? Residents wanted to see Bedlington as a destination rather than a crossroads. Were there still plans for a public toilet ?

It was advised that Bedlington was a unique place and it was hoped to transform the town and attract people to spend money. There was no provision for a public toilet.

- Had any of the small retail businesses/independent shops expressed an interest ?

It was hoped that to avoid any displacement of and retailers/businesses from the town or indeed from other retailers/shops around

Northumberland. That said, if local retailers need other, possibly bigger premises, it would be better to accommodate than lose them altogether

- Was there any opportunity to take advantage of Government Grants ?

It was advised that any available grants would be taken advantage of.

- The name of the development Piper's Leave meant nothing to Bedlington.

Mr Dunbar stated that the name of the development had gone through extensive consultation and the branding was due to be marketed in the hope to attract retailers. A Member stated that the name had been chosen by schools and said the name of the development should include local names or streets.

Members of the public then raised the following concerns:-

- When the consultation took place, it was stated that the development was going to be self-financing. There had been a lot of money invested into Ashington, Blyth and Newbiggin, why could investment not be found for the development ?

Mr Dunbar advised that they were still trying to attract investment

- Since the disbanding of Arch, had the development been evaluated for leisure ?

It was hoped that some units could be taken up by commercially leisure, however, there was no offer for subsidised leisure. The focus was primarily retail but it was hoped to have a mix of units that might enable a service and leisure offer.

- Were existing retailers on the high street wanting to move to the town centre scheme ?

One retailer would be moving to the town centre scheme, the rest were new brands.

- If there were established retailers in the high street, rather than little independent shops, why was it important to have an Anchor tenant ?

If there was no anchor tenant, then smaller retailers might not be attracted to the town centre scheme. The national position showed that fashion retailers were struggling but it was hoped to see some attracted to the new development.

- The whole of the layout for this development needed to be revisited to see what people in Bedlington wanted. Residents were disappointed that they had not been told anything.

Councillor Wearmouth, Cabinet Member for Economic Development advised that the anchor tenant had been incredibly close to signing on the dotted line. When the site had been cleared there had been a sign of intent. Money and time had been invested and the Chief Executive of the anchor store had been badgered to make progress. It was added that the anchor tenant had already made it clear that they wanted to be in Bedlington but has paused to look at other sites. If other alternatives were to be considered, further consultation would have to take place.

- A member of the public referred to an FOI request to Arch and sought clarity regarding public money.

It was advised that there was money to be made available but a successful business model was required. It was further advised that if the scheme did not work commercially, Advance Northumberland would need to contact the Council to fund the gap. Mr Dunbar was not aware of the FOI request but was happy to speak to the resident after the meeting.

- Was there a contingency plan and had a risk assessment been carried out ?

Mr Dunbar confirmed that a contingency plan was in place.

- What was the hold up ?

The contractor was looking at the demographics and wanted to consider a potentially more profitable site.

- A member of the public had been able to find out information last year from Customer Services of the anchor tenant to find out what was happening.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development explained why it was important the scheme was delivered for this Christmas. He added that Advance had gone out on a limb and the site preparation had been important. Mr Dunbar further added that contingencies would have to be negotiated.

- Discussion took place regarding budget setting and the Bedlington Regeneration Fund.
- A resident asked if the number of car parking spaces allotted had been taken into consideration the police station and the law courts.

Mr Dunbar advised that the type of car parking provision needed to be looked at.

- Has the idea of leisure facilities, eg, bowling and cinema been considered ?

Several bowling alleys had closed recently. It was not an easy market to attract.

- What were the contingency plans for the future ?

A construction ready site had been made available which was ready to attract businesses. There may be other options but the best option was to deliver the site with an anchor retailer as planned.

- A resident stated that the public were not being kept in the loop about the progress of the development and had found out what had happened via social media.

Mr Dunbar apologised for the lack of communication but explained that it had been a convoluted process and would make sure that residents would be kept up to date in the future.

- How long had the anchor tenant been given ?

An undertaking had been given and it was hoped that contracts would be exchanged by the end of May.

- Adam Hogg, Bedlington Town Council had been involved in the original steering group for the development where Arch had indicated that only new businesses would be using the development and now existing businesses had started to move from the town centre, leaving derelict units. He further added that Arch had indicated that this would be a phased development with a gap site and then an anchor store so why had there been a sudden change ? Would it not be better to build business units for 9 interested retailers who could move in rather than an empty site ?

Mr Dunbar was not aware of what had been previously discussed as he had not been employed as MD of Arch. It was hoped that the development would work as a whole but stated that if they were unable to secure the anchor store, it is unlikely that we would be able to secure other prospective tenants.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

92. Members' Local Improvement Schemes

Members were provided with an update on Members' Local Area Schemes during 2018/19 as at 1 November 2018. (Report attached as **Appendix E**).

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

93. Local Area Work Programme

Members noted the latest version of agreed items for future Local Area Council meetings (any suggestions for new agenda items would require confirmation by the Business Chair after the meeting). (A copy of the Work Programme is enclosed with the official minutes as **Appendix F.**)

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

94. Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 17 April 2019.

The meeting closed at 7.25 pm.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____