

## NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

### STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the **Strategic Planning Committee** held in the **Council Chamber, County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF** on **Tuesday 5 June 2018** at **4.00 pm**.

#### PRESENT

Councillor CW Horncastle  
(in the Chair)

#### MEMBERS

Flux B	Reid J
Gibson RM	Renner-Thompson G
Gobin JJ	Robinson M
Lang J	Stewart G
Ledger D	Thorne TN
Pidcock B	

#### OFFICERS

Bellis J	Senior Planning Officer
Bulman M	Solicitor
Fairs G	Highways Development Manager
Feige D	Principal Ecologist and AONB Officer
Hitching J	Senior Sustainable Drainage Officer
Little L	Democratic Services Officer
Murphy J	Principal Planning Officer
Sinnamon E	Senior Planning Manager
Sittambalam R	Senior Planning Officer
Thompson C	Principal Highways Development Management Officer
Wood J	Senior Planning Officer

#### ALSO PRESENT

Councillor R Moore  
Councillor C Seymour  
Press/public: 22

#### 1. MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

The membership and terms of reference for the Strategic Planning Committee as agreed by Council on 2 May 2018 were provided.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

## 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Castle, Richards, Swithenbank and Wearmouth.

## 3. MINUTES

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee held on Tuesday 1 May 2018, as circulated, be agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

## 4. DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The report requested the Committee to decide the planning application 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. It was clarified that the recommendation should read:

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

## 5. 17/04374/FUL

**Retail Development of A1 (retail) and A3 (cafe) Uses - Amended 21/05/18  
Land South Of Greensfield Industrial Estate, Willowburn Avenue, Alnwick,  
Northumberland.**

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

- Condition 2 - Approved Plans - Further plans had been received which revised the plans and elevations of Unit, drawings 9. And 14. Condition 2 should be amended to include the updated drawing reference numbers. There were no changes to the size or net tradable areas, the amendments dealt with minor tweaks to the elevation treatments and service area.
- Following request by Alnwick Town Council the applicant had agreed to the installation of an information panel at the site to display content relevant to Alnwick and routes to the Town Centre. This would be secured by a condition should Members recommend the application for approval.
- Condition 16 - Provision of off-site highway works at point d) should omit 'on Taylor Drive'.
- The applicant had confirmed that Marks & Spencer would be the operator for the proposed food store and that a local butcher, Turnbolls, would occupy Unit 2 as a second store whilst maintaining their presence within the Town

Centre. The disclosure of operators did not materially impact the development or its recommendation.

- Prior to the application being brought before the Committee, Councillor Castle, the local Member, had requested that a commuted sum be secured toward the existing bus service to the application site. The Committee was advised that the highway improvements agreed through the application to provide additional infrastructure for the bus services to the site was such that a further financial contribution was outside the Local Planning Authority's powers to require such a provision as an obligation.
- A representation from Alnwick Civic Society had been received which related to highway safety at the A1 slip road from Willowburn Avenue and queuing traffic. Highways England had reviewed the information submitted by Alnwick Civic Society but had not deemed further work to be necessary commenting that the submitted information did not correlate with the peak traffic periods associated with this development. However Highways England would be considering the issues raised over queuing traffic as a separate complaint and would respond to Alnwick Civic Society separately. Highways England had also confirmed that the representation should not prejudice the determination of the planning application from a strategic transport network standpoint.

P Angier addressed the Committee speaking in objection to the application advising that he was Chair of Local Living (NE) Limited and co-author of the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan (ADNP). His comments included the following:-

- The Town Centre and Retail Chapter of the ADNP was central to the consideration of the development with Government guidance stating that Neighbourhood Plans had the same statutory power as the Local Plan.
- TCR3 of the ADNP stated out of centre retail development outside the town centre along a corridor following South Road and linking the town centre and Willowburn would be supported provided that there were no suitable town centre or edge of centre sites; the projected economic benefits of the scheme could be achieved without negative impact on town centre vitality and the viability of town centre trade; the scheme would enhance retail choice and quality within the town as a whole, however he considered that the Officer's assumption in relation to this was incorrect and the wording of TCR3 was very precise and mattered in relation to this application. The proposed development did not follow South Road and would take trade away from the town centre and this type of development was precisely what TCR3 sought to resist.
- He advised that the concerns of the Alnwick Civic Society in relation to the proximity of the A1 and queuing traffic, traffic management and road safety remained.
- He asked that a site visit be undertaken.

D Taylor, Vice President of the Chamber of Trade also addressed the Committee speaking in objection to the application. His comments included the following:-

- There had been a lack of adequate consultation and the figures in the Retail Statement did not provide a true reflection of the true position of the town centre.
- Whilst the town centre was more resilient than some others in Northumberland this would have a detrimental effect on the existing businesses and tourism in the town relied on a varied retail offering.
- The desktop survey which had been undertaken two years previously did not reflect the current picture and more consultation should have been undertaken.
- Many out of town retail centres were also under pressure with shops closing.
- The application would affect the future of the town centre and livelihoods of traders operating within it.
- The report required the views of traders to be taken into consideration before the application was determined.

Councillor M Swinbank addressed the Committee speaking on behalf of Alnwick Town Council (ATC). His comments included the following:-

- ATC supported the application subject to certain requirements being met. He was pleased that the retail study had been commissioned and that steps had been taken to address pedestrian safety and the provision of a busy layby etc were to be conditioned.
- There was still concern regarding the lack of improvement to the A1 slip road and the safety of those using the pedestrian crossing bearing in mind the increase in footfall.
- It would be preferred if the bus service could be developed and a stop provided closer to the stores and that funding provided for improved bus services into the town.
- There was a concern regarding the loss of the pond and whilst a recent amendment provided for wetland and smaller pond it was not considered this was of a comparable size and therefore was not in line with policy ENV4 and the larger pond should be retained.

Councillor R Moore addressed the Committee speaking as the Local Ward Councillor. His comments included the following:-

- He fully supported the views of ATC.
- He highlighted the leakage of trade to Morpeth and beyond and advised that in his view proposals of this nature could only be good for Alnwick and Northumberland.
- He recognised that there were concerns regarding the future of the town centre, however the study had been validated by Officers and had shown there would be no impact. He was aware that trading conditions were brutal however this was down to changes in the market and online shopping.
- The development would add to the tourist attractions and offer in the town and that the vacancy rates in the town centre were lower than the national average and he believed that the development would benefit Alnwick.

- He did not believe there was a necessity to hold a site visit as there was sufficient information contained in the report and asked that the application be supported.

C Barnes, Northumberland Estates addressed the Committee speaking in support of the application. His comments included the following:-

- The proposed development would bring investment of £5m into Northumberland which was significant in terms of Alnwick and the north of Northumberland context creating 100 jobs.
- The development would be provide a range of shops of good quality, the application was widely supported, would reduce the need to travel and would be of significant benefit to the residents.
- The Alnwick and Denwick Core Strategy and recent Neighbourhood Plan both said new development of this nature should be within the Alnwick Service Centre and this would complement both housing and economic growth.
- The impact on the town centre would be minimal and would compete with other out of town retail developments not the town centre.
- The original objection stated that no independent scrutiny of the retail report had been undertaken, this now has been done and found that there would be no effect.
- There were no objection from Highways and the proposals would have significant benefit to both cyclists, pedestrians, school children and shoppers.
- Both Marks and Spencer and Turnbolls had confirmed they wished to invest in the development and had shown confidence in Alnwick.

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

- The proposal would provide retail opportunities to the south of the town with sustainable links to the town centre. The application would provide for two bus lay-bys including shelters, would provide increased pedestrian/cycle access to connect to the leisure centre and improve pedestrian safety to the high school. A balanced view had been taken in view of the distance and the current infrastructure and whilst the infrastructure had been improved it was not possible to include a commuted sum for extending the bus service.
- TCR3 described where it would prefer retail development but did not preclude development on white land.

Councillor Thorne proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the application with the conditions as amended above and with the addition of a commuted sum to be included in a S106 agreement to improve the bus services which would improve town centre connectivity. He advised that Alnwick town centre had struggled lately and he would hate to make the situation worse and that whilst the proposed development would add choice and create jobs, connectivity was crucial. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Pidcock.

During discussions when Members expressed their support for the development and the investment into the area the Committee was advised that whilst Officers' recognised the will to provide additional bus services it was not considered that this was necessary for the development to be progressed and therefore it was not reasonable to request a S106 contribution for this purpose and this could be used as a possible reason to appeal any decision. It was suggested that a condition could be added to any permission granted to look at providing a commuted sum or subsidy of a bus service if required after one year of operation of the development to allow flexibility and establish a demand for the service.

Following this advice, Councillor Thorne confirmed that he wished his original proposal to stand, however Councillor Pidcock advised that he could no longer support the proposal and therefore Councillor Flux advised that he would second the proposal.

A vote was taken on the proposal to accept the recommendation to approve the application with the amended conditions and with the addition of a commuted sum to improve bus services which would improve town centre connectivity by way of a S106 legal agreement as follows:- FOR 9; AGAINST 3.

**RESOLVED** that the application be **GRANTED** for the reasons and conditions as outlined in the report and amended above with a commuted sum for improved bus services to be provided by way of a S106 Legal Agreement.

**6. 18/00715/CCD**

**Construction of a new two storey First School for children aged from nursery to 8 years old. To include external play areas, Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) and associated parking.  
Former Fire And Rescue Workshop And Outbuildings, Loansdean, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2AP.**

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

- Public Protection had advised that they had no objection to the application subject to conditions attached to any permission granted.
- The Highways Authority had asked that an informative regarding the provision of a full travel plan be added to any permission granted.
- Three further objections had been received regarding the proposed height of the fence and requesting plant screening be provided; the use of the playing fields should be restricted to 6pm Monday - Friday and should not be used on Saturday or Sunday.
- Additional transport should be provided from Morpeth town centre.

Councillor A Byard addressed the Committee speaking on behalf of Morpeth Town Council. She advised that Morpeth Town Council supported the proposal however they would request that an additional light controlled pedestrian crossing or school crossing control be provided at school times. The A197 was an extremely busy road at peak times and a lot of the families who would attend school lived on the other

side of the road or would need to cross the road to access public transport to return to the town centre. Safe routes to the school should be provided and the County Council had a duty to address this issue.

E Reay, Headteacher of Goose Hill First School addressed the Committee speaking in support of the application. Her comments included the following:-

- This was the second time she had addressed this Committee speaking on behalf of the children, parents and governors of the first school in respect of proposals for a much needed new school building.
- The current school building was 107 years old, it was built 3 years before the commencement of World War 1 and was not fit to educate children in the 21 century. The school lacked outdoor space and classrooms and cracks were papered over with artwork produced by the children of the school and still had separate entrances for boys and girls.
- Through her years as Headteacher, generations of pupils had been promised a fresh start with a number of them now parents with children at the school.
- Despite the building, and a lack of classrooms and outdoor space the school had continued to provide a first class education and was still rated as 'Outstanding' with agencies marvelling at the behaviour of children within such limited school space.
- The children in the catchment deserved a replacement school now which was fit for purpose, that was not 107 years old and which could deliver the educational provision to which they were entitled in the 21st century. Three years had been spent planning, dreaming and designing the new proposed build with excellent facilities and they did not want it delayed again for any reason.
- Early years children at the school had very little outside space and they deserved the accessible provision which appropriate outdoor play that OfSTED demanded. They need to become a fully integrated unit which would allow the seamless transition between Nursery and Reception and this new school would enable this to be achieved.
- Due to the restricted outdoor space, the children did not experience the opportunities of green space and had to walk a mile to Chantry Middle School every week to access PE.
- The children were very excited about the proposals and she requested that the Committee support the application and did not deny them the opportunity to get education and facilities that they deserved.

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

- There were currently 3 pedestrian refuge islands between the new Bellway development to the south of the site and the roundabout into the County Hall site with the southernmost refuge providing alternative access to the site via Southgate Mews. There could be difficulties in providing a controlled signal or zebra crossing on the A197 which could be used infrequently other than at school times, potentially creating a hazard with drivers not expecting the

crossing to be used and it was thought the use of a school crossing patrol would be more beneficial. Condition 19 requested the approval of a travel plan including the transport links to the site. If Members considered there was a need for an additional signalled pedestrian crossing then a separate condition would need to be included and assessment undertaken of where it would be.

- There were concerns regarding the future operation of the roundabout to the access road to County Hall and Condition 12 requested details of a scheme to improve the impacts of the additional traffic to ensure that the operation of the highway network was not prejudiced. Changing the design to a signalised junction would also include pedestrian crossing phases.
- A drop off point was to be provided within the curtilage of the school car park area.

Councillor Reid proposed acceptance of the recommendation to be minded to approve the application as outlined in the report with the additional conditions and informative as above which was seconded by Councillor Stewart.

A short discussion took place regarding the provision of a pedestrian crossing and improvements to the access roundabout however no change to the proposal to be minded to approve the application was made.

Following a vote it was unanimously:-

**RESOLVED** that the Committee be **minded to APPROVE** the application for the reasons and subject to the conditions as outlined in the report with the inclusion of the additional conditions and informative, and subject to new new matters being raised as a result of public re-consultation within the remainder of the consultation period (expiry 15 June).

#### 7. **18/00728/OUT**

**Outline application for the development of up to 100 residential dwellings with associated access.**

**Land North East Of Lion House, Willowburn Trading Estate, Alnwick, Northumberland.**

The Planning Officer introduced the application to the Committee. An update was provided by way of an addendum report regarding the revision of the reasons for the recommendation to refuse the application. Members were provided with sufficient time to read the information. A copy of the addendum report would be filed with the signed minutes and uploaded to the website.

Councillor M Swinbank addressed the Committee speaking on behalf of Alnwick Town Council. His comments included the following:-

- The Town Council agreed with the Officer's recommendation to refuse the application.



- The original application and been refused as it was contrary to the ADNP as was this application. Nothing had been changed to warrant any change to the recommendation to refuse the application.
- The ADNP was at a robust stage and would be able to be defended against challenge at the Public Inquiry in July. The site was previously deallocated however in the emerging local plan it would remain as an industrial site.
- Housing in an industrial area would cause unreasonable constraints on businesses.
- There was a shortfall of start up premises for smaller businesses in the area.
- There was a plentiful supply of housing land in the area.
- There was concern regarding the existing business on the industrial estate which all provide high quality services.

Councillor R Moore addressed the Committee speaking as the Local Ward Councillor. His comments included the following:-

- He could not understand the reason for the application as the land was zoned for employment use.
- The referendum had taken place for the ADNP the previous year and it had been well supported with the land specifically designated for employment.
- There was no S106 contribution proposed.
- There was a risk that Alnwick would lose the existing business from the industrial estate should the application be approved.
- He asked that the application be refused.

Councillor Pidcock proposed acceptance of the recommendation to refuse the application for the revised reasons as advised in the addendum report which was seconded by Councillor Reid.

A vote was taken and it was unanimously:-

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

1. The proposed residential development would result in the loss of employment land and the creation of residential (C3) land use at the site, contrary to policy E3 of the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan, without any level of public benefit that would justify the loss of employment use and the breach of policy.
2. The development will result in increased demand on education facilities which cannot be accommodated within existing infrastructure. The development makes no provision for appropriate S106 planning contributions towards education provision as required by Policy S23 of the Alnwick Core Strategy (2007). The proposed development would therefore be contrary to Paragraphs 203 - 206 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
3. The development will result in increased demand on health facilities which cannot be accommodated within existing infrastructure. The development makes no provision for appropriate S106 planning contributions towards

healthcare provision as required by Policy S23 of the Alnwick Core Strategy (2007). The proposed development would therefore be contrary to Paragraphs 203 - 206 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. The proposal will have an adverse effect on the integrity of designated sites including the Northumbria Coast SPA and Ramsar Site the North Northumberland Dunes SAC, and a damaging effect on the interest features of the Northumberland Coast SSSI. The development does not seek to mitigate for the adverse effect. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and S.28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended and Paragraphs 118 - 119 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

**8. 17/04652/FUL**

**Re-plan of 271 houses (substitution of house types and addition of 42 houses in relation to the existing development of 396 houses (Use Class C3), access, landscaping and associated infrastructure at Land South of A196, Stobhill, Morpeth Ref. 13/02416/FUL)**

**Barratt Homes, South Fields, Hepscott, Northumberland.**

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

- One further objection had been received in respect of infrastructure.
- One objector had advised that they wished to withdraw their objection and were now in support of the application.

Councillor A Byard addressed the Committee speaking on behalf of Morpeth Town Council. Her comments included the following:-

- She advised that the Town Council considered that the Transport Assessment was inadequate in that it only referred to the A196 and did not cover the impact of the development on the A192, Mafeking Roundabout or take into account the housing development on the St. George's site.
- The Town Council wished to see the applicant undertake a feasibility study for a relief road from Stobhill to Loansdean. The route of such a link road had been protected through planning policy for a number of years such a link would potentially reduce the cumulative impact below the NPPF threshold of severe and render it acceptable.
- Speeding along the A196 was a concern and the applicant could contribute towards preventing this.
- The Town Council welcomed the S106 contributions towards health and education and commended the developer for working through issues with the Town Council.

N Milburn addressed the Committee speaking on behalf of Barratts in support of the application. His comments included:-

- The vision had been to create a distinct high quality development and he thanked Councillor Byard for her comment.
- He advised that sales to younger families were going well and the change would allow further opportunities for them to purchase properties on the site which was designed to reflect the layout on the already developed site.
- The level of open space would remain along with the large central space.
- The development achieves all minimum separation distances and car parking requirements.
- All designs complement those on the existing site and match property designs and were designed for small families, starter homes and those wishing to downsize.
- Affordable housing remained at 12% above what the the current policy requested and the Traffic Assessment submitted confirmed that the new housing could be accommodated and would not be of detriment to the network.
- He highlighted the S106 contributions towards health and education and asked that the application be supported.

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

- The inclusion of trees into the development was purely for aesthetic purposes, be of a native species and suitable for the environment. This would be discussed with the developer.
- The type of affordable housing to be provided would be based on evidence of need in each individual area. Training could be provided to Members on the different types of affordable housing.
- The catchment area for schools for the development was Morpeth.

Councillor Thorne proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the application which was seconded by Councillor Flux.

Following a vote it was unanimously:--

**RESOLVED** that the application be **GRANTED** for the reasons and with conditions as outlined in the report and subject to the completion of a S106 Legal Agreement.

## 9. PLANNING APPEALS

Information was provided on the progress of planning appeals.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

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

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