

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **North Northumberland Local Area Council** held in St. James' Church Centre, Pottergate, Alnwick, Northumberland, NE66 1JW on Thursday, 19 April 2018 at 3.00pm

PRESENT

Councillor G. Castle
(Chair, in the Chair, items 150 - 152 and 165 - 167)

Councillor T. Thorne
(Planning Vice-chair, in the Chair, items 153 - 164)

MEMBERS

T. Clark
G. Hill
W. Pattison
R. Moore

G. Renner-Thompson
G. Roughead
C. Seymour
J. Watson

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

M. Bird
G. Fairs
D. Feige

J. Hitching
N. Masson
C. McDonagh
M. Payne
S. Robson
J. Sharp
E. Sinnamon
R. Sittambalam

Senior Democratic Services Officer
Highways Development Manager
Principal Ecologist and AONB
Officer
Senior Sustainable Drainage Officer
Principal Solicitor
Planning Officer
Consultant Engineer
Principal Planning Officer
Planning Officer
Senior Planning Manager
Senior Planning Officer

L. Bellamy, P. Edge, J. Maddison - Alnwick Friends of the Earth

42 members of the public and one member of the press were in attendance

(Councillor Castle in the Chair.)

150. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Ch.'s Initials.....

Councillor Castle welcomed everybody and explained the format of the meeting. A member queried the wording for the summons for the meeting regarding whether there should have been specification that this was a planning only meeting without a public question time. The format for this notification would be followed up after the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bridgett, Lawrie and Murray.

151. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of North Northumberland Local Area Council held on Thursday 22 March 2018, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

(Councillor Thorne then in the Chair.)

152. DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The report explained how the Local Area Council was asked to decide the planning applications attached to the agenda using the powers delegated to it. (Report enclosed with official minutes as Appendix A).

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

153. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

- Councillor Clark declared that he would speak in the local member slot for application 16/05630/FUL but not participate in the decision
- Councillor Clark declared that he would leave the meeting during application 18/0560/OUT as the application was from his employer Northumberland Estates
- Councillor Renner-Thompson declared in relation to application 17/0457/FUL as he was a member of Belford Parish Council, but could participate as he had not been involved in Belford Parish Council's discussion about the application
- Councillor Renner-Thompson declared that he would leave the meeting whilst application 17/04565/FUL was considered as the applicant was applying for LEADER programme funding, and he was a member of the relevant LEADER Panel
- Councillor Castle declared that he would he would speak in the local member slot for application 18/00682/FUL but not participate in the discussion/vote as he was a County Council appointment to Alnwick Playhouse board and had a personal but non-prejudicial interest in the application having been involved in the project.

154. 16/04630/FUL - The development of 3 residential dwellings including associated parking and infrastructure, Signal Cottage, Island View, Amble, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE65 0SF

Senior Planning Officer Ragu Sittambalam introduced the application with the aid of a Slides presentation. He updated the committee initially by referring to the site visit undertaken on 16 April, and explained that the applicant had agreed for the electricity supply to be carried underground and the site was not within but adjacent to SSSI (special site of scientific interest). Further objections had been received to the application since the agenda for the meeting had been published, but they raised no new issues.

Louise Little and John Smailes then shared the objectors' public speaking slot. Mr Smailes spoke first, of which his key points were:

- he objected strongly to the application which proposed three residential dwellings on a site that previously housed one small cottage
- when the caravans had been removed, residents had been led to believe that this was to protect the sand dunes, and it would create further precedent to build there
- the cottage had been demolished without permission.

Ms Little then spoke, of which her key points were:

- it was understood locally that the area was never to be built on; the previous cottage had been a small wooden structure
- the site was not backed by intact dunes; parts of the coast from Alnmouth to Cresswell had eroded by up to 6m
- there had been more flooding and tidal surges in the past two years
- the Council should undertake a proper coastal ecology report on the impact of erosion.

Local County Councillor Terry Clark then spoke about the application in the local member speaking slot, of which his key points were:

- it was not a good idea to build so close to the cliff edge. It would affect the local ecosystem and natural diversity; there hadn't been an ecological study undertaken in 10 - 20 years
- the coast was one of the most beautiful landscapes; the location was pivotal, and the development would result in inappropriate urbanisation of the coast and an eyesore
- the location was a popular tourist destination, with unspoilt beaches and dunes, with wonderful wildlife
- the buildings would detract from the local outstanding beauty; first impressions of the area counted.

Lyle Robinson then spoke in the supporters' slot, of which his key points were:

- the applicant had worked with the County Council for two years on the scheme. Various amendments had been made to what was originally submitted
- various studies had been undertaken into ecology and coastal erosion
- the site had an existing residential use and been previously developed

- the design had been amended and the scale and massing reduced following local residents' comments. The design was modern, for which views were mostly subjective; there was nothing in policy against contemporary developments
- the site had been subject to vandalism and antisocial behaviour.

Members then asked questions of which the key responses from officers were:

- the floor space of the proposed development would be in line with the curtilage area rather than just the footprint of the previous building
- the building would be sunk into the ground by 1m, with a two storey height. It would be bigger than before, with modified footprint and massing. It would not be significantly higher than previously as it was sunk. It was estimated to be around 1.5 storeys above ground
- if the applicant wanted to erect any wooden decking, it would be subject to a further application
- the materials consisted of render and aluminium framed glazing
- a coastal erosion study had concluded that even with the maximum level of coastal erosion anticipated over the next 100 years, the edge of the building would still be 25m from the cliff. The site was within Flood Zone 1. Officers were content with the position regarding flooding and coastal erosion
- it was acknowledged that there was an imbalance against the natural landscape, but the scale of the building and its design had been reduced
- the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) did not stifle innovation or contemporary design
- the previous application for the site had been withdrawn as its design was not considered acceptable.

Councillor Watson then moved that the application be refused on the grounds of height, massing and design; he referred to the impact on the area and the demolition undertaken without permission. This was seconded by Councillor Hill.

Members then made the following key points:

- it was a step too far given its sensitive location; it was not hidden away
- it was proposing too much development within the curtilage area
- the applicant had worked with the Council to reduce the height and massing and improve the design; some applications could be supported when providing outstanding design, but this was insufficient. It was in a very prominent position.

The motion to refuse was then put to the vote, and agreed unanimously so it was thus:

RESOLVED that the application be REFUSED due to the height, massing and design of the proposal.

155. 18/00213/VARYCO - Removal of condition 6 (Occupancy) pursuant to planning permission 13/00488/FUL to allow unrestricted residential use, land North of North Farm, Warenford, Northumberland

Planning Officer Jon Sharp introduced the application with the aid of a Slides presentation.

Tom Pearson then spoke in objection of which his key points were:

- planning permission had lapsed and no substantial work had been undertaken during the past nine years
- there was currently no sewerage or drainage connection and no water supply. Pipes ran through the gardens of units 3 and 4
- the effluent emissions for existing properties were at maximum capacity and would not cope with additional properties. There had been no servicing of the sewerage connections since 26 August 2016, contravening Environment Agency requirements
- building control requirements had not been met
- an AF6 unit had been required under the original permission, but the developer had put in a smaller unit than what was required for the site
- it had social and environmental impacts.

Lyle Robinson then spoke in support of which his key points were:

- the application had been submitted following difficulties with the existing holiday restriction permission
- it was at the edge of the settlement location, sustainable, with access to some public transport
- rural housing was justified in the NPPF if it enhanced and sustained local services, which this would
- the application would provide a new environmentally friendly sewage system.

Members then asked questions of which the key responses from officers were:

- the application only concerned the occupancy status of the application
- the sewerage issue had been considered as part of the previous application
- regarding concerns about leaking sewage, there was a condition in the previous application requiring a further scheme to deal with the contamination of land
- the application met all planning policy and was a sustainable location
- this application complied with the Berwick Local Plan and the NPPF
- any considerations regarding affordable housing were not relevant. Affordable housing only related to developments of 10 or more houses
- the application had to be considered as presented
- it ticked the boxes for all policy requirements.

Councillor Castle then moved the officer recommendation to approve the application, adding that there were no planning grounds to refuse it and suggested it would be better for the local community to have permanent residents living there rather than being filled part time with holiday makers. This motion was seconded by Councillor Watson.

Members discussed the application with reference to the process for such changes of use and also that if the original application was presented now for private residences, it would still meet the necessary requirements.

The motion to approve was then put to the vote, and agreed by five votes in support to four against and one abstention, and it was thus:

RESOLVED that the application be GRANTED subject to the conditions in the report.

156. 17/04394/OUT - Hybrid planning application, full planning permission: Development of 4 dwellings, outline permission with all matters reserved: Development of up to 20 dwellings - amended 03/04/18, land east of Lambton Avenue and Kyloe View, Lowick, Northumberland

Mr Sittambalam introduced the application with the aid of a Slides presentation. He firstly explained that the recommendation had included a Unilateral Undertaking by the applicant to Lowick Football Club; this was not however required as a condition on the planning application as it could be arranged via a separate legal agreement. The reference to 'Provisions of Unilateral Undertaking set out in Draft Heads of Terms' should thus be removed from the recommendation. Mr Sittambalam also drew members' attention to the conditions regarding coastal mitigation and affordable housing contributions.

Alison Christer then spoke in objection of which her key points were:

- the large properties proposed were not needed locally. They would be out of the price range for most local residents
- the football pitch had been relocated not to allow further residential development. There was a clearly identifiable settlement edge
- the development would have a significant effect on the landscape, in contravention of F1 of the NPF
- objection letters received were from residents most affected, and Lowick Parish Council was representative of the wider community's view
- Lowick was not a sustainable location; housing need should be considered for other brownfield plots in other sustainable locations. This application would set a very harmful precedent and cause irreversible harm.

Conor Colgan then spoke in support of which his key points were:

- he was a farmer who had lived and much invested locally for 15 years; he was not a speculative landowner
- the viability of the village currently was an issue; it was important that the village had vitality
- the support offered to Lowick Football Club was proposed as a gift to add to the village
- similar objections could arise for any other alternative locations for development
- this site was the best fit for viability and local sustainability including supporting the church, shops and school, whose capacity could hold up to 50 - 60 children rather than the current 25.

Members then asked questions of which the key responses from officers were:

- Lowick was a relatively small village with a mixture of house types

- consultation had taken place with the County Council's education service, who had raised no concerns regarding the school's capacity
- it was an outline application; details would be presented at the reserved matters stage. The details provided were an indicative layout only
- much work had taken place with the County Ecologist regarding any issues with protected species; none had been found on the site. The applicant was also undertaking a reptile survey
- the site would have some physical constraint to its south side alongside the football pitch. Planting and landscaping would provide some border control
- Sport England had been consulted and were supportive of the proposed Unilateral Agreement. It should however be a separate legal agreement between the applicant and Lowick Football Club. The planning application would however be acceptable with or without the agreement included.

Councillor Moore then moved the officer recommendation to grant the application, thus including the deletion of the requirement for a Unilateral Undertaking. This was seconded by Councillor Castle.

Members then made the following key points:

- the passionate speech of the applicant, a local resident, was acknowledged
- there was arguably capacity for more housing locally and the village would not be damaged by 20 more. It would be of overall benefit to the village
- the process appeared well managed, with some disagreement locally but also ongoing dialogue
- Lowick was quite far from Berwick and Wooler; how much local housing need was there?

The motion was then put to the vote, and agreed by eight votes in support, none against and two abstentions, and it was thus:

RESOLVED that the Head of Service be authorised to GRANT permission subject to:

- a s106 Legal Agreement to secure the following contributions:-
 - Coastal mitigation contribution of £600 per dwelling (£14,400 total)
 - On-site affordable housing provision of 15%
- the conditions listed in the report.

157. 18/00672/FUL - Development of 14 dwellings; Conversion of Allerburn House to 3 apartments including demolition of later extensions and refurbishment of lodge - amended 27/03/18, Allerburn House, Denwick Lane, Alnwick, Northumberland, NE66 1YY

Mr Sittambalam introduced the application with the aid of a Slides presentation.

Peter Groves then spoke in objection of which his key points were:

- residents' principle objection was against the demolition of the west wing of Allerburn House and the proposed three storey townhouses
- it proposed a reduction in the number of units, but the overall size of the development would increase. If approved, 70% of Allerburn House would

be demolished, at odds with section 4.3.8 of the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan. Proposing six three-storey townhouses also went against policy H4 by not contributing to distinctiveness. The west wing of Allerburn House was currently only two storeys, so the development would be out of keeping with the Allerburn Lea area

- the proposed south elevations would be much nearer to Allerburn Lea than the current west wing was. The proposed Juliet Balconies would add to the townhouses' overbearing nature
- the massing would be accentuated by the eastern block, resulting in significant shading of the surrounding area
- no sustainable drainage measures were proposed despite the impervious hard landscaping
- work had already begun on site.

Neil Turnbull then spoke in support of which his key points were:

- the proposal only included an overall 1.9% increase in size over the full scheme, and now proposed 18 properties rather than 20; it did not represent a significant increase in the development. The application would bring Allerburn House back to its original 1862 concept; no wholesale demolition was proposed
- there was ample evidence of other three storey townhouses in Alnwick
- further tree work was to be undertaken; one tree at the entrance to the site needed to be removed for highway safety means
- no work had been undertaken on site beyond what existing planning permission was already in place
- the application included an increase in offsite contributions.

Members then asked questions of which the key responses from officers were:

- regarding whether they were three or two story townhouses, in this case the third level constituted rooms in the roofs of the properties, which were considered to be half-storey
- Allerburn House was not a listed building, but a non-designated heritage asset
- whether the west wing area could be retained, members could only consider the application presented. Members had to consider whether the application would have significant adverse impact as to warrant refusal
- the likelihood of visual impact was acknowledged, but the Neighbourhood Plan referred to the main part of the building; a good part of Allerburn House would be retained. Whilst wishing to see it preserved, on balance this was not significant
- the application was broadly consistent with the NPPF regarding good design in all new developments
- the townhouses would be at least 22m from the southern boundary. Usually a minimum of 20m would be expected between one house to another. There was around 32m separating the proposed and existing houses
- any work already undertaken was as per existing permission, with the creation of a flat area as part of the approved construction compound
- the maintenance of hedges was a civil concern. The proposal was in line with the arboricultural assessment undertaken

- officers were aware of any complaints made over construction periods and issues raised regarding trees and boundaries
- as Asset Homes was owned by the County Council, the delegation scheme required the Local Area Council to consider such applications
- Juliet Balconies did not project out; they were windows with a handrail only.

Councillor Moore then moved that the application be refused; following procedural clarification it was confirmed that this would be on the grounds of overlooking and the design of the town houses would have an adverse impact on the area; that it was contrary to policies H4 and HD4 of the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan; and also the partial demolition would impact on the setting of a non-designated heritage asset, Allerburn House. This was seconded by Councillor Castle, who expressed concern about the cramming of development against the gable end; he considered that the original application was acceptable but not this one.

Members then made the following key points:

- much work had been put into the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan, so it was frustrating if it did not give weight when considering applications
- it was the applicant's prerogative if they wished to submit new applications for a site like this that already had permission; they could revert to the original approved scheme if they wished.

The motion to refuse was then put to the vote, was agreed unanimously, and it was thus:

RESOLVED that the application be REFUSED for the following reasons:

1. it would be overlooking and the design of the town houses would have an adverse impact on the area;
2. it was contrary to policies H4 and HD4 of the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan;
3. the partial demolition would impact on the setting of a non-designated heritage asset, Allerburn House.

(5.05pm - 5.13pm: the meeting then briefly adjourned. Councillor Clark left the meeting for whilst application 18/00560/OUT was considered.)

158. 18/00560/OUT - Outline Permission with Layout: Development of 21 dwellings (4 affordable) - Land North West of Acklington Drive, Acklington, Northumberland

Mr Sittambalam introduced the application with the aid of a Slides presentation. Mr Sittambalam firstly updated that one further letter of objection had been received but did not raise any new issues. No further issues had been received during the recent further consultation undertaken.

In the absence of any public speakers, members then asked questions of which the key responses from officers were:

- officers had recommended to the applicant that the burgage plot be respected
- Acklington Parish Council had been asked about what S106 infrastructure improvements they considered were required. They had replied about contributions to the village hall, speed cameras and play areas. The developer had agreed to enter dialogue to discuss this further, but this application was currently at outline stage; further contributions were not currently considered necessary.

Councillor Watson then moved that the application be refused on the grounds of overdevelopment. He explained that this was the third recent application in a small village that would in total increase the village's size by 75%. It had no shops, had one bus per hour, and would more resemble an estate than a village if it kept being developed. This was seconded by Councillor Roughead.

Councillor Watson added that if the Local Area Council was to grant the application, members should consider adding a condition at the chicane to slow traffic; another speed camera had been agreed for the other entrance to the Village; two more speed cameras were needed. Members were advised that they needed to consider Councilor Watson's original motion, regarding refusing the application, first.

Members were advised that the impact on the character and/or sustainability of the village were stronger refusal grounds, and that over-development would not be a valid planning reason as it tied in with other applications already approved, and would be thus challengeable.

The motion then proceeded for debate, during which members then made the following key points:

- it was estimated that there were around 120 houses in Acklington. It was however difficult to use over-development as a refusal reason when the number of houses was not certain
- strong reasons were required for refusal; the site was considered a sustainable location, and nearby villages/towns such as Warkworth and Amble could provide services
- refusing on the grounds of over-development was likely to be overturned on appeal by an inspector. Not wanting more housing was not a planning reason
- such decisions should also take account of the previous Alnwick District Plan
- a site visit was unlikely to assist with decision making in this case
- the application would contribute to the loss of the village's rural character
- housing 'need' and 'demand' were different issues.

The motion to refuse the application on the grounds of overdevelopment was then put to vote. Four votes were received in support of the motion, with four against, and there was one abstention. As the vote was tied, the Planning Chair had the casting vote, and voted against the motion, so the motion thus fell.

Councillor Thorne then moved the officer recommendation to approve the application, subject to including the additional proposed condition requiring two new speed cameras. This was seconded by Councillor Castle.

The amended motion to approve was then voted on and was agreed by five votes in support, two against and two abstentions, and it was thus:

RESOLVED that the Head of Service be authorised to GRANT permission subject to:

- the resolution of the Local Lead Flood Agency objections and a s106 Legal Agreement to secure the following contributions:
 - Coastal mitigation contribution of £600 per dwelling (£12,600 total)
 - Affordable housing provision of four dwellings to be provided on site
- the conditions listed in the report, plus an additional condition requiring the applicant to pay for two speed cameras.

(5.40pm: Councillor Clark then returned to the meeting.)

At this point, as the meeting was approaching three hours in length it was RESOLVED to suspend standing orders to allow the meeting to continue beyond three hours in duration.

159. 17/04574/FUL - Proposed sites for 9 new houses and change of use of agricultural to 14 unit Camp/Caravan site - amended 12/01/19, land rear of Blue Bell Hotel, West Street, Belford, Northumberland

Mr Sittambalam introduced the application with the aid of a Slides presentation.

Phyllis Caruthers then spoke in objection of which her key points were:

- she had operated the local caravan park for 25 years
- there was no reception point proposed. The access road was already a congested route
- when planning permission was given in 2004, electric gates and screening were proposed, but neither materialised, and only one property had been built in the 14 years since
- the development would provide a minimum benefit to the wider community; and affect the peaceful amenity of local residents
- it could exacerbate flooding by contributing to water run off; there was a sloping topography
- it could impact on various local species including bats, owls, newts and badgers.

In response to a question Mr Sittambalam explained that when assessing the application, consideration had been given to whether the development would bring harm or provide sufficient benefits to offset harm caused. The application would provide a modest boost to housing supply, contribute to the vitality of the settlement and increase spending locally. It was considered that these public benefits were sufficient to outweigh any harm.

Councillor Hill then moved that a site visit be arranged, which was seconded by Councillor Seymour.

The Vice-chair explained that any debate at that point had to be limited to the motion for a site visit. On no further points about the site visit proposal being raised, the motion was then put to the vote, agreed unanimously and it was thus:

RESOLVED that the application be DEFERRED for a SITE VISIT.

160. 18/00828/OUT - Outline Permission: 30 dwellings - amended 29/03/18, land North and West of Hillcrest, East Ord, Northumberland

Mr Sittambalam introduced the application with the aid of a Slides presentation. He updated members by explaining that the applicant had agreed a written scheme of investigation, and trial trenching was being undertaken on site. A drainage strategy was being prepared and would be submitted to the Lead Local Flood Authority. Mr Sittambalam also advised that paragraph 7.22 in the report should be corrected to read a total health contribution of £17,400. It would be subject to satisfactory comments being received from the County Archaeologist and Lead Local Flood Authority.

Tim Ferguson then spoke in support of which his key points were:

- the Strategic Housing Land Assessment had identified the site as suitable for housing purposes; it was a logical infill site that would have a modest impact
- the boundary landscaping assisted buffering requirements and there would be adequate spacing for new and existing residents
- a public footpath was proposed which would link to the public house, bus stop and village hall. There would be no adverse impact on highway safety
- no objections had been received, subject to the conditions; statutory consultees had not objected
- archaeological work was planned and urban drainage techniques would be used on site
- it accorded with the NPPF and the economic, social and environmental principles of the emerging local Neighbourhood Plan.

Members then asked questions of which the key responses from officers were:

- the list of requirements requested by Ord Parish Council would be addressed at the reserved matters stage. Full contributions to education and health were included
- a baseline level of desktop information had been provided for the County Archaeologist; further information would be provided by the applicant as needed
- the developing local Neighbourhood Plan was not yet at an advanced stage that enabled the application to be assessed against it.

Councillor Renner-Thompson then moved the officer recommendation to approve the application, which was seconded by Councillor Pattison.

A member praised the application as one of the best he had seen over the past year, and welcomed the onsite affordable housing contribution and the indicative plan's proposal to not segregate it within a particular part of the site. It was requested that at the reserved matters stage, details should be provided of how the affordable housing would be integrated amongst the other housing.

The motion to approve was then put to the vote, and agreed unanimously, and it was thus:

RESOLVED that the Head of Service be authorised to GRANT permission subject to the resolution of the LLFA and County Archaeologist's objections, a s106 Legal Agreement to secure the following contributions:-

1. Coastal mitigation contribution of £600 per dwelling (£18,000 total)
2. Affordable Housing contribution of 15% to be provided on site
3. Education contribution of £39,600
4. Health contribution of £17,400;

and:

- the conditions listed in the report.

(6.17pm: Councillor Renner-Thompson then left the meeting in advance of application 17/04565/FUL being considered.)

161. 17/04565/FUL - Proposed camping pods, tree house, lodge and touring van bases along with amenities and services (amended 6th April 2018), Acton Caravan Site, Felton, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE65 9NS

Planning Officer Chris O'Donagh introduced the application with the aid of a Slides presentation. As an update, Mr O'Donagh advised that the one amendment was that Warden's Lodge, as indicated on plans, would now be used as additional holiday let space due to restrictions on rural workers dwellings. There were no implications of this in regard to the recommendation as read.

Three speakers then shared the objectors' slot. Lyle Robinson spoke first (on behalf of objectors Mr and Mrs Ferguson), of which his key points were:

- the access road was inadequate to cope with the traffic and visibility was poor. Mr Ferguson had been involved in a road accident
- there was insufficient room for caravans to pull out as it was single lane only
- the access road was also used by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.

The key objections from William Sidgwick were:

- it was not a quiet road - it included nine houses and a community. Farm vehicles used the road, which would also be during the tourist season
- increasing the traffic from nine to 29 properties could be dangerous
- the site sloped to the road, leaving puddles of up to 25m long. The road was crumbling, with a boggy verge.

The key objections from Moyra Horseman were:

- the Highways Authority had said that passing places had to be built but none were shown on the plans
- no construction method statement had yet been provided
- there was no provision for refuse, lighting or cycle racks
- 29 objections had been submitted, all regarding the speed and volume of traffic around the narrow bends. A site visit should be considered at least.

Jasmine Summers then spoke in support of which her key points were:

- her family hoped to create a high end glamping retreat. There was ample support for the site, and Northumberland Tourism had sent a letter of support
- the development proposed the first tree house in Northumberland that people would be able to stay overnight in
- local businesses and amenities would benefit
- the site's capacity for 10 caravans was not running at full capacity
- the Highways Authority had expressed no concerns about the access or corner
- they owned a small farm and had applied to the LEADER Programme in order to diversify their business.

Members then asked questions of which the key responses from officers were:

- the Highways Officer advised that there was extant permission on site for tourist accommodation; the current proposal would not alter the number of units on the site. There was no evidential or empirical proof of different traffic levels when comparing between this proposal or the previous permission being brought back into use. No accidents had been recorded at the site for 19 years. Improvements were proposed to the access, with gates put back from the carriageway, improving the visibility to the west, and passing places on the lane would be included, subject to details being submitted and approved. There were no sound reasons to refuse the application on highways grounds
- regarding concern that 25 objection letters had been summarised into 11 words in the report, members were advised that usually a hyperlink was provided to all the letters of representation published on the website, which all should take the opportunity to look at.

Members agreed that the main objections focused on highways issues, and Councillor Moore then moved that the application be deferred for a site visit given the high level of objections on highways grounds. This was seconded by Councillor Roughead.

The motion for a site visit was then put to the vote, agreed unanimously, and it was thus:

RESOLVED that the application be DEFERRED for a SITE VISIT.

(6.35pm: Councillor Renner-Thompson then returned to the meeting.)

162. 18/00682/CCD - Refurbishment and reorganisation of the internal elements, refurbishment of external elements of the building and part change of use to incorporate library (D1) and tourist information facilities (B1) (amended 5th April 2018)

Planning Officer Chris McDonagh introduced the application with the aid of a Slides presentation. As an update, Mr McDonagh advised that the one amendment was just to the description to incorporate the additional use classes of the tourist information facilities and library within the theatre.

The local member slot was then shared; Councillor Martin Swinbank spoke first representing Alnwick Town Council, of which his key points were:

- Alnwick Town Council welcomed the development but were concerned about the space available for a library, tourist information and also the customer services facility
- the tourist information service might not have as much space nor be given the importance that it needed, especially when there could be large demand for the service when visitor numbers were high in the summer
- Alnwick Town Council was pleased with the County Council's response and welcomed the engagement event planned. He encouraged support for the engagement event and the need to hear the views of everybody who might like to participate in the event.

County Councillor Gordon Castle then spoke of which his key points were:

- the proposal had been developed over three years; both the County Council and Alnwick Town Council wanted it to happen and work. Both the current and previous County Council administrations had supported it
- the building was now owned by the County Council. There was not a hard line stipulating how the space could be used; the auditorium could also be an option when needed. By summer time, the services would be enhanced
- the community engagement approach had been agreed and the Playhouse's Board had agreed that he, the playhouse manager and a Town Council representative would take this forward
- effort would be made to ensure that the arrangements would work; the equivalent services in Hexham operated very well in Hexham.

Councillor Moore then moved the officer recommendation to approve the application, in doing so he acknowledged Alnwick Town Council's concerns but also welcomed the engagement work due to begin. This was seconded by Councillor Watson.

The motion to approve was then put to the vote, agreed unanimously, and it was thus:

RESOLVED that the application be GRANTED subject to the conditions in the report.

163. Planning Appeals

The report was for members' information to report the progress of planning appeals.

RESOLVED that the application be noted.

(6.47pm - 6.57pm: the meeting then adjourned for a short break.)

164. URGENT BUSINESS (if any)

The Chair agreed, that in the exceptional circumstances as a result of some misunderstanding expressed concerning this being a planning only meeting, he would allow a resident to address the committee in the absence of a public question time, which the resident had attended the meeting for.

Local resident Tony Kell then spoke. Mr Kell firstly welcomed the way the meeting had been professionally conducted, with good and informative discussion, which gave the committee credibility. Mr Kell continued by stressing the importance of governance and accountability and how all members set the culture of the Council in representing their constituents and upholding code of conduct commitments. He referred to the receipt of special responsibility allowances by some members and considered that if the extra duties required by the receipt of special responsibility allowances were not being undertaken, or fellow councillors did not meet their standards/code of conduct responsibilities, members could raise concerns through the Chair.

Mr Kell added that he had raised issues regarding governance, accountability and finance associated with the County Council at a senior level and referred to the role of the Monitoring Officer. He stated that he was a whistleblower and considered that he was not getting sufficient opportunity to put forward his concerns. He stressed that corporate policy applied to everybody in the Council, and that members needed to raise questions through the annual governance statement and auditing processes and undertake their duty that they ensured that they undertook their roles with due diligence.

The Chair then explained that the committee would now move on to the next item.

165. REPORT OF THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: PLACE

Northumberland Local Plan: Update and Spring 2018 Consultation

The report (attached to the official minutes as Appendix B) provided an update for the Local Area Councils on the Northumberland Local Plan and details on the Spring 2018 Local Plan consultation.

Principal Planning Officer Steve Robson provided a presentation on the Spring 2018 Local Plan consultation at the meeting. He explained that following the withdrawal of the Northumberland Core Strategy in July 2017, the Council had

been working on the preparation of a new plan which would be in place until 2036. He provided an overview of the current online survey and how residents could interact with it, including adding suggestions for up to five possible housing sites and five possible business sites. The consultation portal was open from 28 March to 2 May 2018. Approximately 75% of the feedback so far had been positive.

Discussion followed, of which the key details were:

Regarding the achievability of reducing the timescale by three months, members were advised that draft chapters were being developed and although the original plan had been withdrawn after being submitted to the Secretary of State for examination, much of the evidence already gathered would still be usable. However, the main reason why the Core Strategy was withdrawn related to the proposed level of housing and proposals to delete some land from the Green Belt to accommodate this growth. Therefore updated evidence regarding the need for housing and how this aligned with economic growth had been commissioned.

Replying to a question about making the terminology more accessible to encourage people to participate, members were advised that the interactive approach used during the Spring consultation was a new way of engaging with people, and it was hoped that this would reach more/new people. It was indicated that younger people were being encouraged to participate through social media, and the Youth Cabinet/Parliament.

A parish councillor stressed the need for delivering appropriate housing types in local areas rather than the focus on appropriate housing development sites. For example, few homes were available on the north Northumberland coast. For example, a young teacher would not be able to afford to buy a house near Embleton First School, and only 10 of 80 people employed in Craster could afford to live in the village. Could a strategic plan look at how to get appropriate housing in local areas?

Mr Robson referred to the level of second homes in some areas; the evidence base was being updated, but as a full Local Plan, it would also incorporate housing allocations, and that it might be appropriate to allocate sites specifically for extra care housing and affordable housing if required locally. A plan would aim to get the appropriate housing in place.

A member referred to the testing of the North Northumberland Coastal Neighborhood Plan's stipulation that all new housing had to be for permanent residence only. Members were reminded that affordable housing was only required within developments of more than 10 houses and getting social housing providers to take on the management of smaller schemes was often problematic. Given that the Neighbourhood Plan had been examined and should be given weight in the determination of applications, new developments in this area should take account of its policies, and the evidence behind it, which would help ensure more appropriate homes would be delivered locally.

The Chair concluded the item by referring to the policy importance of

Neighbourhood Plans in and progress on the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

OTHER LOCAL AREA COUNCIL BUSINESS

166. Roadside Litter: Presentation by Alnwick Friends of the Earth

The Chair explained that he had agreed this agenda item as Alnwick Friends of the Earth had raised some important issues regarding litter control in the county. Representatives of the organisation were in attendance to address the Local Area Council.

A briefing note had also been circulated to members of the committee (copy appended to the official minutes of the meeting).

Jan Maddison firstly addressed members by providing examples of evidence of how much litter had been collected on a 300m stretch of the B1339 and on a 300m stretch of road into Lesbury.

Peter Edge continued with details about the growing problem and challenge of roadside litter and its impact including blocking drains, contributing to flooding, released damaging chemicals into the soil, injuring animals and dangers to road users and sea life. In a recent Survey, 90% of respondents thought litter was a massive issue, and 81% made them feel angry and frustrated. Mr Edge then provided an overview of suggestions about how this could be addressed by the County Council, of which his key points were:

- Clearing up roadsides - including incorporating road cleaning into road maintenance contracts and/or co-ordinating road closures with local authority teams or community litter pickers
- Prevention strategies - could the 'Love Northumberland, Hate Litter' campaign be launched or replaced, and in doing so have a focus on roadside littering and produce posters for display near large retailers/fast food outlets
- Enforcement - how would the Council use its new powers on enforcement, to fine and prosecute drivers of registered vehicles from which litter was thrown, and publicise penalties and publicise penalties and procedures for reporting instances? This could include incorporating details of fines and penalties in posters, targeting driving instructors to pass on messages to young drivers, and work with retailers who might be in a good position to help identify offenders and get their licence plates before leaving their premises.

In summary, Alnwick Friends of the Earth's question to the Council was:

'Given the environmental impact of litter, much of which is non-biodegradable and the particular difficulties of cleaning litter from verges, what is the Council currently

doing to reduce roadside litter and what further action could be taken? For example: is it possible to incorporate verge cleaning into contracts for road repairs and maintenance? In terms of prevention; are there any plans to relaunch the "Love Northumberland, Hate Litter" campaign and could this incorporate a focus on roadside littering?'

The Chair expressed thanks for the very good presentation and the presenters' attendance. Details had been raised with officers and a report responding to the issues would be produced for discussion at May's round of Local Area Councils.

RESOLVED that the information be noted and a report responding to the issues raised be considered at May's round of Local Area Council meetings.

167. FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on Thursday 24 May 2018 at St James' Church Centre, Alnwick. Members welcomed the change of venue for Alnwick.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....