

## 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, 18 October 2018 at 3.00pm

#### PRESENT

Councillor G. Castle  
(Chair, in the Chair, items 88 - 89) (part)

Councillor T. Thorne  
(Planning Vice-chair, in the Chair, items 90 - 101)

#### MEMBERS

S. Bridgett  
T. Clark  
G. Hill  
R. Moore  
R. Lawrie

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

#### OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

J. Bellis  
M. Bird  
M. Bulman  
J. Hitching  
E. Sinnamon  
R. Sittambalam  
I. Stanners  
C. Thompson

Senior Planning Officer  
Senior Democratic Services Officer  
Lawyer  
Senior Sustainable Drainage Officer  
Interim Head of Planning Services  
Senior Planning Officer  
Housing Enabling Officer  
Principal Highways Officer

27 members of the public and one member of the press were in attendance.

**(Councillor Castle in the Chair)**

#### **88. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Pattison.

#### **89. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of North Northumberland Local Area

Ch.'s Initials.....

Council held on Thursday, 20 September 2018, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair, subject to page 11, paragraph four (regarding application 18/02244/OUT) being amended to begin 'The motion to **approve..**'.

**(Councillor Thorne in the Chair)**

**90. URGENT BUSINESS (IF ANY)**

With the agreement of the Chair, the following items were raised as items of urgent business:

**(a) Amendment to Motion on 17/02893/FUL**

Due to a discrepancy in the report relating to the coastal mitigation sum for application 17/02893/FUL at the former Sailing Club site, Coquet Street, Amble which was brought before members in June 2018, a request was made to amend the motion to the following: *That Members authorise the Head of Service to GRANT permission subject a s106 Legal Agreement to secure a Coastal mitigation contribution of £3996 and the conditions as set out in the report.*

This motion was moved by Councillor Thorne, seconded by Councillor Moore, then agreed unanimously so it was thus:

**RESOLVED** that the Head of Service be authorised to GRANT permission subject a s106 Legal Agreement to secure a Coastal mitigation contribution of £3996 and the conditions as set out in the report.

**(b) Ragu Sittambalam, Senior Planning Officer**

Councillor Thorne paid tribute to Ragu Sittambalam, Senior Planning Officer, who was leaving the employment of Northumberland County Council on 19 October after four and a half years' service. Mr Sittambalam had delivered excellent planning work and assisted the Chair and committee members in having confidence in their planning decisions based on his well researched work. He had performed very well recently when called on to defend the Council's decision on applications in Longframlington. Councillor Thorne presented Mr Sittambalam with a leaving present and thanked him further for all his hard work and skills.

**91. 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 and applications enclosed with official minutes as Appendix A.)

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

**92. 18/02275/FUL**

**Erection of Seven residential units, including garden areas, parking and landscaping - Amended 13/09/18**

Ch.'s Initials.....

## **Land West Of Schooner Hotel, Northumberland Street, Alnmouth, Northumberland**

Ragu Sittambalam, Senior Planning Officer introduced the application by firstly providing an update. A site visit had been held on 15 October 2018. The coastal mitigation contribution amount had been reviewed and should be £4200 not £3600; the revised recommendation was now as follows:

*That Members authorise the Head of Service to GRANT permission subject to a Legal Agreement pursuant to s106 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) to secure the following obligations:*

- *£31,500 Off-site Affordable Housing contribution;*
- *£4,200 Coastal Mitigation contribution; and the recommended conditions.*

A further visual had been submitted by the applicant on 16 October 2018 which would be shown during the presentation. Mr Sittambalam then continued introducing the application with the aid of a slides presentation.

Gary Cunningham then spoke in the objectors' public speaking slot, of which his key points were:

- he owned the northern boundary between 28 Riversdale Road and the site; any traffic accessing the site would have to cross his land, not County Council land
- he objected to the density of the development; properties would be built right up against their boundary, and proposed property HT4 had a large balcony that would look straight into his parents' bedroom window, causing privacy issues
- it would cause problems with waste services. The bins belonging to the seven properties currently on the site would have nowhere safe to go if this development went ahead. They would have to be taken out onto Riversdale Road, resulting in 14 bins being put out for collection every week. The nearby pavement was very narrow; leading to worries about pedestrian safety.

Shaun Whyte then spoke on behalf of Alnmouth Parish Council, of which his key points were:

- Alnmouth Parish Council unanimously objected to this application, but were not against the development of the site. The proposed density was too high, and they had concerns with parking and access issues. They welcomed the reduction from eight properties, but seven was still too many
- the site visit would have demonstrated the lack of green space at the site, and the proposed properties would not have gardens
- The proposed parking spaces had reduced from 12 to nine
- it was served by a very narrow access road; it was difficult to both enter and exit the site; parking problems would be exacerbated by the development
- more space was required for refuse bins.

Craig Ross then spoke in support of the application, of which his key points were:

- the application resulted from work with Planning Services and consultation undertaken to produce the scheme; a previous scheme had been withdrawn in 2017 in response to the concerns raised then

- no internal or external consultees had objected to the current application, except for Alnmouth Parish Council and some neighbours; no technical objections had been received
- the scheme had been reduced which provided for more amenity on site. Materials had been changed; types would be submitted prior to the development beginning
- Historic England had no objection. The Highways Authority had undertaken recent studies, including bin storage and access; the applicant accepted their proposed conditions
- the applicant was happy to form a working group including Alnmouth Parish Council representatives and local members to alleviate any possible problems during the construction phase. The applicant was doing all they could to ensure the construction phase went as smoothly as possible.

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

- there was some sloping and natural gradient from No. 28 to the lower level, but some overlooking already existed from the Schooner Hotel. There would be some impact on amenity and privacy, but not from the massing of the properties nor was not sufficient to warrant refusal
- land ownership matters were not a material planning consideration for when determining the application, but could be a civil matter later on for the construction phase
- the bins were currently dropped off on what was essentially private land; Highways Development Management had required a pre-commencement condition for arrangements for bin storage to be put in place
- the parking ratio had taken the town centre location into account. There was capacity within the layout for additional cars
- the frequency of cars entering and exiting the site was very limited; it was considered to have access with visibility and no accidents had been recorded at the location, so Highways Development Management could not recommend refusal on any of these grounds
- the impact of either including balconies or windows had to be considered on balance. Officers did not consider that the proposed balcony referred to would have a significant impact on neighbours' privacy, given that the Schooner Hotel already overlooked the site
- a series of roof pitches were proposed; Historic England had commented that they preferred rooves to overlap when going up the hill, but Planning Services considered that the current proposal would fit better with its surroundings
- the visuals of the proposals had been requested so that officers could better understand the proposal, and considered that it had an acceptable level of density for the location
- discounted market housing had been considered for the site, but such sites could have big service charges, and house prices were high in Alnmouth
- it would be acceptable to specify that the off-site affordable housing contribution should be retained for spending within the local area within the following five years
- it was conditioned that the developments could be sold but not occupied until the required waste services provisions were confirmed
- as planning permission was granted to the land, not the applicant, land ownership was not a planning issue. The deliverability of any approved application was a later stage, which the developer would have to pursue later

- there was not currently an adequate evidence or policy base to provide enough weight to require a principal occupancy clause on the properties; including such a condition was possible but would likely be lost on appeal. Members should not add the condition on the basis that it might hold more weight in future Core Strategy policy
- regarding what incentive there was to actually complete the final property as that was when the £31,500 off-site affordable housing contribution became payable, the required triggers would be put in place, perhaps requiring a partial payment earlier in the process. It was stated that due to the site being situated in the AONB, the off-site affordable housing contribution was only payable upon sale of the final unit.

Councillor Moore, on noting that the highways issues had been addressed, then moved that the application be granted in accordance with the officer's recommendation, with two further conditions: that the refuse collection details be submitted in advance, and to ringfence the off-site affordable housing allocation within the local area for up to five years. This was seconded by Councillor Castle.

It was then clarified that a condition did exist for the refuse collection requirement, so Councillors Moore and Castle acknowledged that it did not also need to be referred to as an additional condition, but agreed to amend their motion to delegate the exact details of the condition to officers and that it would be presented to the Planning Chair of the Local Area Council for approval. It was also clarified that the off-site affordable housing contribution be allocated through the s106 agreement for spending within the local electoral ward area for three years and then wider Northumberland for a further two years. The motion was therefore technically to mind to grant the application subject to the necessary details being provided.

Members then made the following key points:

- a member supported the design and appearance of the development, which were both incredibly important, given the site's visibility from the Hipsburn to Warkworth road and from the west
- a member indicated she would vote against the motion as she considered that the site was being over-developed, that privacy issues had not been adequately addressed, she did not favour the design, and that a reduced proposal should instead be submitted
- the level of development was consistent with the rest of the village, which was compressed in its layout
- trying to add a principal occupancy condition was a risk if the decision was appealed.

The motion to grant in accordance with the officers recommendation with additional conditions was then put to the vote, and agreed by seven votes in favour to four against and one abstention, so it was thus:

**RESOLVED** that the Head of Service be authorised to GRANT permission subject to a Legal Agreement pursuant to s106 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) to secure the following obligations:

- £31,500 off-site affordable housing contribution, to be ringfenced for spending within the local electoral ward area for three years and the wider Northumberland area for a further two years;

- £4,200 Coastal Mitigation contribution;
- and the recommended conditions as outlined in the report, including the finalised wording for the refuse collection to be delegated to the Head of Service for approval.

And: subject to the conditions in the report.

**93. 18/01819/OUT (Addendum Report)  
Outline Permission with All Matters Reserved; Development of up to 20 dwellings (100% affordable) - Amended 30/04/18  
Land South West Of St Cuthbert Close, Main Street, North Sunderland, Northumberland**

Mr Sittambalam firstly advised that the application number should read 17/01819/OUT. The reference to 'Strategic Planning Committee' in paragraph 1.1 should also be omitted. The revised recommendation was that members authorise the Director of Planning to GRANT permission subject to the planning conditions set out below and a S106 Legal Agreement to secure the following obligations:-

- Provision of 20 no. affordable dwellings to be provided on site in perpetuity
- Financial contribution towards Education provision of £35,200.
- Financial contribution towards Coastal mitigation of £600 per dwelling (£12,000 total).

Mr Sittambalam then continued introducing the application with the aid of a slides presentation, during which he explained how the additional addendum report had been produced following a letter received regarding judicial review and the updates made to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). An independent assessment had been carried out which concluded that the development could be accommodated without any adverse impact on the area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB). The local need for affordable housing remained as did its rural exception site status for affordable housing in perpetuity for people who lived nearby or had a local family or employment connection.

Steve Williams then spoke in the objectors' public speaking slot, of which his key points were:

- the application had been referred back following possible judicial review
- it had been incorrectly stated at May's meeting that it was in accordance of policy 1 of the local Neighbourhood Plan: the development was not small scale. Rural exception sites were small, whereas the level of change proposed to the landscape in this case could not be considered small scale
- evidence of local housing need had been requested; so far only one expression of interest for operating the site had been received from a company whose business depended on it. The evidence paper had been based on a full housing needs survey and no issues had been raised there
- the development would have a negative effect on the AONB and the sensitive settlement edge. Policy 9 of the local Neighbourhood Plan only permitted affordable housing on rural exception sites if no negative impact was caused
- there were other more suitable sites within the settlement boundary to meet current and future housing needs. The report did not express objectors' concerns and the application brought financial risks.

Stephanie Linnell then spoke in support of the application, of which her key points were:

- the application had been previously approved subject to a S106 agreement. A registered social landlord had been confirmed to operate the site and the Council was reviewing applications in line with the revised NPPF, for which none of the new changes affected the status of this application
- the threat of judicial review from some local residents should not unduly affect a fair consideration of the application; members should have confidence in their officers that due process had been followed
- it would provide much needed affordable housing for local people; no other local site had been identified for any. The local area had high market demand and a shortage of affordable housing. The high proportion of second homes locally impacted on the availability of affordable housing
- it was an outline application; details of the impact and design would come at the reserved matters stage. Any negative harm would be negligible; the AONB Partnership supported the proposal
- the application was in accordance with the revised NPPF; it was reasonable to reaffirm support for it.

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

- a housing needs survey had been undertaken five years previously for the North Northumberland Neighbourhood Plan area, which had not identified a huge housing need. The housing needs survey was however only part of the overall assessment. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment had concluded that affordable housing for rent and sale were equally needed
- the interested registered provider was a cautious developer and would only build as the need for the housing had been identified
- local people would get the first opportunity for the housing
- Given the threat of Judicial Review and the fact that the decision had not yet been issued officers reviewed the decision so that members were best informed, and considered that the application was strengthened by the assessment undertaken and it was a more robust report than what had been presented back in May
- the conclusion was in accordance with the AONB Partnership and Council officers' views. Policy 9 of the Neighbourhood Plan did not mean no negative impact on the area, but landscape was the key consideration, and both the independent appraisal and officer appraisals did not consider that it would have a sensitive impact on the settlement edge. As it was a generous site, it included a buffer area which would improve the setting of the village
- the recommendation was now to the Head of Service rather than the Executive Director of Place back in May 2018 due changes in officer personnel
- policy 1 of the local Neighbourhood Plan supported small scale developments of up to nine dwellings, but there was a planning judgement to be made; the Neighbourhood Plan was silent on what constituted major development, but policy 9 detailed the support for rural exception sites subject to requirements. A more thorough analysis had now been carried out
- the recommendation to grant had not changed. All applications had to be screened by the requirements of the revised NPPF. The officer view was no different and the mix of housing was not changing

- the new NPPF supported the benefits of have a range of affordable housing options including full purchase or shared ownership
- the houses would be categorised as affordable in perpetuity and restricted to people who needed it; there would be no right to buy options
- having different affordable housing options available provided flexibility
- there was no other option for affordable housing locally; robust assurance had been provided that there was a local demand for it
- the education contribution of £35,200 would be allocated to where the Education Department had identified as the local need. As the current local Primary School provision was sufficient and future demand as a result of the development was not a cause for concern, it would instead be allocated towards the Duchess' School, Alnwick, where the need for funding to support additional pupil numbers had been identified. This would benefit residents in North Sunderland and Seahouses as it was the feeder school for local 11 - 18 year olds
- if there was sufficient demand for rented accommodation within the proposed 50/50 split of rental and shared ownership, more of the properties could instead be rented.

Councillor Lawrie then moved that the application be granted subject to the conditions in the report. This was seconded by Councillor Moore.

Members then made the following key points:

- a member stated that he would have moved refusal as the settlement line was not meant to be broken. The housing needs assessment was now redundant
- the site had been assessed and was considered not to have a negative impact on the boundary
- 100% of the properties were affordable houses. Affordable housing was essential, especially for young people struggling to get on the housing ladder
- a member welcomed residents' opportunity to challenge the decision in light of unaddressed technical issues
- a member felt that a local school should benefit directly from the £35,200 education contribution rather than one outside of the area; perhaps a 10 year restriction could be put on the amount to use within the local area?
- it was not possible to know that families moving to the area might have children aged 11+ rather than under 11, plus the £35,200 would still be retained within the school catchment area if it went to the Duchess' High School.

The motion to grant was then put to the vote, and agreed by eight votes in favour to four against, so it was thus:

**RESOLVED** that the Director of Planning be authorised to GRANT permission subject to the planning conditions set out below and a S106 Legal Agreement to secure the following obligations:-

- Provision of 20 no. affordable dwellings to be provided on site in perpetuity
- Financial contribution towards Education provision of £35,200
- Financial contribution towards Coastal mitigation of £600 per dwelling (£12,000 total).

And: the conditions listed in the report.



*(5.04pm: Councillor Castle then gave his apologies for needing to leave the meeting.)*

**94. 17/03074/REM**

**Reserved matters approval for appearance, layout, scale, and landscaping for 10 no dwellings including all ancillary works in relation to planning permission 16/02824/OUT. Amended house types received 12th September 2017. Additional plans received 23.10.2017**

**Alnwick Golf Club, Swansfield Park Road, Alnwick, Northumberland, NE66 2AB**

James Bellis, Senior Planning Officer introduced the application with the aid of a slides presentation. He firstly explained that this was the reserved matters application for the site for which an application for removing conditions had been considered by this Local Area Council on 20 September 2018.

Steve Montgomery then spoke in the objectors' public speaking slot, of which his key points were:

- it was not consistent with the outline application and the committee report contained errors, with reference to paragraph 7.6: the positions of the housing had moved/rotated since the previous application. Also, the report referred to timber doors, yet there was also mention of timber effect doors; what other errors might there also be?
- the outline design statement had stated that access would be maintained for the site but there was no assurance in the report
- It would set a precedent for further future development as it was clearly a stepping stone to another larger development in an adjacent greenfield site.

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

- the positioning of the properties had changed, but only on top of where they had been proposed - they had not significantly changed. Such details could be considered at this reserved matters stage
- the materials were confirmed as timber effect. A condition was proposed which controlled the type of materials.

Councillor Moore referred to how Alnwick Town Council had seen no planning grounds to refuse the application, which he agreed with. Applicants were entitled to change details between the different stages of the application process. He moved that the application be granted, which was seconded by Councillor Watson.

A member indicated that it was another example of 'mission creep' and therefore would object to the application. Another member disagreed that it was 'mission creep' as members' concerns about the outline application considered in September 2018 was that the reserved matters application would propose three storey dwellings, but this was not the case. The outline stage was indicative only and did not have to specify the detail of every property. It was nothing outside of how the planning process operated.

The motion to grant was then put to the vote, and agreed by seven votes in favour to four against, so it was thus:

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

**95. 17/03894/FUL  
Demolition of Existing School Building and Development of 23 Dwellings -  
Amended 04/10/18  
Former Cornhill First School, St Helens Gardens, Cornhill-On-Tweed,  
Northumberland, TD12 4UE**

Mr Sittambalam firstly provided an update; a checking survey had been submitted on 18 October 2018 which was considered to address the issues raised by the County Ecologist. Therefore refusal reason 3 was no longer applicable.

In addition, information had been submitted to address outstanding highways issues and therefore highway safety had been satisfactorily addressed in the application. The revised recommendation was thus: That this application be REFUSED for the reasons 1 and 2 within the report. Mr Sittambalam then continued introducing the application with the aid of a slides presentation.

*(Councillor Clark left the meeting during consideration of this application and took no part in the debate or decision.)*

Sue Dorrian then spoke in the objectors' public speaking slot, of which her key points were:

- Highways Development Management had concerns about insufficient parking provision, and the revised plans had not addressed the concerns raised. For example, there was little provision for vans/trailers
- the County Ecologist had commented that bird surveys had not been undertaken since August 2017, but the original report's findings remained valid
- the applicant had advertised the plots back in May 2018 as coming soon, and the plans were fundamentally flawed as gardens had been proposed but then not included in the drawings
- a housing needs survey in 2014 concluded that a small mixed development of affordable housing was justified but not economically viable locally
- the whole process had caused anxiety and concern in the local community. The proposal was undeliverable, unwanted and not required.

Barbara Richmond then spoke on behalf of Cornhill Parish Council, of which her key points were:

- Cornhill Parish Council supported the concerns of local residents and objected to the loss of open space and public amenity, and also the size and tenure of the proposed properties
- the application would lose a publicly accessible playing field, for which there was no other alternative local provision
- the development would not reflect the character or distinctiveness of Cornhill
- adding another 24 properties to a village of only 130 was incongruous.

Councillor Lawrie then moved that the application be refused for the reasons listed in the report. This was seconded by Councillor Bridgett, who added that this vindicated the decision the previous month to refuse the application at Milfield which also involved the loss of a school playing field, plus also this scheme offered no community benefits. The motion to refuse was then put to the vote, and agreed unanimously, so it was thus:

**RESOLVED** that the application be REFUSED for the reasons listed in the report.

**96. 18/03068/FUL**

**Installation of 2 butterfly awnings and timber trellis fencing with canvas wind break panels, decorative metal arch and pond with fire basket to terrace area The Amble Inn, Sandpiper Way, Amble, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE65 0FF**

Mr Bellis introduced the application with the aid of a slides presentation. He clarified that this application needed to be considered by the Local Area Council as it had been submitted by Arch.

In response to a question about the depth of the pond and health and safety concerns for children, members were advised that such matters were dealt with outside of the planning process through other regulations. In response to concern expressed about whether work had already begun at the site to take down hedges before any permission had been granted, members were advised that they needed to focus on this application and if any unauthorised work had taken place, it would be addressed separately through enforcement action.

Councillor Clark then moved that the application be granted as it would put the finishing touches to a fantastic development. This was seconded by Councillor Watson. The motion to grant was then put to the vote, and agreed unanimously, so it was thus:

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

**97. 18/02781/ADE**

**Advertisement Consent for two fascia signs, one projecting hanging sign, one post sign and one podium sign, all externally illuminated The Amble Inn, Sandpiper Way, Amble, Northumberland, NE65 0PE**

Mr Bellis introduced the application with the aid of a slides presentation. This was also an Arch application. Only amenity public safety matters could be considered within the remit of this application.

Councillor Clark then moved that the application be granted, as the development would benefit Amble, jobs, help local trade, and serve both local people and the wider region. This was seconded by Councillor Watson. The motion to grant was then put to the vote, and agreed unanimously, so it was thus:

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

**98. 18/01604/CCD**

**Change of use of former Tourist Information Centre and public WCs to retail use Amble Tourist Information Centre, Queen Street, Amble, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE65 0DQ**

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

In response to a question it was confirmed that the toilets would remain as they were as they were outside of the remit of this application. The former tourist information centre was to change to retail use and the toilets would remain under County Council control.

Councillor Clark then moved that the application be granted; it provided the opportunity to start a business. This was seconded by Councillor Watson. The motion to grant was then put to the vote, and agreed unanimously, so it was thus:

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

**99. 18/01289/CCD**

**Extension to cafe area and internal alterations to form showers within toilet area**

**Druridge Bay Country Park, Hadston, Northumberland, NE61 5BX**

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

Councillor Clark then moved that the application be granted, as he welcomed how it would improve the facilities available for water sport participants and overnight campers. This was seconded by Councillor Watson. The motion to grant was then put to the vote, and agreed unanimously, so it was thus:

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

**100. PLANNING APPEALS**

Members received a report on recent appeals lodged and decisions made.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

**101. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on Thursday, 22 November 2018 in the Jubilee Centre, Spittal, Berwick upon Tweed.

**CHAIR.....**

**DATE.....**