

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **North Northumberland Local Area Council** held at St. James's Church Centre (upstairs hall), Pottergate, Alnwick, Northumberland, NE66 1JW on Thursday, 18 April 2019 at 1.00pm

PRESENT

Councillor G. Castle
(Chair, in the Chair, items 193 - 194)

Councillor T. Thorne
(Planning Vice-chair, in the Chair, items 195 - 199)

MEMBERS

G. Hill
R. Moore
G. Renner-Thompson

G. Roughead
C. Seymour
J. Watson

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

M. Bird
V. Cartmell
N. Masson

Senior Democratic Services Officer
Principal Planning Officer
Principal Solicitor

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

(Councillor Castle in the chair)

193. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

194. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of North Northumberland Local Area Council held on Thursday, 21 March 2019, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

(Councillor Thorne in the chair)

195. DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Ch.'s Initials.....

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.

196. 18/02965/OUT

Outline application with all matters reserved for the demolition of an existing building and redevelopment with up to 5 no. residential properties, Christon Bank Farm, Christon Bank, Alnwick, Northumberland, NE66 3EZ

The application was introduced by Principal Planning Officer V Cartmell, who firstly referred to two late representations received. Copies were circulated at the meeting and read by members. Ms Cartmell then continued introducing the application with the aid of a slides presentation.

Craig Ross and Michael Armstrong then shared the five minute public speaking slot for supporters. Mr Ross spoke first, of which his key points were:

- he thanked members for visiting the site which would have been useful to place in context the larger building and the relationship of the site with the neighbours and surrounds. The application aimed for a low density, high quality Northumberland development constructed in stone and topped with slate to complement the existing properties and enhance the entrance into Christon Bank Farm and Mews. Details would come before members at the reserved matters before any work could start on site
- officers had identified an appeal decision within paragraph 7.17 of the report which had been issued in June 2018, however the applicants had identified a decision issued six months later at Townfoot Farm. Precedent was not a reason for refusal, however the inspector for the Rock appeal found the development of five houses to be acceptable despite no services, public transport nor pedestrian links because of its physical and functional relationship, which had been demonstrated in this application and also accepted by officers in their approval at Townfoot Farm
- The principle of this application was acceptable due to the site's functional and physical relationship with neighbouring dwellings, its proximity to Christon Bank and position within the wider settlement cluster, and was also in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- if members supported the principle of development, then appropriate conditions should be added to cover the technical concerns of noise, contamination and drainage. Members should wait on the reserved matters application to consider fully the landscape, character and heritage impact when they had the final design, layout and appearance.

Mr Armstrong's key points were:

- he had lived at the location for 30 years and seen various developments, including the stone buildings with cottages at Pheasant Farm
- the applicant was developing top class accommodation
- there was no question that the provision of five beautiful stone dwellings with landscaping would be better than the current dilapidated barn, they would contribute to a nice village within Christon Bank Mews.

Members asked questions to which officers responded, of which the key details were:

- the neighbouring dwellings were now used for permanent occupancy, after previously being used as holiday lets
- the main reason for recommending refusal of the application concerned the principle of the development, as the application was currently missing a lot of information and the recommendation could change if more information was provided
- different policies existed for the conversion of buildings and new builds. Planning officers would however assess both on the grounds of sustainability
- the NPPF included policies and about the reuse of agricultural buildings
- regarding any differences to the successfully appealed application at Rock for five houses, this application was considered to be outside of Christon Bank, classed as open countryside and people would need to use cars to access services rather than by walking/cycling. It was not considered to be sustainable as it did not include any footpaths or cycleways
- there was not a set distance in policy for what counted as developments being in the open countryside; it was a subjective consideration
- the Highways Authority had not objected.

Councillor Watson moved that the application be granted; he did not agree that the location was in open countryside, as 400 metres from Christon Bank seemed acceptable. It was debatable what counted as sustainable, as for example Acklington was considered sustainable despite having no shops, pubs or other facilities because Hadston was two miles away. He considered that the application would improve the local area and not have any effect on the open countryside. This was seconded by Councillor Renner-Thompson.

On a point of legal clarification, it was added that the motion was subject to the provision of information listed in refusal reasons 2 - 5 in the report, to be delegated to officers, and the provision of conditions for future approval by the Local Area Council.

Members debated the application, of which their key points were:

- the site visit had been very beneficial. A member indicated that he had changed his mind about the application after viewing the site
- the application required some subjective judgement by members
- the open countryside should be protected; insufficient information had been provided with the application and it could set a precedent
- it was not in the open countryside. It was not proposed in an empty field as other properties existed nearby, nor was it a major application as it only proposed five properties
- one objection related to highways, yet the road was already accessed by a number of other residents, a local farmer and owners of a haulage business
- 400m seemed a short distance to rule out the development from being sustainable; it was walkable to Christon Bank
- Embleton Parish Council were not opposed to the proposal
- as the application was outline, additional information would be provided at the reserved matters stage.

The motion was put to the vote and supported by six votes for to two against, so it was thus:

RESOLVED that the application be GRANTED subject to the provision and approval of information listed in refusal reasons 2 - 5 on page 21-22 of the report being delegated to officers, and the provision of conditions for future approval by the Local Area Council.

197. 19/00744/CCD

Erection of log cabin to be used as a weather shelter, Wooler First School, 15 Brewery Road, Wooler, Northumberland, NE71 6QC

The application was introduced by Ms Cartmell with the aid of a slides presentation. Ms Cartmell explained that the application needed to be considered by the Local Area Council as it was a County Council development.

In response to a question, members were advised that no trees would need to be removed to build the log cabin; it would be sited within a clearing.

Councillor Watson moved that the application be granted, adding that it was reasonable to provide a shelter for the school children especially to provide for inclement weather conditions. This motion was seconded by Councillor Castle.

The motion was put to the vote and supported unanimously, so it was thus:

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

198. Planning Appeals

Members received information about the progress of planning appeals.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

199. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would now take place on the revised date of Tuesday, 21 May 2019 at St James' Church Centre, Alnwick. The date had been changed to give early notice for members to rearrange their diaries to avoid any clash with European Union elections possibly due on the same day. The next planning site visit would still take place from 10am on Monday 20 May 2019.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....

Ch.'s Initials.....