

## 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 3 July 2018** at **4.00 pm**.

#### PRESENT

Councillor CW Horncastle  
(in the Chair)

#### MEMBERS

Castle G  
Flux B  
Gibson RM  
Gobin JJ  
Lang J  
Pidcock B

Reid J  
Renner-Thompson G  
Richards M  
Robinson M  
Stewart G  
Wearmouth R

#### OFFICERS

Bulman M  
Fairs G  
Little L  
Sinnamon E  
Sittambalam R  
Thompson C

Solicitor  
Highways Development Manager  
Democratic Services Officer  
Senior Planning Manager  
Senior Planning Officer  
Principal Highways Development  
Management Officer

#### ALSO PRESENT

Councillor J Watson  
Press/public: 25

#### 10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ledger, Swithenbank and Thorne.

#### 11. MINUTES

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee held on Tuesday 5 June 2018, as circulated, be agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

## 12. 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.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

## 13. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chair advised that item number 5 application 16/04408/OUT had been withdrawn from the Agenda. In response to a question regarding the number of applications which were being withdrawn from Committee once the agenda had been published it was clarified that in this instance the applicant had withdrawn the application following sight of the officer's report.

## 14. 18/00079/FUL

**Play village comprising cabins, chapel, Main hall, play structure and ancillary accommodation in a landscaped setting - Amended 08/06/18  
Land North Of The Treehouse, The Alwick Garden, Denwick Lane, Alwick  
Northumberland NE66 1YU**

The Senior Planning Officer introduced the application to the Committee with the aid of a powerpoint presentation. He advised that a further two letters of support had been received for the application and that no additional issues had been raised.

Councillor M Swinbank of Alwick Town Council addressed the Committee advising that the Town Council supported the development and the positive contributions that it would make including job opportunities and increasing visitor numbers to the Town. He highlighted Policy E5 of the Alwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan with special reference to point 2 "Development will contribute positively to the weekend and evening economy of the town" and advised that the provision of clear signage to direct visitors to the town centre should be a condition to any permission granted. Three suggested locations for such signage highlighting the attractions in the town were :-

- Pedestrian entrance to the Garden on Denwick Road
- Ticket booths
- T Junction between Alwick Castle/Garden and Greenwell Road

It was also considered that additional electric car charging points should be provided to meet the demand created with the expected increase in visitor numbers. It was a requirement of Transport for London (TFL) that 10% of spaces provided should have charging points and therefore 30 should be provided in this instance.

The rapid charger provided by NCC in Alnwick was the 13th most used in the England. He highlighted the rural nature of the area and advised of the type of chargers that the Town Council considered would be the most appropriate.

J Blackie, Chairman of the independent Alnwick Garden Trust addressed the Committee speaking in support of the application. He advised that this was an exciting opportunity to put Northumberland on the International Tourist Map. The Trust were aware of the importance of the local heritage and had worked with Historic England to minimise any impact on the surrounding area with the proposed development blending into the landscape. The attraction would be of national significance and there was great imagination behind the unique design. It was expected that the development would bring greatly increased visitor numbers into the town and the wider Northumberland area and extend the season far beyond the six week summer holiday period with an economic benefit of £7m anticipated along with the creation of 50 jobs. The massive tourist opportunity would also enhance the landscape and continue the work to attract visitors alongside the Alnwick Garden which had already added a significant amount to the economy since its opening.

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

- Delegated authority could be given to Officers to request the provision of additional signage. The location of any such signage would be decided in conjunction with the Town Council and applicant but would be dependent on land ownership.
- There was not a policy within Northumberland to seek the provision of electric car charging points, however they were being requested as part of this application through condition 11 attached to any permission granted. No specific numbers could be requested as there was no evidence base.
- Part of the existing overflow car park was to be converted to provide additional permanent spaces, however some overflow provision would be retained.
- As this was a unique scheme some assumptions have had to be made in respect of the levels of expected traffic, however it was expected that the attraction would spread visitors over an increased period of the year rather than increasing numbers within the peak holiday period. Most traffic generated would not be when the network was at its busiest.
- Officers had to accept as a reasonable assumption, based on information provided on existing use, that the typical stay in the car parks was 3 hours. It was presumed that alternative parking would be utilised if visitors were accessing the attraction over two days and staying overnight.

Councillor Castle proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the application as outlined in the report with delegated authority to Officers to agree additional signage and the provision of electric car charging points which was seconded by Councillor Pidcock.

Members advised that they would have had concerns if the landscape and incredible vista was to be affected by the development however it was considered

that the proposals would not damage the landscape designed by Capability Brown. Any problems associated with the proposals would only be due to its success with the excellent scheme being of benefit to the town.

Following a vote it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** that the application be **GRANTED** for the reasons and subject to the conditions as outlined in the report and the resolution of outstanding matters and the imposition of additional conditions deemed necessary related to Surface Water Drainage and the expiry of the consultation period (09/07/18) and delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning to agree additional signage and the provision of electric car charging points.

**15. 18/01529/OUT**

**Outline Permission with Access; 185 Dwellings - Amended 15/06/18  
Land South East Of New Hall Farm, Amble, Northumberland**

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

- Additional drainage information had been provided with no objections raised by the Lead Local Flood Authority subject to the conditions set out in the consultation response. Therefore surface water drainage was not to be considered as an outstanding matter as part of the recommendation.
- A written scheme of investigation has been submitted to the County Archaeologist with the archaeological assessment to be conducted prior to a future decision being issued should Members be minded to approve the application.
- Following the submission of a Phase 2 Ground Investigation Report which has been subject to assessment by Public Health Protection, condition 15 was no longer applicable should Members be Minded to Grant Approval.
- Paragraph 2.1, the first sentence should read western not eastern.

Councillor J Watson, the Ward Member addressed the Committee speaking in objection to the application. His comments included the following:-

- The large number of planning approvals for new housing in Amble over the last few years.
- The purpose of Green Belt was to prevent the westward sprawl. Amble was now moving out and was now close to being joined to other towns.
- The indicative housing requirement for Amble between 2016-2036 was 540, although quoted in the report as 1238 currently consented, he believed it was nearer 1500 and this application would add nearly another 200, when there should only be 27 per year.
- Whilst the Town Council had not objected to the application, he questioned whether this was because they felt it was a waste of time to do so.

- The site was set outside the main development area of Amble. He considered that the approval of this application would compromise the land at the other side of the road as the boundary was already being extended.
- He was not opposed to some development, however this level was too much too quickly for the infrastructure of the town.
- He highlighted that the proposed level of development for this site was just below the borderline of being unacceptable in terms of the Traffic Assessment.
- He asked the Committee to look carefully at the application and say that was enough development and realise that Amble was full.

S. Linnell, addressed the Committee speaking in support of the application on behalf of the applicant. Her comments included the following:-

- Home Group were a social enterprise and charity providing affordable housing. They were one of the UK's largest providers of high quality housing, integrated housing, health and social care and supported living accommodation.
- The site was in a sustainable flat location within walking distance of schools and services.
- The road to New Hall Farm provided a logical barrier for development.
- There had been no objections from Consultees subject to conditions, only 2 objections received and the Town Council had no objections to the development.
- Whilst the application was outline at the present time there would be 15% Affordable housing provided on the site.
- Whilst there was concern regarding highways, these were unfounded with the Highways Authority supporting the application and she highlighted the improvements that would be made.
- In respect of the scale of new housing in Amble, she advised that over a number of years Amble had struggled to provide additional new housing. This had changed with new housing now being delivered.
- This was not a speculative application, subject to approval being given the development would be delivered.
- She highlighted the S106 contributions which would be delivered through the application.
- She advised that the emerging local plan was only going out for consultation the next day and therefore held no weight in deciding this application.
- She requested that the Committee grant consent.

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

- It was confirmed that 85% of the properties provided by Home Group were for sale just like any other private developer. This was the market arm of the Home Group.
- The Planning Authority would not hold exhibitions in respect of planning applications, however it was confirmed that the developer has held drop in events and a website in relation to the development had been set up.

- It was considered that the shelter-belt was a defensible barrier as it was situated at a crossroads and Officer's felt that this was a natural line with the site constrained by natural boundaries.
- Amble and Alnwick were both classed as main towns, however development in Amble had fallen behind. The character and landscape impact had been assessed. Due to Amble being a main town with schools and a high street it was considered that the site was sustainable and did not diminish the character of the town.
- The S106 contributions would provide an education contribution of £495,000 and a health contribution of £112,800.
- Clarification was provided that of the sites highlighted in colour on a photograph only one had consent whilst the other sites were only minded to be approved as these were subject to ongoing S106 discussions.
- The current application was for outline permission and full details of the layout would be provided as part of a further application.
- There was no settlement boundary.
- The Traffic Assessment had taken all other proposed developments into consideration and had concluded there was not a severe impact on the road network. Some traffic calming measures would be introduced including a 30 mph limit.

Councillor Flux proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the application as detailed in the report with the reference to drainage removed which was seconded by Councillor Reid.

In deliberating the applications Members commented that Amble was now an up and coming town and was now a destination for visitors with some very attractive features. There were no planning reasons to refuse the application and it was considered that the development would be a very good addition to Amble.

A vote was taken as follows:- FOR, 12; AGAINST, 1.

**RESOLVED** that the Head of Service be authorised to **GRANT** permission for the reasons and with conditions as outlined in the report and amended above and subject to resolution of outstanding matters relating to archaeology and the imposition of additional conditions deemed necessary related to Archaeology; and a Legal Agreement pursuant to s106 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) to secure the following contributions:

Provision of 28 no. affordable dwellings to be provided on site;  
 Coastal mitigation contribution of £600 per dwelling (£111,000 total);  
 Education contribution of £495,000; and  
 Health contribution of £112,800

**16. PLANNING APPEALS**

Information was provided on the progress of planning appeals.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

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

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