

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 September 2019** at **4.00 pm**.

PRESENT

Councillor CW Horncastle
(Chair in the Chair)

MEMBERS

Bowman L
Flux B
Gibson RM
Gobin JJ
Hepple A
Lang J
Ledger D

Moore R
Renner-Thompson G
Robinson M
Stewart GM
Swithenbank ICF
Thorne TN

OFFICERS

Armstrong N
Hitching J
Horsman G
Little L
Lowe T
Masson N
Patrick M

Robbie K
Sinnamon E

Thompson C

Senior Planning Officer
Senior Sustainable Drainage Officer
Senior Planning Officer
Democratic Services Officer
Senior Planning Officer
Principal Solicitor
Principal Highways Development
Management Officer
Senior Planning Officer
Senior Planning Manager -
Development Management
Principal Highways Development
Management Officer

ALSO PRESENT

Roughead G
Stow K

Ward Councillor
Ward Councillor

Press/ public: 14

20. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors E Armstrong and J Reid.

21. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee held on Tuesday 6 August 2019, as circulated, be agreed as a true record and be signed by the Chair

22. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor M Robinson declared an interest in application 18/03945/REM as he was a Director of Advance Northumberland and left the Chamber while the item was considered. Following the Officer's presentation on the same application, Councillor D Ledger advised that he had realised that the application related to a joint venture with Arch (now Advance Northumberland) and that as a previous Director he would leave the Chamber and take no part in the determining of the application.

23. DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The report requested the Committee to decide the planning applications 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.

24. 19/01754/CCD

Construction of replacement leisure centre and 3G pitch and phased demolition of current centre with associated landscape works and parking, Swan Centre For Leisure, Northumberland Road, Tweedmouth, Berwick-Upon-Tweed, Northumberland, TD15 2AS.

Councillor Gobin advised that he would like placed on record his disgust at the behaviour of some Members at the site visit in respect of this application which had taken place the previous day. He stated that some Members had been playing/talking on their phones during the Officer's presentation. He requested that Members be instructed that phones should be turned off in the future. The Chair advised that he had taken on board these comments and would ensure this happened in the future.

T Lowe, Senior Planning Officer provided an introduction to the report with the aid of a slide show presentation. Updates were provided as follows:-

- Paragraph 2.5 sub paragraph v - everything but the first sentence should be deleted.
- The submitted site plan omitted two coach parking spaces which were to be provided. Any permission granted would be subject to the submission and approval by the Director of Planning of a revised site plan limited to the inclusion of the two coach parking spaces.
- The application has been referred to Committee as it concerns a Council development on Council owned land.

- The amended recommendation to the Committee was to approve the application subject to the conditions as outlined in the report and the submission of a revised site plan, limited to the inclusion of the two coach parking spaces, with authority delegated to the Director of Planning to approve.

Councillor G Roughead, Ward Councillor addressed the Committee advising of his support for the application and thanked Members for their attendance at the site visit the previous day. He advised that the two coach parking spaces to be provided were for visiting teams as the two long term coach parking spaces previously approved had already been relocated. The provision of the 3G pitch and development of the centre was a fantastic opportunity and would increase usage from residents both within Northumberland and from across the Scottish Border. The Town Council along with local residents welcomed the proposals and work had been undertaken with service users on what they wanted which had resulted in the retention of the indoor bowls facility. He considered that the benefits of the development outweighed the loss of the four trees which would need to be felled however asked that these be replaced as part of the landscaping plan.

In response to questions from Councillors, Officers provided the following information:-

- Whilst it was acknowledged that the gradient of the roundabout at the entrance to the site was unusual, there were no plans to alter the roundabout which operated well and was within capacity. A slight adjustment would be made to widen the access road to assist with HGVs accessing the construction site. In respect of coaches accessing the site, Members were advised that coaches frequently accessed the site at present and no concerns had been raised.
- A Transport Assessment had been undertaken which compared new use to old and no issues had been found.
- The current centre had originally started as a Community Centre with the swimming pool and other buildings provided as additions. The Officer considered the approach being used by the Developer/Architect using a box method with a limited pallet of high quality materials would provide a joined up approach with a fully functioning layout and a much better provision for the community.
- The development would meet all current requirements in terms of energy efficiency and electric car charging points would be provided in line with current requirements with capacity for the numbers to be increased in future.
- A Landscape plan would need to be submitted and approved which would include replacement trees for those removed.
- Pupils using the sports facilities from the Middle school were escorted by teaching staff using the existing pedestrian crossing and this would continue following its upgrade to a toucan crossing. It was considered that pedestrians from Berwick Academy also used the existing crossing. It was not possible to request the Developer to provide an additional crossing on the northern side of the roundabout as part of this planning application as the children from both schools were existing users of the facilities and the Transport Assessment could only consider where new users would come from.
- A full Travel Plan was required to be provided as part of Condition 4.

Councillor Renner-Thompson proposed approval of the application subject to the conditions as outlined in the report and the submission of a revised site plan, limited to the inclusion of the two coach parking spaces, with authority delegated to the Director of Planning to approve which was seconded by Councillor Stewart.

Councillor Thorne advised that he would abstain from the vote as whilst he was delighted that there was to be investment into the Centre for the people of Berwick he felt that not enough had been done to address highways concerns in relation to the gradient of the roundabout or the provision of an additional pedestrian crossing which was also of concern to other Members of the Committee.

The Senior Planning Manager advised that if this development was on a new site then the provision of another pedestrian crossing could be considered, however as the site was already open and operating as a Leisure Centre this could not be used as a planning reason to refuse the application. Members' concerns would be fed back to Highways.

Councillor Renner-Thompson stated that whilst he understood the concerns this was a fantastic scheme which would help bring visitors to the town and provide a much improved facility for residents.

A vote was taken on the motion to approve the application as outlined above as follows: **FOR 13; AGAINST 0; ABSTENTION 1.**

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** for the reasons and subject to the conditions as outlined in the report and the submission of a revised site plan, limited to the inclusion of the two coach parking spaces, with authority delegated to the Director of Planning to approve.

Councillor Robinson left the Chamber at this point.

25. 18/03945/REM

Reserved matters application relating to planning permission 16/02082/OUT for the first phase of development (the eastern area of the outline planning permission) consisting of 3,260sqm (GIA) A1 Food Retail, 3,200sqm (GIA) A1 Non-food Retail, 278sqm (GIA) A3/A4, 240sqm (GIA) restaurant/drive-thru (A3/A5), with associated access, car parking, service area, landscaping and infrastructure works (as amended), Land South Of Regents Drive, Prudhoe, Northumberland.

N Armstrong, Senior Planning Officer introduced the report to the Committee with the aid of a slide show presentation. He advised that one further representation in support of the application had been received since the agenda had been published.

Councillor Ledger advised of his interest at this point and left the Chamber.

Councillor C Barrett addressed the Committee speaking on behalf of Prudhoe Town Council. He advised that an on-line survey had been undertaken in March with 91% stating that they were in favour of the development and 93% stating they would use

the new retail provision. There had been some concern expressed regarding the effect on local retailers however a large number of residents currently travelled out of town to shop. He stated that previously Councillors on the Town Council had not supported the development however he believed the new Town Council supported the proposals.

Councillor K Stow, the Ward County Councillor advised that he was fully in support of the application. He believed that the development would encourage those who currently travelled out of town to do their weekly shop to stay within the town and a significant number would use the existing shops in the town centre. There was support from residents for the application. The previous proposals for the town centre development had failed and there had been no improvements made in 25 years. This would offer more choice and keep people in the town, boost employment and bring benefits to the town. Prudhoe was a growing town with a huge number of people who required services and this development was needed.

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

- Objectors had raised the impact the development could have on the town centre along with the employment use of the site. These issues had been looked at in detail during the previous application along with the scale, access to the site and residential amenity and nothing had changed since that time. Whilst the points raised were valid these were more related to the previous application.
- The previous application for this site and the one for the town centre were separate applications although they had been considered at the same time. The consent for the town centre scheme still remained extant and it would not be reasonable to condition that scheme to be provided first. This application was only to consider reserved matters.

Councillor Stewart proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the application as outlined in the report which was seconded by Councillor Gibson.

Councillor Stewart stated that he echoed the remarks in support of the application made by the two speakers. The application had been talked about for years and he was pleased it was now being progressed. Residents did support the Front Street shops, however they still needed to travel outside for their 'big shop'. All concerns had been addressed and this was the right development in the right location which would provide more jobs for local people.

A vote was taken on the proposal to approve the application which was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** for the reasons and subject to the conditions as outlined in the report.

Councillors Ledger and Robinson returned to the Chamber at this point.

26. 17/04653/VARYCO

Variation of condition 29 (approved plans) of planning permission CM/20090001 for up to 149 residential units, combined heat and power plant, enterprise space, allotments and associated open space, parking and means of access to allow for amendment of phase 1 dwelling numbers, layout and design, phasing areas and deletion of enterprise space and allotments, The Old Brickworks, Stobswood, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 5PZ.

G Horsman, Senior Planning Officer provided an introduction to the report with the aid of a slide show presentation. Updates were provided as follows:-

- Condition 10, the first sentence be amended to read 'The construction of any building shall not commence until' rather than 'No development approved by this planning permission shall be commenced until'
- There was a slight change to the recommendation and it should read:-

"That this application be granted permission subject to the conditions as outlined in the report with the minor change to the wording of condition 10 as detailed above and subject to the applicant entering into a S106 Agreement to provide 10% affordable housing, contributions in respect of primary healthcare, ecology coastal mitigation and Parish Council community centre and play provision enhancement and a woodland management plan relating to the eastern part of Grange Wood with viability review and overage clauses in that Agreement as detailed in the report."

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

- In respect of the reduction in the level of affordable housing from 25% to 10% now being proposed for the site it was clarified this was due to the reduced area of the site which was able to be developed due to the discovery of Grey Crested Newts on the site and subsequent reduction in house numbers; the increased remedial costs of the site due to its previous uses and additional S106 contributions being required over those agreed as part of the previous application. The figures had been given careful consideration over the last twelve months by both the District Valuer and the Council's Quantity Surveyor with some savings being achieved, however these were insufficient to provide the 17% affordable housing contribution which would usually be required for a development of this size in this area. The type of affordable housing to be provided on site was required to be Discounted Market Value (DMV) for sale rather than for rent due to a change in the NPPF which required at least 10% of affordable housing on a site to be provided for affordable home ownership.
- A viability clause would be included within the S106 Agreement in respect of the costs of the ground remediation works as it had not been possible to fully investigate ground conditions in the area of the site occupied by the Grey Crested Newts until a licence had been granted by Natural England. If the actual cost of remedial works was lower than that estimated then this could free up additional funding for affordable housing.

- It was not known if the DMV affordable housing would be shared ownership, which was usually with a Housing Association, or if it would be sold in full at DMV directly by the developer.
- The density of houses to be provided on the site was lower than usual at 17 per hectare as opposed to the norm of 25/30 per hectare.
- Concern had previously been expressed by the Parish Council in relation to phasing of the site and the release of S106 funds for recreational facilities in the Parish, however the applicant had agreed to this funding being released in full by the completion of phase 1.

Councillor Thorne proposed approval of the application as outlined in the revised recommendation above which was seconded by Councillor Robinson.

A vote was taken as follows: **FOR 13: AGAINST 0; ABSTENSION 1.**

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** for the reasons and subject to the conditions as outlined in the report with the minor change to the wording of condition 10 as detailed above and subject to the applicant entering into a S106 Agreement to provide 10% affordable housing, contributions in respect of primary healthcare, ecology coastal mitigation and Parish Council community centre and play provision enhancement and a woodland management plan relating to the eastern part of Grange Wood with viability review and overage clauses in that Agreement as detailed in the report.

27. 19/01115/CCD

Retrospective application for installation of ground source heat pump system, Northumberland County Council Depot, East View, Stakeford, Choppington, Northumberland, NE62 5TR.

K Robbie, Senior Planning Officer provided an introduction to the report with the aid of a slide show presentation. She advised the first sentence in paragraph 7.15 of the report should be deleted.

The Committee was informed that the application was retrospective as the array had been installed outside the curtilage of the depot and the system contained more than one pump and therefore was outside permitted development rights. It would be unlikely that the land over the trenching could be built on due to the depth of the array and it was also outside the settlement boundary.

Councillor Thorne proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the application as outlined in the report which was seconded and unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** for the reasons and subject to the conditions as outlined in the report.

28. PLANNING APPEALS

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

The meeting closed at 5.50 pm.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____