

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 1 October 2019** at **4.00 pm**.

PRESENT

Councillor CW Horncastle
(Chair in the Chair)

MEMBERS

Armstrong E
Bowman L
Gibson RM
Gobin JJ
Hepple A

Lang J
Ledger D
Stewart GM
Swithenbank ICF

OFFICERS

Blyth K
Bulman M
Derham K
Feige D
Fish T
Francis M
Horsman G
Little L
Murfin R
Patrick M

Robbie K
Robson V
Thompson C

Principal Planning Officer
Solicitor
Archaeologist
Principal Ecologist and AONB Officer
Area Countryside/Rights of Way Officer
Senior Planning Officer
Senior Planning Officer
Democratic Services Officer
Director of Planning
Principal Highways Development
Management Officer
Senior Planning Officer
Building Conservation Officer
Principal Highways Development
Management Officer

ALSO PRESENT

Press/ public: 18

29. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chair advised that Item 9 on the Agenda, application number 19/01981/VARYCO had been withdrawn from the agenda.

30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors B Flux, R Moore, J Reid, M Robinson and T Thorne.

31. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee held on Tuesday 3 September 2019, as circulated, be agreed as a true record and be signed by the Chair

32. 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.

33. 17/04618/OUT

Outline Planning Permission for up to 167 residential dwellings with associated infrastructure and areas of public open space (with all matters reserved except access).

Land South Of Grange Court, Grange Road, Widdrington Station, Northumberland

G Horsman, Senior Planning Officer, introduced the application to the Committee with the aid of a powerpoint presentation. A detailed explanation of the three reasons for the recommendation to refuse the application was provided. He advised that if this application were to be approved then the settlement of Widdrington Station would increase by 14% and taken with the already consented scheme for 120 dwellings the increase would be 24%. When looking at the Parish as a whole, including the already consented schemes, including the site at the former Brickworks at Stobswood, the increase would be 34%. In respect of the critique of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) provided by the Council's Consultant, the applicant's landscape architect had advised that this was an outline application only and did not seek approval for the detailed layout which would be provided as part of the reserved matters and could address concerns raised including screening of the site. They also considered that the application site's settlement edge location did not necessarily result in the site having higher landscape value or sensitivity and that the visual effects of the development would be low. The Senior Planning Officer advised that notwithstanding these further representations the view of officers regarding the harm arising from encroachment into open countryside and landscape/visual effects remained unchanged and as per the officer report.

J Cullingford, Agent, addressed the Committee speaking in support of the application. His comments included:-

- The settlement boundary was based on the housing numbers in the Castle Morpeth Local Plan and the Council's emerging Local Plan which was still subject to considerable objection and therefore only limited weight should be given to these and the application should be determined in line with policies for sustainable development within the NPPF.
- The application, which had been submitted in 2017, had been the subject of pre-application discussions when it had been considered that this was a sustainable development site with existing rail services, shops, school etc and would round off the settlement.
- The development through the S106 agreement would provide 28 affordable homes, contributions for primary healthcare, coastal mitigation and to the Parish Council for community and play provision.
- Land supply was not sufficient reason to refuse the application.
- The application only provided an indicative layout with matters reserved. The Council's Consultant did not object to the principle of development on the site.. The application stated up to 167 dwellings and a lower number could be provided if additional planting was needed to address landscape/visual effects. The site could be developed without harm with the opportunity to address concerns at the reserved matters stage.
- The requirement for trial trenching was inconsistent with the NPPF which stated that requirements should be reasonable and proportional. A desk study and geophysical assessment had been undertaken and there was no reason to suspect archaeological remains on the site. The requirement to undertake trial trenching could be conditioned.
- The application had the support of the Parish Council and residents with only two objections being received.
- The benefits of the S106 funding would not be delivered if the application was refused and these benefits should be weighed against the limited harm.

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

- There was no significant level of objection to the application nor did the Parish Council object in principle.
- There was a need to counter-balance the favour of the NPPF for sustainable development against the local need for housing or if there was an under-delivery of housing. There was currently in excess of a five year supply of land identified for housing with a build out rate of 230% of the Government's target. The Local Plan factored all considerations and demonstrated that there was no need to release land for development at this site. The correct place for that discussion was at the Local Plan Hearing which would commence the following week. All decisions must be based on a Plan led approach. There was currently sufficient housing supply and applications previously consented.

Councillor Stewart moved acceptance of the recommendation to refuse the application for the reasons outlined in the report which was seconded by Councillor Gibson. Members considered that this application was outside of the settlement boundary and there was sufficient housing supply. Following a vote it was unanimously:

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

34. 18/04200/FUL

Part demolition of existing buildings on the application site (retention of the existing stone facade to the former swimming pool fronting onto Gilesgate) and the erection of 45 no residential apartments with associated communal facilities, landscaping, car parking and diversion of Public Right of Way through the application site (amended description)

Former Swimming Pool and associated land, Gilesgate, Hexham, Northumberland, NE46 3NP

A paper which provided additional conditions 39-42 and details of amendments to conditions 6 and 10 to be attached to any permission was circulated to Members and would be uploaded to the Council's website. An updated objection from Hexham Civic Society was also circulated. Members were allowed sufficient time to read these documents prior to M Fancis, Senior Planning Officer, introducing the application with the aid of a powerpoint presentation. Further updates were provided as follows:-

- Public Protection had now assessed the application and subject to the inclusion of the additional conditions circulated they had no objection.
- Section 6 of the report should also include reference to Policies CS21 and CS23 of the Tynedale Local Plan.

M Axtell, Project Lead, addressed the Committee speaking in support of the application. His comments included the following:-

- The application sought approval for 45 one and two bedroom apartments following the purchase of the building at the full asking price from Northumberland County Council, following the previous developer of the site pulling out.
- The development site dropped down considerably and therefore deterred purchasers, however the applicant was passionate about the redevelopment of the non-listed 1885 building which would keep the facade on Gilesgate.
- The current dangerous structure which had been vacant for 11 years was an eyesore and the development would provide much needed residential dwellings.
- Following pre-application discussions, the height had been reduced by the removal of an entire floor and would now be no higher than the existing swimming pool building.
- Numerous consultation events had taken place with residents, the Hexham Civic Society and others. The previous problems with the Right of Way through the site had been resolved.
- Parking was to be provided on site, was above the level required and would ensure traffic was kept on Haugh Lane with a dedicated entrance and would have no direct impact on the existing road users.
- Electric vehicle charging points were to be provided along with cycle storage and a communal heating system with individual controls to reduce the carbon

footprint of the building. The Green Wall would be the first to be provided in Hexham.

- The application had the support of the community, Council Officers the Local Lead Flood Authority and neighbours.

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

- As the development was within the Town Centre there was no requirement for parking spaces to be provided and therefore this provision was acceptable and welcomed.
- No detail of the Green Wall had yet been provided and a condition regarding its construction was included. A retaining wall was required due to the levels on the site.
- The application included a new access to the site and work would also be undertaken adjacent to the site. First stage comments had been included in the design and carriageway resurfacing would be undertaken as part of the S.278 process.
- The application for the diversion of the Right of Way would be progressed if the application was approved. The details submitted were satisfactory and Officers were content that it would pass the required test. It would be progressed through the normal consultation process with the public able to raise objections. It was considered this proposal was an improvement of the current situation and from the previous application proposal. If the diversion was successful the new footpath would be constructed to the Council's specification by the applicant and would be maintained by the Council as was the current footpath.
- Due to the viability of the site the contribution requested by the Community Centre could not be legally asked, however the Developer had indicated an additional contribution would be provided in good faith.
- The building was in a conservation area and any future request for solar power to be installed would need to meet the criteria. The proposed development would meet all Building Regulation thermal requirements.

Councillor Gibson proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the application with the conditions as per the report and update provided and which was seconded by Councillor Stewart. A vote was taken and it was unanimously

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** for the reasons and with the conditions as outlined in the report and update provided.

35. 18/01285/CCMEIA

**Lateral extension to extraction area to provide an additional 1.75m tonnes of dolerite and limestone and an extension of time for the extraction of mineral to 2029 with final restoration in 2030
Longhoughton Quarry, Longhoughton, Alnwick, Northumberland
NE66 3LS**

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

- The highways consultation response paragraph 2 referred to annual maintenance payments agreed for the previous permission at the site. In fact a single capital payment had been agreed.
- Clarification in the conclusion that the current site had permission to operate to 2025 and this permission would extend that to 2029.
- A sum of £40,000 as a single capital payment had been agreed to cover the extra-ordinary maintenance of the highway.
- Condition 9 – referred to the occupation of dwellings - this should read prior to the commencement of mineral extraction.
- Condition 28 referred to condition 19 this should read condition 3.
- Condition 39 referred to condition 32 this should read condition 38.

R Dickinson addressed the Committee speaking in objection to the application. His comments included the following:-

- His written objection had been lodged on 4 May 2018 and he would re-emphasise the three points as he did not feel these had been adequately addressed.
- The use of the C79 between the Littlehaughton junction and Craster junction should not be used by HGVs from the Quarry. This part of the road was very narrow with no markings and in effect was a single track.
- In his written objection he had highlighted that there had been between 70/80 vehicle movements per day. He did not consider that this had adequately been addressed.
- If the application was to be approved then he asked that a legally enforceable condition be imposed whereby no HGVs accessing the Longhoughton Quarry should be permitted to use the C79 in either direction between the Littlehoughton junction and the Craster junction. To allow such potentially significant HGV access would have a detrimental effect on the road surface and the soft highway verges, as well as adversely impacting on other road users' safety, including cyclists, and on pedestrian amenity. The impact of quarry HGVs on these other road users is by no means negligible. This could be addressed through the Route Management Plan.
- Permitted reserves would be exhausted sooner than expected potentially by 2020". This would mean work in the western sector of the quarry would cease. The current requirement for restoration of the site was by 2026, however he had just heard in the Officer's presentation that this would be brought forward. He hoped that this would be undertaken and completed by next year in order to help mitigate the visual impact and biodiversity on the site.

D Purvis, Operator of the site, addressed the Committee speaking in support of the application. His comments included the following:-

- KW Purvis had operated the site since 1966 and now employed 60 staff and supported numerous local businesses.
- The Quarry was one of only two who worked Whinstone in this part of the county which had a wide market and was used in the building of roads both in Northumberland and Tyneside.

- The site was close to the A1.
- The Company was a significant employer and the extension would retain good well paid employment in rural Northumberland.
- The Parish Council had visited the site and out of the 600 neighbours notified of the application, only 4 objections had been received.
- Measures would address concerns raised and there were no objections from either Consultees or the Parish Council.
- Most traffic was directed to Denwick with the Company being members of the Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme which sought the improvement of road safety. All trucks operated by the Company were of a high modern standard with cameras.
- Payment had previously been made for improvements to Station Road and further funding had been agreed for the improvement of the junction at Denwick and the access to the site.
- Asked the Committee to support the application.

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

- Conditions related to blasting had been included as per Network Rail's request.
- Condition 6 requested a route management plan to be agreed with improved signage to be provided. HGVs should not use the C79 during their normal daily route, the only exception to this would be if they were delivering locally. A contribution for enhanced maintenance of the road network was also to be provided. The local road network was suitable for HGVs and the Highways Authority had no objection to the application subject to the imposition of the Conditions as outlined in the report.
- The previous application had a separate red line boundary to this application and if operations ceased on the first application site next year then the restoration of the site would be brought forward and commenced at that time.
- There was a demand for the stone and the Council worked closely with both Durham County Council, the National Park Authority and the other five Local Authorities in the area to ensure there were sufficient supplies for their needs. Having a local supply cut out the need to transport the stone from elsewhere and therefore contributed to the Council's Climate change proposals.

Councillor Hepple proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the application with the conditions as outlined in the report and amended above and subject to the satisfactory completion of a S106 Agreement as detailed in the report. This was seconded by Councillor Bowman and following a vote it was unanimously:

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** for the reasons and with the conditions as outlined in the report and amended above and subject to the satisfactory completion of a S106 Agreement as detailed in the report.

- 36. 19/01845/S106A**
Variation of S106 Agreement application pursuant to planning application 18/00415/VARYCO dated 31 August 2018.
Land At Spittal Point, North Greenwich Road, Spittal, Northumberland

K Blyth, Principal Planning Officer introduced the report to the Committee.

Councillor Steward proposed acceptance of the recommendation as outlined in the report to vary the s106 agreement which was seconded by Councillor Ledger. Following a vote it was unanimously:

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED**.

- 37. 19/02071/LBC**
Listed Building Consent: Removal of existing dilapidated boiler room doors and replacement with new steel security doors
The Sele First School , Hexham, NE46 3QZ

K Blyth, Principal Planning Officer introduced the report to the Committee with the aid of a powerpoint presentation.

Councillor Stewart proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the application for the reasons and with the conditions as outlined in the report, which was seconded by Councillor Hepple. 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.

- 38. PLANNING APPEALS**

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

The meeting closed at 5.45 pm.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____