

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 5 November 2019** at **4.10 pm**.

PRESENT

Councillor CW Horncastle
(Chair in the Chair)

MEMBERS

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

Reid J
Renner-Thompson G
Robinson M
Stewart G
Swithenbank ICF
Thorne TT

OFFICERS

Armstrong N
Bowers H
Bulman M
Horsman G
Patrick M

Sinnamon E
Thompson C

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

ALSO PRESENT

Blyth K
Dixon L

Principal Planning Officer
Apprentice, Democratic Services

Press/ public: 9

39. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Armstrong and Moore.

40. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee held on Tuesday 1 October 2019, as circulated, be agreed as a true record and be signed by the Chair.

41. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ledger declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda number 7 - planning application 19/01457/REM as he was a friend of the owner of Windmill Farm and would leave the Chamber whilst the application was being discussed.

42. 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.

43. 19/00277/FUL

Hybrid Planning Application - Full planning permissions for a new food store (Use Class A1), (2,177 sqm) with associated customer car parking and servicing, a four storey 69 bed hotel (Use Class C1) (2,540 sq m) and 250 public car parking spaces with associated means of access from, and upgrades to, Alemouth Road. Outline planning permission with all matters reserved for up to 1,600 sq.m of development in Use Classes A1-A4 in two units with associated car parking.

Land North East of Tesco, Alemouth Road, Hexham, Northumberland

Members were informed that the hybrid planning application and the listed building consent for the above development would be presented together however, they would be determined separately.

Neil Armstrong, Senior Planning Officer, provided updates to Members as follows:-

Further responses had been received from the Environment Agency regarding the hybrid application based on the Flood Risk Assessment and there would be a minor change to the wording of condition 33.

Since the report had been published, the LLFA had advised that the figure for the commuted sum in respect of flood risk for the hybrid planning application would be £35,000.

One further representation had been received on the hybrid application raising similar issues already raised during the application and covered within the report. These included the need for another supermarket; the impact on the town centre; unethical business being introduced into the town; drainage and flood risk; pedestrian accessibility and connectivity; sustainability and impacts on wildlife.

To clarify, there had been 10 objections in total for the hybrid planning application, including the Hexham Civic Society, although the issues summarised in the report remained the same.

There were some proposed changes to the wording of some conditions on both applications – conditions attached to the minutes.

Mr Armstrong continued introducing the application with the aid of a powerpoint presentation.

Paul Wharrier on behalf of Hexham Civic Society addressed the Committee and his comments included:-

- Whilst they supported the application, the Society had serious concerns about the scheme;
- The site next to Hexham Railway Station was separated by a barrier to Alemouth Road;
- The extension of the bunker site would be better located at the Bristol Street Motors site;
- Access could be achieved on foot or bicycle via the locked up tunnels from Alemouth Road;
- Access for the disabled from the new station would be awkward;
- He urged the Committee not to approve the application until the tunnels were opened up;
- Flood risk could be alleviated by engineering;
- The NPPF stated that the application should be refused as the development was of poor design. To completely ignore the NPPF flew in the face of recommendations and guidance. Walking and cycling should be encouraged, particularly in view of NCC's climate change commitment;
- The Committee needed to show leadership and adopt local planning parameters to improve carbon targets;
- He requested that the tunnel entrances were not sterilised by development;

D Preston, resident also addressed the Committee speaking in objection of the application. His comments included:-

- The safety of pedestrian access at the roundabout;
- There had been four near misses at the roundabout;
- The new roundabout was of a similar layout and was concerned that pedestrians would have to cross the access road;
- There was no actual crossing for people to cross the road;
- The roundabout would be busy with four spurs coming off it;
- A proper zebra crossing should be installed further down the road;

- If the tunnels were opened they could provide a route for pedestrians

Councillor Trevor Cessford was in attendance as Ward Councilor and his comments were as follows:-

- The site had been standing empty for approximately 30 years;
- The town needed the redevelopment and parking;
- As a previous Councillor with Hexham Town Council he had tried his best to help the situation with the loss of car parking space and had contacted the owner himself regarding the sale of the land but nothing had come forward;
- In May 2017 himself and the County Councilor for Hexham East tried again and were successful in managing to acquire 250 spaces from the developer;
- It was difficult getting accommodation in Hexham and parking and the extra hotel accommodation was needed;
- The application was viable and he fully supported the application

Helen Marks, Agent was in attendance and addressed the Committee with the following:

- The applicant had secured the site in 2017 and had since been working with the Local Planning Authority, and they had held consultation events;
- The scheme was in response to interest which would make the use of vacant land;
- It was intended to start on the site in the New Year;
- A series of access solutions had been considered but were not achievable, eg, the owner was not prepared to sell the Bristol Street Motors site;
- The addition of the new roundabout would reduce traffic delays from 7 minutes to 50 seconds or less and would include traffic islands on three arms of the roundabout;
- The need for extra space had been identified and the development and policies complied with the Neighbourhood Plan;
- A site via Alemouth Road would be more complex and Historic England supported the scheme;
- Historic England also acknowledged that the wall needed to be developed with the change of design, eg the use of existing stone work and timber;
- This was a complex site and all options had been considered;
- The responses from Hexham Civic Society were acknowledged but access would need to be agreed with Network Rail but the development would not preclude future access into the Network rail depot;
- The use of the archways were not an option;

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

- Officers had looked at the possibility of opening up the arches but this was not straightforward because of the extent of the works being proposed and was not practical. Also there would be difficulties in the future however, there may be a possibility for other areas to be opened up but would include further discussion

with adjacent landowners including Network Rail. The applicant had indicated that they would not object to further discussion with any other potential landowners;

- There was pedestrian access at the south-east corner by Bristol Street Motors. Officers had to be mindful of not having the highway littered with crossings;
- A Transport Assessment had been submitted and highways works would be subject to a technical appraisal;
- There was a condition within the recommendation for charging points; Officers would work with Highways on the discharge of this condition;
- Access to the north west was to be for pedestrian/cyclist use primarily however, it was to have a drop down bollard which would enable it to be used in an emergency. The deliveries for the hotel and store would all be via the roundabout on Alemouth Road/Rotary Way;
- The hotel would be four storeys high, there had not been any discussion about reducing the height. There had been discussions regarding the previous design and whether there was any potential harm;
- There was no significant adverse impact to the town centre and this had been verified by an independent appraisal of the retail impact assessment;
- Following discussions with Network Rail, the retaining of the existing wall would form part of the scheme in consultation with Network Rail. This would also be achieved through an Archaeological Condition. Existing stone would be used where possible and any proposals for the finish of the wall would be within keeping of the wall;
- Conditions of listed building consent would include securing a Method Statement of works;
- The colour and cleaning of the other walls outside of the site would be difficult to condition but for the proposed scheme it was hoped that as much of the existing material would be used for the wall and details of new stone would need to be approved;
- The finish of the hotel still needed to be agreed but the intention was to use the same brickwork for the Travelodge;

Councillor Thorne moved approval of the recommendation to grant the application in accordance with the officer's recommendation, including the updated conditions and obligations. He added that the site had been idle for 30 years and a new store and hotel would bring a lot of economy to Hexham. He noted the concerns about the wall but this was trying to be rectified by using as much of the old stone as possible. This was seconded by Councillor Flux who echoed Councillor Thorne's comments. He added that Councillor Cessford had tried hard to find a parking solution and wholeheartedly supported the application. Following a vote it was unanimously:

RESOLVED that planning permission is **GRANTED** subject to the completion of a Section 106 Agreement to secure a financial contribution of £10,000 to ecological mitigation and a commuted sum of £35,000 in respect of flood risk to the car park area, and the conditions set out in the report with amendments as circulated.

43. 19/01082/LBC
Listed Building Consent: Works to relocate listed wall (as amended).
Land North East of Tesco, Alemouth Road, Hexham, Northumberland

Councillor Flux proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the application in accordance with the officer recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Stewart. Following a vote it was unanimously:

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** subject to the conditions set out in the report with amendments as circulated.

Councillor Ledger withdrew from the Chamber whilst the following planning application was being discussed.

44. 19/01457/REM
Reserved matters application for appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for phase 1 comprising 149 dwellings.
Land South West of Glebe Farm, Choppington Road, Bedlington, Northumberland.

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

- Minor amendments were proposed to Condition 1 - (approved plans) to reflect some changes made to ensure that all drawings tied up with one another in respect of amendments;
- A minor change to Condition 11 to allow for other forms of sustainable drainage in addition to permeable paving to be utilised;
- The recommendation was as per the report but that reserved matters be granted for Phase 1 subject to the conditions set out in the report and the amendments as detailed in Conditions 1 and 11.

The Chair informed the Committee of a late request from West Bedlington Town Council requesting to speak on the application. The Chair was informed that the request had not been received by Democratic Services and after consultation with the Solicitor it was agreed that the representative from the Town Council be allowed to speak with no objection from the supporter. The Chair reiterated the correct channel for any Members wishing to speak on an application.

Mr C Jenkinson addressed the Committee speaking in objection of the applications. His comments included the following:-

- He was concerned about the welfare and safety of the general public;
- There was no access as such and the proposed entrance was dangerous;

- He had lived in close proximity to the farm for over 20 years and had witnessed numerous accidents with traffic travelling from the south. The proposed entrance was 30 metres from a sharp bend;
- At peak times the traffic backed up past the proposed development entrance and was one of the most dangerous roads in Wansbeck;
- Several years ago the proposed entrance was one and a half miles further north, if that entrance was used there would be a win-win situation as it would remove the danger;
- He requested that Members carry out a site visit and to approach the site via Choppington;
- There were scars on trees which had been damaged by cars;
- The removal of sycamores would improve the view and safety for drivers;
- The Council had a duty for public safety.

Adam Hogg, West Bedlington Town Council was in attendance and his comments included the following:-

- The point of access was not safe;
- The road was getting worse and there had been a recent fatality;
- Drivers reduced/increased speed on the blind bend;
- Requested a condition that the speed on the whole stretch of the road be reduced from 40 mph to 30 mph;
- The impact to residents of overshadowing;
- The Town Council would request either bungalows or other measures such as hedging;
- The applicant proposed to remove several hedgerows and the Town Council did not support removal of the hedgerows from The Chesters to Glebe Farm and a condition should be added that the hedgerows be replaced;
- The Town Council were also concerned that the hedgerows acted as a barrier;
- Nine mature trees had been felled;
- New trees should be planted to the estate to ensure a tree line;
- The site was too small for the proposed development and this should be reduced;
- The Town Council was disappointed to note that the S106 monies were not going to the West Bedlington area. This should be reviewed;

Mr Alistair Willis on behalf of the applicant was in attendance and made the following comments:-

- The application sought the approval of all reserved matters (layout, scale, appearance and landscaping) for the first phase of the development;
- The details of the principle access had been approved. It was not proposed to alter the access and was not a matter of consideration today;
- Miller Homes took public safety seriously and the appropriate visibility splays would be provided;
- The scheme represented several months of close work to achieve the first phase of development providing a network of safe and open spaces, sustainable drainage and affordable housing and would secure jobs;

- He requested that Members follow the recommendations with the suggested conditions.

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

- Details of the road accident were not in the public domain as officers did not have that information. The application was only for reserved matters and access onto the highway had already been approved;
- The S278 junction works were currently going through a technical approval process where road safety matters would be considered further and a right hand lane and chevron markings would be implemented;
- Consultees had given advice on the S106 contribution, eg, education, primary and special needs and healthcare;
- When the original outline scheme had been approved a material planning reason was that the Council could not demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply. The Council could now demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply which would be a material consideration if an application outside of the settlement boundary was to be submitted. The removal of the trees was to allow for visibility splays and there would be replacement planting as referred to in condition 5 of the report;
- 15% affordable housing of 22 units would be provided as part of Phase 1. The Council would receive 50% of other Section 106 monies as part of Phase 1;
- Ecology mitigation provided new and improved footpaths to Choppington woods;
- The S278 works were subject to consultation and the Principal Highways Development Manager was happy to discuss speed variations with the developer. Any reduction in speed would have to be implemented by a Traffic Regulation Order;
- Clarification was sought on street lighting and following discussion with the Senior Planning Manager, the Senior Planning Officer and the Highways Manager, it was explained that roads shown grey on the map were to be adopted with street lights and would usually be covered by a street lighting scheme. There would not normally be street lighting on the yellow areas shown as they were private roads and not adopted; It was also suggested that not all residents wanted to live on an adopted road. However, Members were advised that street lighting details were secured by a suggested condition and that any application subsequently to discharge this condition would be referred back to committee for a decision.

Councillor Thorne proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the application with the updated conditions which was seconded by Councillor Stewart.

Councillor Robinson recognised the work that had been carried out but, as Ward Councillor could not support the application and would vote against.

Following a vote, 12 Members voted in favour of the application with 1 Member voting against and it was therefore:

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** subject to the conditions set out in the report and subject to the amendments to Conditions 1 and 11.

45. PLANNING APPEALS

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

The meeting closed at 6.34 pm.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____