

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the **Strategic Planning Committee** held virtually
on **Tuesday 2 June 2020** at **4.00 pm**.

PRESENT

Councillor CW Horncastle
(Chair in the Chair)

MEMBERS

Armstrong E	Reid J
Bowman L	Renner-Thompson G
Dodd R	Robinson M
Flux B	Stewart G
Foster J	Swithenbank ICF
Gibson RM	Thorne T
Hepple A	Webb G
Lang J	

OFFICERS

Armstrong N	Senior Planning Officer
Blyth K	Principal Planning Officer
Bulman M	Solicitor
Harvey C	Planning Officer
Hudson J	Planning Officer
Lathan D	Senior Environmental Health Officer
Little L	Democratic Services Officer
Murfin R	Director of Planning
Murphy J	Principal Planning Officer
Norris K	Democratic Services Officer
Parkin H	FCERM Officer
Patrick M	Principal Highways Development Management Officer
Payne M	Consultant Engineer
Sinnamon E	Senior Planning Manager
Williams M	Team Leader - ICT Practitioner SIFA

79. PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED AT A VIRTUAL STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Chair outlined the procedure which would be followed at the virtual meeting and of the changes to the public speaking protocol. He also advised Members that if their connection was lost during consideration of an application and it was not possible for a

short recap to be provided then the Member would not be allowed to vote on the application.

80. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee held on Tuesday 3 March 2020, as circulated, be agreed as a true record and be signed by the Chair.

81. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor Stewart advised that as the Local Ward Member he had asked for the Ferndene application to be brought to this Committee. He had been involved in numerous discussions over many months and had submitted a report to the Legal Services Manager outlining his involvement and had been advised that he had not predetermined the report and could take part in the decision.

Councillors Reid and Robinson and Renner-Thompson declared that they had an interest in application 19/04235/CCD as they were on the Board of Advance Northumberland. Whilst the application was a County Council application they considered that as the Council would be paying Advance Northumberland to manage the project, it could be seen as prejudicial and would not take part in deciding this application. Councillor Swithenbank advised that he was now also on the Board of Advance, however he had only recently been appointed and had not been involved in this application previously so he would participate in the decision making process.

82. 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.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

Councillors Reid, Renner-Thompson and Robinson switched their cameras and microphones off and took no part in the following application.

83. 19/04235/CCD

Construction of new leisure and community centre with associated parking, pedestrian access, landscaping and public realm.

Car Park On Former Library Site, Gas House Lane, Low Stanners, Morpeth Northumberland

The application was introduced by J Murphy, Principal Planning Officer with the aid of a powerpoint presentation. It was confirmed that all Members had previously received and read a copy of the update sheet which would be filed with the copy of the signed minutes and uploaded to the Council's website. In addition members confirmed that they had also received the officer presentation in print format. The Committee was

also reminded that a site visit had previously been held in respect of this application on 2 March 2020.

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

- Parking at the new development had been assessed and compared to the existing provision and in relation to the town centre. Trips to the leisure centre would divert from the existing car park to the proposed car park within the town centre. Additional on-street parking will also be provided on Gas House Lane. It was considered there was sufficient car parking within the town centre.
- Additional cycle parking was to be provided with improvements made to bus stop facilities and walking routes to the town centre.
- The new leisure centre would be fully DDA compliant with appropriate signage within the development. However a specific condition could be added requesting details of signage to be provided and agreed by the Planning Authority if Members wished this to be added.
- Due to the location of the proposed main car park within a flood risk zone it was not possible for high voltage electric vehicle charging points to be provided.
- Potential problems with youths congregating outside of the proposed development, as it was suggested they did outside the current leisure centre, would be a management issue. An informative could be added asking the operator to look at whether the car park should be closed outside operating hours etc. No precise details could be provided at the current time but the Director of Planning advised that he would liaise with the applicant.
- Surface water attenuation would be provided on the site by way of a tank which would be released at a greenfield runoff rate.
- Northumbrian Water had not submitted an objection to the application and therefore the Committee should be assured that there was sufficient capacity to deal with all the foul waste from the development.

The Principal Planning Officer confirmed that the recommendation was to approve the application subject to the conditions outlined in the report and as amended in the update previously circulated. If Members wished to include a condition related to the signage within the proposed development then she also requested that delegated authority be provided to the Director of Planning to agree the wording.

Councillor Flux proposed acceptance of the recommendation as above to also include delegated authority to the Director of Planning to agree the wording of a condition related to the signage within the building which was seconded by Councillor Stewart.

Members welcomed the investment into Northumberland and into a development which was very much needed to replace the existing tired and sad leisure centre in Morpeth. A vote was taken and it was unanimously

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** subject to the conditions as outlined in the report and as amended in the update with delegated authority to be provided to the Director of Planning to agree the wording of an additional condition related to signage within the building.

Councillors Reid, Renner-Thompson and Robinson returned to the meeting at this point.

84. 19/04985/FUL

**Extension and internal and external remodelling of existing low secure mental health hospital to provide both low and medium secure clinical units with associated parking, infrastructure and landscaping works
Northumberland Tyne & Wear NHS Foundation Trust., Ferndene, Moor Road, Prudhoe Northumberland NE42 5PB**

C. Harvey, Planning Officer introduced the application to the Committee with the aid of a powerpoint presentation. It was confirmed that all Members had received and read the additional representation and update report detailing a revised recommendation to include conditions related to noise both of which had been circulated in advance of the meeting and which would be attached to the signed minutes and uploaded to the Council's website. It was also confirmed that Members had watched the video clips also circulated in advance of the meeting. A further update was provided as follows:-

Paragraph 7.24, the last sentence should read: "Policy GD2 of the Tynedale District Local Plan requires proposals to, where appropriate, ***be designed to deter crime and increase personal safety*** and not to have a significant impact on residential amenity"

A statement in objection to the application from N Harold was read out by L Little, Democratic Services Officer and would be attached to the signed copy of the minutes and uploaded to the Council's website.

A statement in support of the application from the Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Trust was read out by J Hudson, Planning Officer and would be attached to the signed copy of the minutes and uploaded to the Council's website.

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

- The perception of fear or worry was a material consideration, such as the fear of crime or fear of health impact. The Planning system looked at the reasons behind the concerns and assessed if these were reasonable and evidenced; what was being changed and was it materially a greater risk; and did relevant statutory agencies have concerns. The proposal would enhance the security and would improve the existing measures and no concerns had been raised from statutory consultees. A refusal on the grounds of risk would be unfounded.
- The fence height of 5.2m had been submitted as part of the application and a decision would need to be made based on this height. Officers had considered the height of the fence in context to the site and surrounding area and had concluded that there would not be a significant visual impact. It was clarified that the height of 5.2m was specified in the NHS Environmental Design Guide for Adult Medium Secure Services. It was clarified that the proposed 5.2m fence would be provided to the south of the building.

- Both a Transport Statement and Travel Plan had been submitted and a study undertaken in respect of parking. During the study it had been found that only 80 car parking spaces were being used and during a further visit by an Officer there was no visual indicator that there was overflow from the development onto the neighbouring residential area. Highways were satisfied that sufficient spaces were to be provided.
- In 2008 an application had been made for an outline application for housing to the north of Humbles Wood and as part of the same application, for the principle of a health care provision on the current application site which had been approved. Therefore when the houses were purchased the principle of a health care facility had been established.
- In relation to the security and safe operation of the site, Government guidance stated that when looking at a planning decision for the operational use of a site which was covered by other regulatory bodies, i.e. NHS, the Planning Authority should assume that those other agencies would discharge their duties correctly and on that basis should only question whether it was in the correct location. It must therefore be assumed that the health care facility would be managed and operated in the correct way.
- In respect of the concerns from residents regarding the numbers of patients currently absconding from the existing facility, the statement provided by the NHS advised that the recorded number of people who had absconded from the medium secure unit at St Nicholas in Gosforth within the last three years was zero. The application would allow the modernisation of the facilities and provision of improved security measures on the site including the provision of an air-lock and the 5.2m high fencing and would enable the NHS to manage the site in the best possible way to minimise any risk. The question Members were required to consider was if there was anything in this application to suspect that the site would be less safe than at present.
- The proposed works did look to increase the security measures across the whole site but it was not possible to give 100% assurance. It would be the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the fence and other security measures were installed as per the application, but enforcement action could be taken if there was any deviation from the agreed plans. The outdoor recreation area for the medium secure unit would be within the boundaries of the 5.2m fence, which would be of a metal security mesh type.
- Officers did not have any information regarding any changes to the definition of high or low security.

Councillor Flux advised that he had lost connection twice within this item and would take no further part in this application, switching his camera and microphone off.

- Each element of the proposals had been taken into account and it was not considered that the proposals were disproportionate to the existing development and therefore it was not considered to be inappropriate development within the Green Belt.
- The Council's Sustainable Travel Team had assessed the Travel Plan submitted and had raised 6 points of concern which they wished to be addressed in the Full Travel Plan such as the appointment of a Travel

Co-ordinator at the facility for 5 years to promote initiatives. It was conditioned that a Full Travel Plan should come forward to address these issues.

- The Planning Officer advised that he had visited the site on a number of occasions and on occasions there had been cars parked on Beechwood Drive and on other occasions there were not. A Transport Statement had been submitted and in the view of the consultant the proposed car park would mitigate any need to park on Beechwood Drive.
- The plans indicated that there would be car parking spaces at the north and eastern parts of the site and also proposed 18 new spaces at the rear. Officers could not comment on if and why existing spaces were not being used.

Members confirmed that they had no questions on the site visit videos which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

Councillor Reid proposed acceptance of the recommendation as outlined in the update sheet as follows:

That Members be minded to GRANT planning permission for the proposed development, subject to relevant conditions in the officer report along with the additional conditions following consultation with the Public Health Protection Team.

The motion to accept the recommendation was seconded by Councillor Robinson.

For the most part Members considered that reassurance had been provided that the site would be well managed by the NHS and increased security measures would minimise any potential increased risk to members of the public. It was hoped that the travel plan would be written, would be accepted and would be utilised by the people who worked at the site.

Councillor Stewart advised that whilst this was not a big application, it was a massive issue for Prudhoe. He had spoken to residents whose concerns were genuine. This was a rural setting, close to schools and had poor transport connectivity. Communication in the area was not good with a poor mobile signal and no local police station within the Town. Police were being called frequently when patients absconded from the current facility, and whilst he recognised this had been built at the same time as the houses, it was a low security facility and this proposal was a change of category to medium. He considered that the road layout had been badly designed with only one road for use by both residents and the health care facility. He advised that he could not support the application as he felt that the residents' safety could not be 100% assured.

A vote was taken as follows: FOR - 14; AGAINST - 0; ABSTENTION - 1.

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

Councillor Flux rejoined the meeting.

85. 19/00514/FUL

Redevelopment of Brocksbushes Farm Shop & Tearoom including demolition of existing buildings and erection of new buildings to accommodate farm shop, tea shop, play barn and production kitchen uses, new car park and associated new planting.

Brocksbushes Tea Rooms, Brocksbushes Farm, Stocksfield, Northumberland, NE43 7UB

N Armstrong, Senior Planning Officer introduced the application to the Committee with the aid of a powerpoint presentation. Members confirmed that they had received and had watched the short video clips which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. He advised that within Condition 2, in the list of approved plans and documents additional plans and documents should be added in respect of non mains drainage arrangements.

Councillor Bowman had left the meeting for a time during the Officer's presentation and therefore would take no further part in this application.

A statement in support of the application submitted by the applicant was read out by J Hudson, Planning Officer and would be attached to the signed copy of the minutes and uploaded to the Council's website.

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

- In relation to Condition 3 where it was stated that 25% of the farm shop would be dedicated to the sale of produce and goods produced from within Northumberland etc. this was considered suitable as a reflection of it being a farm shop development within the open countryside. Advice had also been sought from a retail consultant on this aspect and rather than allowing unrestricted retail development in the open countryside this reflected the nature of the existing development and how it has developed over time, its position in the countryside and the ethos of the existing business. This condition was considered reasonable in this instance.
- The application was required to be referred to the Secretary of State due to the scale of development in the Green Belt; and as it was inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- In relation to the elevations and the signage it was clarified that the southern elevation gable ends were in the direction of the entrance from the roundabout and the west elevation was the main entrance from the car park. Whilst the buildings were larger structures, the design tried to reflect the rural setting; its location in relation to the farm; and was a farmstead type of development with a courtyard arrangement.
- Some control would remain with regard to the materials to be used. A mix of external materials would be used and a suggestion from the Conservation Officer would be to incorporate some stone, however the final details were not known at the current time nor were the colour finishes. These details would be secured as part of a condition.

Councillor Dodd proposed acceptance of the recommendation as outlined in the report with the addition of the plans for the non-mains drainage in Condition 2 as highlighted above, which was seconded by Councillor Gibson.

Members supported and welcomed the scheme which they stated served a very important function and they also considered the location to be suitable for this type of development. It was requested that it be made clear to the Secretary of State when submitting the application that the Committee wholeheartedly supported the application.

A vote was taken and it was unanimously

RESOLVED that the committee be minded to **GRANT** permission subject to the referral to the Secretary of State under CL Circular 02/2009 - the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009, with delegated authority to the Director of Planning to issue the decision if the Secretary of State did not call in the application with the conditions as outlined in the report and as amended in respect of the addition of plans and documents for non-mains drainage in condition 2.

86. PLANNING APPEALS

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

The virtual meeting closed at 6.50 pm

CHAIR_____

DATE_____