

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the **Strategic Planning Committee** held virtually
on **Tuesday 3 November 2020** at **2.00 pm**

PRESENT

Councillor CW Horncastle
(Chair in the Chair)

MEMBERS

Armstrong E	Hepple A
Bowman L	Lang J
Dodd R	Reid J
Foster J	Robinson M
Flux B	Stewart G
Gibson R	Thorne T
Gobin J	

OFFICERS

Bulman M	Solicitor
Feige D	Principal Ecologist and AONB Officer
Leadbeater N	Housing Enabling Officer
Little L	Senior Democratic Services Officer
Mowatt R	Webb Communications Assistant
Murfin R	Director of Planning
Payne M	Consultant Engineer
Turnbull N	Democratic Services Officer
Sinnamon E	Senior Planning Manager
Wood T	Senior Planning Officer

116. 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.

117. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Renner-Thompson and Swithenbank.

118. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Strategic Planning Committees held on 4 August 2020 and 18 August 2020, as circulated, be agreed as true record and signed by the Chair.

119. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chair advised that applications 20/01217/CCD and 19/02870/FUL had been deferred and would now be considered at a Strategic Planning Committee to be held on 17 November 2020.

120. 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.

121. 19/00904/FUL

**Construction of 158 dwellings, forming phase 1B of the development of the former St Georges Hospital site I Morpeth, (amended description)
Land South of Bluebell Court, East Cottingwood, Morpeth, Northumberland**

There were no questions from Members in relation to the site visit videos which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

T Wood, Senior Planning Officer introduced the application to the Committee with the aid of a powerpoint presentation. An update had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting detailing a revised recommendation and changes to conditions contained in the report. A copy would be filed with the signed minutes and would be uploaded to the Council's website. Members were advised that a late representation had been received from Greystokes Medical Practice reminding of the necessity of a roundabout for patient safety.

A written statement from T Lloyd and St Georges Wood residents in objection to the application was read out by N Turnbull, Democratic Services Officer. The statement would be filed with the signed minutes and uploaded to the Council's website.

A written statement from Morpeth Town Council objecting to the application was read out by L Little, Senior Democratic Services Officer. The statement would be filed with the signed minutes and uploaded to the Council's website.

A written statement from J Hall, Agent, in support of the application was read out by N Turnbull, Democratic Services Officer. The statement would be filed with the signed minutes and uploaded to the Council's website.

Councillor Dodd left the meeting at this point

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

- Whilst there was an outline permission for this site, this was a new full application and therefore should be considered in its own right. There was still sufficient open space proposed between Phase 1a and Phase 1b. There were more dwellings proposed in this application compared to the outline permission, however there was a need for these type of smaller dwellings as there were sufficient of the larger style family homes within Morpeth. This application also required SUDs to be provided which had not been part of the outline application. There was a 15m buffer to be provided between the proposed houses and woodland so this had pushed the houses westwards thereby reducing the open space between the phases. Ecology had advised that they were happy with the application and mitigation would be provided by tree and hedge planting within the buffer zone, with a woodland management plan also to be provided. The open space would also include a naturalistic play area.
- Highways had assessed the application which had been put forward, which was that an interim solution junction which modelling had said was required at 46 dwellings and traffic lights at 108 dwellings as per the revised conditions. This was acceptable. No details of a roundabout or modelling of such had been provided as part of the application as the applicant had chosen to include traffic lights in the proposal put forward.
- In respect of the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan, this site had been allocated as a housing site for 375 houses within the Plan following the 2014 application for a full permission for 119 dwellings on phase 1a, and outline permission for 115 dwellings on phase 1b and outline permission for 141 dwellings on phase 1c giving a total of 375. Whilst this application was for more than the originally proposed 115 on phase 1b, it was still within the allocation of 375 for the whole site and therefore was in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan. This application had come forward based on the market conditions at the current time as a new full application and should not be measured against the previous application for outline permission. It must be looked at on its own merits and a decision made based on the acceptability of the proposed scheme.
- The application provided more units of a more modest scale than the more usual executive type of housing within Morpeth but had been judged in terms of space standards within properties, stand-off distances between properties along with highways impacts and was acceptable in terms of density and therefore was not overdevelopment of the site

- There was no one definition of overdevelopment and what would be acceptable in an urban area might not be in a more rural location. This application was within the settlement boundaries of Morpeth which also had areas of terraced properties and was therefore considered to be in character with the town.
- A 15m buffer was to be provided which would assist in protecting the woodland and whilst the land did have a slope, the possibility of subsidence had not been a concern. Building Control would be responsible for the safety of the development in relation to any possible subsidence within the site itself.
- As part of the phase 1a application the road from Dark Lane to that phase must be brought up to an adoptable standard. This had not been completed as construction traffic could still damage the road but was part of the phase 1a conditions. Condition 30 attached to this permission would ensure that the access road to phase 1a was brought up to the appropriate standard prior to the occupation of properties in 1b. There were more works to be undertaken but it would remain as a private road for some time yet.
- Trees were an important part of the design and layout of residential estates and there was an active policy to look to secure as many as possible, ensuring that they were not planted too close to properties as to cause root damage. The planting of trees was also important to address the climate change agenda and capture carbon and from a health perspective, in that trees and other natural landscaping go some way to increase peoples' mental health and value of their local environment. Ecology would consider which species of trees would be suitable for planting within the estate based on the premise of the right type in the right place.

Councillor Thorne proposed acceptance of the revised recommendation as outlined in the update report circulated which was seconded by Councillor Stewart.

Councillor Reid stressed that the type of trees to be used must be considered so that problems were not encountered in years to come. He advised that he could not support this application as he considered that the increase in the number, the type and design of properties along with the materials to be used was driven by profit. Other Members of the Committee advised that the site was allocated for housing and the change to the house types and number of units was acceptable.

A vote was taken as follows:- FOR 12; AGAINST 1; ABSTENTIONS 0.

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** subject to the applicant entering into a Section 106 agreement which provides for 10% affordable housing, a woodland management scheme and contribution totalling £500,000 to fund the coastal mitigation measures of £47,400 and for flexibility to allow the Council to expend the remainder the contribution on education, health and bus incentive measures in whatever proportions they so choose with authority delegated to the Director of Planning to determine the proportions and allocation of the same; and subject to the conditions as outlined in the report and amended on the update.

122. APPEAL UPDATE REPORT

Information was provided on the progress of planning appeal and related to appeals throughout all 5 Local Area Council Planning Committee areas and the Strategic Planning Committee.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

123. S106 AGREEMENTS UPDATE REPORT

Information was provided on the monitoring and collection of S106 contributions in the planning process.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____