

## **NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **TYNEDALE LOCAL AREA COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the **Tynedale Local Area Council** held at Hexham House, Gilesgate, Hexham, Northumberland, NE46 3NH on Tuesday, 10 July 2018 at 4.00 p.m.

#### **PRESENT**

Councillor G Stewart  
(Chair, in the Chair)

#### **MEMBERS**

T Cessford	N Oliver (nos 32-45)
A Dale	K Quinn (nos 27-36)
CW Horncastle (nos 37-45)	A Sharp
I Hutchinson	KG Stow
D Kennedy (nos 32-45)	

#### **OFFICERS**

N Armstrong	Senior Planning Officer
K Blyth	Principal Planning Officer
M Bulman	Solicitor
R Campbell	Planning Officer
D Hunt	Neighbourhood Services Area Manager
M Francis	Senior Planning Officer
D Lally	Chief Executive
A Olive	Interim Highways Area Manager
M Patrick	Principal Highways Officer
D Puttick	Senior Planning Officer
V Robson	Conservation officer
J Sanderson	Senior Planning Manager - Planning Policy
E Sinnamon	Senior Planning Manager - Development Management
N Turnbull	Democratic Services Officer
K Westerby	Highways Delivery Manager

#### **ALSO PRESENT**

L Spark, Communications  
32 members of the public  
1 member of the press

## 27. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gibson, Homer and Riddle.

## 28. MINUTES

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of Tynedale Local Area Council, held on 12 June 2018, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

## 29. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Cessford declared a personal and prejudicial interest in planning application 18/01056/FUL and would leave the meeting during consideration of that item.

Councillor Cessford declared an interest in planning application 18/01757/LBC as he was on the Queens Hall Arts Trust Board and would leave the meeting during consideration of that item.

Councillor Kennedy declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in planning application 17/04070/FUL and 17/04071/LBC as he lived within 200 metres of the site.

Elizabeth Sinnamon declared an interest in planning application 18/01056/FUL as she knew the public speaker and would leave the meeting during consideration of the item.

***Councillor Stewart vacated the Chair, for Councillor Cessford, Vice-Chair, to chair the development control section of the agenda.***

## DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

## 30. DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The report explained how the Local Area Council was asked to decide the planning applications on the agenda using the powers delegated to it, and included details of the public speaking arrangements. (Report attached to the minutes as Appendix A.)

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

**31. 18/01056/FUL**

**Proposal for new electric vehicle gates at the site entrance.  
Development Land At Garden House Lane, Acomb, Hexham,  
Northumberland**

*(4.05 pm Councillor Cessford and the Senior Planning Manager having disclosed an interest left the meeting whilst the application was considered).*

The Senior Planning Officer introduced the report with the aid of a powerpoint presentation.

Charles Enderby, Chair of Acomb Parish Council spoke on behalf of the Parish Council to object to the application. He made the following comments:-

- The letter from Action for Acomb encapsulated the feelings of the Parish Council and the people of Acomb.
- This was the first substantial addition to the village for many years and they had looked forward to welcoming new residents. A gated community with a physical barrier would make it harder for this to happen.
- Acomb was a low crime area and they could see no advantage or need for the gates.
- The access road was narrow and well used and had seen minimal improvement in recent years. The electronic gates would cause substantial delays and congestion for new and existing residents.
- It was requested that the application for electronically operated gates be declined.

Amy McFaulds, Architectural Manager, Avant Homes, spoke in support of the application and made the following comments:-

- They understood the concerns of the Parish Council but disagreed that the introduction of gates would separate the development from the village.
- The gates would be constructed of timber and would not be visually intrusive.
- Some residents of the village had written in support of the proposal.
- New residents would use local facilities and participate in community activities.
- The site was to be privately maintained with roads remaining unadopted. And therefore residents would need to contribute to the maintenance of the road and private refuse collections. The gates were proposed to control the flow of vehicles through the site. Pedestrian access through the site would be retained.
- The gates would give increased safety for children playing in the development.
- The gates would be positioned to allow 2 cars to wait to enter the site and would utilise a GSM system allowing residents to open the gates in advance.
- Regular visitors such as post and bin collections would be given an access code so there would be minimal impact on Garden House Bank.

- Use of timber gates would not be invasive but would limit access to those who needed entry to the private estate, thereby improving road safety.

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

- The impact of a power cut and management and operation of the system used for the electronic gates was not yet known and therefore condition 3 required that clarification be provided and approved before the gates were brought into use.
- Pedestrian access to the site was available from a number of locations and a Section 106 agreement related to a legal obligation to restore and maintain pedestrian access over parish council land.
- There were not many gated communities in Northumberland although a development of 8-12 houses at High Callerton, Ponteland, was given as an example.
- Highways had initially expressed concerns regarding the impact of the gates on Garden House Bank and how they would operate for emergency vehicles. Condition 3 required that these details be provided and approved to ensure the gates operated satisfactorily.
- Each application was considered on its own merits and would not necessarily impact on other developments with private roads.
- The points regarding security had been raised by the developer.
- If the gates were not operational they would be required to remain open. It would not be reasonable to require that the gates be left open during peak times during the morning and evening when residents were leaving and returning from work and school.

Several members expressed concerns regarding the omission of the proposals for electronic gates from the original application for the development.

Councillor Hutchinson proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the application with the addition that the Chair and Vice-Chair (Planning) be consulted on the details of condition 3 regarding the operation of the electronic gates. This was seconded by Councillor Stewart.

A vote was taken as follows:-: **AGAINST: 5; ABSTENTION: 1**, with the motion failing.

Councillor Dale then proposed that the application be refused due to highway safety and the detrimental impact of the use of gates on the everyday access to the development including services such as emergency vehicles, refuse vehicles and deliveries and general users of Garden House Bank. She made reference to Policy GD4 of the Tynedale Local Plan. This was seconded by Councillor Quinn.

It was noted that the cumulative impact of the proposal would need to be severe which the planning officers had considered would be overcome by

requiring that the precise detail of the system, location, management and operation be approved in writing prior to the gates being brought into use. The Councillor disagreed due the incline and width of Garden House Bank and the impact in bad weather.

A vote was taken as follows:-: **FOR: 4; ABSTENTION: 2.**

**RESOLVED** that the application be **REFUSED** consent for the aforementioned reasons.

*(4.45 pm Councillor Cessford and Elizabeth Sinnamon returned to the meeting.)*

**32. 17/04070/FUL**

**Change of Use (B1 to C3) of Prospect House comprising demolition of modern rear single storey extension, conversion of existing office building and construction of 2 No Cottages with associated external works providing eighteen units of self-contained residential accommodation**

**Prospect House, Hallgate, Hexham, NE46 1XD**

The Chair confirmed that the application, and application 17/04071/LBC would be presented together, however, they would be voted on separately.

The Senior Planning Officer introduced the report with the aid of a powerpoint presentation. She provided the following update:

- Amendment of Condition 2 in reference 007 Rev B should read Existing elevations.

Ms W Breach, an active member of Hexham Civic Society, addressed the committee to object to the application. She made the following comments:

- Whether this was the best that could be achieved for the building and suggested there were a number of grounds for refusal.
- She had been involved in the development of the Hexham Neighbourhood Plan and was aware that there were a number of empty buildings and it hoped to encourage more residential units back to the town centre. The principle of flats was a suitable use.
- They had concerns with regard to housing standards and the size of the accommodation.
- Fire safety issues had not been addressed.
- There were no affordable units within the development.
- The town of Hexham needed to trade on its heritage and use its assets wisely.
- Prospect House was an important historic asset. Hexham House and Burn Brae House had been converted sensitively and the proposals for Prospect House fell short in comparison.

- She queried why the development had been recommended for approval when the Conservation Officer had ongoing concerns with regard to the number of units and impact on the character and appearance of the listed building despite the number being reduced from 18 to 20.
- It was acknowledged that the building had been unsympathetically altered to create offices when in the ownership of Tynedale District Council and Northumberland County Council; however, it did not excuse the acceptance of the poor design now proposed.
- Although it was acknowledged that there was no policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) with regard to the minimum size of flats, a number of the flats did not accord with the Government's Space Standards for housing which had a requirement of 39m<sup>2</sup> for one bedroom dwellings and 50m<sup>2</sup> for two bedroom dwellings.
- There were 5 storeys, not 3, within Prospect House which could be described as a 'rabbit warren' (basement, ground floor, first floor, second floor and attic).
- The arrangements for fire escape and exits was questioned as the subdivision of the space into 18 units had resulted in one fire escape leading into a small courtyard with no means of exit.
- The application had previously been discussed with a planning officer who had commented on the poor standard of the proposals and had implied that the application would not be approved. It was now recommended for approval following some 'tweaks'.
- Whilst there were 72 documents, these did not include a fire service assessment or a building regulation assessment which they would be very interested to see.
- The housing needs assessment undertaken for Hexham in 2016 indicated that there was a clear need for 2 and 3 bedroom properties and affordable housing.
- There were no affordable housing units proposed within this conversion. The applicant's research had concluded there was demand for 1 and 2 bedroom properties which contradicted the research undertaken for the Council.
- There was concern that there would not be a market for the smaller units which would become buy to let rentals or AirBnB rentals.
- The application be deferred until questions were answered.

Neil Westwick, Senior Director at Lichfields representing the applicant, addressed the committee speaking in support of the application and raised the following key points:-

- The officer's written report provided a balanced view and recommended approval of the application.
- Their architect had worked with a building control expert on the sub-division of the property.
- They had also worked extensively with the planning officer on proposals for the former Council building.
- There were no objections from the statutory or internal consultees.

- The conversion had been sensitively designed to take into account its listed building status and differed to the previous application made in 2017.
- The building was to be reinstated to its former condition prior to interventions by the Council as a former occupant.
- A consultation event had been held in the winter of 2016 which had been attended by many residents of Hexham who had welcomed development of the building.
- The proposals brought the building back into use and was recommended for approval by officers.

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

- The area next to Hallstile Bank would be largely left untouched, except for the removal of undergrowth, due to the listed building status of the area. A condition had been included to obtain clarification regarding proposals for the area and a management plan for future maintenance.
- An application had been submitted to the Council for the establishment of a Public Right of Way through the site which was being assessed and would be brought to a future meeting of the Local Area Council for determination.
- Assurances had been given that cornicing would be retained and repaired as necessary when rooms were sub-divided.
- An off-site contribution was being sought for affordable housing and was in the process of being calculated taking into account Vacant Building Credit, and would be subject to a Section 106 agreement.
- In order to seek a contribution for sport and play, it would need to be shown to be necessary for it to be made a planning obligation via a Section 106 agreement.
- A 40% affordable housing contribution was being sought on this site based on an open market valuation of the property.
- There was no requirement to provide parking at a town centre location and therefore 20 parking spaces for 18 units was advantageous. No parking spaces had been provided at Hadrian House.
- The listed building consent proposed numerous conditions to protect features and / or requested further details.
- Benefits of the scheme included the removal of the flat roof extension and protection of features in the lobby and staircase.
- The applicant had submitted a fire safety assessment and would be considered as part of building regulation approval.
- Whilst the Conservation Officer had some initial concerns these had been overcome following discussions and amendment of plans.
- The Heritage Statement contained the detailed changes proposed to the building listed by floor and section which had been assessed by officers room by room.

Councillor Kennedy proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the application which was seconded by Councillor Oliver. They agreed to a

suggestion from Councillor Dale that a delegation be given to the Planning Officer to explore a contribution for sport and play.

A vote was taken on the motion to approve the application with the amendment and was unanimously agreed.

Several Members welcomed the application which would bring the building back into use whilst retaining important features and be beneficial for the town centre.

**RESOLVED** that the application be **GRANTED** permission for the reasons and with the conditions as outlined in the report and subject to a Section 106 agreement in relation to affordable housing and that a delegation be given to the Planning Officer to explore a contribution for sport and play.

**33. 17/04071/LBC**

**Listed Building Consent: Change of Use (B1 to C3) of Prospect House comprising demolition of modern rear single storey extension, conversion of existing office building and construction of 2 No Cottages with associated external works providing eighteen units of self-contained residential accommodation  
Prospect House, Hallgate, Hexham, NE46 1XD**

Following the application being presented jointly with 17/04070/FUL, a separate vote was then taken on the above application.

The Senior Planning Officer provided the following update:

- Amendment of Condition 2 in reference to 007 Rev B should read Existing elevations.

Councillor Hutchinson proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the application which was seconded by Councillor Sharp and was unanimously agreed.

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

**34. 18/01757/LBC**

**Listed building consent for refurbishment of Green Room and adjacent changing rooms as a Studio Theatre  
Queens Hall, Queens Hall Arts Trust, Beaumont Street, Hexham, NE46 3LS**

*(5.30 pm Councillor Cessford having disclosed a personal and prejudicial interest left the meeting whilst the application was considered).*

The Senior Planning Officer introduced the report with the aid of a powerpoint presentation. The application was for listed building consent for internal



alterations to provide additional studio theatre space. The proposals did not involve any alterations to the historic fabric of the building and would not affect its character or appearance and therefore the Conservation Officer raised no objection.

Councillor Hutchinson proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the application which was seconded by Councillor Stow and was unanimously agreed.

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

*(5.40 pm Councillor Cessford returned to the meeting.)*

**35. 18/01793/FUL**

**Construction of proposed extension to agricultural building to house and control cattle**

**Land South East Of Blakelaw Farm House, Bellingham, Northumberland**

Clarification was requested regarding non-registerable personal interests and participation in the discussion of a planning application made by a councillor. The Solicitor made reference to the criteria under Part 6, Chapter 1, Parts 3 and 4 of the Constitution and whether a member of the public knowing the relevant facts would reasonably think it so significant that it was likely to prejudice judgement of the public interest. Each Member had to consider whether they had a 'close association'; they were not precluded by the fact that they were the member of the same committee or political party. The following declared a non-registerable personal interest: Councillors Cessford, Dale, Horncastle, Hutchinson, Oliver, Quinn, Sharp, Stewart and Stow.

The Planning Officer introduced the report with the aid of a powerpoint presentation. She provided the following update:

- A response had been received from Highways following finalisation of the report. They did not object in principle to the proposals as they would not have a severe impact on highway safety. They had therefore not recommended the inclusion of any conditions or informatives.

Councillor Hutchinson proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the application which was seconded by Councillor Quinn and unanimously agreed.

**RESOLVED** that that Members be minded to **GRANT** permission subject to now new issues being raised within the consultation period and with the conditions as outlined in the report.

### **36. PLANNING APPEALS UPDATE**

A report was received which provided an update on the progress of planning appeals received. (A copy of the report is enclosed with the minutes as Appendix B).

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

### **OTHER LOCAL AREA COUNCIL BUSINESS**

*On the conclusion of the development control business at 5.50 pm the meeting adjourned as the remainder of the agenda consisted of other Local Area Council business scheduled to begin at 6.00 pm. Councillor Stewart returned to the Chair and continued the meeting at 6.00 pm.*

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS - CORPORATE**

#### **37. Community Chest Awards**

Councillor Cessford, Chair of the Tynedale Community Chest Panel welcomed recipients of Community Chest awards to the meeting. Certificates were presented to representatives from:

- First Wylam Scout Group
- Earth Doctors Ltd.
- Prudhoe Youth Club Football Club
- Catton Village Hall
- Riding Mill Play and Regeneration Group
- Whitley Chapel Basketry Group
- Stocksfield Tuesday Club
- Tynedale Lions
- Tynedale Golf Club
- Tynedale Archery Club
- Allendale Village Hall and Recreation Ground

**RESOLVED** that the report and presentation be received.

#### **38. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions at this meeting.

### **39. PETITIONS**

This item was to:

#### **a) Receive any new petitions:**

There were none to consider.

#### **b) Consider reports on petitions previously received:**

There were none to consider.

#### **c) To consider updates on petitions previously considered:**

There were none to consider.

### **40. LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES**

The area managers from Technical Services and Neighbourhood Services were present to give an update on recent, ongoing and future planned Local Services work . The area managers had principal responsibility for highway services and environmental services, such as refuse collection, street cleansing and grounds maintenance, within the geographic boundaries of the local area council.

Neighbourhood Services:

- Due to the recent warm weather and slowing of grass growth, operatives normally employed on grass cutting in amenity areas were being deployed to other duties including strimming, cutting back of overhanging branches, watering recently laid turf etc. Members were requested to identify any areas within their wards which would benefit from this work.
- Further analysis was to be undertaken of garden waste collection routes as refuse vehicles were struggling to complete their daily routes due to the tonnages being collected. Garden waste not collected on a normal collection day was removed before the end of the week.
- 70% of roadside verges had been cut with the remainder being completed within the next few weeks.
- 85% of weed spraying was now complete. This was being undertaken in-house and was more effective but taking slightly longer than when external contractors had been employed.
- The service had supported the Great Northumberland launch in Hexham on 7 July and would be supporting Britain in Bloom events in the next few weeks.
- Delivery of a new hgv sweeper was expected within the next few weeks. Following problems with current vehicles, the length of lease had been reduced from 7 to 5 years.

Technical Services:

Kris Westerby informed Members that he had recently been appointed to the post of Highways Delivery Manager and he would be replaced by Andrew Olive in the interim period.

- 22,000 defects to the highways network had been recorded during the winter period, November to April, of which 7,000 related to the Tynedale area and had now been repaired.
- Gritters had been deployed on A and B class roads during the recent period of hot weather.
- Phase 1 of works to repair the winter damage from potholes was now complete and phase 2 would be commencing on 16 July 2018.
- Remedial work was being carried out by Tarmac to repair roads following the completion of eight schemes, four would continue over the next few months.
- 2,500 gulleys had been cleared and work was continuing. Areas requiring traffic management were in the process of being scheduled. An additional drainage gang was clearing ditches and pipe ends.
- A new salt barn was to be located at Allendale which would be of assistance to crews in the winter months.

Members wished both officers well in their new roles. They also discussed:

- What assistance they could provide for gully / drainage works in their wards to ensure that the work was able to proceed and not prevented by parked vehicles. It was confirmed that officers would be able to provide Members with a copy of the schedule of work approximately 4 weeks in advance and also cones, if required.
- Gulleys and drains would be checked and flushed following resurfacing work.
- The problem of privately owned overgrown hedges and the formal process for the issuing of notices to address highway safety issues at junctions where visibility was obscured. It was reported that the full process would not need to be repeated where notices had been served in previous years as in those circumstances only a 14 day final notice would be required.

**RESOLVED** that the update be noted.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **41. NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL PLAN - REGULATION 18 DRAFT PLAN**

The Local Area Council received a report which provided an update on the Northumberland Local Plan for the period 2016 - 2036 and details of the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan consultation. (A copy of the report and presentation are enclosed with the minutes as Appendix B).

The Senior Planning Manager - Planning Policy outlined the progress to date which included: updates to existing evidence base studies, review of submissions from call for sites, working with Neighbourhood Plan Groups, review and input into the development of draft policies by the LDF Working Group, acceleration of plan preparation programme and identification of milestone dates to be achieved.

The presentation included information on:

- What the Local Plan encompassed
- The draft vision
- Objectives: economic development, housing, connectivity
- Delivery of the Vision

The vision and objectives reflected the Council's corporate priorities and the Northumberland Economic Strategy as well as strategies of the North of Tyne Devolution Deal and Strategic Employment Plan.

The Senior Planning Manager - Planning Policy highlighted changes to settlement specific policies including changes to the Green Belt. Areas were assigned as main towns, services centres, service village or smaller settlements; she commented on whether additional employment land and housing sites were proposed, the number of houses to be built at each location with a minimum 20% affordable housing contribution.

The public consultation on the draft plan was open from 4 July 2018 to 15 August 2018 with 23 drop-in events at community venues across the county. Members of the public were encouraged to submit their responses online. Interactive and pdf maps and frequently asked questions were available on the Council's website.

Many of the Members expressed their appreciation to the Planning Policy Team for their efforts and long hours which was expected to continue for many more months to meet deadlines.

In response to questions from Members, it was confirmed that:

- The allocation of towns and villages within the settlement hierarchy was not yet fixed and proposals for alternate designations would be considered. Towns and Parish Councils who felt their settlements were wrongly categorised when compared to other locations were encouraged to make a submission during the consultation period.
- 10 ha of additional employment land was proposed next to the Egger site in Hexham with a recommendation for a Green Belt deletion.
- Key stakeholders were being consulted on a draft infrastructure delivery plan.
- A 'call for sites' consultation had been undertaken earlier in the year to inform the site selection process for updating the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). The best sites would be selected from a

pool of land submitted with focus on brownfield sites in central areas. Town and Parish Councils with concerns were able to suggest alternative sites they considered more suitable.

Members compared a number of differences between the current draft local plan and the previously withdrawn core strategy including:

- The number of additional dwellings required in the period 2016 - 2036.
- Employment, not housing, should be the key driver.
- Improvement of the quality of jobs and skills in Northumberland was required to attract new businesses.
- There would be no deletion of the Green Belt for residential development.
- Northumberland's natural, historic and built environment should be conserved and / or enhanced.

**RESOLVED** that the contents of the report and presentation be noted.

#### **42. SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

At 7.05 pm Councillor Stewart proposed the suspension of standing orders in order to continue the meeting beyond the 3 hour limit which was seconded by Councillor Cessford.

**RESOLVED** that in accordance with the Council's Constitution, standing orders be suspended and the meeting continue over the 3 hour limit.

#### **43. MEMBERS' LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES**

A report was received which provided details on the latest position of schemes during for the period May 2017 to April 2019. (A copy of the report is enclosed with the minutes).

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

#### **44. LOCAL AREA COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME**

A list of agreed items for future Local Area Council meetings was circulated. (A copy is attached to the minutes as Appendix E).

Members were reminded that if they had any items they wished to be considered for inclusion on the work programme at the meeting of the Local Area Council Chairs to contact the Chair with details.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

**45. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be held on 14 August 2018 at Hexham House, Gilesgate, Hexham at 4.00 p.m.

**CHAIR** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE** \_\_\_\_\_