

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, 9 July 2019 at 4.00 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillor G Stewart

(Chair, in the Chair for agenda items 27 - 29 and 35 - 42)

(Planning Vice-Chair Councillor R Gibson in the chair for items 30 - 34)

MEMBERS

T Cessford
A Dale (no.s 27 - 38)
CR Homer (no.s 35 - 42)
I Hutchinson
N Oliver (no.s 27 - 34)

KR Quinn
JR Riddle
A Sharp
KG Stow

OFFICERS

N Armstrong
K Blyth
R Campbell
M Francis
D Hunt

P Jones
N Masson
R Murfin
A Olive
M Patrick

N Turnbull

Senior Planning Officer
Principal Planning Officer
Planning Officer
Senior Planning Officer
Area Manager (West),
Neighbourhood Services
Service Director - Local Services
Principal Solicitor
Director of Planning
Highways Delivery Area Manager
Principal Highways Development
Management Officer
Democratic Services Officer

ALSO PRESENT

38 members of the public
1 member of the press

27. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor C Horncastle.

28. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Tynedale Local Area Council held on 11 June 2019, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

29. DISCLOSURES OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Dale declared a personal interest in planning application 18/04446/OUT. However, as she would be speaking as the local member, she would leave the meeting after she had spoken whilst the item was considered.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

Councillor Stewart then vacated the Chair, for Planning Vice-Chair Councillor Gibson to chair the development control section of the agenda, as was the arrangement for all Local Area Councils.

30. DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The report requested the Local Area Council 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. (A copy of the report is enclosed with the minutes as Appendix A.)

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

31. 18/04446/OUT

**Resubmission: Outline planning application for residential development (flats or apartments) with all matters reserved on land located to the east of the Golf Clubhouse, Stocksfield Golf Club
Stocksfield Golf Club, New Ridley Road, Stocksfield, Northumberland
NE43 7RE**

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

Councillor Dale addressed the Committee as the local Councillor who had represented Stocksfield for 25 years and understood the concerns raised by residents on both sides of the argument. She made the following points:

- The golf club was over 100 years old and she had seen how the new club house had developed into a community asset for the residents of Stocksfield and the surrounding area. It welcomed young players such as Chris Paisley.
- The golf course had been named as the most popular community asset in the village in a recent survey by Stocksfield parish council.
- Like many other similar facilities, the club had not had an easy time financially for a number of years and needed financial assistance to enable them to pay off their debt and make improvements to the facilities, otherwise it would close.
- Planning applications for golf clubs at Rothbury and Blyth had been supported against officer advice as the value of those community assets had been recognised by Councillors who had wanted to ensure their long term future.
- The NPPF was clear on the promotion of healthy and safe communities and the rural economy, although it was accepted that the site was situated in the Green Belt.
- The golf course had a future if the Council supported and worked with it to put together a plan for a small development. This was an outline application only and she encouraged the Council to work with the club to ensure that there was minimal impact on the Green Belt. There was a fine balance to be made
- Provision needed to be made for the younger generation and maintain a valuable community asset which would be difficult to replace once gone and therefore should be considered as very special circumstance.
- The committee were requested to visit the site to better understand the layout of the land and why the golf club was of such importance to the community.
- The golf club needed to become financially secure otherwise it would close when it needed to be retained for future generations.

(Councillor Dale left the meeting after speaking whilst the application was considered).

Jen Page spoke on behalf of Stocksfield Golf Club in support of the application. She made the following comments:-

- Central to the matter was whether there were 'very special circumstances' to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and the open countryside. She considered that the harm caused by building on the land could be outweighed by the need to support the golf club.
- Whilst the application was also being refused for 3 other technical reasons, they had been discussed with officers and they were satisfied that they could be resolved. However, they could not spend money to resolve them unless they knew that the principle of development was supported.
- What were the 'very special circumstances'?
- Stocksfield Golf Club was 106 years old.

- It was a Community Amateur Sporting Club run by volunteers for the benefit of all. Membership was open to all in accordance with HMRC rules.
- The community asset was used by nearly 500 members from the local community.
- Members did not have to play golf to socialise.
- One of the rooms was to be converted into a community room.
- It was a health asset which kept the community fit and well both physically and mentally combating stress, obesity, exclusion and loneliness in the older generation.
- It was a safe place to make friends for the younger generation.
- The club was the essence of community where people worked together for something worthwhile.
- They needed to sell some land in order to fund improvements to the course and clubhouse and pay off their debts.
- Part of the site was brownfield and could be built on although part of the site was greenfield and they understood there were Green belt issues.
- They argued that sacrificing a very small area of Green Belt was justifiable in order to retain and protect the course for future generations.
- The 2013 Housing Needs Survey for Bromley and Stocksfield identified a lack of quality accommodation for downsizers. This was the reason for detailing apartments in the application as it fulfilled a need for this community. However, they were willing to work with the planning authority to develop something that would be acceptable; it did not need to be 16 apartments.
- The club finances were being run by a committed group of qualified volunteers and they were making headway controlling costs; however, they still had outstanding debt to repay and they needed to invest in the ageing facilities.
- It would only take one unfortunate event to push the club over their overdraft limit to a level that they would be closed down by the bank. They were fire fighting repairs and equipment breakdowns on a daily basis.
- The parish council survey identified that residents wanted to see more community facilities, not less. The golf club was the most used club in the village.
- It was within the committees remit to decide if the golf club had a long term future. The application had been supported with minimal funds and the goodwill of their planning consultant because this was a cause worth fighting for.
- The retention of the sporting facility that was central to the life of Stocksfield represented very special circumstances which outweighed harm to the Green Belt.

Muriel Devere also spoke in support of the application. She stated:-

- That she was a resident of Stocksfield and a long time member of the club although she would be speaking that evening on behalf of the junior section. They had a thriving junior league which competed with various clubs.

- Up to 40 children between the ages of 11 and 17 attended regular coaching sessions.
- Their young members had given the following reasons why the club was important to them:
 - It's good fun to play with friends and family several times per week.
 - It's good exercise with lots of walking.
 - It has a nice atmosphere and it was good to mix with people they wouldn't normally meet.
 - It was a release from the pressure of school having something different to focus on.
 - It was close to home so they could go by themselves.
- They said they learned respect for the rules and other people and family values from playing golf.
- She thought the club taught them much more including perseverance, determination, how to behave in society and become responsible adults.
- Chris Paisley had given the young people a role model to look up to as he had been a junior and senior member of the club and was now an international player of world ranking.

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

- Blyth golf club had not been situated in the Green Belt.
- The argument regarding the difficult financial situation was made by other organisations situated in the open countryside (not Green Belt) and therefore would not constitute very special circumstances.
- Stocksfield Golf Club was situated wholly within the Green Belt.
- The recommended approach would be to lobby for the designation of the site to be changed through the Local Plan process.
- Planning permission had already been granted for 22,000 houses which fulfilled the need for a 5 year housing supply and therefore there was no need for land in the Green Belt to be used for housing.
- The reference within the report to the Planning Inspectors comments on the Medburn appeal related to the location of New Ridley as a sustainable location.
- The exception of 'limited infilling in villages' within paragraph 145 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) had not been considered to apply in the assessment of this application.
- The Lead Local Flood Authority had objected as insufficient information had been submitted for it to properly assess the application. The missing information would need to be submitted before the committee could consider whether planning permission be granted.
- Part of the golf club's car park and the clubhouse itself could be considered to be brownfield land, however the entire site was in the Green Belt.
- The Stobart's Field site north of the golf club had been considered under different policies. It provided 100% affordable housing and was considered to be acceptable at that time as it fulfilled the criteria regarding

limited infilling in villages. It was fronted by the highway and adjacent to other dwellings in the village.

- Officers had discussed with the golf club the possibility of dwellings being built exclusively for affordable housing, which could be considered more favourably. However, this would not generate the funds required by the golf club for investment and clearance of debts.
- The circumstances when very special circumstances could be used included resolution of other problems and provision of a better facility. The financial reasons put forward by the club could, and were being used elsewhere and therefore were not considered to be very special circumstances.

Councillor Hutchinson proposed acceptance of the recommendation to refuse the application for the reasons in the officer's report, which was seconded by Councillor Stow.

Members discussed the circumstances of the club but limited information had been provided regarding the financial situation and other options investigated. Unfortunately, many organisations and sporting clubs were experiencing similar financial hardship with reducing membership numbers and had found it necessary to generate income in other ways. Whilst they sympathised with the club's situation, they did not consider that it met the test regarding very special circumstances.

As Members were familiar with the location a site visit was not required.

Members voted unanimously in favour of the recommendation to refuse the application.

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

(4.36 pm Councillor Dale returned to the meeting.)

32. 19/00764/LBC

**Listed building consent to create an opening in wall and a temporary opening to be made to facilitate building work under applications 18/00090/FUL and 18/00091/LBC
Bouchon Bistro, 4 - 6 Gilesgate, Hexham, Northumberland
NE46 3NJ**

The Senior Planning Officer introduced the report with the aid of a powerpoint presentation. She requested that the condition 10 be amended to read:

"The Local Planning Authority shall be informed in writing when the work to open the doorways commences and the temporary doorway shall be infilled and completed to the agreed specification *and method statement as outlined in Condition 5* within 6 months of the start of this work."

Joanne Wood, a senior planner with planning consultancy BH Planning and Design, spoke on behalf of the applicant and owner of the premises. She raised the following points:-

- The comments of the Conservation Officer and the Planning Officer's report, which recommended approval of the works, were welcomed.
- The opening of the 2 doorways would allow construction of the previously approved extension and refurbishment works to the restaurant to allow expansion of the business which was an asset to the town and attracted a large number of customers.
- The expansion would enable them to double the number of covers and create 6 further full time and 6 part time jobs which represented a significant opportunity for the town and its economy.
- Whilst not a matter that could be taken into consideration in the assessment of the planning application, Members' attention was drawn to the fact that the Council's Strategic Estates Team had advised that it was unable to grant the applicant temporary access to the yard area, or allow the blocked doorways in the boundary wall to be opened up, due to the impact on the Hexham House accommodation.
- If access to the rear of the restaurant during the construction phase could not be obtained via the parking area between 4-6 Gilesgate and Hexham House, then the work could not be carried out. Other alternatives had been explored but this was the only feasible option.
- Alternative parking was available nearby for guests of Hexham House during the construction phase.
- A grant of £100,000 had been obtained to allow expansion of the business on the condition that work commenced before 7 October 2019.
- If access was not granted, the owner would need to relocate to premises that would be large enough to accommodate the expanding business.
- Closure of the premises would have a detrimental impact upon the vitality and viability of Hexham town centre and put at risk the jobs of local people employed there, if the proposed works could not be undertaken.
- They hoped to engage with Strategic Estates to negotiate use of the car parking area and opening up of the blocked doorways, to enable the works at the restaurant be carried out.
- Members were requested to approve the application for listed building consent in line with the officer recommendation.

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

- The Planning system does not become involved in land ownership issues. Land ownership matters and disputes do not prevent permission being granted provided that all certificates have been properly served.
- The adjacent land owner in this case was Northumberland County Council.
- It was recommended that permission be granted for a limited period to minimise the period of disruption as the proposals had wider benefits to the town of Hexham.

- Whilst the application had been validated on 11 March 2019, the delay had been due to awaiting receipt of a report regarding the structural integrity of the wall. There was also the outstanding issue regarding permission from the adjacent landowner.
- The application should be considered on its own merits, however, the granting of planning permission would give some certainty to the negotiations.

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

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** permission for the reasons and with the conditions as outlined in the report and the amended condition No. 10 which should read

“The Local Planning Authority shall be informed in writing when the work to open the doorways commences and the temporary doorway shall be infilled and completed to the agreed specification *and method statement as outlined in Condition No. 5* within 6 months of the start of this work.”

33. 19/00980/FUL
Construction of one detached dwelling
Land North of Clontibret, Allendale Road, Hexham, Northumberland

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

Mike Coe, the applicant, spoke in support of the application. He made the following comments:

- They wished to build a new home for their family within the garden of their existing home.
- There were no objections from their neighbours, members of the public, Hexham Town Council or the statutory consultees.
- The planning officer was satisfied with the scale and design of the proposal and stated that the design was in accordance with Tynedale policy, the new Northumberland Local Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework and the Hexham Neighbourhood plan.
- The impact upon residential amenity, highway safety and parking, and ecology aspects were judged to be in acceptable and in line with existing and emerging policies.
- Their house was located amongst 50 houses on the western edge of Hexham, built as an extension of the town.
- They were 20 minutes walk from the town centre, within the Welcome to Hexham signage and within Hexham’s 30 mph sign. Queen Elizabeth High School was less than a 15 minute walk away.

- A bus stop was located outside the group of houses with a regular service into the town centre and train station.
- The group of houses was contained with Allendale Road to the South, Shaw's Lane to the West and Wines Well stream to the North. The proposed home was within those boundaries which meant the open countryside beyond was safe from encroachment.
- 20 years ago the Green Belt was extended to the west of Hexham and now washed over the group of houses and other parts of Hexham including St. Joseph's middle school. That did not stop them becoming part of Hexham. 4 Tynedale Planning Officers stated that the location was part of Hexham despite being in the Green Belt.
- Quotes from planning reports for extensions for their current home, their neighbours homes and those in the group of 50 state that they were within Hexham and in the Green Belt and not in the open countryside. The only exception being the current application to build a new house. Whilst he acknowledged that different policies applied when building a new house, the physical location of a site should not be affected
- Hexham Town Council were satisfied that the proposal represented an acceptable form of infill within the Green Belt.
- The area to the north of the site was their neighbour's front garden and garage which had been in residential use since 1935. They were not bounded by agricultural fields as stated within the report.
- The reference to gap within frontages was not referred to as part of the definition of infill within the Tynedale or national policy.
- Whilst policy STP8 within the Northumberland Local referred to gaps within frontages, the second part stated that other forms of limited infill development within the Green belt would be supported if it was justified and met the test of the NPPF. The other forms of infill did not require location in a village and the justification for this infill proposal was the fact that it was accessible to a main town with a wide range of services.
- They considered the Green belt tests in the NPPF to be met as the countryside was safeguarded from encroachment, it would not cause Hexham to merge with other settlements and the special setting of Hexham would be preserved.
- The application could be approved with existing and emerging planning policies and did not require a departure from policy. It followed the existing precedence of limited infilling within built-up areas that had been approved in line with policy.

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

- Paragraph 145 of the NPPF stated that the construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate in the Green belt unless one of the identified exceptions which included limited infilling 'in villages'. It was accepted that it was in close proximity to Hexham and a sustainable location, however, the application site was not in a village, it was situated within a small group of houses in the open countryside and Green Belt.

- The Northumberland Local Plan established a settlement hierarchy where infill development would be permitted to take place. Extensions to houses were considered under different policies.
- Building new homes in the Green Belt would set a precedent allowing any individual with a large garden to build a new home within it. The recommended course of action would be to request that the location be reviewed under the settlement hierarchy. Reviews were undertaken on a 5 yearly basis to change the designation and / or establish a settlement boundary, if it was considered that there was a need for the settlement to grow. It was not appropriate for single applications to seek exceptions under the Green Belt policy.
- A strategic decision had previously been made regarding housing developments on Green Belt land which would not normally be permitted.
- Whilst the site was effectively located within a 'suburb' of Hexham but in the open countryside, there were 22,000 houses with planning permission within the county and therefore no need for additional housing sites to increase housing provision.
- This collection of properties was not defined as a village within the settlement hierarchy. Previous decisions and advice cited by the applicant related to extensions of existing properties.
- Development of a new build in the Green Belt would require require very special circumstances and need to outweigh the harm, as per paragraphs 143 and 145 of the NPPF.
- A town, such as Hexham, would not be washed over by the Green Belt. The town of Hexham had a clear boundary and this site was outside the defined boundary.
- It was acknowledged that the site was bounded on 3 sides by other properties, however, officers considered that a new building would impact on the openness of the Green Belt. Decisions regarding new build at this location should be reviewed on a strategic basis.

Councillor Hutchinson proposed acceptance of the recommendation to refuse the application for the reasons in the officer's report. This was seconded by Councillor Stewart and unanimously agreed.

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

34. 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.

On the conclusion of the development control business at 5.14 pm, Councillor Gibson vacated the Chair and 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.

OTHER LOCAL AREA COUNCIL BUSINESS

35. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from members of the public.

36. 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.

37. LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES

Members received the following updates from the Area Managers from Neighbourhood Services and Technical Services:

Neighbourhood Services:

- The residual and recycling waste services were performing well. Ward Councillors were normally emailed regarding missed collections which had unfortunately occurred earlier in the day due to employee illness. Missed bins would be emptied the following day.
- Around 6,700 households participated in the garden waste service which brought in £278,000 per annum.
- Grass cutting was on the 5th / 6th cut of the season. Warm and wet conditions meant that the grass was continuing to grow rigorously.
- Weed control was being undertaken in-house and was slightly behind expected progress due to wet and windy conditions. Areas of concern should be reported.

- Verge cutting started in mid June and was expected to be complete by the end of July / beginning of August.
- Memorial testing was now up to date after falling behind in 2018. This was normally undertaken on a 5 yearly basis.
- Support was being provided to the In Bloom competitions in Hexham and Haltwhistle. The teams were also supporting local elections with the delivery of polling booths.

Issues discussed by Members included:

- The frequency of grass cutting at the Sele. It was cut on the same frequency of amenity grass which was on a 2-3 week cycle.
- Following a request from a climate change group, some grassed areas were being left long although weeds had been removed and grass paths were cut to provide access.
- Glyphosate herbicide was used to kill weeds and did not require specialist protective equipment. The apparatus applied large droplets on the plant surface and did not mist so there was no plume of herbicide in the atmosphere. Other alternatives were available at a greater expense however there was no statutory reason not to use the current product.
- The Council's waste recycling strategy was in the process of being reviewed and a decision would be taken after it had concluded as to whether it would be necessary to reissue guidance regarding recyclable materials. Properties or areas were targeted where there were a lot of contaminated loads or recycling was poor. A county wide issue of new labels for the recycling bins would cost approximately £60,000.
- A new commercial waste officer was in the process of visiting premises to ensure that waste was disposed of in the correct way.
- Wheelchair accessibility was to be checked at bus stops in Humshaugh.
- Graffiti on a bus shelter in Tyne Green would be checked and removed.

Technical Services:

- The network continued to be inspected on a frequency determined in accordance with the road hierarchy.
- 17,392 defects had been repaired within the 24 hour or 14 day response within the last 12 months.
- A new hot box to transport 6 tonne of tarmac had recently been purchased for the Tynedale area to reduce time lost travelling back to depot.
- A new camera had recently been acquired to check pipework; the gully wagon would be next working in Haydon Bridge and Newbrough.
- Over 200,000m² of structural patching had been carried out in the County in the last 12 months with 95,965m² had been carried out in the Tynedale area. This equated to 1650 km of road which was a substantial amount. Additional work was also carried out under the LTP Programme included road surface dressing and micro surface dressing.
- The Mayrise administration system was to be replaced with a new system called Alloy which was expected to be operation in December 2019. The new system would be interactive and enable members of the public to see

where defects had been reported and provide email updates when completed.

The following issues were raised by Members:

- Flooding issues at Tyne Green were in part due to a small bore pipe the responsibility for maintenance and replacement was the councils. The area was now identified as a hotspot and was to be included in a programme to be cleaned on a quarterly basis. Flooding in the area would be monitored and prioritised particularly if there were any properties at risk of flooding.
- An update on dropped kerbs in Wark included in the LTP Programme in 2017/18 would be provided to the local Councillor.
- The timescale for the rectification of the highway following installation of fibre would be obtained from the Street Works section.

The Chair and members thanked the Local Services teams for their work and efficient response to issues raised.

RESOLVED that the updates be noted.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

38. OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor Homer reported that she was unable to attend meetings of the Tyne Youth Forum due to a clash with another meeting.

RESOLVED that Councillor Cessford be appointed as a replacement on the Tyne Youth Forum.

39. TOUR OF BRITAIN

The Chair reported that the 2019 Tour of Britain race will be travelling through Northumberland as part of Stage 3 of the event. The event this year was a partnership stage for the North of Tyne and would run from Berwick to Newcastle via North Tyneside.

All schools had been invited to participate and take a safe place to stand along the route.

Councillor Homer, the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Arts, Leisure and Tourism was delighted that the event was again taking place in the county for the third time. It was a fantastic opportunity for tourism related businesses in the Tyne Valley which could be used as a base by spectators as the race came along the Northumberland coast and then from Gateshead to the Lakes.

She also advocated the benefits of cycling and reminded everyone that maps of cycle routes were available on line or from the tourist information centres.

A copy of information regarding the race route, road closures and contact details for event officers would be circulated to Members by email after the meeting.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

40. MEMBERS' LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES 2018/19

The Local Area Council received a progress update on Members' Local Improvement Schemes as at 1 July 2019. (A copy is enclosed with the minutes as Appendix C.)

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

41. LOCAL AREA COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME

A list of agreed items for future Local Area Council meetings was circulated. (A copy is enclosed with the minutes as Appendix D.)

It was agreed that the following suggestion be referred to the Local Area Chairs Briefing for consideration for inclusion in the work programme:

- Physical Activity Strategy

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted and the Physical Activity Strategy be referred to the Local Areas Chairs Briefing for consideration for inclusion in the work programme

42. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 13 August 2019 at Hexham House, Gilesgate, Hexham at 4.00 p.m.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____