

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

At the meeting of the **Strategic Planning Committee** held at Remotely on Tuesday, 2 February 2021 at 4.00 pm.

PRESENT

C Horncastle (Chair) (in the Chair)

MEMBERS

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

OTHER COUNCILLORS

OFFICERS

L Dixon	Democratic Services Apprentice
G Horsman	Principal Planning Officer
L Little	Senior Democratic Services Officer
H Marron	Principal Planning Officer
N Masson	Legal Services Manager (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
R Murfin	Director of Planning
E Sinnamon	Development Service Manager
R Soulsby	Planning Officer
M Williams	Team Leader - ICT Practitioner SIFA

Around xxx members of the press and public were present.

130 **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

Ch.'s Initials.....

131 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee held on Tuesday 1 December 2020, as circulated, be agreed as true record and signed by the Chair.

132 **DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Councillors Reid, Renner-Thompson, Robinson and Swithenbank all declared a personal and prejudicial interest in applications 20/03621/FUL and 20/3353/FUL as they were on the Board of Advance who were the sponsors of these applications and would withdraw from the meeting during their consideration.

The Chair advised that in order to ensure the smooth running of the meeting and to allow those Members to leave, the agenda would be reordered and application 20/02482/FUL would be heard first.

133 **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.

134 **20/02482/FUL**

Construction of 29no. residential units associated with phase 3 of the site. Land North of Fairfields, Longframlington, Northumberland.

There were no questions regarding the site visit videos.

H Marron, Principal Planning Officer introduced the application to the Committee with the aid of a Power Point presentation. An update was provided as follows:

- Formal comments from the Building Conservation Officer had been received which confirmed that the development would give no harm to heritage assets which was in line with the Officer's report.

A written statement from the Parish Council in relation to the application was read out by L Little, Senior Democratic Services Officer and would be filed with the signed minutes of the meeting. A copy would also be uploaded to the Council's website.

A written statement from the applicant in support of the application was read out by L Little, Senior Democratic Services Officer and would be filed with the signed minutes of the meeting. A copy would also be uploaded to the Council's website.

Ch.'s Initials.....

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

- If the Local Plan had been adopted then the application would have been recommended for refusal as this would impose the settlement boundary and the Plan would carry full weight and would sustain a refusal. However the Local Plan was not adopted at the current time and would not sustain a refusal. It was clarified that it had previously been the position that the further along the process the formation of the Local Plan was then the more weight it would carry, however now until the Local Plan had been adopted no weight can be placed as there were unresolved issues within the Plan in respect of settlement boundaries.
- The application would normally have been considered by the North Northumberland Local Area Council however due to the applicant pushing for a decision and the possibility of them invoking non-determination, then it had been decided it should be reported to the first available Planning Committee, which happened to be Strategic Planning.
- The affordable housing on the site would be 3 bedroomed terraced properties with 3 shared ownership and 2 affordable rent. The affordable housing team had looked at the proposals and had no objections to the type and tenure of the properties.
- It was clarified that some towns and villages had settlement boundaries in existing local plans but Longframlington did not. The new Local Plan when adopted would impose settlement boundaries on all small towns that did not currently have them.
- A settlement boundary was not intended to prevent all development beyond the boundary as exception sites could be considered. The developer was keen for this application to be decided before the boundaries were imposed through the adoption of the Local Plan.
- It had been checked and verified that a letter drop to 72 neighbouring properties had been undertaken along with a site notice and press notice which had generated 8 responses, mostly from residents of Armstrong Grove.
- It was not possible to defer the deciding of applications until the Local Plan had been adopted as the Government had made it clear that decisions must continue to be made during the pandemic. It would not be possible to refuse this application due to prematurity.
- The Local Planning Authority was duty bound to deal with each application on its own merits.

Councillor Thorne proposed refusal of the application for the reason of Cumulative Landscape Impact. He advised that he also thought this was a premature decision and highlighted how much the village had grown, evolved and absorbed the drip feed of new housing within the village. He stated that within the previous two years there had been an explosion of housing approvals and a village which had 400 properties was now heading towards another 300 newly built or approved which took the village to 700. The North Northumberland Local Area Council had refused recent applications which had both been overturned at Appeal. He advised residents had not objected to this application as they had done to previous applications for this reason. If the Local Plan had been adopted then the application would have been recommended for refusal. The proposal to refuse the application for the reason of “cumulative landscape impact” was

Ch.'s Initials.....

seconded by Councillor Renner-Thompson.

In debating the application and the proposal to refuse the application whilst Members had sympathy the local Ward Member and residents, the majority advised that they could not support the proposal to refuse the application for the additional 29 properties as there were insufficient grounds to do so and the risk of losing an appeal to great. A vote was taken as follows on the motion to refuse the application:- FOR 2; AGAINST 13; ABSTENTION 1 and therefore the motion fell.

Councillor Flux proposed approval of the application in line with the Officer's recommendation as outlined in the report which was seconded by Councillor Stewart. A vote was taken as follows: FOR 13; AGAINST 2; ABSTENSIONS 1.

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** for the reasons and with the conditions as outlined in the report and subject to a Legal Agreement pursuant to s106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) to secure the following obligations:

- Financial contribution towards secondary education provision (£48,000)
- Financial contribution towards healthcare provision (£22,200)
- The provision of 5no. on site Affordable Homes.

A five minute break was held at this point and Councillors Reid, Renner-Thompson, Robinson and Swithenbank left the meeting.

135 **20/03621/FUL**

Enabling works, comprising of the laying out of a development platform at Plot 6 Ashwood Business Park, including earthworks, tree removal, tree and landscaping management on A189 frontage, new access from internal roundabout and electrical substation.

Ashwood Business Park, Ashwood Drive, Ashwood Business Park, Ashington, Northumberland. NE63 0XF

There were no questions regarding the site visit videos.

G Horsman, Principal Planning Officer introduced the application to the Committee with the aid of a Power Point presentation. The Director of Planning advised that it was usual for the layout of industrial estates to initially include landscaping to increase the attractiveness to businesses, then as they developed, for some changes to be made. As there was now a lot of interest in the business park some additional signage etc would be required and this was a natural process in the development of any business park or industrial estate to provide good quality marketable sites to attract inward investment and create jobs.

Councillor Lang, whilst welcoming the employment opportunities within his Ward questioned if any improvements were to be made to the North Seaton roundabout as this development would put more pressure on an already dangerous roundabout. Members were advised that S106 funding would be made available for further enhancements to the roundabout as and when needed but this would be on a phased basis when required.

Ch.'s Initials.....

Councillor Stewart moved acceptance of the Officer's recommendation to approve the application as outlined in the report which was seconded by Councillor Flux. Members welcomed the prospect of additional employment in the area and following a vote it was unanimously

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

136 **20/03353/FUL**

Erection of unit or general industrial uses (Class B2) (5,626 square metres (Gross External Area), with parking, landscaping and two site accesses onto Birchwood Way, as well as associated infrastructure and earth works Land North of Birchwood Way Roundabout, Birchwood Way, Ashwood Business Park, Ashington, Northumberland

There were no questions regarding the site visit videos.

R Soulsby, Planning Officer introduce the application to the Committee with the aid of a Power Point presentation. Updates were provided as follows:-

- Condition 17 within the officer report. Additional information had been submitted to Highways allowing removal of the pre commencement element of the condition. The condition should now read:-

"No works to the site accesses from Birchwood Way or the pedestrian/cyclist access to Ashwood Drive shall commence until details of the proposed highways works to facilitate the main access junction and servicing yard access junction from Birchwood Way and the pedestrian/cyclist connection to Ashwood Drive along with all associated works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be brought into use until the highways works have been constructed in accordance with the approved plans "

• If the application were to be approved by members, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) would also request that an alteration to condition 4 be dealt with under delegated powers following the committee. The applicant has submitted additional information to Public Protection to overcome this condition. The LPA were awaiting a formal response from Public Protection regarding this.'

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

- The cladding to be provided on the building would be part of the building regulation process and would be addressed then. It did not form part of the planning application.
- The overall height of the proposed building would be 9.8m and due to the land slope would for the most part be screened from the housing with a slight view of the ridge possible.

Ch.'s Initials.....

Councillor Flux proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the application as outlined in the report and condition 17 as amended above and delegated authority be provided to the Director of Planning in respect of the wording of Condition 4, which was seconded by Councillor Hepple. A vote was taken and it was unanimously

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

137 **APPEALS UPDATE**

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

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....

Ch.'s Initials.....