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NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

At the meeting of the **North Northumberland Local Area Council** held Remotely on Thursday, 18 February 2021 at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT

G Castle (Chair) (in the Chair)

MEMBERS

S Bridgett
A Murray
G Renner-Thompson
C Seymour
J Watson

G Hill
W Pattison
G Roughead
T Thorne

OFFICERS

G Bucknall
V Cartmell

B Hodgson
P Jones
D Lathan
D Rumney

J Sharp
E Sinnamon
N Snowdon

L Tipple
J Turner
M Williams

Highways Delivery Area Manager
Planning Area Manager - Development Management
Neighbourhood Services Area Manager
Service Director - Local Services
Senior Environmental Health Officer
Principal Programme Officer (Highways Maintenance)
Planning Officer
Development Service Manager
Principal Programme Officer (Highways Improvement)
Planning Officer
Accessing Aidan Project Officer
Team Leader - ICT Practitioner SIFA

181 **PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED AT A VIRTUAL PLANNING COMMITTEE**

The procedure which would be followed for the planning items on the agenda were outlined.

RESOLVED that the information be noted

182 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor T Clark.

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183 **DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Councillor Thorne advised that he had a personal non prejudicial interest in application 20/02082/VARYCO as his family owned land and the adjacent farm to the application site.

184 **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Chair advised that at the request of Councillor Hill he had agreed that an additional item on Winter Maintenance Programme would be added to the agenda and would be discussed as item 10A. Councillor Thorne, Vice-Chair (Planning) then took the Chair for the planning items on the agenda.

185 **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

186 **20/02082/VARYCO**

REMOVAL OF CONDITION 8 (RESTRICTIONS OF TYPES OF FLYING) - TO ALLOW FLYING TRAINING, CIRCUITS, TOUCH-AND-GO MANOEUVRES TO TAKE PLACE AT THE SITE ON A PERMANENT BASIS.

VARIATION TO CONDITION 4 (CURRENT RESTRICTION IS 120 DAYS) - TO ALLOW THE NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES TO 150 DAYS PER YEAR ON A PERMANENT BASIS.

VARIATION TO CONDITION 5 (RESTRICTION ON TAKE OFFS AND LANDINGS) - TO INCREASE DAILY AIRCRAFT MOVEMENTS TO 50 MOVEMENTS IN A 24 HOUR PERIOD TO ACCOMMODATE FLYING TRAINING AND ADD 200 MOVEMENTS WITHIN A 24 HOUR PERIOD TO SUPPORT AIR RALLIES TO TAKE PLACE AT THE SITE ON A PERMANENT BASIS.

VARIATION TO CONDITION 7 (NO AIR RALLIES) - TO ALLOW THE SITE TO BE USED FOR UP TO 4 AIR RALLIES, FESTIVALS OR SIMILAR CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES PER YEAR ON A PERMANENT BASIS ON APPROVED PLANNING APPLICATION 17/03436/VARYCO (REVISED DESCRIPTION 05.08.2020).

**POULTRY FARM, ATHEYS MOOR, LONGFRAMLINGTON, MORPETH
NORTHUMBERLAND
NE65 8EG**

V Cartmell, Planning Area Manager - Development Management introduced the

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application to the Committee with the aid of a Power Point presentation. Updates were provided as follows:

- The map shown on the Committee report was out of date, however the map shown on the presentation to the Committee was accurate.
- Condition 1 – proposed to include an additional plan to the list of approved plans. The plan shows circuit patterns in the noise sensitive areas.
- Condition 5 – proposed to add the definition of a touch and go manoeuvre. The additional sentence to be included was “The touch and go manoeuvre will be classed as two movements.”

D. Lathan, Senior Environmental Health Officer advised Members that there was a legal definition of what microlights were and this was tied to the original permission provided in 2010 which limited what could fly from the site. Details were provided on the three types of microlights. The touch and go manoeuvre would allow the aircraft to touch down on the runway and then take off again, it was an important part of training and would be classed as two movements. A circuit was a manoeuvre where the aircraft would take off and then it would fly a circuit to ensure everything was ok and then it would fly off to its destination. On approach to the airfield, the aircraft would do a circuit to see which landing strip was being used and to ensure everything was ok before coming into land. In each instance it would be a single circuit of the airfield.

Statements submitted in objection to the application from Dene House Farm and Embleton Steads were read to the Committee by L. Little, Senior Democratic Services Officer and would be filed with the signed minutes and uploaded to the Council’s website.

A statement in support of the application from Mr D Coppin was read to the Committee by J Sharp, Planning Officer and would be filed with the signed minutes and uploaded to the Council’s website.

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

- The wider public benefit had not been considered as part of the application. The main issues taken into consideration in coming to the recommendation were the impact on amenity and landscape. It was proposed that rallies would be held over 24 hours four times per year with micro pilots flying in to the airfield to raise funds for local charities and then flying back out to the respective air fields, there would be no training flights during this time and the events would be open to the public.
- The increase of 40 movements per day to provide 50 in total had been easy to assess. The accumulative impact was well within levels at which Public Protection would be concerned. The World Health Organisation (WHO) stated that 55 decibels was the upper limit for annoyance and the predicted levels for 50 movements would be less than 50 decibels. The noise assessment had stated that it caused low harm in Framlington Park this also included the training flights and would not impact on amenity. The application had been assessed using the WHO standards and it was well

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below levels which would impact on amenity. The 200 movements would get closer to the 55 decibel level with 54.5 decibels at Framlington Park, but whilst it was close to the upper limit it was still below the level Public Protection would look at unless this was a daily occurrence, but these events would only be permitted on four occasions per year. With the conditions to be attached to any permission given, Public Protection were satisfied and raised no objection to the application.

- The original planning permission was submitted in 2010 and approved in 2011 however flying had already been taking place from the site under the 28 day rule, so had been going on a lot longer.
- Public Protection advised that on his system within the last 5 or 6 years it showed there had been 2 temporary event notices and no complaints found on that system in relation to the premises.
- It was clarified that the view of officers was that the proposed changes did not give rise to significant effects on the environment and would not require an Environmental Impact Assessment to be undertaken.
- The micro lights would be powered by liquid fuel, either kerosene or petrol, however the effects of these, due to the size, would not impact on air quality.

Councillor Castle proposed acceptance of the Officer's recommendation to approve the application with the conditions as outlined in the report and amended above, which was seconded by Councillor Hill.

Members understood some of the concerns which had been put forward from the objectors, however considered that the micro light centre had been in the area for a long period of time and with the conditions would not have a significant impact. In respect of a suggestion made to allow the application for the period of 12 months and then have a review, Members were advised that a reason for this would need to be provided and exactly what was to be achieved at the end of this time would also need to be identified. Due diligence had been undertaken by officers in relation to noise with modelling undertaken based on a worst case scenario and conditions to be attached to any permission given. If there was a problem in relation to noise identified during the operation of the site in breach of the conditions then enforcement action could be taken.

A vote was taken on the proposal to approve the application and it was unanimously

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

187 **20/03155/FUL**

**6NO. TOURISM UNITS WITH ASSOCIATED ACCESS, PARKING AND AMENITY SPACE
LAND NORTH OF NORTH FARM, EMBLETON, ALNWICK,
NORTHUMBERLAND
NE66 3DX**

J Sharp, Planning Officer introduced the application to the Committee with the aid of a Power Point presentation. He advised that additional letters of support had

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been received which took the total to 30 and one further letter of objection had been received in addition to the objection from the Parish Council.

A statement from Embleton Parish Council was read out to the Committee by L Little, Senior Democratic Services Officer and a copy would be filed with the signed minutes and be uploaded to the Council's website.

A statement from the applicant in support of the application was read out to the Committee by V Cartmell, Planning Area Manager and a copy would be filed with the signed minutes and be uploaded to the Council's website.

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

- This application was within the AONB which required that development would conserve or enhance the special qualities of the AONB and Officers were of the opinion that the tourism benefit or any other benefit of the proposed development outweighed the harm to the AONB. A High Court decision within the last few weeks in relation to another AONB was highlighted and the great weight that the conservation and enhancement to the AONB had played in making the decision. The applicant had offered to enter into a S106 legal agreement to extinguish the existing consent for the siting of 9 caravans should this application be granted, which had been accepted, however there was no policy which would require the applicant to do this.
- The Solicitor advised that a statutory requirement of a S106 agreement was that any obligation had to be necessary in order to allow the application to be granted. If Members were minded to approve this application then it would need to be stated that the extinguishment of the approval for the 9 caravans was a requirement for this application to be granted. She also reminded Members that should they be minded to grant permission that a comprehensive set of conditions would be attached to an application of this type.
- Whilst the policies of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan had been given weight in the consideration of the application, these had not been used for reasons for refusal. Development in the open countryside had also not been used as reason for refusal. An outline of the various policies contained in the Alnwick Core Strategy and Embleton Neighbourhood Plan were provided which both supported development in open countryside which supported farming and associated farming business and allowed development outside the boundaries for sustainable tourism and leisure respectively; and Alnwick District Wide Local Plan which protected the AONB. The application site was within the extremely sensitive site of the AONB and great weight need to be given to the AONB test.
- Caravans were seen as temporary structures as opposed to the proposed tourist units which were permanent structures and therefore increased the impact on the AONB.
- The difficult balance was understood, however the NPPF helped with guidance as it was not a straight planning balance. The recent Judicial Reviews had clearly stated that the conservation and enhancement of the AONB puts it into a special category of material considerations and it was not a planning balance, this was about protecting a very narrow coastal

strip where views and tranquillity were of great importance. Whilst there was an appreciation of the design put forward, the vernacular of the site was of importance and there was an existing policy related to the type of static caravans which would be expected to be sited. Due to the topography caravans would not be visible from the road, however this proposal would increase the built form. Caravans would be less intrusive on the coast and would deliver a diversification of tourism offer.

- The previous large farm structures on the site had been moved to the other side of the road and the existing farm steading was being masked by new buildings.
- Statements on the site capacity would not be made by the planning team and an applicant could come forward with any application, however the views of the AONB Officer would need to be sought and their opinion on site capacity discussed. An application to relocate the proposed buildings on the location proposed for the caravans would need to be the subject of a separate application and a decision was required on the application before the Committee today.
- Whilst it was regrettable that no response had been provided by Tourism Officers this was not a reason to hold up an application. The tourism benefits had been acknowledged however the proposed development would not conserve or enhance the AONB.
- Members had to consider whether the development of the proposed buildings would enhance or conserve the setting of the AONB and if the relinquishment the existing permission for the 9 caravans would assist with this. It was clarified that the wording of a S106 agreement would require the applicant to agree that the existing permission for the 9 caravans would not be implemented.

Councillor Bridgett proposed approval of the application subject to conditions to be agreed by the Director of Planning and Vice-Chair (Planning) and subject to a S106 agreement stating that planning application 19/00510/COU would not be implemented and to also include a contribution in respect of coastal mitigation. Councillor Bridgett stated he considered that the provision of 6 units rather than 9 caravans would have less impact on the setting of the AONB. This proposal was seconded by Councillor Renner-Thompson.

Councillors Pattison and Hill advised that they could not go against the recommendation of the Planning Officer and views of the AONB Officer and could not support the proposal to approve the application. An alternative view was provided by other Members of the Committee who considered that the provision of good quality traditional buildings would be an improvement to the provision of caravans.

A vote was taken as follows: FOR 8; AGAINST 2; ABSTENSIONS 0.

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** subject to conditions to be agreed by the Director of Planning and Vice-Chair (Planning) and subject to a S106 agreement stating that planning application 19/00510/COU would not be implemented and which would also include a contribution in respect of coastal mitigation.

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**VARIATION OF CONDITION 2 PURSUANT TO PLANNING APPROVAL
16/02231/COU DUE TO MODIFICATION OF SHOP FRONT DURING WORKS
(RETROSPECTIVE)
69 QUEEN STREET, AMBLE, MORPETH, NORTHUMBERLAND, NE65 0DA**

Councillor Murray did not take part in this application.

The application was introduced to the Committee by L Tipple with the aid of a Power Point presentation.

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

- Consideration had been given to the objection from the Building Conservation Officer. It was accepted that there would be harm, however guidance allowed that to be off set against any public benefit. Officers were of the opinion that the less than substantial harm when balanced against other public benefits was that the overall impact would not be sufficient to warrant refusal.
- The public benefits were ride ranging and included tourism, economy, keeping alive trade within the town centre, the tools available allowed these to be considered against harm. Officers were generally very firm on matters within a conservation area, however in this instance they considered that the development was acceptable and the recommendation to approve justified.

Councillor Watson proposed refusal of the application as he considered that the variation was inappropriate. The proposed alterations would not only result in a harmful impact to the quality and design of the scheme, but also the way in which it responds to the character of the designated heritage asset - the Amble Conservation area. This was seconded by Councillor Seymour.

A vote was taken and it was unanimously

RESOLVED that the application was **REFUSED** as the variation was inappropriate. The proposed alterations would not only result in a harmful impact to the quality and design of the scheme, but also the way in which it responds to the character of the designated heritage asset - the Amble Conservation area.

189 **PLANNING APPEALS UPDATE**

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

190 **S106 AGREEMENTS UPDATE REPORT**

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

Councillor Castle returned to the Chair at this point advising that a 10 minute break would be held. The meeting resumed at 4.40 pm

191 **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

RESOLVED that Standing Orders be suspended in order to allow the meeting to continue over 3 hours.

192 **WINTER MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME**

P Jones, Service Director, Local Services advised that over the previous 10 days teams from both Highways and Neighbourhood Services had worked on a 3 shift basis for 24 hours each day during very difficult winter conditions. There had been significant snowfall and some very challenging severe weather. All operators under winter services contracts had been deployed. The focus had been to keep the primary road networks open and only when work on these had been completed work had been undertaken on secondary routes and footpaths. The primary routes with the highest footfall were prioritised with work also being undertaken at Covid vaccination and testing sites. Only once these had been completed areas with steep slopes or shopping centres within the priority 2 group had been treated. Of the 218 CRM requests logged, 82 had been for the North of the County with 10 in Berwick with 28 formal requests for footpath gritting of which 3 had been in the Berwick area. These figures did not include any direct requests to Officers.

Councillor Castle advised that he had received emails complimenting the service provided in the Alnwick area and help had been provided in response to requests in certain areas. The Town Council had worked with the County Council to agree priority routes to be gritted and this had worked well.

Councillor Hill in acknowledging the hard work undertaken by staff stated that she had received numerous complaints from residents in Berwick with residents being unable to leave their homes due to the lack of gritting of footpaths. She highlighted that the Ranger which had previously been used in Berwick had been moved to Alnwick and she had been assured that the new contractors would be able to provide an improved service, which had not been the case. Officers clarified that the Ranger was not used to clear footpaths and that the new vehicle deployed in Berwick was able to navigate the tight streets like the Ranger but the gritter capacity was four times greater which allowed improved efficiency. During the extreme weather staff within Neighbourhood Services had all been deployed on gritting footpaths, which as previously stated, included Covid vaccination and testing centres, inclines and the town centre, it was only when these areas had been cleared that the teams were able to be deployed onto gritting of other priority 2 footways, however this would not include clearing ice and snow from all footways within estates across the town as there were not the resources available to do this and work had to be prioritised to the main routes. . Councillor Hill welcomed the offer for officers to work with the Town Council to review and agree priority routes for gritting as had been done in Alnwick.

In response to a query regarding residents clearing footpaths and any possibility liability if they did so, it was clarified that the clearing of footpaths by residents was encouraged and volunteer snow wardens who did go out to do this worked well in parts of the County.

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Councillor Bridgett stated that staff within his area had worked exceptionally hard and deserved credit for this. The Ranger had actually been out of action and staff had managed without this resource. He highlighted that a resident had actually gone to the local depot and abused staff for gritting as the person did not want salt to be carried into their home. He considered that this was unacceptable behaviour and thanked staff for their work and patience.

Councillor Thorne thanked all concerned for the great service within his area, however he highlighted that a stretch of road from Pauperhaugh to Embleton Terrace with a steep gradient had not been gritted. Officers would investigate this.

The Chair thanked officers advising that overall it had been a very good performance.

193 **LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN PROGRAMME 2021-22 AND HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE INVESTMENT IN U AND C ROADS AND FOOTWAYS PROGRAMME 2021-22**

P Jones, Service Director – Local Services provided a comprehensive introduction to the report advising that the Local Transport Plan (LTP) of just over £19m had been developed following dialogue with Town and Parish Councils along with Local Ward Members. The proposed expenditure across the four key areas was as set out in the report and the highlights brought to the Members attention

In response to a query regarding the increase in potholes recently, it was explained that there had been prolonged and heaving rainfall which had saturated the network which had been followed by 10 days of very cold temperatures which had resulted in a rapid deterioration. Work to repair these would be carried out as soon as possible and Members should report any defects.

N Snowdon would be asked to contact Councillor Bridgett regarding parking improvements in Rothbury. A suggestion was made that the old railway line which could connect Morpeth to the Coquet Valley would be a fantastic safe cycling route.

In response to questions from Councillor Hill, it was confirmed that the scheme for Main Street, Spittal could possibly be extended if it proved value for money to do so and would be looked at. The Highways Inspector had been asked to look at the road beside High Cliff shops and beside the garage as had been requested and would also look at Ladywell estate.

Councillor Renner-Thompson asked that North Bank in Belford be closed to traffic until it had set during the micro-surfacing work to be undertaken. Officers confirmed that there was one hot box which was shared between all areas in the North of the County, however it might be possible that this resource be increased as a temporary measure.

Councillor Roughead highlighted in respect of cycling routes that at the LTP workshop it had been talked about a Berwick wide scheme and questioned if this was still the case and would include Spital and Tweedmouth. It was clarified that

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it was for the main town centres as it was commuter travel this was focussed on. The work was being led by the strategic transport team in the Directorate of Regeneration, Commercial & Economy, but it would be expected that Spital and Tweedmouth would be included within Berwick, however at this stage the routes identified were within the towns, so for example would not stretch to outer areas such as Cornhill.

Councillor Castle requested that it be ensured that works on the road from Denwick to Alnwick Garden which Colas had said they would return to correct did not take place within the busy summer tourist months.

194 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting was scheduled for 2.00 pm on Thursday 18 March 2021.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....

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