

## NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

### CRAMLINGTON, BEDLINGTON AND SEATON VALLEY LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

At the meeting of the **Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley Local Area Council** held at Council Chamber - County Hall on Wednesday, 19 October 2022 at 4:00 pm

#### PRESENT

S Lee (Vice Chair in the Chair for agenda items 1 – 4)  
R Wilczek (Vice-Chair, Planning for agenda items 5 – 9)

#### MEMBERS

L Bowman  
E Chicken  
P Ezchilchelvan  
D Ferguson

B Flux  
M Robinson  
C Taylor

#### OFFICERS

J Blenkinsopp  
H Bowers  
J Murphy  
M Patrick

R Soulsby  
A Wall  
T Wood

Solicitor  
Democratic Services Officer  
South East DM Area Manager  
Principal Highways Development  
Management Officer  
Planning Officer  
Environmental Health Officer  
Principal Planning Officer

Around 6 members of the press and public were present.

#### 45      **PROCEDURE AT PLANNING MEETINGS**

The Chair outlined the procedure which would be followed at the meeting.

#### 46      **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Swinburn.

#### 47      **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley Local Area Council, held on 28 September 2022, as circulated, were confirmed as a true  
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record and signed by the Chair.

#### 48 **DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Councillor Ferguson declared a prejudicial interest in planning application 21/02285/FUL he is a member of Seaton Valley Community Council who objected to the application and the other objector, Northumbria Healthcare Trust was his employer and that he could not have an open mind or fairly assess the application so would not take part in this item and leave the room while the item was being discussed.

*(Councillor Wilczek in the Chair).*

#### 49 **DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

Councillor Wilczek, Vice-Chair Planning introduced the report which 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 planning applications, the procedure for handling representations, the requirement of conditions and the need for justifiable reasons for the granting of planning permission or refusal of planning applications.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

#### 50 **22/02237/CCD**

**Construction of new single storey modular building to house reception and Nurse provision including necessary improvements to boundary fencing for safeguarding and landscaping (soft and hard) to improve circulation and outdoor play space in line with DfE requirements.  
Bedlington Station Primary School, School Road, Bedlington.  
Northumberland. NE22 7JQ**

Ryan Soulsby, Planning Officer informed members that there were no updates to the report. No objections had been received to the application and planning permission be approved subject to the conditions and reasons in the report.

Councillor Flux moved the recommendation to approve the application which was seconded by Councillor Taylor and unanimously agreed.

**RESOLVED** that the application be **GRANTED** permission subject to the conditions/reasons in the report.

*(At this point in the meeting, (16.10) Councillor Ferguson left the Chamber).*

#### 51 **21/02285/FUL**

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**Erection of 92 dwellings and associated access, infrastructure and landscaping.  
Land South of Plant Based Valley, Avenue Road, Seaton Delaval,  
Northumberland.**

Tamsin Wood, Principal Planning Officer provided the following updates:-

- 1) After further discussion with Highways, condition 33, which related to vehicular access being constructed in accordance with the approved plans and NCC standards and specification would be deleted
  
- 2) On site amenity green space and the following contributions were sought:
  - £71,879.58 for contribution towards park and gardens
  - £49,286 for play space contribution
  - £60,600 for healthcare contribution
  - £56,580 for Coastal Service Mitigation contribution
  - £243,000 for education contribution
  
- 3) The report recorded the recommendation of the application was to be GRANTED permission subject to further comments from Public Protection however this was to be amended as comments had been received.

Paragraphs 7.23 to 7.30 of the report dealt with noise impact and potential conflict with the adjacent factory use. It sets out that Public Protection required the submission of a new noise impact assessment report which assesses the existing and potential acoustic scenarios of the adjacent factory site, should the factory be developed further and any necessary mitigations which would reduce impact on residents from future development at the NHS site, which in turn would lead to more compatibility between the two sites and less potential for restrictions to be placed on the NHS.

Final comments had now been received from Public Protection who had removed their objection, having assessed the further assessment submitted by the applicant. They state - 'With respect to noise, an addendum report has been submitted which has reported data from a live monitoring exercise in October 2022. The submission of this report has satisfied Environmental Protection that the proposed housing can be developed without a risk of significant harm to residential amenity – the dominant noise sources have been identified as aircraft and the existing road network. Furthermore, the consultant has demonstrated that an increased use of the existing NHS site (as is permissible under Permitted Development) is compatible with the sensitive end-use proposed under this application. The applicant's proposed noise mitigation approach (the orientation of buildings and habitable rooms and the positioning of an acoustic fence along the site boundary) satisfies the requirement of Paragraph 187 of the NPPF that the applicant (the "agent of change") provides suitable mitigation to ensure that the existing commercial use does not have unreasonable restrictions placed upon their activity.'

Therefore, based on these further comments she did not want to change the recommendation to grant permission but did wish to amend the recommendation

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to omit the words 'further comments from Public Protection'.

Ms Wood then continued to share a presentation of the application site.

Councillor Sue Bowman from Seaton Valley Community Council was in attendance and raised the following concerns:-

Seaton Valley objected to the proposal and considered that it conflicted with the provisions of the Northumberland Local Plan and there were no material considerations to outweigh this conflict.

Seaton Valley had significant concerns regarding the location of the proposed development. Whilst it was accepted that the part of the site that was proposed for housing development outside the Green Belt, the impact of the relationship with and proximity of it to the adjacent NHS site, was of great concern.

This concern clearly echoed the NHS who had explained their detailed objections that the wider site had huge potential to provide Northumbria Healthcare Trust with office, manufacturing and warehousing space to service their own supply chain and meet clinical and operational functions both within Northumberland and across the wider region. Also, that the site would soon accommodate almost 600 employees which would provide a range of jobs available to the local community.

Seaton Valley Council believed that granting planning permission for residential development in close proximity to an active employment area would hinder the use of the site as a manufacturing and innovation hub. This would be in clear conflict with the provisions of plan policy QOP2 as well as national planning policy.

Local plan policy QOP2 was clear that neighbouring uses must be compatible and there were no unacceptable adverse and harmful impact from, amongst other things, noise and disturbances. Paragraph 178 of the NPPF states that existing businesses and facilities should not have unreasonable restrictions placed on them as a result of development permitted after they were established.

It was noted that the applicant had suggested that the NHS site was bounded by residential development to the east and north east and that if the application was approved, then the new dwellings would not be significantly closer to the boundary than existing dwellings. Whilst this was not disputed, without residential development to the south, the NHS would have the flexibility to locate activities that generated more noise to the south of the application site, away from existing dwellings.

Seaton Valley had significant concerns that if the application was approved, it would make the operation of the adjacent site by the NHS incredibly difficult and would not want the NHS to reconsider its full plans for the development and growth of the site and potentially relocate elsewhere.

It was also unclear why, given this application was submitted in June 2021, it was being presented to committee when a full and considered response from the Public Protection team had not been used to inform the recommendation within the committee report.

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Seaton Valley Council therefore urged members of the committee to refuse the applications as a result of the clear conflict with the local plan and national planning policy.

James Hall, on behalf of the agent Bellway was in attendance and made the following comments:-

They had been working with the Council for 22 years providing quality schemes. Bellway was a leading national 5-star company in the delivery of houses.

They had worked successfully with officers since validation of the application in June 2021.

With the exception of Barratt Homes, there had been little development in the Seaton Valley area and the development would support the Northumberland Line, economy growth and community development.

He referred to the application site showing white land and stated that consideration had been careful to not allocate housing within the Green Belt.

The Northumberland Local Plan defined settlement boundaries for all Main Towns, Service Centres and Service Villages. The Seaton Valley Neighbourhood Plan did not define settlement boundaries and that part of the site which was white land lay directly next to the built-up area of Seaton Delaval but within the Green Belt inset boundary. Under STP1, Seaton Delaval was identified as a service centre which could accommodate employment, housing and services which maintained and strengthened their role. The site was located in a sustainable location with two bus stops located within 120 m of the site with connections to Newcastle and Cramlington and Blyth.

Bellway were mindful of the NHS facility and had been in regular correspondence with the NHS to address concerns.

Bellway did not want to impede on the facility and had put careful thought to the design of the scheme and had gone above and beyond to ensure noise mitigation was put in place with an assessment provided by Apex Acoustics, with a 1.8 metre fence acoustic fence being constructed along the northern site boundary.

With reference to concern over highway safety to the main access into the site, this had been discussed with the NHS and the position of the access had been redesigned.

In response to questions/comments, the following information was provided:-

- The Education Department had been consulted as part of the application. They required a contribution of £243,000 which would be used towards Astley High School and SEN Provision.
- The Education Officer had looked at capacities and had not come forward with a need for a contribution towards the primary school.
- There would be a percentage of children of primary school age living in the properties. The properties were of various types and sizes with some

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- people downsizing to smaller properties.
- Paragraphs 7.23 to 7.30 dealt with noise impacts and highways had asked for further modelling to be submitted.
  - If the NHS implemented any further growth or extensions, there were further restrictions. The applicant had done as much they could and had carried out additional surveys.
  - A Transport Assessment had been carried out and was well within the capacity of the roundabout and Members were referred to Condition 34 of the report.
  - Best practice guidance was used for the narrowing of the road.
  - The site for the development was not employment land.
  - The land had previously been used as part of Proctor & Gamble and had not been used for anything else.
  - The applicant would provide a fence along the boundary and also planting to soften the appearance.
  - The details of the acoustic barrier were detailed in condition 20 of the report.
  - Under Policy STP1 Seaton Delaval is identified as a service centre which can accommodate employment, housing and services that maintains and strengthens their roles. As such it is a suitable place for housing and this policy has been through the Local Plan process.

Councillor Flux moved approval of the application in line with officer recommendation and the amendments to the conditions.

Councillor Flux's motion was not seconded and the motion fell.

Councillor Bowman stated that the application was not in line with the Local Plan and would prevent the NHS from further development in the future and recommended that the application be refused, this was seconded by Councillor Chicken.

Councillor Flux stated that there were no reasons to vote against the application and would not vote against the application.

Judith Murphy, Planning Area Manager, advised that specific reasons were required for refusal and there was no application from the NHS. The committee had a duty to determine what was before them in accordance with the Local Plan.

Councillor Bowman stated that the white land had not been allocated for housing and had been originally allocated for business and employment use and was not in accordance with Policy ECN7, paragraph 187 of the NPPF. The land was given to Proctor & Gamble and Coty for the development of factory use and office block.

The Planning Area Manager stated that in paragraph 7.27 of the report, the officer had addressed policy ECN7 and the development site was not in the employment area and so this policy was not relevant.

Councillor Chicken stated her concern about future over development in Seaton Delaval and the villages of Seaton Valley and links between villages becoming

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blurred. No thought had been given to the primary school and had not been mentioned at all.

The Planning Area Manager explained that consultation had been undertaken with schools and the primary school had not raised any issues.

In response to a question regarding the previous use of land for employment, all things had been considered to minimise impact and the site was suitable for housing.

Alex Wall, Environmental Health Officer referred to paragraph 187 of the NPPF and stated that the NHS in this case would not have any unreasonable restrictions placed on them. They could develop the site but would still need to provide mitigation to protect any housing to the east of the site. Paragraph 187 was to protect the current and future use of the site.

Councillor Bowman referred to noise which had previously been mitigated by Proctor & Gamble and Coty by surrounding trees and was also concerned about highways access to the housing site.

The Principal Planning Officer affirmed that the housing target in Northumberland had been reached. This was a windfall site and policy STP1 in the Northumberland Local Plan identified Seaton Delaval as a service centre which contributed to the local economy.

In response to a question regarding future expansion of the NHS facility and having to move to another site, it was confirmed that there were 500 jobs in total at the NHS site, allocations had been allocated at future growth potential and traffic growth. In addition, there was the Green Belt area around which would restrict growth around that area.

Councillor Bowman reiterated his reasons to refuse the application and stated that the white land was given up for business and employment use.

Mrs Murphy stated that there needed to be clear planning reasons for refusal of the application.

Councillor Bowman stressed that the land was not designed for housing and had reservations regarding the housing access and would be voting against the application.

The Principal Planning Officer explained that site had not been allocated as previous employment land in the previous plan.

Members discussed the reasons for refusal and concluded that there were no lawful reasons to refuse the application and requested that the motion to refuse the application be withdrawn.

Councillors Bowman and Chicken agreed to withdraw their motion for refusal.

Councillor Robinson proposed a further motion to defer the application in order for a site visit for members to gain a better understanding of the location of the

fencing and all acoustic access matters. This was seconded by Councillor Taylor.

Upon being put to the vote, 6 voted in favour of the deferral for a site visit and 2 voted against.

**RESOLVED** that the application be deferred for a site visit.

52 **APPEALS UPDATE**

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

53 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 23 November 2022.

**CHAIR**.....

**DATE**.....

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