

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

CRAMLINGTON, BEDLINGTON AND SEATON VALLEY LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

At the meeting of the **Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley Local Area Committee** held at Seaton Sluice Community Centre, Albert Road, Seaton Sluice, NE26 4QX on Tuesday, 21 February 2023 at 4:00 pm

PRESENT

M Swinburn (Chair) in the Chair, for agenda items 76-78 and 81-83
R Wilczek (Vice Chair) in the Chair, for agenda items 79-80

MEMBERS

L Bowman	E Chicken
W Daley	C Dunbar
P Ezhilchelvan	D Ferguson
B Flux	M Robinson
C Taylor	R Wilczek

OTHER COUNCILLORS

G Sanderson

OFFICERS

J Blenkinsopp	Solicitor
H Bowers	Democratic Services Officer
P Jones	Service Director-Local Services
R Laughton	Senior Planning Officer
J Murphy	South East DM Area Manager
J Rose	Interim Director of Regeneration
N Snowdon	Principal Programme Officer (Highways Improvement)
Fenwick	Housing Delivery Manager

Around 4 members of the press and public were present.

76 CHAIR'S OPENING COMMENTS

The Chair referred to the recent sad passing of Michael Carle, Highways Delivery Manager who had been a respected officer and colleague and would be dearly missed. A minute's silence was requested as a mark of respect.

77 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lee.

Ch.'s Initials.....

78 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley Local Area Council, held on 17 January 2023, as circulated, were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

79 **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.

80 **21/01588/FUL**

**Proposed erection of 9 no. 2 bed affordable bungalows
Land north east of Hastings Hartley Arms, Lysdon Avenue, New Hartley,
Northumberland**

Richard Laughton, Senior Planning Officer introduced the report with the aid of a power point presentation.

John Barrell was in attendance and spoke in objection of the application. The main key points were:

- What he was going to say would not change the decision on the application. However, he wanted to register his complete lack of trust in the planning system.
- He was an immediate neighbour to the site and despite suffering 3 years of building work on 2 sides, he welcomed the proposed removal of the unkempt eyesore and replacement, with more useful and much needed affordable housing. It was the way in which this was being achieved that was objectionable.
- The proposal was promoted on behalf of Advance Northumberland, a wholly owned development company of NCC, whose focus was the regeneration of Northumberland. It should, therefore, be setting an exemplar of planning development to maximise development opportunities rather than seeking minimal change to the existing isolated plot.
- The officer's report regarding Planning Policy cited compliance with STP1, 2 and 3 as New Hartley was recognised as a service village within the NLP and served by public transport and comprises facilities including a public house, convenience store and primary school.
- The bus service is X7 which was scheduled every half an hour (but increasingly with unplanned cancellations) between Newcastle and Blyth and the nearest shop was over 300m walk distance from the site.

Ch.'s Initials.....

- The pub did not serve food and the school was oversubscribed.
- Walking and cycling routes were limited in the immediate vicinity of the site and the provision of communal cycle storage with car parking directly in front of properties was a token gesture to sustainability.
- Policy QOP 4 highlighted that new development would be expected to incorporate well-designed landscaping and respond appropriately to any existing landscape features. Apart from internal site clearance, the proposal sought to maintain the substantial tree boundary to the north west isolating and screening the development from the rest of the village. This created a secluded ghetto with a single point of access.
- The application was validated by the Planning Department in April 2021. During the intervening two years, all that had changed was a watering down of the proposed mitigation work, principally to the access proposals. Those started out as a substantial simplification and separation of a complex of 5 roads all meeting within 15m of each other. The final proposals now presented were to retain this complexity of movement and add a further road within that area, yet Highways Development Management only comments related to the internal layout, which would not be adopted. Any concerns to be finalised and addressed in a S278 agreement was yet to be signed.
- No consideration seemed to have been given to the wider context and setting. Seaburn View was the prime pedestrian route for children walking to school from the existing housing and the new development of 286 houses in Church Fields. The added complexity of these junctions was bound to have an adverse impact on both road safety and sustainability. If, for no other reason that parents would perceive additional danger and choose to drive children to school. The recently installed pedestrian and cycle zone around the school was already being abused by parents who would not walk their children to school. The proposal in its current form would only make that worse.
- Alternative access (which had been repeatedly discounted) was possible via Montford Road/Hastings Terrace to the north west as this already provided vehicular access to the garages which were currently well used, rather than being abandoned as referred to in the Open Space Assessment. The current tenants had been served with notices and told to remove their property before demolition started in 10 days. The closest alternative facilities they had been offered were in Ashington or Bedlington, which was not very convenient or sustainable for a resident of New Hartley.
- The remainder of the site was used as recreational space by adjoining properties in Seaburn View and the Open Space Assessment discounted that as not having any recreational value to local people, despite children playing there regularly under the watchful eye of their parents/guardians from the surrounding windows. Again, the alternative was stated as a minute's walk to unsupervised Protected Open Space to the north east. This was more like a 5 minute walk and no responsible adult would allow their young child there unsupervised. The realistic alternative was playing on the front street, which this development made more complicated with the additional traffic movements.
- Therefore, the Open Space Assessment did NOT provide a credible case for poor recreational quality and amenity space.
- So much more could be achieved with the site.

Ch.'s Initials.....

- He urged the Committee to consider carefully how it treated isolated development proposals as part of a structured approach to planning development, being proactive rather than reactive.

Alex Franklin, Hedley Planning Consultants, agent for the applicant was in attendance and made the following comments:

- He thanked members for the opportunity to speak on behalf of Ascent Homes in support of the application for a 100% affordable housing development that would be acquired, let and managed by Northumberland County Council.
- He fully supported the recommendation for approval as detailed within the Committee report and thanked the officers for working with them as they had addressed all comments raised by consultees and local residents.
- The development of 9, 2 bedroomed bungalows, specifically for those with level access needs within a sustainably accessible location would meet a specific housing need for the area, as identified within the Northumberland Strategic Housing Market Assessment.
- As all dwellings would be 100% affordable, members should give this significant weight within the planning balance.
- The proposed, under utilised site was not allocated as Open Space within the Neighbourhood Plan. It was partially recognised as brownfield land with the secluded area of greenfield land enclosed to the rear of existing properties and not visible from the public highway. The Open Space Assessment submitted in support of the application demonstrated a wide variety of more accessible areas of public open space within New Hartley of a much higher quality. The site, therefore, did not contribute to the needs of the local population within the immediate area, as supported by the Parish Council.
- The applicant had worked cooperatively with the Local Authority throughout the application process, addressing all consultee comments and any concerns from local residents.
- With particular regard to accessibility and highways safety, the site access had been significantly altered in response to those comments. An independent Road Safety Audit had been undertaken to demonstrate the development did not provide safe access onto and from the existing highway network. The proposed access as detailed on plans was considered appropriate and safe by highway professionals.
- With regards to comments raised on the planning portal:
 - Although the development site was situated within the Coal Authority Standing Advice Area, Public Protection had no objections to the proposal, subject to Condition 11, 12 and 13 which related to ground conditions.
 - There would be no impact upon residential amenity during the construction phase as an appropriate Construction Management Plan would be submitted to and agreed with the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development within Condition 9 and 17.
 - There was no objection from the County Ecologist. Existing trees along the northern boundary were to be retained and ecological enhancements, such as bat and bird boxes would be secured within Condition 5. As noted within the Committee report, whilst the loss of a single tree was regrettable, within the planning balance, the provision of affordable, level access bungalow to meet an unidentified need should be given significant

Ch.'s Initials.....

- weight within the assessment.
- Both Northumbrian Water and the Lead Local Flood Authority had no objections to the drainage proposals.
- To summarise, the proposal provided much needed affordable housing, in line with the aims of the NPPF and Northumberland Local Plan. The 2 bed bungalows had capacity to be “life-time” homes within a sustainably accessible location. All the technical information submitted had concluded that the proposed development would not have an adverse impact upon the surrounding area and its residents.
- As the proposal fully accorded with all relevant planning policy, he respectfully requested that members approved the application before them, as recommended by the Planning Officer.

The following responses were provided to questions from Members of the Committee:

- The people who owned the garages had not been compensated
- The existing garages were unsafe. And unsightly.
- Ascent Homes had issued Demolition Notices and no complaints or responses had been received. It was not a planning issue, but for the landowner to agree with those who had garages on their land.
- There had been no objections from Highway regarding access.
- This was a 100% affordable housing scheme and would be affordable rent.
- The properties would be advertised on Homefinder and prioritised for individuals in housing need.
- The ownership issue for the demolition of the garages was not a material planning consideration. There had been no objections received in terms of them being demolished and the applicant separately issued demolition notices where no complaint was received.
- Mr Laughton had not been involved in a previous housing development in New Hartley (15/01182/FUL) and therefore could not comment on the affordable housing comments.
- The application had been supported by drainage proposals to discharge into the existing mains. Northumbrian Water and LLFA had been consulted with no objections, subject to conditions.
- The Housing and Enabling Team had been unsuccessful on the Barratt site (15/01182/FUL) but then had been allowed at appeal by PINS. Again, the current application could only be considered for 100% affordable housing which was a positive factor.

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

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

81 **APPEALS UPDATE**

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

Ch.'s Initials.....

82 LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

Paul Jones provided an introduction to the report which set out the details of the draft Local Transport Plan (LTP) programme for 2023-24 for consideration and comment by the Local Area Council. Final approval of the programme would be made by the Executive Director responsible for Local Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Local Services.

In response to members questions, the following information was provided:

- Where possible, specific information had been provided, schemes were generic and enabled works to be undertaken.
- There was a need to retain generic funding for rural safety schemes.
- If a scheme was not listed, it would not be on the programme
- The speed surveys would be done on schools when it was applicable to do so.
- The comments regarding guidelines at West End School and bus stop raised kerbs, High Pit Road, Cramlington would be forward to Highways Delivery and followed up.
- Micro surfacing for Chesterhill and CATERON Way would be considered in a future programme.
- The footpaths in Alexandra Park would be looked into.
- An email to be forwarded to N Snowdon regarding the dual carriageway at CLV.
- The petition report on the A193 between South Beach and Seaton Sluice should be available soon.

(Councillor Ezchilchelvan left the meeting at 5.16 pm)

- Mr Snowdon would follow up the re-costing of the 20 mph scheme from Barns Park/Southfield Gardens and report back.
- Allocations were always difficult and were based on asset transfer/surveys and feedback from local members.

(Councillor Ezchilchelvan re-joined the meeting at 5.26 pm).

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

83 NE DEVOLUTION UPDATE AND REGIONAL CONSULTATION

Councillor Sanderson informed members that the Leaders of Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland Councils had agreed in principle to a devolution deal which the Government had 'minded' to approve.

Public consultation was taking place at all Local Area Councils and an event at Alnwick had been well attended.

The consultation was on the Council's website, with a list of venues of paper copies of the consultation.

Janice Rose, Interim Director of Planning and Economy shared a presentation of Ch.'s Initials.....

which the key points were:

- The 'minded to' deal would set out a new framework
- The new combined authority would be headed up by a Metro mayor, who was expected to be elected in 2024
- The deal would provide significantly more power and money to the region than at present
- Transport – previously not a lot of funding had been devolved to the north east
- Investment – a significant fund supported by an investment plan
- Skills, education and inclusion – funding towards expanding adult education, with focus on employability and inclusion
- Housing, land and digital infrastructure - devolved housing powers and expansion of brownfield funding, as well as additional regeneration to improve communities.
- Clean energy and net zero – measures to unlock potential and increased investment in our major industries, businesses and infrastructure to support clean energy and net zero transition – including a unique 'Green Superport' model.
- Rural economy and sustainability – clear focus on rural growth and stewardship, including a specific rural investment plan and focus on food security, biodiversity and nature gain. The only areas not included were Cramlington and Blyth. A specific rural board would be set up which Northumberland would chair.
- Culture, tourism and place – opportunity to collectively utilise and enhance the region's greatest assets and partnerships.
- Health and public service reform – tackling inequalities by including measures to drive innovation in prevention, healthy housing, and social care collaboration

The seven local authorities had carried out a review to explore whether a new combined authority for the region would be beneficial to the North East, which concluded that the new combined authority would benefit economic growth and delivery of public services, devolved funding and also unlock new funding and powers.

In response to members questions, the following information was provided:

- The deal would give the power for transport to work collaboratively, with better connectivity and integrated ticketing
- Mini park and ride schemes would be explored to help extend the reach of bus services
- Governance was in place that would work, the Mayor would understand all the needs and aspirations. There had been no appetite to have a referendum in the area.
- There was a constitution that all 7 councils and the Mayor had to agree to a list of key decisions
- A consultation dashboard was being produced on a regular basis and Sarah McMillan would be able to share the information on her return from leave.
- The suggestion of signposting the consultation to young people through the school's network and engaging with the Youth Parliament would be

Ch.'s Initials.....

- looked into, if not already in hand
- The Joint Transport Committee would be subsumed into the Combined Authority.
 - The decision making process would be strong.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....

Ch.'s Initials.....