

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

At the meeting of the **North Northumberland Local Area Council** held at Berwick Leisure Centre, Northumberland Road, Tweedmouth, Berwick Upon Tweed, TD15 2AS on Thursday, 22 September 2022 at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT

G Castle (Chair) (in the Chair)

MEMBERS

T Thorne
W Pattison
C Seymour
C Hardy
M Swinbank

G Hill
G Renner-Thompson
J Watson
I Hunter

OFFICERS

G Bucknall
M Bulman
V Cartmell
B Hodgson
J Hudson
I Hewitt
R Little
T Lowe
J Sharp

Highways Delivery Area Manager
Solicitor
Planning Area Manager
Neighbourhood Services Area Manager
Senior Planning Officer
Rural Business Growth Programme Manager
Assistant Democratic Services Officer
Principle Planning Officer
Senior Planning Officer

Around 20 members of the press and public were present.

42 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Bridgett, Councillor Clark and Councillor Mather.

43 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the North Northumberland Local Area Council held on Thursday, 18 August 2022, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and be signed by the Chair.

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44 **DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Councillor Hunter declared that she had a personal and prejudicial interest in item 7 of the agenda, planning application 22/01660/FUL, as she would be speaking as the Ward Member and would not take part in any debate or vote.

Councillor Watson and Councillor Renner-Thompson declared that they were directors of Ascent Homes and would leave the meeting for item 5 of the agenda, planning application 18/00751/REM

Councillor Hardy in the chair.

45 **DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

RESOLVED that this was noted.

Councillor Renner-Thompson and Councillor Watson left the meeting.

46 **18/00751/REM**

T. Lowe – Principal Planning Officer introduced the application with a PowerPoint presentation and gave the following updates to the committee:

- In some paragraphs of the report, it referred to the “emerging NLP”, that was a mistake and wherever this was in the report, the policies referred to were the adopted policies of the adopted NLP and the officer assessment was made using the adopted policies of the adopted NLP.
- A number of late representations were received and were circulated to members prior to the meeting. The contents of the late representations had been addressed within the report and members had had the opportunity to view all objections.

M. Adams spoke in objection to the application, and gave members the following information:

- The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 stressed good design of the built environment and that developments should be visually attractive and sympathetic to local character and poorly designed developments should be refused.
- The Northumberland Local Plan stated that the design of any new development should make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness and respect its surroundings.
- The proposed development site was an 8-acre, greenfield area in open countryside, outside the Thropton settlement boundary and any development would be visually intrusive, as it would be viewed from the main road.
- The size, scale and density of the urban-style estate development were totally unsuitable for the beautiful rural setting.
- It would increase a small village by 40%
- The proposed house designs were uniform boxes using different brightly

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coloured brick and tile finishes and were in stark contrast to the natural sandstone buildings that lined Thropton's main street.

- The small housing estate of Wreigh Burn Fields were mainly bungalows, set well back from the road with gardens and boundary hedges. In contrast many of the new houses were two storey and would tower over the bungalows and conservatories along their western boundary and were not in keeping in scale, design or appearance.
- The application was an unimaginative, unsympathetic, unsustainable development clinging onto the back of a dubious, out of date application.

Councillor N Tuckey spoke on behalf of Thropton Parish Council and gave the following information:

- The total number of existing planning proposals in Thropton should be considered as a unity, as plans should fit in with the long terms aims of the village and its population within the setting of the County Councils development plan.
- Thropton had an aging population, and a growing population of elderly widows living alone
- Developments from the previous 25 years, had been occupied by retired people.
- Thropton needed more affordable housing and houses to rent.
- There would be a total of 96 new dwellings, including a recently approved development, a 50% increase in the village.
- The average household in Thropton owned 2.7 cars, with the update of electric cards, the Parish Council queried where all of the charging points would go.
- The Parish Council objected to this application.

N. Turnbull spoke in support of the application and gave the committee the following information:

- Ascent Homes welcomed the conclusion of the Officer's Report including that all procedures were followed correctly in respect of the submission.
- The proposed number of units was reduced from 79 to 65, which had allowed developers to incorporate a significant amount of green space throughout with a variety of sustainable drainage features throughout the site.
- The scheme offered a number of public benefits including: the provision of affordable homes; increase in population supporting existing services; the provision of a bus turning circle within the village and s278 works securing improvements to the immediate locality such as a bus stop and a new footpath.
- There were no statutory consultee objections to the proposal and the development would provide 65 homes in a desirable location.
- 22% affordable housing would be provided.

Following members questions to the planning officers, the following information was provided:

- The application was valid, and the reserved matters was to be considered only.
- Street lights would be dealt with by the street adoption process.
- The development sits within the settlement boundary for Thropton.

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- The number of houses and size of units was acceptable.
- The reserved matters application was submitted in time to keep the application valid.
- A condition to make the road-facing units to be of natural stone could be added to the planning permission.
- The X14 bus services the area.
- There were no play facilities for children in the development.
- Condition 16 in the report includes the provision for Electric Vehicle Charging Points.
- The principal of residential development was established at Outline and any reason for refusal should be based on the matters reserved by condition

Councillor Thorne proposed to accept the officers recommendation with a condition that all properties adjacent to the road, the elevation abutting the road to be of a natural stone appearance with plot numbers to be specified, with exact wording delegated to officers in conjunction with the chair of planning. This was seconded by Councillor Castle.

Councillor Thorne explained that he was sympathetic with the objectors and that the application was originally submitted before the new Local Plan was adopted but as the application was a reserved matters application, there was no planning reasons to refuse the application, this was agreed by Councillor Castle and Councillor Hardy.

A vote was taken as follows: FOR; 6, AGAINST; 1, ABSTAIN; 1

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** in line with the conditions set out in the report and a further condition that all properties adjacent the road, the elevation abutting the road to be of a natural stone appearance with plot numbers to be specified, with exact wording delegated to officers in conjunction with the chair of planning.

Councillor Renner-Thompson and Councillor Watson returned to the meeting.

47 **21/04136/FUL**

J. Sharp – Senior Planning Officer introduced the application with a PowerPoint presentation and gave the following updates to the committee:

- Paragraph 7.2 in the report should have read “The application proposes 2no affordable units within the development”
- Paragraph 7.73 in the report. Legal advice was received after the publication of the report stating the works to be carried out the replacement of the septic tanks could be conditioned using a Grampian condition as opposed to a S106. The proposed condition would read along the lines of: “The development hereby approved shall not be occupied until the proposed works to replace the two septic tanks at Middleton Low Farm, Belford with modern package treatment plans have been carried out in accordance with the details to be approved in writing by the local planning authority” Exact wording of the condition would be

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- delegated to the planning officers.
- Paragraph 7.74 in the report. Lowick did not meet the trigger for a second homes condition, therefore there would be no primary occupancy clause on the proposed dwellings.
- Condition 9.1 would include Nutrient Neutrality and maintenance.

J. Huddart spoke in objection to the planning application and gave the committee the following information:

- The scheme clashed with the community's Neighbourhood Plan, which was yet to be adopted.
- The Neighbourhood plan had been through all phases of public consultation and was being prepared for the Inspector. No objections to any aspect were raised by any party. The plan included the village boundary, excluding the application site.
- The plan maintains a vibrant and healthy community which satisfied the needs for new and better housing and facilitates of all types and affordability's, preserving the rural character of the village.
- The Neighbourhood Plan noted the existence of 37 undeveloped sites with planning permission, and the existence of brownfield sites and other land within the village which could prove more, exceeding the national and county development requirements.
- The Neighbourhood Plan village boundary sought to limit encroachment on open farmland until 2036, aiming to preserve the character of the settlement and encouraged the use of its existing "land bank".
- The proposed development was adjacent to the Village Common, valued by all as an open space, offering a direct link to fields and an uninterrupted view of the nearby Kyoel Hills.
- The previous proposal was not described as "Phase 1", the remainder of the field was left as farm land, which the dumping of building waste was negated.
- The development would add to the pressure on village community facilities.
- Phases 1 and 2 together would bring around 50 people to the village – a 10% increase in population.
- The adjacent stream, the Low, floods the Common in extreme weather, when water was trapped and could not drain away. In the Northumberland Local Plan on p213, part 11 – Water Environment, section 11.2 bullet 3 identifies "maximum resistance and resilience to flood risk". Nearby residents feared that the drainage scheme to be provided would not help to mitigate the increased number of bad weather events that were anticipated.

N. Craig spoke in support to the application and gave the following information:

- GMC was a local business who employed skilled local people that lived in the area. GMC also used a local supply chain.
- Having completed the 8 properties adjacent to the site, GMC were in the process of completing the necessary infrastructure works. GMC were obligated under Section 38 and s104 agreement to complete the work.
- There was a waiting list of 30 names for the 16 new homes planned.
- If approved, the strategy was to complete 2 homes per year, with minimal impact on the local community.

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- The application had undergone extensive and detailed analysis of the proposal by LPA, technical consultants, including ecology, public health, LLFA, Northumbrian Water, NCC Highways and Natural England.
- Specific attention has been given to the drainage capacity and flooding. The new infrastructure included storm water capacity, designed to deal with extreme weather conditions.
- The homes were well designed with energy efficiency built into construction, with insulation and airtightness as standard.
- As part of the 16 new homes, 2 were offered as affordable housing, with 45% discount market value.
- Other financial contributions included local amenity - £9,500, play area - £12,000, parks £12,500, coastal mitigation - £9,600, nitrogen neutral standard - £116,000, affordable homes - £330,000. Total contributions equal to £489,000

Following questions from members to the planning officers, the following information was provided:

- The Neighbourhood Plan was noted in the report, it was at a reg 14 stage meaning that limited weight was given.
- The development was considered to be an acceptable location, following the Northumberland Local Plan.
- The 45% affordable housing offered was voluntarily offered by the applicant and would not be controlled by NCC.
- Lowick did not fall into the category of Parishes that have 20% or more second homes.
- The site was unsustainable for sustainable transport.

Councillor Watson stated that he was impressed by the applicant offering affordable homes for the community and proposed to accept the officer's recommendation to approve, subject to the conditions in the report, S106 agreement securing the contributions towards coastal mitigation, nitrogen neutrality maintenance and the additional Grampian condition on nitrogen neutrality, with exact wording being delegated to officers. Councillor Thorne seconded the motion.

A vote was taken as follows: FOR; 9, AGAINST; 1, ABSTAIN; 0

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** in line with the conditions set out in the report, S106 agreement securing the contributions towards coastal mitigation, nitrogen neutrality maintenance and the additional Grampian condition on nitrogen neutrality, with exact wording being delegated to officers.

48 **22/01660/FUL**

J. Hudson – Senior Planning Officer introduced the application with a PowerPoint presentation.

Councillor Hunter spoke as the Local Member in the public speaking slot, the following information was given:

- Paragraph 7.11 of the report states the nearest properties 7, 8 & 9 Turret Gardens were consulted but there was no reference to No's 36 – 36C

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Northumberland Road being consulted, which were to the North of the proposed secondary entry/exit point.

- The A1167 was the main entrance from the A1 into Berwick Upon Tweed & Tweedmouth from the south.
- The proposed secondary entry/exit was the only access for all deliveries to all businesses on the Retail Park, many of which would take place during opening hours.
- The current entrance/exit to the retail park regularly had stationary traffic on the A1167 heading south waiting to turn right into the retail park.
- There was regularly stationary traffic, including HGV's on the A1167 heading north.
- Changing the service entrance to a junction for all vehicles accessing the retail units would cause more congestion.
- The pedestrian crossing was not well used by shoppers from the Retail Park, as the majority of the pedestrians entering and leaving, use the footpath taking them to the junction of the A1167.
- School children from 9-16 years from Tweedmouth use the footpath along the A1167 to access Tweedmouth Middle School and Berwick Academy.
- Members were asked to consider a condition that all vehicles existing the Retail Park turn left only.

Following questions from members to the planning officers, the following information was provided:

- There were no objections from Highways.
- Condition 4 in the report noted that an internal pedestrian crossing at the entry/exit point to the service road was to be submitted.
- If members had concerns and wanted a "no right turn" condition, a highways officer would need to be consulted upon and members could defer the application to the next meeting.

Councillor Hill proposed to accept the officers recommendation, this was seconded by Councillor Pattison.

A vote was taken and was it was unanimously

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** in line with conditions set out in the report.

49 **APPEALS UPDATE**

RESOLVED that this was noted.

50 **SECTION 106**

RESOLVED that this was noted.

A comfort break was announced to allow Officers to change over.

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51 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

No questions had been received.

52 **PETITIONS**

- (a) No new petitions had been received.
- (b) There were no petition reports for members to discuss.
- (c) No updates on previous petitions.

53 **LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES**

Highways

Resurfacing

Multiple resurfacing schemes across all wards in the Northern Area had been completed as well as 13 surface dressing schemes. There were 9 LTP surfacing schemes to complete as well as 8 schemes from the U and C roads programme. Schemes to complete included:

- Etal Road
- Guyzance
- Elyhaugh near Longframlington
- Preston Towers
- Magdalene Fields, Walkworth.

Members noted that a major new car park at Amble had been completed, alongside various minor drainage schemes, traffic safety schemes and footpath improvement schemes.

Storm Arwen clearance had restarted, a team of tree surgeons cleared over 140 trees that had blocked across a little used U road near Hazon.

Maintenance

The jet patcher was in the area for 8 weeks, and had filled hundreds of potholes mainly up the Valleys.

The Gully tanker was working its way around the secondary network after clearing all gullies on the A697, 698 and 1068.

Members noted that Highways Inspectors were continuing to deal with hundreds of complaints every week while trying to complete their routine inspections.

The Highways Maintenance team had begun the annual inspection of grit bins.

Following the update from G. Bucknall – Lead Highways Delivery Manager, members were invited to ask questions, in which the following information was provided:

- The bird nesting season had ended, and trees were starting to be cut back to allow clearer visibility for road signs.
- The Alwick to Lesbury resurfacing scheme had been deferred to the 2023 programme.

Members thanked Graham and the team for their continued hard work.

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Neighbourhood Services

Waste Services

Residual, Recycling and Garden waste collection services were all operating well, with the income from garden waste and commercial waste exceeding targets. Members noted that there had been an increased demand for bulky waste collections and also additional collections for bottle recycling facilities.

The kerbside food waste trial had been delayed due to supply chain issues and was scheduled to start in November.

Grass Cutting

Members noted that grass cutting had remained on target but there had been some challenging periods throughout the year due to long spells of warm and dry weather. The team was on cut number 10 out of 11 for the year.

Members were informed that winter works were starting to be scheduled for maintenance commitments, but requests from members were welcome.

Following the update from B. Hodgson – Neighbourhood Services Area Manager, members were invited to ask questions, in which the following information was provided:

- The out of hours service covered: fallen trees, road incidents, dangerous electrical lighting, and dangerous potholes.
- The gully tanker worked on an 18-month rota but would focus on hot-spots for blockages.
- Any road with a speed limit of over 30mph would need a traffic management system in place for verge cutting.

Members thanked Bob and the team for their continued hard work.

54 **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

As the meeting approached the 3 hour limit Members were asked if they wished to suspend standing orders in order to continue the meeting. Upon being put to the vote it was:

RESOLVED that in accordance with the Council's constitution, standing orders be suspended and the meeting continue over the 3 hour limit.

55 **RURAL BUSINESS GROWTH SERVICE**

I. Hewitt – Rural Business Growth Manager, introduced the service to members with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation. The RBGS was delivered by Advance Northumberland on behalf of Northumberland County Council and worked with micro, small and medium sized enterprises, located in the rural areas of Northumberland, Newcastle and North

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Tyneside.

The aim of the RBGS was to grow the rural economy in North of Tyne, with the key outcome being the creation of growth and jobs. The service would be a single point of contact and provided access to one-to-one business secure funding and financial support. The capital grant for business to grow, expand production and diversity. The grants would start from £10,000 upwards at a maximum intervention rate of 40%.

The capital grant was available for eligible businesses with clear growth potential that required direct capital investment to grow, expand productivity capacity or diversify into new markets or products.

Businesses would include:

- Food and drink production
- Manufacturing
- Knowledge, intensive business
- Culture, creative and tourism – excluding retail and accommodation
- Energy products and services
- Environmental products and services

Members thanked Ivan for attending and for the information on the Rural Business Growth Service.

56 **LOCAL MEMBER IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES**

RESOLVED that this was noted.

57 **LOCAL AREA COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME**

Councillor Swinbank suggested “Space for Shorebirds” to be added to the work programme.

Councillor Watson requested a representative from Highways to attend the next meeting to discuss the sustainability issues that were mentioned in the planning reports.

RESOLVED that this was noted.

58 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the North Northumberland Local Area Council was scheduled for Thursday, 20 October 2022, St James’ URC, Pottergate, Alnwick, NE66 1JW

RESOLVED that this was noted.

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CHAIR.....

DATE.....

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