

## 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 Council Chamber - County Hall on Wednesday, 23 August 2023 at Time Not Specified.

#### PRESENT

M Swinburn (Chair) in the Chair for agenda items 1-5 and 8.  
R Wilczek (Planning Vice Chair) in the Chair for agenda items 5 – 7

#### MEMBERS

|                |            |
|----------------|------------|
| E Chicken      | W Daley    |
| P Ezhilchelvan | B Flux     |
| S Lee          | M Robinson |
| C Taylor       | R Wilczek  |

#### OFFICERS

|            |                             |
|------------|-----------------------------|
| H Bowers   | Democratic Services Officer |
| M Bulman   | Solicitor                   |
| R Laughton | Senior Planning Officer     |
| T Wood     | Principal Planning Officer  |

#### PRESS:1

#### 22 PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED AT PLANNING MEETINGS

The Chair advised those present of the procedure to be followed at the meeting.

#### 23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bowman, Dunbar and Ferguson.

#### 24 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Cramlington, Bedlington & Seaton Valley Local Area Council held on 19 July 2023 as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

#### 25 DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Daley requested that it be noted he was Chair of the Family & Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee, but which was not a

Ch.'s Initials.....

decision-making body. He had sought legal advice from the Solicitor who had advised that he could take part in the meeting.

Councillor Swinburn declared an interest as he would be speaking as Ward Councillor and would take no part in the determination of the application.

## 26 **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.

## 27 **23/02232/CCD**

Temporary (max 2 years) single storey, double classroom building to aide teaching whilst the works to construct a new school will be undertaken.

Land within Cramlington Learning Village, Cramlington, Northumberland, NE23 6BN.

Richard Laughton, Senior Planning Officer provided three updates:

- 1) The application was part retrospective as the building was now on site, condition 3 would need to be removed for the Construction Method Statement as this was no longer required.
- 2) There had been confusion beforehand regarding the need for classrooms. The Education Department had since confirmed it had been due to the increase in pupils from feeder schools and not due to a new school. The description was revised to:

'Construction of a single storey, double classroom building for a temporary period up to a maximum of 2 years (amended description).

- 3) As the permission was temporary for 2 years, condition 1 would be replaced with:

'This permission is limited to a period expiring two years from the date of this permission. The development hereby permitted shall then be removed from the site and the land restored to its former condition within 2 months of the date of the expiration of this permission.

Reason: The design and materials used in the construction of the building make it unsuitable for a permanent permission and in accordance with the provisions of Local Plan Policy QOP1'

The Officer continued to introduce the report with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation.

Ch.'s Initials.....

Councillor Mark Swinburn, Local Councillor, addressed the Committee:

He thanked the committee for allowing him to speak.

He was aware of the need to temporarily expand year 7 education provision to cover what had been called a 'blip' for a two year period.

He was pleased that the County Council had come forward to support the Academy.

As both local member and a member of the Family & Children's Services Scrutiny Committee, he was aware that despite the 'blip', the school, as with the majority of the county, maintained a surplus of space, despite current development in the town which was a concern repeatedly expressed by residents.

Space requirements were calculated when planning applications were submitted. The current Cramlington developments were made back in 2016 when numbers were then calculated, but still constantly monitored by the Authority who would respond to any on going change as necessary.

The make up of the school numbers also included 25% of pupils from outside of the town, some third of those from outside of the county, but the temporary measure was just a 'blip'.

As planning committee members were fully aware, the application must be treated as though it was a new application, despite the fact that work had already progressed and the portacabins had been installed on site over 2 weeks ago.

He was disappointed to see no concerns raised by the Highways Team, especially considering continued calls for improvements to the entrance and exit junction at the site with current congestion levels. Also, the ongoing issues raised with traffic and parking in the surrounding residential streets.

His main concern related to the location of the portacabin units. Having queried this, he was informed that the location of the portacabins needed to be adjacent to other classrooms and access for the delivery of the modules.

He felt that latter could have been made much easier being located slightly to the north east of the planned location, as seen on the site map, therefore providing easier installation, and at this time there was no public knowledge of any future rebuilding plans.

He referred to the location of the application beside the Public Right of Way, which the school for many years, had raised concerns to the fact it had a footpath running through the school grounds, taking action in the early 2000's to have it removed, resulting in the Secretary of State changing this to a Public Right of Way following significant public opinion.

At the start of 2021, the school started the process to formally request closure of the Public Right of Way, which many Cramlington colleagues would be aware of, and which had again raised significant objection.

The school had cited safeguarding concerns and examples to support the closure

Ch.'s Initials.....

of the Right of Way, formally recorded in their application, but had not commented, or objected to the placement of the classrooms, just a few feet away.

While other options were available, there was no mention of any safeguarding concerns over the location, despite the many years of complaint by the school. It was important that members were made aware of this if they were minded to approve the application and were happy with the location of the units adjacent to the Public Right of Way when making their decision.

When the application to remove the Public Right of Way proceeds to the Secretary of State, then it would be seen that the planning committee was happy to approve the location of these classrooms beside the path, despite being made aware of apparent safeguarding concerns.

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

As the new school term was just a couple of weeks away, it was thought that the planning application would have been delegated.

The loss of conditions would not harm the application.

Councillor Flux proposed that the application be granted in line with the officer recommendation incorporating the change of description and amendments to the conditions, which was seconded by Councillor Daley.

In debating the application, Councillor Robinson stated that he would abstain from the vote as the applicant had not engaged in the proper process resulting in loss of conditions and with the additional problem of the Right of Way.

Councillor Daley could not find any material planning consideration to refuse the application and if appealed, would probably lose. Family & Children's Services had been aware of this earlier in the year and information had not been shared by the Education Department and he would, therefore, support the application.

On summing up, Councillor Flux said that it was disappointing that the application had been received retrospectively, but as it was time critical, he did have some sympathy. He was aware of the issue of the path, but it was separate to the planning application. There was no reason to refuse as this would be to the detriment to pupils and the application should be approved.

Upon being put to the vote the results were as follows: -

FOR: 5; ABSTENTION: 3.

RESOLVED that the application be granted permission subject to the amended description and amendments to the conditions as referred to by the Planning Officer.

## 28 **APPEALS**

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

Ch.'s Initials.....

29 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday, 20 September.

Members were reminded that Local Services would not be present at the September meeting and any queries/requests in the meantime be emailed directly to Local Services officers directly for a response.

**CHAIR**.....

**DATE**.....

Ch.'s Initials.....