

## **NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE**

At the meeting of the **Strategic Planning Committee** held at Council Chamber - County Hall on Tuesday, 6 September 2022 at 4.00 pm.

#### **PRESENT**

T Thorne (Chair) (in the Chair)

#### **MEMBERS**

C Ball  
J Foster  
JI Hutchinson  
J Reid  
M Robinson  
M Swinbank  
A Watson

R Dodd  
G Hill  
J Lang  
G Renner-Thompson  
G Stewart  
A Wallace

#### **OFFICERS**

J Blenkinsopp  
L Little  
E Sinnamon  
T Wood

Solicitor  
Senior Democratic Services Officer  
Development Service Manager  
Principal Planning Officer

Around 2 members of the press and public were present.

#### **20 PROCEDURE AT PLANNING COMMITTEE**

The Chair outlined the procedure to be followed at the meeting.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

#### **21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Darwin and Flux.

#### **22 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

(a) The Minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee held on 7 June 2022, as circulated, were agreed as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

(b) The Minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee held on 5 July 2022, as circulated, were agreed as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

Ch.'s Initials.....

## 23 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.

## 24 21/04941/VARYCO

**Variation of condition 2 on approved application 19/00904/FUL in order to amend landscape plans to change position of play area so condition 10 can be complied with, resulting in slight amendment to landscaping. (amended description)**

**Land South of Bluebell Court, East Cottingwood, Morpeth, Northumberland**

An introduction to the report was provided by T Wood, Principal Planning Officer with the aid of a power point presentation.

Councillor A Byard, addressed the Committee speaking on behalf of Morpeth Town Council in objection to the application. She advised that the Town Council objected to the application as it was not clear why the change was required now and why the developer could not stick to the original plan. The objections of residents were noted in relation to further exposure of dust and disruption if the compound was to remain in its current position and delay in the provision of play facilities promised to new house-buyers. This contravened policy Des 1 of the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan that development proposals should make a positive contribution to their surroundings in terms of ensuring that the development did not cause unacceptable adverse impact on the amenities of occupiers of existing or proposed nearby properties.

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

- It was accepted that there could be some safety concern due to the proximity of the revised position of the play area to the SUDs pond, however there were many SUDs ponds throughout the County which were open and these were designed to form part of the landscape for nature and wildlife. The ponds would be dry for large parts of the year.
- The original conditions for the application in relation to the position of the compound which had been agreed with Highways in relation to road safety and the timing of the provision of the play park had overlapped. If the application had originally been submitted with the play park in the new proposed area, then this would have been equally as suitable.
- It was possible that more households would be affected by the moving of the compound.

- The developer had come forward with this proposal as it had been recognised that there was a breach of conditions, however it could not be guaranteed that further variation applications would not come forward as development continued. Developers were entitled to apply for variations and it would not be a material consideration to refuse an application just because a variation had been requested.
- It could not be clarified how many houses had been completed on the site, however the trigger for the provision of the play area was 30 and developers had come forward with this proposal in order that the provision of the play area was not delayed and they could comply with conditions. It was considered that this was the best outcome and the compound area would be restored to open space once the development had been completed.
- Whether the householders had purchased dwellings on the understanding that the play area was to be provided in a certain area was not a material planning consideration.

Councillor Dodd proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the application with conditions as outlined in the report. This was seconded by Councillor Robinson, who asked that an additional condition be added for the provision of a fence around the SUDs pond. Councillor Dodd advised that he did not wish for this to be included in the proposal as he considered this would change policy and therefore his original proposal for the application to be granted with the conditions as outlined in the report was seconded by Councillor Stewart.

It was clarified that the application had come to this Committee as the original application was for over 100 dwellings and that objections had been received in relation to the variation of conditions application.

Some Members advised that they could not support the proposal to approve the application without a condition requesting fencing to be provided around the SUDs pond due to safety concerns regarding the close proximity of a children's play area, however others felt that the provision of a fence was not in keeping with what was trying to be created.

Councillor Dodd considered that the SUDs pond was only being provided to contain run-off water in exceptional weather events and that the provision of a fence would curtail the open aspect and create difficulties in maintaining the space.

A vote was taken on the proposal to approve the application with the conditions as outlined in the officer's report as follows: FOR 5; AGAINST 9; ABSTAIN 0; and therefore the motion fell.

Councillor Robinson proposed acceptance of the officer's recommendation to approve the application as outlined in the report with an additional condition for the provision of a fence around the SUDs pond which was seconded by Councillor Ball. It was clarified that the fence would only be required for the SUDs pond next to the play area and delegated authority should be provided for the wording of the condition to be agreed with the Director of Planning and Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee.

Councillor Robinson advised that he thought it would be common sense to provide a fence around the SUDs pond and that to move the compound would cause inconvenience to more households.

A vote was taken on the proposal to approve the application in line with the officer's recommendation with an additional condition for the provision of fencing around the SUDs pond as follows: FOR 10; AGAINST 3; ABSTAIN 1.

**RESOLVED** that the application be **GRANTED** for the reasons and with the conditions as outlined in the report with an additional condition for the provision of fencing around the SUDs pond with delegated authority to be given to the Director of Planning and Chair to agree the wording.

25      **APPEALS UPDATE**

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

26      **S106 AGREEMENTS UPDATE REPORT**

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

**CHAIR**.....

**DATE**.....

Ch.'s Initials.....