

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 in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF on Wednesday, 21 June 2023 at 5.00 pm

PRESENT

M Swinburn (Chair) in the Chair

MEMBERS

L Bowman
E Chicken
B Flux

S Lee
M Robinson
C Taylor

OFFICERS

H Bowers
M Bulman
R Murfin
J Murphy
M Patrick
A Wall
T Wood

Democratic Services Officer
Solicitor
Director of Housing & Planning
Planning Area Manager
Highways Development Manager
Environmental Health Officer
Principal Planning Officer

Public: 4. Press: 1

01. MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

RESOLVED that the Membership and Terms of Reference for the Cramlington, Bedlington & Seaton Valley Local Area Committee as agreed by Council at the meeting on 17 May 2023 be noted.

The Chair referred to the error of membership in the table relating to Councillor Lee who should be listed under the Independent Group.

02. PROCEDURE AT PLANNING MEETINGS

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

03. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Daley, Dunbar, Ezhilchelvan, Ferguson and Wilczek.

04. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Cramlington, Bedlington & Seaton Valley Local Area Council held on 16 May 2023 as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and be signed by the Chair with the following amendments:

To note Councillor Christine Taylor's attendance.

The last paragraph on page 8 should state *"Mr Gribbin explained that some streets in Cramlington/Seaton Valley and Blyth had not been cleaned as there was no dedicated large sweeping machine"*.

Councillor Robinson referred to a request for a further report following an issue raised under Public Question Time. The Chair explained that the item would be followed up and discussed with the individual concerned and referred to the email from the Director of Local Services where it had not been thought appropriate for individual complaints relating to a specific property to be the subject of a report to the Local Area Committee. The Chair would, if possible, share the information with members.

Councillor Lee referred to a comment regarding blocked gullies in Cramlington and clarified that he had raised the issue of an ongoing blocked gully on the B1326 at the hospital roundabout, which made it difficult for pedestrians to walk on the pavement without getting drenched by passing vehicles. He also raised the issue of the pedestrian bridge over the A189 Spine Road no longer having pedestrian access as the pavement leading to it had been fenced in, forcing on to the road.

05. 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.

06. 23/00584/OUT

Outline planning application (all matters reserved) for 99 dwellings. Land south of Plant Based Valley, Avenue Road, Seaton Delaval, Northumberland.

Tamsin Wood, Principal Planning Officer provided two updates:

- 1) Paragraph 7.23 in the report should be omitted but this would no bearing on the conclusion.
- 2) A further letter of objection had been received which had set out similar concerns that the industrial site could not function adjacent to an residential housing site.

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

Nigel Hall, resident, addressed the Committee and raised the following:

- He lived closed to the site and had followed the development since it had been purchased by the developer.
- There was no merit in building 99 houses on the NHS site which would jeopardise jobs
- The application would bring confrontation with two opposing developments
- The NHS Centre worked 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including bank holidays
- The development was not feasible
- Seaton Delaval needed local employment nearby
- A good industrial site was being ruined and there was no merit in the planning application
- Loss of employment and apprenticeships

Richard Lanyan addressed the Committee on behalf of the applicant in support of the application:

- He was the business partner of the Applicant, Duo Renovations Ltd and had a long association with the site dating back to 2019 when the whole complex of land and buildings had been acquired.
- Coty had unexpectedly shut down the factory having acquitted the business from Proctor & Gamble the preceding year with job losses.
- He had been instrumental in facilitating the move by the NHS to the site in 2020 and the subsequent sale in 2021.
- The success and growth of the NHS commercial hub was a very significant and positive benefit to the region and he was pleased to have been an enabler and played a small part in that process.
- To underline the commitment and support to promote and facilitate employment, the applicant had gone out of their way at the point of

sale to ensure the expansion of the NHS hub was protected under the terms of title transfer

- Protection was catered for under the terms of the legal title transfer and this could be verified by officers who had been provided copies of the transfer document which not only specifically safeguarded and future proofed the main access to the site, but also ensured that continued planning support from Duo as a neighbouring landowner for all future NHS operations on the factory site.
- Before the factory site was sold to the NHS, planned residential proposals for the retained land were openly shared with the NHS on the understanding both parties would be supportive of one another. The NHS had also been offered the ability to purchase the land at the time, which had not been taken up.
- Being mindful of the NHS future plans for their site, over the last 2 years, considerable time, effort and resources had been spent to work with and engage with the NHS professional team. Two years on, the detailed NHS plans were still not finalised but dialogue was being continued.
- In an earlier open written representation on the site dated 23 June 2021, Lichfields Planning Consultants acting on behalf of the NHS stated that they had no objection in principle to the development of the adjacent site for housing.
- The current application being determined was an outline application supported by detailed transport access plans and flood risk assessments which had been scrutinised and approved by the respective statutory bodies.
- The application simply established the principle of residential use on the site with all matters reserved. Reserved matters would ensure protection and mutual compatibility, not only with the NHS hub, but the community in Seaton Delaval.
- The application did not, in any way, inhibit the growth of the NHS hub on their site and he hoped that the background facts outlined would allay a concern raised when considering a previous detailed application in October last year.
- The outline application would provide a framework, not only to provide much needed new homes and living accommodation, but also deliver additional economic and social benefits to the community and local economy.
- If permission was granted, it would create the foundation for investment in meeting future housing targets and provide a varied mix of affordable accommodation and generate significant financial investment through the Section 106 system.
- Despite changing their position, he explained that from the start of the journey that the NHS were always aware and initially supportive of the housing plans which is why the legal framework was put into place at the point of sale. In addition, there was already established housing on two sides of the NHS hub.

- The outline application had been designed to accommodate the growth of the NHS hub and would accord with all modern planning and environmental safeguards.
- There was no doubt in his mind that the application would further improve the fabric and environment of the immediate community as well as bringing clear economic benefits and asked the committee to vote in accordance with the recommendation of the planning officers.

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

- There was no outline detail as yet for the entrance/exit to the site, which would come forward with the assessed matters. A transport assessment had been submitted and officers were satisfied that the site access could accommodate the number of vehicles entering and exiting the residential development.
- Given the NHS hub was already on the site, ranges of impacts and noise disturbance would need to be looked at what was proposed. Public Protection had examined the noise and business activity. There were already residential units on two sides of the business and the conclusion from Public Protection was that the scheme could be supported, subject to the conditions in the report and reserved matters. If members decided to go against the advice of Highways and Public Protection, considerable weight and evidence would have to be given with compelling reasons for refusal.
- The affordable housing target across the county was 17% but the local plan had identified the site within a low value area, where 10% of dwellings should be affordable homes.
- The new Local Plan made provision for both housing and employment land and parcels of land, "white land". The application had to be looked at purely on its merits and members should consider the acceptability of the proposal.
- Condition 12 would secure a noise barrier prior to the commencement of the development with an acoustic fence of a minimum of 1.8 metres to absorb noise.
- There was no reason why there would be light pollution in the evening as the lights were angled towards the NHS site.
- Public Protection were of the opinion that light was not an issue and there was no requirement for mitigation.
- There were 4 objections to the proposal, 2 of which had been from the same person. The site had lain dormant for years and the material issues which had been raised had been looked at.
- It was possible to grant planning permission but it was the decision for the land owner. There had been no competing scheme for this piece of land. The starting point should be the weight of the Local Plan and material consideration and statutory consultees.
- From the information provided there was a dual right of access over the private land but this was not a matter for the committee to debate.

- The developer would have to prove land ownership and have roads to dedicate as public highway.
- The SHLAA was now historic and had been superseded by the new Local Plan which had designated this piece of land as “white land”.
- If the outline application was approved, the company would establish further details.
- Public Protection would have to agree final details in relation to mitigation, design and physical matters in relation to light or noise pollution.

Councillor Flux proposed that the application be granted in line with the recommendations in the report and the changes referred to by the Principal Planning Officer. This was seconded by Councillor Lee.

In debating the application, Members referred to noise and disturbance to residents, detriment to the operation of the NHS hub and issues regarding access to the factory sites; issues on transport and access to the factory and car parking issues; light and noise pollution; residents’ complaints about noise.

On summing up, Councillor Flux stated that it would be the choice of potential purchasers whether they wished to purchase a property on the site. He had supported the previous application and would support this application. He understood the arguments made but members had to consider the information presented before them.

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

FOR: 3; AGAINST: 1; ABSTENTION: 3.

RESOLVED that the application be granted permission subject to the conditions and reasons in the report, and the update from the Planning Officer.

07. APPEALS

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

08. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday, 19 July.

CHAIR

DATE