

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

At the meeting of the **Strategic Planning Committee** held at Council Chamber - County Hall on Tuesday, 2 January 2024 at 4.00 pm.

PRESENT

T Thorne (Chair) (in the Chair)

MEMBERS

C Ball
R Dodd
JI Hutchinson
J Reid
G Stewart
A Wallace

L Darwin
G Hill
J Lang
M Robinson
M Swinbank
A Watson

OFFICERS

M Bulman
L Little
D Love
R Murfin

Solicitor
Senior Democratic Services Officer
Senior Planning Officer
Director of Housing & Planning

There was 1 member of the press and public present.

49 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillors Flux, Foster and Renner-Thompson.

50 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee held on 5 December 2023, as circulated, were agreed as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

51 DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Hill advised that whilst there had been some contact between the applicant and herself over concerns on the length of time take for the application to come to Committee, she still had an open mind and would take part in the decision.

Ch.'s Initials.....

52 DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The report outlined the procedure to be followed and 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.

53 19/01095/REM

Reserved matters application for access, appearance, landscaping, layout, and scale for 110 dwellings relating to planning permission

14/01295/VARYCO

Land East of Springhill, Sunnyside, Tweedmouth, Northumberland

D Love, Senior Planning Officer provided an introduction to the report with the aid of a power point presentation. An addendum report had been circulated in advance of the meeting which provided Members with information on the recent publication of the updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) by the Government which had been issued on 21 December 2023. Members were further advised that it was important that any decision made was compliant with national policy on the date a decision was made. The addendum report confirmed that the changes to the NPPF did not alter the officer recommendation. Further updates were provided as follows:-

- Paragraph 7.21 referred to 100 houses and it should state 110.
- The consultee response in relation to Education just stated comments, however they had requested a commuted sum of £365,000 however this was not possible on a REM application.
- Details of the total S106 contributions were outlined as follows:-
 - Facilities contribution maintenance of £146 per unit and provision of £622 per unit (total £21,900 + £93,300 = £115,200)
 - Overall transport contribution of £100,000
 - Phase 1 to be transferred to a Registered Social Landlord
 - Update to include £67,650 Coastal Mitigation Strategy
 - Total financial contribution of £282,850 with Phase 1 as 100% affordable

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

- The first application had been subject to a full road safety audit on the provision of 150 houses and was part of that separate consent and therefore details had not been provided in relation to this application. Highways had not raised any objections in relation to either this or the previous application however it was understood that there were proposals to extend the current 30 mph limit.
- It could not be confirmed what the £100,000 transport contribution in the original S106 agreement would be used for but details could be provided to Councillor Hill after the meeting.

Ch.'s Initials.....

- In relation to S106 contributions towards Coastal Mitigation it was clarified that Natural England had placed a holding directive on any development within a 10 mile strip of the coast of Northumberland and therefore in order to prevent each individual scheme having to negotiate with Natural England on its contribution it had been agreed that a set formula would be used on all schemes. Not all areas benefitted from contributions made in their specific area but events providing details on how the funding was used were informative and generally well attended by members of the public. Information had also been provided at the North Northumberland Local Area Committee on a number of schemes. A link to the website providing information would be circulated to Members, however a short report would also be provided to a future meeting. The work being undertaken within Northumberland was viewed as international best practice and attracted visitors from both Europe and the USA.
- Housebuilding within the Berwick area usually did not happen on a large scale and this development would contribute to the housing target. The site had been factored into the Local Plan, but it had been very difficult to bring forward for development.
- The 40 units which had already been provided under Phase 1 of the scheme consisted of all the affordable housing for the site and the remaining 110 properties were for private ownership.
- A condition requiring full details of landscaping to be provided would be attached to any permission granted which could include discussions with the ecologist on the appropriate species of trees to be planted. Members ongoing concerns regarding large trees in proximity to properties and the possibility of this being included in the Northumberland Design Guide were noted. It would be the Developer's responsibility to ensure that appropriate maintenance was carried out to ensure that no nuisance was caused to residents.
- It was presumed that the variety of the proposed property types for the 110 units was the result of market based assessments and the provision of bungalows on the site was particularly welcomed.
- In relation to the possibility of a bus route through the estate Members were advised that due to operational efficiencies, it was very unlikely that an operator would wish to provide this.
- Dwellings would be set back and a buffer zone provided in order to protect the remaining parts of the Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM). There was no parking proposed in connection with visitors to the SAM, however there would be unrestricted parking on the development and a bus service on the main road and it was considered that there would be sufficient access and transport in relation to the SAM.
- Highways on new developments were only adopted once all works were completed to a required standard and it was acknowledged that this did sometimes have implications for residents. The maintenance of highways remained the responsibility of a developer until adopted and enforcement action could be taken against developers in relation to works. Planning legislation had no influence on the build/product quality of new dwellings however certain building control measures must be met.
- The Construction Management Plan would limit where construction vehicles could access and no access through the existing development should be required, it would also limit the hours of working to limit disturbance to existing residents.

Ch.'s Initials.....

- Part of the delay in this application was due to the history of mining on the site and objections from both Public Protection and the Coal Authority. Conditions 6, 7, 8 and 9 would be included in any permission granted in order to address their concerns. Additional information as part of the conditions was still required to be submitted and agreed by both Public Protection and the Coal Authority.

Councillor Hill proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the application with the conditions and S106 contribution of £67,650 to Coastal Mitigation as outlined in the report which was seconded by Councillor Reid. Councillor Hill emphasised the highways issues in relation to the cumulative effect of this development along with the location of the school and existing developments. She was disappointed that it was not clear and transparent what the S106 contributions would be used for and stated that whilst it was a shame that the development was not for social housing, there was a shortage of houses in general in this area and therefore the provision of this level of housing within Berwick was positive.

A vote was taken and it was unanimously

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** subject to the conditions as outlined in the report and a S106 agreement for the contribution of £67,650 towards the Coastal Mitigation Strategy.

54 **APPEAL UPDATE JAN 2024**

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

55 **S106 UPDATE JAN 2024**

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....

Ch.'s Initials.....