

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL
CASTLE MORPETH LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

At the meeting of the **Castle Morpeth Local Area Council** held Remotely on Wednesday, 21 April 2021 at 4.00 pm.

PRESENT

L Dunn (Vice Chair - Planning) (in the Chair)

MEMBERS

S Dickinson
J Foster
G Sanderson

R Dodd
P Jackson
R Wearmouth

OTHER COUNCILLORS

OFFICERS

L Dixon
D Hadden
G Horsman
R Laughton
L Little
C Mead
R Murfin
J Murphy

R Soulsby
A Fogerty
SJ Imrie

A Wall

Democratic Services Apprentice
Solicitor
Principal Planning Officer
Planning Officer
Senior Democratic Services Officer
Highways Development Manager
Director of Planning
Planning Area Manager - Development
Management
Planning Officer
IT Apprentice
Principal Highways Development
Management Officer
Environmental Health Officer

217 PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED AT A VIRTUAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

Councillor Dunn, Vice-Chair (Planning) outlined the procedure which would be followed at the virtual meeting and of the changes to the public speaking protocol.

218 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Armstrong, Jones and Towns.

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219 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held of the Castle Morpeth Local Area Council held on Monday 8 March 2021, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

220 **DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Councillor Foster advised that she would be speaking as local member on behalf of residents on application 20/01768/FUL and would therefore withdraw from the meeting once she had spoken and take no part in the determination of that application.

221 **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.

222 **20/01333/FUL**

**Proposal to demolish a later addition garage and build a greater quality replacement
Espley Hall, Espley, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 3DJ**

There were no questions in relation to the site visit videos which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

The application was introduced by J Murphy, Planning Area Manager - Development Management, with the aid of a power point presentation. She advised that there was an error in paragraph 7.18 of the officer's report and the third last sentence should read ... it was considered that, on balance, there would **not** be sufficient grounds to refuse the application

A written statement in objection to the application from Russell Emmerson was read out to the Committee by G Horsman, Principal Planning Officer. A copy of the statement would be filed with the signed minutes of the meeting and would be uploaded to the Council's website.

A written statement in support of the application from Michael Hepburn, Lichfields, was read out to the Committee by R Soulsby, Planning Officer. A copy of the statement would be filed with the signed minutes of the meeting and would be uploaded to the Council's website.

Councillor Dickinson joined the meeting at 4:16pm after the Officer's presentation on the application it was confirmed that he would take no part in the deciding of this application.

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The Planning Area Manager provided clarification on the full dimensions of the proposed development. The Director of Planning advised that this was a Green Belt site and therefore any development needed to satisfy the legal test of very special circumstances and that Members should look at the application in these terms rather than as a balancing of harm versus benefit.

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

- The application had been assessed as a stand-alone building under paragraph 145 of the NPPF which stated that the replacement of a building should not be materially larger than the one it replaced. The applicant was asking for it to be considered from the permitted development perspective and how much bigger the new building would be from the permitted development, however Officers had assessed it on the existing garage.
- Whilst it was welcomed that the applicant had wished to improve the design over the permitted development, the Director of Planning advised caution as there could be differing options under permitted development rights and not just what had been shown from the applicant.
- Paragraph 79 of the NPPF which allowed support for schemes of exceptional architectural design must also significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area. The proposed development did not meet this criterion.

Councillor Dodd proposed acceptance of the recommendation to refuse the application as outlined in the officer report, which was seconded by Councillor Foster. A vote was taken and it was unanimously

RESOLVED that the application be **REFUSED** for the following reason:

1. The proposed garage by virtue of its scale and massing was considered to be inappropriate development within the Green Belt and the open countryside. The proposal failed to meet any of the exceptions within paragraph 145 of the NPPF and no very special circumstances had been demonstrated. As such, the proposal did not comply with policies C1, C16 and C17 of the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan, Policies Set1 and DES1 of the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan and paragraph 145 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

**Change of use: vehicle depot to material recycling facility (B2 Use Classes)
Watsons Yard, Barrington Road, Bedlington, Northumberland
NE22 7AH**

R Soulsby, Planning Officer provided an introduction to the application with the aid of a power point presentation. He advised that one further objection had been received since the report had been published which stated *“I strongly object to this planning application due to increased noise, pollution and heavy traffic in the local area”*

A written statement in objection to the application from residents was read out to the Committee by G Horsman, Principal Planning Officer. A copy of the statement would be filed with the signed minutes of the meeting and would be uploaded to the Council's website.

Councillor Foster, as the local Ward Member read out a statement in relation to the application. A copy of the statement would be filed with the signed minutes of the meeting and would be uploaded to the Council's website.

A written statement in support of the application from the Agent, K Wood, was read out to the Committee by L Little, Senior Democratic Services Officer. A copy of the statement would be filed with the signed minutes of the meeting and would be uploaded to the Council's website.

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

- Waste management facilities were an acceptable use on industrial and commercial estates with the proviso that they were modern and well managed operations. Robust planning conditions would control noise from the operation and in addition the day to day activities of the site would be covered by dual controls with the Environment Agency under their permit which would set out how the Company would manage noise/dust etc. The activities which created the most dust would take place inside with dampening down of materials outside. The Environment Agency would undertake checks as part of the permit. Therefore there would be a range of controls over the site and what had been presented fell within what was felt to be acceptable in terms of adverse impact. Members were asked to consider that this was an industrial estate with a wide range of uses which could cause dust/noise and that as this site would have more controls the Director of Planning was satisfied that there would be sufficient controls in place.
- The nearby housing had been in existence for an extensive period of time within the existing settlement of Bedlington Station and was not new housing built next to an industrial estate. The site was allocated for employment uses with policies not requiring additional controls on the type of activities to be undertaken and there was a range of activities taking place with the site also adjacent to a railway line.
- A condition which would limit noise measured at noise sensitive properties provided that background noise was at no more than 5 decibels. The conditions would ensure that the site was managed

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under current best practice. The Environment Agency required management of the site and would undertake both announced and unannounced visits to monitor uses. The Environment Agency were also able to require continuous improvements and could vary the conditions that they imposed on the site to require different ways of working if necessary. A fee was required to be paid to hold an Environment Agency permit and the way in which the site was designated and the number of complaints received would determine the frequency of their inspections.

Councillor Dodd proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the application as outlined in the officer report, which was seconded by Councillor Sanderson.

During discussions on the application, some Members of the Committee expressed concern on the proximity of the neighbouring dwellings to the site and the type of materials to be processed as it was known that problems had been encountered at other locations and if the use was appropriate in this location. It was stated that this Council wished to recycle more and be a greener authority and if industrial estates could not be used for this purpose then there was a problem. Members stated that whilst they were not opposed to putting recycling facilities on industrial estates, this was very close to residential properties and further assurance was required on what was appropriate.

Members were advised by the Director of Planning that the starting point for consideration was that this was an employment site suitable for a modern well managed waste management facility. There had been potential in the Northumberland Local Plan to keep employment sites for non-waste activities, however that step had not been taken in relation to this site where there were already heavy uses. The site would have an environmental management plan through the Environment Agency and it could be that the application could be deferred in order to ask the applicant to supply the environmental management plan in order that Members would be aware of how issues would be dealt with. It was also suggested that, when Covid restrictions allowed, an actual site visit would be valuable in this instance.

Councillor Jackson proposed to defer the application to allow a site visit to be undertaken and the environmental management plan to be provided. Councillor Dodd advised that he would withdraw his motion to approve the application in favour of deferring the application to allow a site visit and extra information to be provided to which Councillor Sanderson agreed. Councillor Dickinson then seconded Councillor Jackson's proposal that the application be deferred to allow a site visit and the additional information to be provided. A vote was taken and it was unanimously

RESOLVED that the application be **DEFERRED** to allow a site visit to be undertaken as soon as practicable and request that an environmental management plan be submitted to the Committee.

224 **20/03389/FUL**

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**Proposed residential development of four dwellings (as amended 21.12.2020)
Land South Of Centurion Way , Centurion Way, Heddon-On-The-Wall, NE15 0BY**

There were no questions related to the site visit videos previously circulated.

R Laughton, Senior Planning Officer introduced the application to the Committee with the aid of a power point presentation. An update was provided as follows:-

- The Highways Team had requested that condition 6 be removed and replaced with a condition for the applicant to provide further details on parking to ensure that cars could manoeuvre safely within the site as follows:-

“The development shall not commence until details of the car parking area has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and implemented in accordance with the approved details. Thereafter the car parking area shall be retained in accordance with the approved details.”

A statement in objection to the application from Mrs L Twizell was read out to the Committee by L Little, Senior Democratic Services Officer. A copy would be filed with the signed minutes and be uploaded to the Council’s website.

A statement in support of the application on behalf of the applicant was read out to the Committee by R Soulsby, Planning Officer. A copy would be filed with the signed minutes and be uploaded to the Council’s website.

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

- The site was within the settlement boundary and it was identified in the new Local Plan as a settlement village and it was assumed this site would be anticipated to come forward for housing during the plan period. The new Local Plan was not yet fully adopted and therefore to attach full development plan status it was safer to rely on the existing Local Plan.
- There had been previous applications for the site from a number of years ago and some information was not available. There had also been proposals for 2 dwellings further down the site, but these applications had been assessed on different planning policies which were in place at that time.
- The principle of residential development on this site was that subject to an appropriate design this was acceptable. The merits of this scheme should not be measured against other schemes. This scheme was a reaction to modern design and policies in the NPPF, in response to the current market and was of a high end design quality.
- In certain locations design cues would be taken from existing buildings, however as there was no over-riding design in the area that was not appropriate in this instance. These design of these houses was in response to height restrictions on the site in terms of scale and massing. Members must ask themselves if the response

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was so insufficient that the harm caused by the proposals outweighed the benefit of delivering housing on a site identified for housing in the Local Plan. The Director of Planning suggested that the application was in response to design cues to the built form and topography of the area. The right to a view through a site was not a material planning consideration, however visual impact was, i.e. that if the buildings were so inappropriate by virtue of their design that they caused an unacceptable visual impact then a refusal could be based on that. However in this instance he advised that this application was not out of scale for the site and a refusal for this reason would be difficult to defend at appeal.

- The height of the dwellings from street level was quite low and a condition attached to any permission granted required that all site levels were to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority. The height of the proposed dwellings was no higher than those previously consented.

Councillor Jackson advised that he considered there was an issue of whether the development was compatible with the distinctive vernacular character of the locality in Policy H15 was crucial and as stated in the NPPF that it had to be sympathetic to the local character and history of the built up and landscaped setting, and overdevelopment of the site. It was a small site and suitable for 2 to 3 small bungalows, but not for 4 x 5 bedroomed houses. He thought that the buildings would have a greater impact than being stated and also questioned if sufficient car parking could be provided. He proposed that the application be deferred to allow a site visit to be undertaken due to the impact that was not shown on the photographs, car parking issues and to judge if 4 x 5 bedroomed houses was an overdevelopment of the site. This was seconded by Councillor Wearmouth, who advised that whilst he was tending to think that the proposals were acceptable, it would be useful to have a site visit.

Following a short discussion on the merits of having a site visit to determine if Members considered the proposed development would be overdevelopment on the site a vote was taken on the proposal to defer the application in order to carry out a site visit as follows: FOR 4; AGAINST 2; ABSTENTIONS 1.

RESOLVED that the application be **DEFERRED** for a site visit to be undertaken.

225 **APPEALS UPDATE**

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....

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