

**NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**CASTLE MORPETH LOCAL AREA COUNCIL**

At the meeting of the **Castle Morpeth Local Area Council** held at Meeting Space - Block 1, Floor 2 - County Hall on Monday, 13 September 2021 at 4.00 pm.

**PRESENT**

J Beynon (Chair) (in the Chair)

**MEMBERS**

D Bawn	R Dodd
L Dunn	J Foster
V Jones	M Murphy
D Towns	R Wearmouth

**OFFICERS**

J Blenkinsopp	Solicitor
P Jones	Service Director - Local Services
M King	Highways Delivery Area Manager
L Little	Senior Democratic Services Officer
R Little	Assistant Democratic Services Officer
P Lowes	Neighbourhood Services Area Manager
E Sinnamon	Development Service Manager

Around 3 members of the press and public were present.

**32      PROCEDURE AT PLANNING MEETINGS**

J Foster, Vice-Chair (Planning) (in the Chair) outlined the procedure which would be followed at the meeting.

**33      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Darwin, Dickinson and Sanderson.

**34      MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meetings of the Castle Morpeth Local Area Council held on Monday 12 July 2021 and Monday 9 August, 2021 as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

**35      DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Councillor Towns advised that he had spoken to the applicant's agent regarding

Ch.'s Initials.....

the planning application but did not express any views. Councillor Bawn advised that he had received representations from the developer but had not expressed any views.

## 36 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.

## 37 21/00236/FUL

**Redevelopment of existing land and buildings and the erection of 7No dwellings**

**Land North of Katerdene, Fulbeck, Morpeth, Northumberland**

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

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

- Page 43 – Item 9 Recommendation should read :

“That this application be *REFUSED* permission subject to the following: ...”

- There were typographical errors in paragraphs 7.4 and 7.5 and to clarify the aim of these paragraphs was to confirm that it could be argued that the site was not considered to be in an isolated location in reference paragraph 80 of the NPPF this was due to its proximity to the existing farmhouse although the site was not located in a village itself it would not be included under definition of paragraph 79 of the NPPF to be able to support services in other nearby villages.

Late representations received after the agenda had been published had been emailed to members in advance of the meeting and paper copies were circulated at the meeting with a short adjournment provided to ensure that Members had sufficient time to read these prior to consideration of the application. The meeting recommenced at 4.31 pm.

T Michie addressed the Committee speaking in support of his family's application. His comments included the following:-

- Katerdene had been in the family since his Grandfather purchased it in the 1950's. It was no longer operating as a commercial farming unit with all members of the family pursuing different career paths to agriculture.

Ch.'s Initials.....

- This was a resubmission of a former application which following advice from Planning Officers was withdrawn amended and resubmitted.
- The size of the application had been changed from the original along with the design and location of the houses ensuring that these did not encroach past the boundary of the existing yard, buildings and areas which were granted a Certificate of Lawfulness which also covered the paddock area which was not included within this application.
- A lot of discussions had been undertaken related to the principal of the development and technical issues and if Members provided their support to the application then they had solutions to the noise, land contamination and drainage and delegated authority could be given to the Planning Officers for sign off whilst the necessary reports were produced.
- A great deal of information had been provided in support of this application. On the first application Highways only required technical changes to be made however they now said that this application was wholly unacceptable and he questioned why this was the case as they were not aware of any policy changes.
- They could link to the path on the new by-pass or simply walk down Fulbeck Lane the same as the existing residents of both the old and new properties. They did not understand why walking down the lane or linking to the by-pass route was suddenly unsustainable or unacceptable and no technical response had been provided from Highways or Planning on this issue. They hoped that Members accepted that walking down the lane to the by-pass was acceptable and a provided an easy suitable route into Morpeth.
- The site represented an anomaly in relation to the existing and emerging policies, the NPPF and the site circumstances. The aim of the NPPF was to deliver more homes in the most sustainable way while the Neighbourhood Plan was to harness growth whilst retaining local identity and distinctiveness. The development would meet the aims of the NPPF whilst protecting and representing the aspirations of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- A lot of information had been provided by the agent in relation to other developments in the area, and Katerdene sat between these.
- The site was previously developed and had an existing permission for 2 dwellings currently and the site would not encroach outside boundaries of the Certificate of Lawfulness which was granted by the Council.
- The site would not link settlements together and would not undermine the settlement boundary as defined in the Neighbourhood Plan. Whilst outside the settlement boundary it fell within the settlement of Morpeth and fell within allocations for employment and housing land. The site was not isolated from Morpeth and was a sustainable form of development.
- The impact on the highway network should be considered acceptable with manoeuvring and parking spaces would be provided and safe access provided.
- The proposal would comply with the Development Plan as a whole and fulfil the environmental role as sustainable development. It would contribute to the supply of housing and would be sustainable development in terms of the NCC.

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

Ch.'s Initials.....

- In respect of further clarity on aspects of the late representation, details of the Certificate of Lawfulness had been checked and it was confirmed that only half the site at the northern part could be considered as brownfield site the other half being greenfield. The application has been considered on the whole site. If the whole site had been previously developed it would still need to be considered against bullet point g in the NPPF which stated ... “not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development”.
- In terms of the Highways position, Highways stated that they had assessed the application and had concerns regarding the unsustainability of the location with the development being wholly reliant on vehicle use and did not meet tests within the NPPF.
- Other developments in the location could have had different material reasons for being acceptable at the time of development however Members must consider the facts as of today in relation to this application and the in principle position which was in the Development Plan and the position of the emerging Local Plan on developments outside the settlement boundary. If the application did not meet policies you could look at other material aspects, however Officers did not consider these were sufficient to justify development outside the principal policies to allow this application.
- All aspects of the highways scheme was unacceptable, whilst there was the possibility that some mitigation could be provided details of this had not been provided to Highways so they could not support this application.
- Part of the site could be developed but Members must look at the policies and be consistent in their application.
- Discussions regarding settlement boundaries had taken place with policy colleagues, there was a definite line of a settlement boundary and anything outside of this was described as open countryside or outside the settlement boundary. In this instance, whilst the application site might be close to and feel part of the settlement, it was definitely outside of the settlement boundary and therefore there should be no development unless there were exceptional circumstances.
- The extant permission for 2 dwellings had been granted under permitted development and therefore there had been no opportunity to refuse due to sustainability.
- The site to the north of the internal road could be utilised for development, however the applicant had wished to proceed with the application for the whole of the site.

Councillor Dodd proposed acceptance of the recommendation to refuse the application as set out in the Officer's report which was seconded by Councillor Jones.

Whilst Members had some sympathy with the applicant and felt that the proposed dwellings were of a good quality design, it was not considered that there was sufficient justification for development within the Green Belt and outside of the settlement boundary and they must be consistent with the application of planning policies. It was stated that Cabinet had agreed that a review of the Local Plan would be undertaken once it was adopted in light of the development of the Northumberland Line and BritishVOLT in order to provide more executive type

Ch.'s Initials.....

housing in South East Northumberland which might assist in unlocking this site in the future. Alternatively a smaller development on the previously developed land could be submitted for consideration.

A vote was taken on the recommendation to refuse the application for the reasons as outlined in the report as follows: FOR 6; AGAINST 0; ABSTENSIONS 3.

**RESOLVED** that the application be **REFUSED** for the reasons as outlined in the report.

## 38 **APPEALS UPDATE**

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

A short break was held at this point and the meeting reconvened with Councillor J Beynon, in the Chair who advised that the agenda would be reordered and the next item would be the Policing and Community Safety Update.

## 39 **POLICING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY UPDATE**

Inspector John Swan and Sergeant Les Robson were in attendance to provide an update on policing and community safety within the Morpeth area. The following information was noted:

- Police in Morpeth had received a total of 8,259 incidents during the past year, which was low in comparison to some other areas, with the majority in relation to public safety and welfare. There had been 2,307 crimes reported however at least one third had been from the two mental health institutions and HMP Northumberland which meant that 1649 in total from residents within the Castle Morpeth area which was low in relation to other areas with the same population.
- Liaison Officers had been attached to the Morpeth Police Station to work with St Georges and Northgate Hospitals to build relationships and work to resolve issues. This work would also cover the new housing estates in proximity to the hospitals ensuring residents felt safe.
- There had been issues within the Hadston and Widdrington areas with Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) and off road biking with some vehicles involved in being seized.
- Work had been undertaken in relation to ASB within Morpeth town centre and Carlisle Park, and homelessness and begging issues working with NCC Safeguarding teams to get help and support to remove the issue.
- Youth ASB warnings and letters had been issued throughout the year and work was undertaken with housing providers. There had been a slight increase in reports of ASB following the end of lockdown, however this often related to young people just sitting chatting without any ASB occurring.
- Cameras had been adjusted to take account of the reopening of the night-time economy with an increased police presence and work undertaken with door staff and licensees.
- Morpeth was a safe place to live with a lower crime rate than other areas however the Neighbourhood Team would continue to work to make

Ch.'s Initials.....

improvements for residents.

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

- Morpeth Police Station had never been closed during the pandemic, however the reception area was no longer open to the public.
- The Police were aware of cars using the underground area of the Morrisons car park at night and the ASB occurring with a number of arrests made and warnings provided. Any video evidence of ASB should be forwarded to the Police to allow action to be taken.
- Information would be forwarded to colleagues in relation to vodka bottles and security tags from Asda being thrown from cars between Loansdean and Clifton on the A197.
- Strategies have always been in place in relation to any domestic violence (DV) and positive action taken. The Specialist Investigation Unit (SIU) takes on all DV incidents with specially trained officers in place. There was an awareness of the potential for an increase in DV incidents during lockdown and extra contact was made by the Neighbourhood Team to known victims at medium risk and work was also undertaken with partners and foodbanks etc to ensure identification of potential problems at an early stage.
- Any child concerns were reported through the Multi Agency Safety Hub (MASH) with the appropriate support put in through the partnership approach.
- The Neighbourhood Teams linked in with each other across the force and resources would be moved to where needed and there was a borderless policy in place.
- Regular updates should be provided to Town and Parish Councils with regular updates from their Neighbourhood Teams although attendance in person had not been possible during Covid. It was important that any issues were reported as they happened rather than waiting for a Parish Council meeting and contact should be made with the local teams whose details were available on the website.
- In relation to speeding issues contact would be made with Councillor Dunn regarding problems in Lynemouth and Ellington. Speeding issues in other areas should continue to be reported through the Neighbourhood Teams and would be passed to traffic.
- The use of speedwatch volunteers had been paused due to Covid however work was underway as to how volunteers could feel better valued.
- Notification of any cycling events / time trials being held should be being provided to the Police in advance.
- Planning for darker nights operations which included additional patrols targeting ASB was underway, however any incidents should continue to be reported either by calling 101 or on the Northumbria Police website.
- Any incidents of vehicle ASB should be reported as above as action could be taken under Section 59 of the Police Reform Act and where registrations were provided these would be added to the database and the vehicles targeted. If this was happening in specific areas at certain times then extra resources could be utilised to look for the vehicles and details could also be passed to Operation Dragoon for their attendance.
- The Community Engagement Van visited villages to provide education

Ch.'s Initials.....

regarding speeding and work was to recommence in association with the Fire and Rescue Service and Ambulance Service on this.

- It was anticipated that “Cuppa with a Copper” would be reintroduced.
- More would be done to share with the media the good work that was being undertaken. Issues with social media perpetuating stories from other areas of the country had been recognised and moderators were being asked to remove stories which were no longer relevant.

Inspector Swan and Sergeant Robson were thanked for their attendance.

## 40 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

L Little, Senior Democratic Services Officer advised that questions had been received as follows:

From: Heddon and Ponteland Branch Labour Party

“Under the government’s new National Bus Strategy, Northumberland County Council is required to produce a “Bus Service Improvement Plan” (BSIP), with a deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> October 2021. What public consultation is being undertaken to inform the development of this Plan and the work of the proposed “Enhanced Bus Partnership”? How can individuals and interested groups contribute ideas for new or improved routes, better integration and other measures to improve local bus services? “

Response provided in writing in advance of the meeting:

*“The Enhanced Bus Partnership consultation is being led by Transport North East and supported by the region’s local authorities, including the county council. The County Council are actively promoting the consultation via news releases, social media and encouraging stakeholders such as town and parish councils to get involved. Both individuals and groups are being encouraged to participate in contributing to the development of a regional ‘Bus Services improvement plan’ further information on this initiative as well as a public engagement questionnaire can be accessed via the Transport North East website”*

A further question was then submitted:

“Thank you for your response and the proposed answer to the questions submitted for next Monday’s LAC regarding improvements to bus services. I must say that publicity for the questionnaire seems to have been rather poor. I have been looking into the issue for a few weeks now, and have just looked again at the NCC website for information on bus policy, and there is no pointer to the questionnaire. I haven’t seen anything in Pont News and Views. I don’t recall any information in the annual Council Tax correspondence or the occasional paper that is distributed. So I would question how serious the council is on consultation. Perhaps this comment could be raised at the upcoming LAC and considered by the relevant officers?”

Response:

*“This consultation is being led by Transport North East (TNE) and not by*

Ch.’s Initials.....

*Northumberland County Council. The Bus Service Improvement Plan is set against very strict and tight deadlines for submission to DfT which has affected the ability of both NCC and TNE to effectively engage with all stakeholders at this stage, once the BSIP has been submitted next month, we will then have further opportunity to consult and feed in proposals ahead to any intervention being finalised. In the meantime either Neil Easton or someone from TNE would be happy to meet with any individuals or groups to discuss any opportunities or concerns they may have”.*

#### Morpeth Town Council

“Can the Town Council be provided with written guidance with regards to NCC’s s106 protocols including how best to engage with Planning Officers. The Town Council believes the early stage discussion is an important step in the process and would appreciate the necessary guidance to ensure requests are being heard at the earliest possible time. Members of the Council appreciate how busy Rob will be and if we could have the details of a specific s106 office, if there is one, and we can raise the issues directly with them. We also feel it is now especially important to get this information as we have 10 new councillors which joined us following the elections in May and they need to have a good understanding of the processes in place.”

Response:

*“The new Local Plan will hopefully be formally adopted during the next few months. Extensive viability work and debate took place during the formal examination process on s106 contributions. This will mean there will be significant changes to the way that developer contributions are calculated and secured on sites. We have anticipated issuing revised public guidance when the Planning Inspectorate issues its final report on the Local Plan. Training sessions will be run with NCC and Parish/Town Council Members. We will set out how communities can get involved at this stage.”*

## 41 **PETITIONS**

No new petitions had been received.

An update was provided in relation to the petition “Enforcement in Lynemouth” as follows:

*“Out of the eight remaining cases, four have been evaluated and are being closed. The final four will have their evaluations completed shortly.”*

## 42 **LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES**

### Highways

M King, Highway Delivery Area Manager was in attendance to provide an update to Members and answer any questions. Members were advised that social guidelines in respect of Covid were continuing to be followed. The Highways Engineers post had now been filled with Lee Dundas stepping up. Routine

Ch.’s Initials.....



inspections were continuing with the backlog reducing. Reactive third party reports have continued to increase with extra officer resource allocated, however the forecast September date for completion had been missed. The reason for the increase in reports would be investigated. The routine gulley programme was continuing and some progress had been made with the backlog with a review of the routes and frequency currently being undertaken. A full list of schemes would be circulated after the meeting. Agreement to fill all vacant posts within the team had been given.

In responses to comments from Members, P Jones, Service Director advised that there was a large highways programme ongoing and resources had been provided. Gully tankers were to be replaced with larger capacity tankers which would improve gully cleansing in areas where this was needed. Traffic Management would need to be put in to allow the cleaning of the middle of the A197 road outside County Hall. A discussion would be held outside the meeting with Councillor Dodd regarding the A69 slip road roundabout between Ponteland and Throckley.

### Neighbourhood Services

P Lowes, Neighbourhood Services Area Manager provided an update to the Committee advising that there remained a high demand for garden and bulky waste with targets being exceeded. Grass cutting was on target and street sweeping would be targeting leaf hot spots shortly with Members asked to notify of any problem areas. Preparations were commencing for winter works and he would welcome any feedback on areas which Members felt need to be looked at. The weed killing trial was coming to an end and a report would be provided on the results in November and be shared with Members. All verge cutting targets had been achieved. It was hoped that assisted bulk collection would be able to be reinstated.

An update would be provided to the Communities and Place OSC and Cabinet in October on the glass collection trial. It had been expected that there would be a drop in the levels at take your own collection sites, however these had gone up 22% during Covid which had skewed the results of the trial. The trial had been very successful and had been welcomed however its continuation and potential for roll out to other areas was very much dependent on Government funding.

Morpeth Town Centre was swept on a regular basis however it had been the larger sweeper that had been used recently which was unable to go onto paths and they would look to use the mini-sweeper as well. Councillor Beynon highlighted that years ago business proprietors swept footpaths outside their own premises which had helped with the appearance of the town centre. Members highlighted issues with weeds with some areas looking neglected. It was clarified that this was not as a result of trials of alternative weed killing methods as that had been undertaken in specific areas, but was the result of the recent weather and it might be that the programme would need adapting to meet challenges in the future. Councillor Murphy highlighted that weeds provided essential food for bees and it might be that unless areas were unsafe that weeds should be considered as part of the biodiversity of areas. The Service Director advised that due to constraints chemicals could not be used to prevent weeds growing and therefore they needed to grow before they could be treated and it was possible a

trial of a mechanical removal could be undertaken in the future.

Contact would be made with Councillor Jones outside of the meeting to discuss the tree programme.

#### 43 **LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN UPDATE**

P Jones, Service Director – Local Services, provided an introduction to the report which gave an update on the Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2021/22 and the preparation for the 2022/23 programme.

The key aspects of the Countywide programme were outlined including the increased level of DfT funding and he advised that some additional schemes had been added to the previously consulted upon schemes. The complexity of some of the schemes within the County were highlighted.

Specifically in relation to the Castle Morpeth area it was reported that of the 55 projects within the area, 14 were complete including 20mph scheme at Cambo First School, Barrington corner improvements, works on the B6309 Stamfordham to Whittledean as well as a new zebra crossing at Broadway and Darras Hall. Five had gone through consultation and design and had been issued to the Area Team including works at Front Street in Lynemouth and Cresswell Road in Ellington, Meadowfield at Ponteland, improved signage along the riverbank at Stakeford and works at Hebron Village and Ponteland around car parking. 23 Schemes were at the design stage including pedestrian and cycling improvements. The safety teams had also taken forward a number of other high risk sites such as Blagdon Lane junction with the Great North Road, the C115 bends west of Chevington Moor and the 13 remaining were still to be programmed.

In respect of Highways Maintenance in the area there were a total of 32 projects, 14 of which were complete which included the majority of micro-surfacing and surfacing schemes, although as this was weather dependent, two schemes had been deferred into the next year. Nine works orders had been issued mainly in relation to surface dressing, with a further five in design and two waiting to be programmed.

Councillor Towns advised that the bridleway which had been put in following safety concerns after the restoration of the open cast from East Farm Road to the A1 was severely overgrown and asked that it be looked at to make usable. In response to a question relating to the LTP 30 mph scheme at Trittlington First School which had initially been delayed due to the possible routing of the A1, it was thought this was still at the design stage and an update would be provided. An update would also be provided on the Pegswood 20 mph scheme.

In response to Councillor Murphy's question regarding the progress of the Morpeth Road to Paddock Hall scheme which had been funded by ex-Councillor Ledger, Mr Jones advised that a process to provide updates to the LACs in terms of LTP schemes in a similar way to those provided for Members Small Schemes on a quarterly basis was being developed which would provide this type of information.

Mr Jones was thanked for the report and update.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

44      **LOCAL AREA COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME**

The work programme was attached and the Chair asked that should anyone have any items they would like to raise they should contact him. It was hoped to be able to have an update on the A1 dualling at the next full meeting in November.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

45      **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting which was a Planning only meeting would be held on Monday 11 October 2021 at 4.00 pm.

**CHAIR**.....

**DATE**.....

Ch.'s Initials.....