



Minutes of the Planning, Highways and Transport Committee held on December 14th, 2017 in St James Church Rooms, Pottergate, Alnwick at 6.00pm

Present: Cllrs M Swinbank (Chair), P Edge, A Fletcher, M Harrington, J Humphries, A Symmonds, L Wearn and C Westendarp.

In attendance: W Batey, Chief Officer & Town Clerk; J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town Clerk; T Kirton, Project & Funding Officer; representatives of the Alnmouth Road Residents Association including Tricia Cresswell.

P17/57 Apologies

Cllr. P Broom.

P17/58 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Wearn declared a pecuniary interest in Planning Application 17/04143/FUL. Councillor Wearn signed a dispensation form, to request a dispensation to speak on the application. This was granted.

P17/59 Planning Applications

The following applications were discussed and comments to be submitted were:

17/04143/FUL Land North East of Windy Edge Alnmouth Road Alnwick

Northumberland Hybrid application comprising - Full planning permission: Change of use of agricultural land and erection of 87 residential dwellings (including 15% affordable homes), an improved junction and access road off Alnmouth Road, temporary construction haul road from Denwick Lane, service roads, structural landscaping, open spaces, SuDS basin and other ancillary works. Outline planning permission with all matters reserved: change of use of agricultural land and development of 23.36 ha for 183 residential dwellings (including 15% affordable homes), service roads, structural landscaping, open spaces, SuDS basins and other ancillary works. Applicant Northumberland Estates (NE).

The Chair, Councillor Swinbank, gave Alnmouth Road Residents Association (ARRA) 10 minutes to give a summary of their concerns and issues, to the committee.

Tricia Cresswell (TC) and Lynda Wearn (LW) gave the summary.

TC explained that there were a number of issues that ARRA had regarding the planning application these centred around key points which had been submitted to the Town Council:

Access - Permanent access though Peter's Mill Lane cannot be made safe either structurally or functionally.

Structurally:

- issues with trees on the side of Peter's Mill Lane
- road material in the planning application is not suitable for the proposed usage as it has a maximum vehicle weightage of 8T which would mean that nothing bigger than a car or small van would be able to access the development.

Functionally:

- not safe and no proper assessment on the current number of vehicles and speed issues.
- there is a major concern about visibility especially with the Ravenmount Hotel development.
- The existing bridleway will disappear once the access road is completed.
- Denwick Lane would be the preferred access to the proposed development.

Ecology and conservation – concerned about the ecology and conservation statements made by the applicant.

Alnwick & Denwick Neighbourhood Plan (ADNP) issues – LW explained that the land identified as the site does not comply with the ADNP.

Boundaries - the proposed boundaries on the site are a real issue and the corridor being suggested between the new development and the existing houses not complying with the ADNP.

No visibility impact assessment has been done by the applicant.

Public transport - will be a real issue on the site with no turning points for buses.

Affordable Housing – this is at the bare minimum in the initial phase.

School catchment – the current schools are too far away from the proposed development at 1.5 miles.

Green space – more should be allocated. There are no new green buffer areas in the proposed development and the existing buffers are not highlighted to be maintained.

Having spoken, Councillor Wearn then left the meeting.

The Town Clerk advised that there had been lots of comments, including from consultees, about the proposed new development which had been pulled into a summary document which had been circulated.

Northumberland Estates (NE) had submitted a pre-application to NCC, which the Town Council were not involved with and according to NE, resulted in support in principle.

He gave a summary of the application:

The site map in the ADNP had generally been followed in the application except in the South East corner where the buffer is much narrower. This was a concern for residents adjacent to this part of the proposed site.

He explained that the site was the largest identified in the ADNP as a site for housing in Policy H2 but that this does not mean it will automatically get planning approval.

Housing – the proposed development was for 270 dwellings, Phase 1 would be for 87 dwellings and would be a mix of housing including 6 bungalows.

Transport – there is a combined footpath and cycle route through the development, except for the entrance area from Alnmouth Road..

The application contains very few off site suggestions for improvements such as bus shelters and crossings.

Environment – some tree planting and wild flower planting has been identified in the application but there is nothing in the application about future management and maintenance.

Heritage & Design – consultees have asked for more information about the application's relationship to policies HD1 and HD4.

Councillor Swinbank thanked the Town Clerk and Project & Funding Officer for their work on reviewing the planning application.

Councillor Swinbank took the committee through the report and suggestions from the Sustainable Transport Working Group regarding walking, cycling and bus services relating to the proposed new development.

Councillor comments:

Councillor Symmonds said that parking was a real concern for him and that once all the dwellings were built congestion would be a real issue. He also felt that more spaces would be needed at the schools. The Town Clerk advised that the NCC Education Department had asked for a financial contribution from the development to deal with the education implications.

Councillor Edge asked if objecting or submitting comments would have most impact. Councillor Swinbank advised that the Town Council were a consultee but not a Statutory one so NCC did not have to take account of their views. He added that several consultees had asked for further information before commenting further. There had also been no comments from Highways, which would be crucial.

He felt that there was not enough information to fully object or support at this stage and that the Town Council should submit its comments and concerns.

Councillor Symmonds felt that the proposed development needed to adhere to the Neighbourhood Plan and felt it was important that the boundary was preserved.

Councillor Westendarp agreed with Councillor Symmonds.

Councillor Harrington felt that traffic would be a real issue and that access to the proposed development should have a slip road from the A1.

The Chairman advised that possible Town Council comments had been pulled together. He took the committee through the comments and one additional comment was added, following the comments made by the ARRA representative at the meeting.

Councillor Symmonds thanked the residents group for their articulate points of view. He proposed that the proposed comments be submitted to NCC.

Councillor Swinbank also thanked the residents for their views.

It was agreed that the following comments be submitted to NCC:

1. The Town Council supports the principle of the allocation of this site for housing.
2. The Town Council objects to the Development Site Boundary which is not in line with the Neighbourhood Plan proposed site boundary and as such, the envisaged buffer for the existing dwellings in the south-east corner of the site is not provided.

In addition, the Town Council has the following issues which need to be addressed:

3. Safe access to & from the site on Alnmouth Road is of paramount importance and NCC Highways will need to give careful consideration to this and be satisfied that this can be achieved, not only for pedestrians but also for cyclists particularly young people accessing the BMX Track. In addition, the impact of the proposed junction on traffic flow and traffic speed on Alnmouth Road needs to be considered, along with ways to reduce vehicle speeds on the main primary road within the development.
4. In the event that approval is given, the improvement of public transport, walking and cycling provision both within the site and off site and traffic will require infrastructure improvements, not addressed in this application. Having undertaken some work on this, the Town Council wish to have a discussion with the Planning Officer about these for possible inclusion in the Section 106 agreement requirements. Future maintenance and management of the BMX track should also be addressed in these discussions.
5. In the event approval is given, safe access to the proposed BMX track, from Fisher Lane and Alnmouth Road, must be maintained during the proposed development.
6. In addition, to the BMX Track, play facilities for younger children must be provided, and

future management and maintenance addressed.

7. The future management and maintenance of Green Spaces, Trees and SuDS must be addressed (both functionally and financially) as part of any planning approval.

8. The Town Council would be supportive of the use of a permanent access road from Denwick Lane.

9. Consideration should be given to improve the provision of bus routes and services serving the new development and new bus shelters.

10. Concerns about the suitability of the road construction for heavy vehicles, as raised by objectors, will need to be addressed.

11. For the Committee to endorse the submission of the Sustainable Transport Working Group paper as part of the Town Council response.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The Site is allocated on the Neighbourhood Plan proposals map for Housing (Policy H2) with a guide capacity of 270. This is the largest site identified in the Plan. The plan suggests that the area is both developable and deliverable.

The Guideline requirements for the Site in the Plan states:

Design for the site needs to leave extensive green corridor down the east side of Allerburn Lea/West Acres housing, account for Fisher Lane Public Right of Way. Hedgerow and landscape structure, provide structural landscaping on and off site and provide access improvements to Alnmouth Road. The design may also have to account for A1 road noise. Improvements to public transport services to serve the site will also be required.

In addition, the text of the plan highlights that it will be necessary to use structural landscaping and green corridors between existing and new developments to protect the amenities and living conditions of existing residents on the edge of the urban area.

The Neighbourhood Plan proposals map identified the proposed site boundary. The developer has mainly followed this, with one major exception which is the buffer area between the dwellings and site to the southeast section of the boundary (Oaklands and Tarrega) is much narrower than was envisaged in the plan. The developer says changes have been made to the boundary to accommodate site specific issues and there is no increase in the overall housing numbers. Some 23 dwellings are included in the part of the area that was envisaged as a buffer area.

Relevant Neighbourhood Plan Policies:

Housing

Policy H3 A mix of formats and sizes of dwellings is required A mix of formats and sizes of dwellings is proposed including the provision of the required 15% affordable housing (10% rented and 5% discounted market value for sale or shared ownership). Phase 1 has 87 dwellings including 6 bungalows, 45 detached 2 storey and 36 semi-detached 2 storey. There is a mix of 2, 3, 4 and 5 provision. The first phase has only 4 private 2 bed provision (ignoring affordable provision). The Town Council would want to comment further on the housing mix in the later phases.

Under Policy H4 requires consideration of Building for Life¹² and the Lifetime Homes Standard- The developer claims Building for Life 12 has been considered. A 12 question checklist is addressed, although some responses are subjective.

Transport

Policy TRA1 requires developments to have safe and convenient pedestrian access and the enhancement of provision for walking including public rights of way will be supported There is an onsite provision of a footpath/cycle path alongside the main connecting road in the

development. This is 3m wide but decreases to just a footpath of 2m in the entrance to the site. A number of other footpaths are shown, some of these e.g. Allerburn Lea to Fisher Lane) could benefit from upgrading, to improve pedestrian routes to school/town.

Off site, very few improvements are suggested except for a possible pedestrian crossing on Alnmouth Road. This together with a number of pedestrian route improvements would assist with access to facilities including schools and the town centre.

Policy TRA2 has similar requirements regarding cycling. There is an onsite provision of a footpath/cycle path alongside the main connecting road in the development. This is 3m wide but decreases to just a footpath of 2m in the entrance to the site.

Off site, very few improvements are suggested. A number of cycle route improvements would assist with access to facilities including schools and the town centre.

Policy H2 (refers to improving public transport to the site) The travel plan contains details about raising awareness, promoting walking/cycling, publishing public transport information etc. To improve public transport consideration could be given to bus services / routes serving the new development and new bus shelters.

Environment

Policy ENV1 requires amenity green space and natural and semi natural green space in the site. Plans show substantial planting and woodland areas are proposed. The layout includes the retention of paddocks, a proposed allotment area, and areas of public open space and amenity space including a village green and wildflower meadow area. Future management and maintenance of these areas is not addressed.

Policy ENV6 relates to the protection of trees. 10 trees with TPOs need to be removed to facilitate access. These are a mixture of Limes, Yews, and a Cypress. In addition, a further 16 trees are listed for removal and some hedgerows. The development proposes some areas of new planting Phase 1 has 77 new trees.

Policy ENV7 requires full landscaping and tree planting proposals to add to the distinctive character of the area. Plans show substantial planting and woodland areas are proposed. Future management and maintenance of these areas is not addressed.

Policy ENV8 requires green infrastructure to be protected and the enhancement of public rights of way will be supported. A public right of way and public bridleway pass through the development. Diversion Orders will be required for the footpath or alternative provision and an alternative provision for the Bridleway. The NCC Countryside Officer has objected, unless these will be done. He also suggests upgrading of section of path towards Allerburn Lea in tarmac as part of s106 agreement.

Policy ENV9 requires major developments to have Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDs). 3 SUDS ponds are being created. Future management and maintenance of these areas is not addressed.

Heritage & Design

Policy HD1 seeks to protect the landscape setting and ensure they do not harm the distinctive landscape or historic character A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment report is provided. Historic England and NCC Conservation Officer has requested a more thorough assessment otherwise they object.

Natural England require more information on the impact on the Northumbrian Shore SSI and Northumbrian Coast due to increased recreational disturbance.

Policy HD4 relates to the approaches to the town and seeks to ensure they are in keeping with local character A landscape and Visual Assessment report is provided - see comment above in relation to Historic England and NCC Conservation Officer. The scheme may need to consider effective off-site landscaping.

The policies in the Alnwick & Denwick Neighbourhood Plan which was made in July 2017 should be used when reviewing planning applications within Alnwick & Denwick.

Councillor Wearn rejoined the meeting

17/04000/PRUTPO Green Batt House Green Batt Alnwick Northumberland NE66 1TY Tree Preservation Order application to crown lift T4 and T5 Sycamores to 4m removing epicormic growth from previous pruning to allow more light into back garden. Trees in a Conservation Area application to crown lift T1 Lime - to 4-5m as lower growth over-hanging and effecting highway on grey place. Crown reduce T2 Cherry by 20-25% retaining natural shape as its starting to outgrow its surroundings. Crown lift T6 Ash to 5m as starting to over-hang and encroach on neighbouring property, remove deadwood over highway – **NO OBJECTION** to most of the proposed tree works but are concerned that the works to the cherry tree may kill the tree. They would like NCC's Tree Officer to give his comments and recommendations which they would support.

It was agreed that the remaining planning applications on the agenda would be dealt by email.

P17/60 Matters Arising from the minutes of the previous meeting

None.

P17/61 To minute responses made since last meeting:

17/03828/FUL 3 Sawmill Industrial Estate Alnwick Northumberland NE66 2QW NO OBJECTIONS, in principle, but prior to any approval being given, we would like to see a copy of the Design and Access statement (which is missing from the application) and a scale plan showing the location and layout of the proposed 16 car parking spaces.

Proposals of this nature can be supported by policy E3 in the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan providing they contribute to the creation and retention of employment and/or reinvestment in the built fabric and infrastructure.

The policies in the Alnwick & Denwick Neighbourhood Plan which was made in July 2017 should be used when reviewing all planning application within Alnwick & Denwick.

P17/62 Any Other Urgent Business

None.

The meeting closed at 7.15 p.m.