NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE - SOUTH EAST

At a meeting of the Area Planning Committee - South East held in the Adamson Suite, Choppington Social Welfare, Colliery Road, Choppington, NE62 5SS on Tuesday, 21 April, 2015, 2014 at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT

M I Douglas (Chair)
E Cartie, B Gallacher, JJ Gobin, L Grimshaw, L Pidcock, J Reid, L Simpson, A Wallace

OFFICERS

H Bowers Democratic Services Officer
M Ketley Senior Manager, Development and Delivery
H Lancaster Solicitor, Regulation
D Lathan Environmental Health Officer
K Ledger Head of Planning and Housing Services
P McCarthy Senior Planner

ALSO PRESENT

U Filby, Solicitor, Regulation
Members of the Public: 4 approx
Public speakers: 1

PART I

60. Chairs Announcement

It was with great sadness that the Chair informed the Committee and members of the public of the death of Councillor Jimmy Sawyer. He paid tribute to Councillor Sawyer and requested the Committee and members observe one minute’s silence as a mark of respect.

The Chair then introduced Helen Lancaster, Solicitor and Umi Filby, Solicitor who was observing the meeting.

61. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Johnstone, Lang and Wilson.
62. Minutes

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 17 March 2015, as circulated, be agreed and signed by the Chair.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

63. Determination of Planning Applications

The Chair explained that the report set out the material planning considerations that had to be taken into consideration with applications and the procedure for considering and deciding each application. It also outlined the public speaking procedure.

64. B/08/00465/FUL – Erection of 715 dwelling houses on land adjacent to east and west of Beacon Lane in the south west sector, Cramlington. Development includes playing fields, a pavilion, three areas for play equipment, a multi-use games area and three substations (as amended).

Mark Ketley, Senior Manager - Development and Delivery informed the Committee that the application had originally been reported to the South East Area Planning Committee in March 2011. At that meeting it had been resolved that planning permission should be granted subject to a number of planning conditions and completion of a Section 106 agreement. Due to the length of time that had elapsed since the previous resolution was made without the Section 106 agreement being completed, along with changes to national planning policy through the NPPF and subsequent changes to the scheme, it was appropriate that the application was reconsidered by the Committee.

Since the report had been published, a late representation had been received from the Homes and Communities Agency and previously circulated to members of the Committee.

An update report had been provided by the Case Officer for the planning application and the Chair advised that a 5 minute recess would take place to allow Members to read the information. (Update report attached with the signed Minutes).

Mr Ketley then introduced the report with the aid of maps and diagrams.

The application site was approximately 33.77 hectares in area and generally flat and bounded to the north by the Beaconhill Estate. To the east, the application site was bounded by farmland which abutted the main East Coast railway line and the Whitelea area of Cramlington together with the town centre. To the south and west of the site was enclosed by open countryside including a golf course and woodland; an area to the south was designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Vehicular access to the site was from Beacon Lane. The access from Beacon
Lane would be improved and widened with a roundabout to be installed at the Beacon Lane/Kielder Avenue junction.

An area of land on the eastern side of the proposed access road was to be set aside for the development of a commercial centre.

Two playing pitches were proposed at the western end of the site and areas of open space were to be spread throughout the site. There was an area within the south east part of the site that was of archaeological significance. That part of the site would be left undeveloped and would be used as open space.

The proposed development would utilise a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) for the disposal of surface water which would be based on two ponded areas, one in the south western corner of the site to the south of the proposed playing pitches and another towards the south eastern boundary beyond the main residential block. The ponds would be used to manage the flow of the surface water to the nearest watercourse at Southern Stream to the south of the site.

The Authority had recently received an application to develop an area of land immediately to the south of the site. The application was a hybrid application submitted by the Arcot Consortium which consisted of Bellway and Persimmon Homes. The application sought outline planning permission for residential use with up to 1600 homes and other associated development. In addition, full planning permission had previously been granted for the construction of a roundabout and access to the site from Fisher Lane. The area of housing proposed by the Arcot Consortium would adjoin the southern boundary of the proposed site and would be connected through the construction of a new link road from Beacon Lane into the Arcot Consortium land to the south.

Part of the application site was outside of the defined settlement boundary and on land which was not allocated for housing purposes and therefore classed as a departure from the local plan. On this basis the application would need to be referred to the Secretary of State to determine whether the application should be "called in" for decision by the SoS.

The Council’s emerging Core Strategy draft plan identifies Cramlington as a strategic location for housing growth but it was considered that it carried limited weight in determining the application. However, both the existing and emerging local planning policy envisaged Cramlington South West sector as a key location for housing and on that basis it was considered that the scheme was acceptable in principle.

The Council’s most recently published assessment of its 5 year housing land supply identified that there was not currently a five year supply of deliverable housing land within the south east delivery area and therefore the NPPFs assumption in favour of development applied.

The NPPF advises that Local Authorities should plan for a mix of housing and the application proposal included a variety of mixed styles from the two developers to create visual interest.
Since the publication of the report, five letters of objection had been received to the proposal and the main issues were summarised in the update sheet.

Mr Ketley referred to the Case Officer comments in the update sheet regarding the principle of use of Beacon Lane.

He continued that the proposed development would utilise a Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS) for the disposal of surface water and there had been no objections from the SUDS Officer subject to conditions to secure a detailed drainage design and maintenance regime.

In respect of the highways and the impact of the local network, that was deemed acceptable subject to conditions which could be added to those already set out in the report.

A key element of the scheme was the provision of a new link road from Beacon Lane into the Arcot Consortium land. The applicant had confirmed their commitment to providing the link road between the application site and the land to the south and detailed discussions had taken place over the phasing of the delivery. Members were advised to note the history of the issue when determining the application, not least because the South West Sector had been the subject of discussion at public inquiry in 2006 when the previously “called in” applications had been considered by the Planning Inspectorate. The decision notice made it clear that it was desirable to build out from the edge of the urban area as that would ensure that the first residents could use the most convenient links to the town centre and other facilities. A trigger point of completion of the 500th dwelling for providing the Beacon Lane link road had been imposed through planning conditions attached to the outline consent. However, during the course of assessing the subsequent application for the site, a trigger point of completion of the 100th dwelling for providing the link was recommended by the South East Area Planning Committee.

The appropriate trigger point had been the subject of lengthy discussion and detailed negotiations with the applicant, particularly in light of the financial viability of the scheme and the upfront remediation and infrastructure costs.

It was expected that the planning obligation attached to the planning permission would provide 20% affordable housing.

On that basis the recommendation remained more or less the same as set out in the report but with the revised wording for the recommendation as follows:

“Authority to the Head of Planning & Housing Services to GRANT planning permission subject to the completion of a Section 106 planning obligation covering the Heads of Terms set out in the report; subject to the conditions set out in the report along with any amendments and/or additional conditions that may be considered necessary following receipt of further consultation responses, and subject to no new issues being raised by consultees or as a result of public consultation within the remainder of the consultation period.”
The application will also be required to be referred to the Secretary of State under the provisions of The Town and County Planning (Development Plans and Consultations) (Departures) Direction 1999 as the scheme would represent a significant departure from the development plan.

Councillor Flux, Ward Councillor was in attendance and commented on the following:-

- The presentation referred to public transport link between Langdale Drive and the site. It was in fact a cycle link; the residents were not objecting on the basis of a cycle link and he urged the Committee to re-consider the issue;
- Safety in respect of the shops on Kielder Avenue – many people would run across the road, especially children. It was a 30 mph road with a proposal for a footpath in that area. The Committee might want to consider conditions;
- He stated that the report had been produced before the deadline of the 21 April for objections. The report stated that limited weight should be given to previous schemes. Councillor Flux advised that a significant number of objections had been received from residents in 2011 regarding overlooking which the Committee should to consider.

Mr Ketley advised that he had initially understood the link between Langdale Drive and the site to be a public transport link but could now confirm that this would be a cycle way only and apologised for the error. Philip McCarthy, Senior Planner advised that a condition would be recommended and agreed.

Members raised questions on the following:-

- The number of trees in the development;
- Were the primary roads wide enough for parking?
- What was the archaeological significance?
- How enforceable was the 20% affordable housing?

Mr McCarthy advised that the primary road could accommodate parked cars.

Mr Ketley did not have any detailed information on the archaeological significance.

In relation to the query regarding the affordable housing, Mr Ketley stated that if the Section 106 agreement was not completed after a certain length of time, then the application would need to be brought back to the Planning Committee for re-consideration. However, if Members were minded to approve the application, the planning obligation would be entirely enforceable. Karen Ledger, Head of Planning and Housing Services advised that a lot of work had been carried out on the application in terms of viability but added that the applicants could apply to renegotiate their affordable housing offer under Section 106A of the Planning Act.
Councillor Daley moved the recommendation for approval which was seconded by Councillor Cartie.

**RESOLVED** – Authority to the Head of Planning & Housing Services to GRANT planning permission subject to the completion of a Section 106 planning obligation covering the Heads of Terms set out in the report; subject to the conditions set out in the report along with any amendments and/or additional conditions that may be considered necessary following receipt of further consultation responses, and subject to no new issues being raised by consultees or as a result of public consultation within the remainder of the consultation period.

The application will also be required to be referred to the Secretary of State under the provisions of The Town and County Planning (Development Plans and Consultations) (Departures) Direction 1999 as the scheme would represent a significant departure from the development plan.

65. **Urgent Business**

The Chair referred to the last meeting of the South Area Planning Committee where he had informed Members that the Inspector had refused planning permission for an application at East Sleekburn. The Chair advised the Committee that the case was in fact still awaiting the Inspector’s decision and apologised for giving Members the wrong information.

**RESOLVED** – That the information be noted.

The meeting ended at 6.40 pm

CHAIR

DATE