NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE - WEST

At a meeting of the Area Planning Committee - West held at Council Chamber, Prospect House, Hexham, NE46 1XD on Wednesday, 18 March 2015 at 6.00pm

PRESENT

Councillor CW Horncastle
(in the Chair)

MEMBERS

I Hutchinson R Gibson
E Armstrong JB Fearon
A Dale A Reid
RR Dodd JR Riddle

OFFICERS

M Bird Team Leader (Scrutiny/Regulatory), Democratic Services
M Patrick Senior Highways Engineer, Local Services
G Robbie Principal Planning Officer, Planning and Housing Services
E Sinnamon Principal Solicitor (Regulation), Legal Services
N Turnbull Affordable Housing Senior Officer, Planning and Housing Services

Public (21)
Press (1)

144. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Sharp.

145. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Area Planning Committee - West held on Wednesday, 18 March 2015 at 6.00pm, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair, subject to being amended to show that Councillor C Homer was also present at the meeting.

146. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST
The Chair explained how members had taken legal advice about possible interests, after which the following declarations were made:

- Councillor Gibson declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to application 14/03086/OUT and would not take part in the discussion as he knew both the applicant and agent and was also a Humshaugh Parish Councillor.
- Councillor Dodd declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to application 14/03086/OUT and would not take part in the discussion as he was Vice-chair of the Hexham Constituency Conservative Association when the applicant had been the Chair of the Hexham Constituency Conservative Association.
- Councillor Dale declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in relation to application 14/03086/OUT as she happened to know the applicant.

(6.03pm: Councillors Dodd & Gibson then left the meeting in advance of application 14/03086/OUT being considered.)

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

147. DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The report requested the committee to decide the planning applications attached to the report using the powers delegated to it. The Chair also explained the process for how each application would be considered and the public speaking arrangements.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

148. 14/03086/OUT: Outline application for the development of 20 residential dwellings with all matters reserved - Land East of East Lea, Humshaugh, Northumberland

Principal Planning Officer Mr Robbie introduced the application by firstly providing a number of updates, as follows:

- paragraph 2.2 of the report referred to the application being originally for 20 dwellings, however condition 4 proposed that the proposal was for not more than 20 dwellings, thus putting an upper limit on the numbers.
- Humshaugh Parish Council had commented further. They had restated their neutral position and their points regarding requiring a condition for the junction by East Lea, how it was a large plot for a small number of dwellings, and how the most recent Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) assessment did not support the development.
- the applicant had amended the boundary line to bring in the area of surface water drainage attenuation pond, so a further consultation period was currently running until 6 April. The area for the pond had however been set out through an earlier version of the application.
- English Heritage had confirmed they had no objection. The site was within the landscape setting of the Hadrian’s Wall World Heritage Site, but it would not impact on the archaeological remains of the wall. The development
would be visible from the site but it would not harm the setting. It adjoined the Conservation Area but it was characterised by modern housing. They had not concerns subject to issues regarding landscaping and buffer planting

- Northumbrian Water had no further comments regarding surface water and had requested a condition for both drainage methods to be agreed
- a further letter had been received which raised the same concerns as those of Humshaugh Parish Council
- the proposed addition of Public Protection conditions which had been missed off the original Committee papers
- the recommendation was thus amended to recommend authority be given to the Head of Planning and Housing Services to approve the application subject to any further comments from the Environment Agency and Humshaugh Parish Council or any other material planning reasons being raised, subject to a Section 106 agreement regarding the provision of affordable housing and off site sport and play facilities, and subject to the conditions proposed in pages 40 – 43 of the agenda.

Mr Robbie then continued introducing the application with the aid of maps, photos and diagrams.

Ms J Ludman then spoke on behalf of objectors to the scheme, or which her key points were:

- it was contrary to Tynedale Core Strategy policies GD1, GD2 and H4; policy GD1 required that villages were to be the last resort for new housing, and this should only be for small schemes, and policy H4 stated such proposals could only be undertaken if 100% of the houses were affordable
- the latest SHLAA document stated that overall there was a surplus in land supply identified for 2014 – the proposal was opportunism in the face of a policy vacuum
- it was a sensitive greenfield site with drainage problems near the Conservation Area. The local sewage system had no capacity; a new system was required. Information about drainage was required if the principle of the development of the scheme was to be acceptable, but this could not currently be established
- access would be through the East Lea estate, which had much on street parking and was a quiet cul-de-sac. People had to cross the road from the parking area to get to the doctor’s surgery. The proposed access was the only route to the site and heavy traffic going through would not be acceptable
- the application was contrary to both existing and emerging planning policy, and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- there was too much left to condition for a sensitive site

Mr R Murphy and Mr S Hughes then spoke in support of the application. Mr Murphy spoke first, of which his key points were:

- the proposal was for a modest extension to the village in a sustainable location. No statutory consultees had objected. Any issues had been resolved by working with consultees; a number of the details had been revised as a result
- it would boost housing supply in the west area of Northumberland and county as a whole; a five year supply couldn’t be demonstrated, so both the Tynedale Core Strategy and Local Plan were both out of date
• access would be 4.6m wide, more than adequate for the highways network
• the proposal would provide 30% affordable housing, with a Section 106 contribution. New residents would support both the new and existing facilities within the village. It would complement the recently built affordable housing development nearby at Chollerford.

Mr Hughes then spoke, of which his key points were:
• a topographical survey had concluded that the depth of the depression on the land was lower than anticipated. There was no subsidence at the site
• it would have no impact on local ground water levels, assisted by the clay bed. Surface water discharge would be attenuated by the SuDS pond, which would provide ecological benefits. A condition was also included about foul water treatment.

Members then asked a number of questions to which officers replied; the key details were:
• the Highways Authority deemed the access to be adequate to accommodate 20 additional dwellings. If approved, the reserved matter application would address matters relating to the layout, which would have to be adequate and provide sufficient parking provision with each dwelling
• the junction was adequate for the doctor’s surgery, and parking was provided opposite
• there was a shortfall in housing supply in the west delivery area under the latest figures; the current supply was for between 2 – 2.4 years, so below the 5 year requirements. This set in place the assessment against the NPPF regarding whether local housing supply policies were up to date or not
• a wider consideration concerned the sustainability of the development in relation to local services available, and Humshaugh and Chollerford had a disproportionately high number of services for the size of the villages
• the development proposed a rate of eight houses per hectare. English Heritage had stressed that the proposed density had to be the upper limit
• consideration had been given to the type of affordable housing, particularly that provided at Chollerford - evidence suggested four bungalows could be supported as a result
• priority for affordable housing would always be given to local people
• Northumbrian Water had confirmed that the treatment plant was operating at full capacity, but were satisfied with a condition requiring that a scheme should be submitted prior to any work commencing. Northumbrian Water were a consultee and the proposed scheme would be reflected in any future recommendation
• the proposed attenuation pond was not included within the original plan boundary line. The revised site location plan brought this within the red line site boundary although the inclusion of the pond within the principles for drainage was within the application from the outset. The reconsultation and renotification was a procedural matter and the recommendation provided scope for the applicant needing to come back if any new material planning issues were raised
• if the five year housing supply couldn’t be demonstrated, it was then a matter of judgement regarding what weight to give the various factors in each scheme
• the SuDS Officer had commented that he had no objections subject to a range of conditions, which included proposals for water discharge and an
attenuation pond. Further technical details could be dealt with at the reserved matters stage
- local letting policy enabled the sourcing of properties for people who wanted the housing, for example most people who applied for the Riverside scheme wanted bungalows.

Councillor Hutchinson moved that the application be deferred as there were issues with flooding and sewage, and the SuDS Officer needed to be asked questions and there was insufficient information available to members at the present time. Councillor Armstrong seconded this, stressing that the site was on a steep hill and a problem with sewage already existed.

Members then debated the issue, of which the key points were:
- it was hoped that the SuDS Officer, as the expert for water run-off, needed to be in attendance for such an important application
- more information was required about the demand for affordable housing in the area
- at least five members of the committee wanted to ask questions of officers not in attendance
- members who had not attended the site visit should try to visit it before taking a decision on the application to see how the area operated.

It was then put to the vote and:

**RESOLVED** that the application be DEFERRED to allow further consideration of matters relating to the provision of affordable housing and to matters relating to surface and foul drainage.

(6.57pm: Councillors Dodd & Gibson then returned to the meeting.)

149. **14/02939/FUL:** Extensions to provide dormer window to proposed attic conversion, and construction of ground floor front and side extension for living room and garage with linking mono-pitch roof, and on-site paved area (revised plans) - 10 Windsor Crescent, Ovingham, Prudhoe, Northumberland, NE42 6AS

Members were advised that the application had been withdrawn. Ovingham Parish Council had withdrawn their objection to the application which could now be dealt with under delegated powers.

150. **15/00248/FUL:** Resubmission: The formation of a single storey rear extension (as amended: 03/03/15) - 15 Front Street, Corbridge, Northumberland, NE45 5AP

Principal Planning Officer Mr Robbie introduced the application with the aid of maps, photos and diagrams.

Ms C Price then spoke in objection to the application, of which her key points were:
- paragraph 7.5 of the report stated that amenity in her property would be impacted by overshadowing and loss of light
• according to the Council’s Validation Checklist for the registration of planning applications, a daylight/sunlight application was required for all applications where overshadowing or loss of light might occur, but this assessment had not been provided. How was the determination of the application not dependent on this information, as the amenity implications were of prime importance to she and her husband’s home of 40 years
• the proposed development was not permitted development
• there was no fall back design before the Council, so it could not be known if there was a likelihood or real prospect of one happening, and a comparison could not be made between the proposed development and the fall back
• the Council had been requested to issue an Article 4 Direction withdrawing permitted development rights, which should be determined before a decision was taken on this application
• it was an overdevelopment which would appear overwhelming and cause a loss of light and overshadowing. It would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area not just from the neighbouring perspective but from the views of the bridge and riverside
• if not refused, a site visit should be considered as the impact of the development could only be fully appreciated by inspection from her, and also due to the unusual nature of the proposal.

Mr S Rickman then spoke in support of the application, of which his key points were:
• it would be a modest single storey accommodation with a kitchen height of 2m, below the 2.4m height of the main house
• the design had changed after consultation with neighbours, which had also influenced the design of the perimeter walls also
• the scheme was designed to be constructed as per the requirements of the Party Wall Act
• there would be little overshadowing and loss of light as the property was north of 15A Front Street
• two tests for overshadowing had been undertaken, one 25 degrees and one 45 degrees to all windows on the southern angle; all had passed the requirements. The partial enclosure of the rear yard would take away any overlooking
• a window in the client’s new bedroom would also be blocked up to be replaced by a roof light
• it had been fully assessed against all planning policy.

Members then asked a number of questions to which officers replied, of which the key details were:
• a daylight/sunlight assessment was not essential; it was up to the case officer as a matter of judgement to consider whether the proposal would impact upon light / create overshadowing. The application was not supported by a technical document for an assessment, but the case officer had visited to assess it.
• the case officer commented that there would be some minor overshadowing during morning times from the eaves level of the extension to the boundary with 15A. However this was not considered harmful enough as to warrant refusal
• permitted development rights had existed for over 20 years until two years previously when a neighbour had requested an Article 4 direction to restrict
them. However it was up to officers and member to considered whether this application as presented was acceptable or not, and officers considered it acceptable on planning terms.

- replying to concern about the address from where one objection had come from, members were advised that any letters had to be assessed on the basis of whether they raised material planning matters, not where they came from, and in this case the design and the impact on the neighbouring property were key considerations.

Councillor Dale then moved that a site visit take place to assess the impact on the neighbouring property, with reference to the close proximity involved. This was seconded by Councillor Armstrong.

The motion for a site visit was then put to the vote. Upon the vote being tied, the Chair then issued a casting vote and it was then:

**RESOLVED** that the application be DEFERRED FOR A SITE VISIT to take place on Monday 30 March at 9:30am.

151. **14/04160/FUL:** Development comprising the demolition of non-listed buildings, erection of 392 dwellings (Use Class C3), conversion of Prudhoe Hall and associated buildings to provide 12 dwellings (Use Class C3), improvement works to Walled Garden and associated access, landscape and infrastructure: Former Prudhoe Hospital, Prudhoe Hospital Drive, Prudhoe, Northumberland: request for pre-committee site visit

Mr Robbie explained that an application for outline planning permission for the demolition of non-listed buildings, erection of 392 dwellings, conversion of Prudhoe Hall and associated buildings to provide 12 dwellings and associated improvement works been submitted and it was recommended that members undertook a site visit prior to the formal determination of the application by the committee in order to familiarise themselves with the application site.

Members asked if a number of consultees could attend the visit, after which it was then put to the vote and:

**RESOLVED** that a pre-committee site visit take place on Monday 30 March at 10:30am.

**REPORTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, ECONOMY & HOUSING**

152. **APPEALS UPDATE**

Members received a report on the progress of planning appeals, for information.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.30pm.