

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL
CASTLE MORPETH LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **Castle Morpeth Local Area Council** held in the Council Chamber on Monday, 11 March 2019.

PRESENT

Councillor S. Dickinson
(Vice-chair (Planning), in the Chair items 109 - 117)

Councillor J. Beynon
(Vice-Chair, in the chair items 118 - 123)

COUNCILLORS

Bawn, D.L.
Dodd, R.R.
Dunn, L.
Foster, J.D.

Jones, V.
Sanderson, H.G.H.
Towns, D.J
Wearmouth, R.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Bennett, Mrs L.M.
Bulman, M.
Churchill, F.
King, M.
Laughton, R.
Murphy, J.
Ryan, L.
Sinnamon, E.
Snowdon, N.

Senior Democratic Services Officer
Solicitor
Interim Director of Planning
Highways Delivery Manager
Planning Officer
Principal Planning Officer
Network Manager
Senior Planning Manager
Principal Programme Officer
(Highways Improvement)
Neighbourhood Services Area
Manager

Wardle, S.

109. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E. Armstrong, P.A. Jackson and D. Ledger.

110. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Castle Morpeth Local Area Council held on Monday, 11 February 2019 as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

Ch.'s Initials.....

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

111. DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The attached report explained how the Local Area Council was asked to decide the planning applications attached to this agenda using the powers delegated to it. and included details of the public speaking arrangements. (A copy of the report is filed with the signed minutes as **Appendix A**)

RESOLVED that the report be noted

112. 17/04414/FUL

Detailed Planning Application for the erection of 61 no. 2, 3 and 4 bedroom two-storey dwellings with associated works
Land North East Of Pegswood First School, Butchers Lane, Pegswood, Northumberland

This item was withdrawn.

113. 18/03424/OUT

Outline planning permission with all matters reserved for residential development (use class C3) of one x 1 1/2 storey dwelling with associated landscaping and access.

Land North Of 16 Park Drive, Park Drive, Hepscoth Park, Northumberland

Richard Laughton, Planning Officer, introduced the application and provided a brief overview.

Karen Carins (Stannington Parish Council) spoke in the local member slot and her main points included:-

- Stannington Parish Council and local residents strongly supported the development.
- Significant development was ongoing in Hepscoth Park.
- The proposed bungalow was appropriate in scale and style and in keeping with current housing.
- It was suggested that restrictions should prevent further building by removing permitted development rights and the applicants were happy to agree to this.
- The development sat quite comfortably within the descriptions of developments considered appropriate in paragraphs 145 and 146 of the NPPF.
- The dwelling fell within the Hepscoth Park settlement and could, therefore, be defined as 'limited infilling in a village'. It was, therefore, appropriate development in the Green Belt and the impact on the openness of the Green Belt did not need to be assessed.
- The NPPF did not define what constituted a village or infill development.

- The land in question separated 14 and 15 Park Drive and there was a continuous built up frontage along the roadside which partly characterised Hepscoth Park as a settlement.
- The site was not so expansive that the gap could not reasonably be considered as 'infill' when assessed on the ground.
- The surrounding agricultural fields and highway defined the extent of the settlement giving it a sense of enclosure.
- There would be minimal impact on the Green Belt and it tidied up an area and completed the road.

Members then asked questions of officers and the key points from responses included:

- There was no definition of a village in NPPF, but it was something that was larger than a hamlet but not as large as a town and there would normally historically have been a church and some community assets such as a shop etc.
- Hepscoth Park did not have any characteristics which would lead to the interpretation that it could be considered a village in the opinion of officers.
- The houses already built or being built had been taken into consideration in deciding whether Hepscoth Park could be considered a village.
- There was a cafe and garden centre but this was not enough to be considered as a village.
- The development could not be considered as infill.
- Infill in Medburn and Belsay could not be used as a comparison as they were both considered established village settlements.

Councillor R. Wearmouth then moved, seconded by Councillor H.G.H. Sanderson, to grant the application (subject to appropriate conditions) for the following reasons:-

- Hepscoth Park was a significant development and they considered it to be a village. It had a cafe, nursery and shop nearby along with a sense of community.
- There was no impact on the Green Belt and the sense of openness
- There was overwhelming public support for the application.
- The site was clearly infill as it was positioned amongst three dwellings and was in an existing garden. It was hemmed in by a woodland copse and a stream.

Debate then followed and key points from members included:

- This matter was very finely balanced. Hepscoth Park could be viewed as an extension to Hepscoth Village, which had no church but did have a village hall.
- It could be viewed that this area should not have been included within the Green Belt.
- Hepscoth Park had reached the threshold to be reasonably considered to be a village. If it was accepted that it was a village then this development plot fitted the definition of infill.
- There would be no harm to the Green Belt by this development as the property was relatively small and surrounded by houses and trees.

On being put to the vote, it was agreed by 6 votes for to 1 against with 3 abstentions, that it be

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED**, subject to conditions being determined at a future committee, for the following reasons.

- Hepscott Park was a significant development and was considered to be a village. It had a cafe, nursery and shop nearby along with a sense of community.
- There was no impact on the Green Belt and the sense of openness
- There was overwhelming public support for the application.
- The site was clearly infill as it was positioned amongst three dwellings and was in an existing garden. It was hemmed in by a woodland copse and a stream.

114. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED

- (a) that under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the agenda as it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act, and
- (b) that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure for the following reasons:-

Agenda Item

Paragraph of Part I of Schedule 12A

7

5 - Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings. The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the interest in disclosure because privilege lies with the "client", which is the Council.

115. 18/01840/FUL

**Demolition of existing farmstead and erection of 3 No dwelling houses
Benridge Moor Farm, Longhorsley, Morpeth**

Members received a confidential report and legal advice outlining the reasons why the decision made on 12 November 2018 had been reviewed and the application brought back to committee.

The meeting was declared open to the public.

**116. 18/01840/FUL
Demolition of existing farmstead and erection of 3 No dwelling houses
Benridge Moor Farm, Longhorsley, Morpeth
Addendum Report**

Richard Laughton, Planning Officer, introduced the application and provided a brief overview. He added that there was an error in the second sentence of the third reason for refusal, as follows: The sentence should read that ‘No very special circumstances have been demonstrated.....’

Craig Ross (Agent) then spoke in support of the application and his key points included:

- The application had first been considered and approved on 12 November 2018.
- On 28 November 2018, further information on ecology and land contamination issues were supplied to planners as requested.
- On 18 January 2019, he was told that all matters had been resolved and the application would be approved under delegated powers.
- On 14 January 2019, the minutes of the meeting on 12 November 2018, were approved by members. The resolution regarding the application was very clear in the minutes.
- He had made numerous attempts to contact the department to find out why the decision notice was being withheld. He had eventually received a response.
- On 22 February 2019, an internal conference had been held but he had heard nothing further about the outcome.
- He had not received an invitation to attend tonight’s meeting.
- All the local residents supported the application and he represented everyone affected.

Derek Robson spoke in support of the application and his key points included:

- He lived at Benridge Moor House and his daughter owned the adjoining property.
- He thanked the members who had attended the site visit.
- Their houses were surrounded by six foot high fences to screen their properties from the derelict buildings on the site.
- The site was a brown field site in the Green Belt
- The complex of old barns were visible from roads to the south and east.

Members then asked questions to officers and the key points from responses included:

- The proposed dwellings were within the footprint of the existing barns.
- The footprint of the dwellings would be smaller but the mass would be different as some of the barns had no side walls.
- The proposal should not be seen as a conversion as it was, in fact, a full planning application.
- Consistency in approach was very important but all sites and developments were different. This site was different to some applications that had gone before

but this site was in the Green Belt and so that fact affected how it would be judged what was acceptable.

- A previous application referred to at another location had been approved because the site was previously developed for industrial use and so met the exception rule in the NPPF.
- This site was not previously developed land and so excluded from the exception rule in the NPPF.

Councillor R.R. Dodd then moved the officer recommendation to refuse the application. This was seconded by Councillor S. Dickinson

Debate then followed and the key points from members included:

- The purposes of the Green Belt were discussed, the land was already encroached and developed and would assist with urban regeneration. There would be no harm to the Green Belt and this development was likely to benefit the openness of the countryside and improve the site by enhancing what was already there.
- The site was not currently in use and was affecting neighbouring properties.
- The tools for assessing development in the Green Belt had to be used.

On being put to the vote, it was agreed by 4 votes for to 3 against with 3 abstentions, that it be

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

117. **PLANNING APPEALS UPDATE**

Members were informed of the progress of planning appeals. (A copy of the report is filed with the signed minutes as **Appendix B**)

RESOLVED that the report be received.

OTHER LOCAL AREA COUNCIL BUSINESS

On the conclusion of the development control business at 5.40 pm, the meeting adjourned as the remainder of the agenda consisted of other Local Area Council business scheduled to begin at 6pm.

118. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

This item allowed members of the public to ask questions, either at the meeting or submit them in advance.

A question had been submitted in advance by Lynne Roxburgh who was unable to attend the meeting. A copy of the written response was circulated to Members at the meeting.

Councillor Alan Sambrook, Pegswood Parish Council

Another housing development was proposed at Pegswood and it was likely that funding would again go to Ashington Academy. However, Pegswood school needed money to keep it going. The High School was planning to reduce its pupil numbers. Was this the case?

A written answer would be supplied to Councillor Sambrook and the Clerk to Pegswood Parish Council.

Councillor Liz Dunn

There was an issue with an historic landfill site at Lynemouth beach. Could both she and Councillor S. Dickinson be kept informed of developments in dealing with the matter?

Councillor H.G.H. Sanderson confirmed that there was a serious problem at the beach in that high tides had exposed the remains of an historic waste tip. It was not currently clear how toxic the exposed material may be. A consultant had been appointed to draw up options for dealing with it and, when this was complete, the Secretary of State would be approached with a view to securing funding to resolve the issue. Councillors Dunn and Dickinson would be kept informed.

119. PETITIONS

Members were informed that, since the previous meeting, no new petitions had been received, nor any updates due on petitions previously considered.

Receive any updates on petitions for which a report was previously considered:

Speeding through Ellington Village from A1068 roundabout. (A copy of the report is filed with the signed minutes as **Appendix C**)

Mr. Beattie, the lead petitioner, referred to the report and stressed the importance of reducing the speed of vehicles on this stretch of road. The people who had signed the petition were directly affected, having drives directly leading onto the road. It was difficult for these people to access the road from their homes safely. Following the removal of speed cushions, chicanes had been provided, but these were not popular with all residents. Traffic islands/ a roundabout and or pedestrian crossing would be helpful. A traffic survey had been carried out but the positions used and timings had affected the results adversely.

Councillor L. Dunn confirmed that traffic speed was a major concern to residents in the area. The chicanes and road signs that had been introduced were not felt by everyone to be working and were frequently damaged. The worth of traffic speed surveys was often questioned as the results very much depended on their positioning. Ellington Front Street was very busy and often congested and it was unlikely that any vehicle would overtake there. Further work with officers and

residents would be very welcome. It was important to find a sustainable and effective solution to this problem.

Members and officers discussed the report and the following comments were made:-

- A 20 mph limit would seem to be a good solution and should be quite straightforward particularly in view of the strong public support.
- It was not possible to go directly from 60 mph down to 20 mph without a transition zone with a lower speed, such as 60 - 40 - 20 mph.
- When installing physical measures it would be helpful if lighting and visibility was carefully considered to prevent further damage.
- A drop in session could be arranged to hear the views of local residents.

RESOLVED that

- (1) officers work with the local Councillor and Parish Council to investigate and consider whether there is any opportunity to improve signage and road marking.
- (2) drop in sessions for local residents be arranged.

120. LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES

Members received a verbal update from the Area Managers with the opportunity for members to ask questions afterwards.

Neighbourhood Services

- The 2019 garden waste scheme had just resumed. A new collection vehicle had been purchased with a larger capacity.
- Grounds maintenance work over the winter had gone well.
- Grass cutting had recommenced
- Weed spraying was being carried out but had been delayed due to the high winds.
- A new road sweeping vehicle had been purchased.

Technical Services

- There had been 7,800 requests for services
- Large increase in the number of potholes following the 'Beast from the East' in 2018.
- Backlog of dealing with potholes was reducing.
- 67 resurfacing projects had been carried out as part of the LTP.
- Forestry and quarry routes had been improved with funding from Rural Roads Challenge Fund.
- Microsurfacing was completed.
- Flood repairs and landslips completed by December 2018.
- Salt barn Powburn

Members welcomed the verbal report and commented that there had been good feedback from residents about the quality of road repairs. It was commented that the standard of pothole repairs was very high and it was noted that it was policy to carry out a basic repair in emergency circumstances and then to return later to complete a full repair. £150,000 was set aside for improvements to white lines at road junctions.

Environmental Enforcement and Environmental Campaigns Update

Councillor H.G.H. Sanderson presented a report on dog control enforcement and the Green Dog Walkers Campaign in September 2018. The report provided an update on environmental enforcement and the Council's environmental campaigns. (A copy of the report is filed with the signed minutes as **Appendix D**).

Members welcomed the report and commented that it was important to highlight successful prosecutions for dog fouling and flytipping. It was noted that the public often did not bother to report incidents but it should be emphasised that they should always report any incidents. Members noted that new regulations would mean that prosecution would take place if any flytipping was traced back to the original owner, even if they had paid company to remove it. It was important to ensure that the company had a valid permit.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

121. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PLACE

(1) Cycling Events on the Highway

Members received a report sets out the protocols for dealing with Cycling Events on the public highway. (A copy of the report is filed with the signed minutes as **Appendix E**)

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(2) Members' Local Improvement Schemes - Progress Report

Members received a progress report. (A copy of the report is filed with the signed minutes as **Appendix F**)

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

122. LOCAL AREA COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME

Members received the latest version of agreed items for future Local Area Council meetings. (A copy of the report is filed with the signed minutes as **Appendix G**)

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

123. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Monday, 8 April 2019, at 4.00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Morpeth.

This meeting would deal with planning matters only.

CHAIRMAN

DATE