

Minutes of a Meeting of Planning Committee held on Tuesday 25 April 2017 at 6:00pm in the Amble Town Council office, Fourways 2, 6 Dilston Terrace, Amble,

PRESENT: Cllrs Morrison, Horn, Dargue, Lewis, Hinson. Also present were 9 members of the public and 1 member of the press.

APOLOGIES: Cllr Weir – Apologies were accepted.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: Cllr Morrison made attendees at the meeting aware that she lives nearby one of the planning applications to be discussed at tonight's meeting and that she had received a circular letter of notification but that she had no personal interest in the development.

27. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC:

Louise Little referred to planning application 17/01095/FUL and quoted the core strategy guidelines which state the land at Coquet Enterprise Park should be retained for business use and creating employment opportunities. Mrs Little also pointed out that this proposed development backs on to a local scrap yard which also has a crushing license and uses a Furness. There is concern that new residents will complain about the dust and noise affecting their right of enjoyment of their garden areas and will could result in sanctions upon an already established business which employs local people. If the roles were reversed, she felt this juxtaposition would not be acceptable. Mrs Little also questioned how the land was reclassified when it was specifically designated as employment land.

In relation to planning application 17/01123/FUL, Mrs Little again referred to the Core Strategy document. This piece of land is on the coastal edge and within the fragile ecology of the dunes, sanctions have been put in place for other developments nearby so why not this one? The access road from this site is in to a very busy road with footpaths widely used by school children from the nearby school, holiday makers to the caravan site that holds 1000 caravans.

The site should be retained and used as part of the primary tier of the two tier education system that Northumberland is aiming for. These homes are not going to be affordable to local people.

Mrs June Watson commented also on planning application 17/01123/FUL and referred to the guidelines of the DfE where strict regulations are in place to prevent the disposal of school playing fields. If the disposal was to go ahead, consultations must take place before any works and any proceeds from the disposal are to be put back into education and sport. NCC have applied to demolish 3 schools this year, 2 have been refused and 1 has been withdrawn. Mrs Watson asked what consultation had taken place before this planning application went ahead and if this land was sold without any consultation it is in breach of government guidelines. Has a study been conducted with other schools to see if they could cope with yet another influx of pupils?

In respect of application number 17/01095/FUL, Mrs Watson supplied a petition from every household on Lindisfarne Road stating that they object to the planning application. Mrs Watson has also been informed from prospective employers and businesses that they have been advised to look elsewhere to start up their businesses. Mrs Watson requested that policies should be in place to protect the industrial element of the enterprise park.

Mrs Watson expressed concern for the local infrastructure of an already strained health centre and school places as well as the loss of even more green spaces.

Mrs Ann Bulman also echoed the objections to the planning application 17/01095/FUL. Whilst the rules on industrial enterprise may have relaxed to allow housing and whilst she accepts there may be a need for further housing she does not think that Amble Town Council should support such an application. The noise disturbance to local residents from wagons would not be acceptable. The houses seem to be made of pre-fab materials without any garages and in her opinion would struggle to be rented.

Mrs Bulman felt that this space should be kept for businesses and employment opportunities.

28.0 COMMUNICATIONS:

28.1 None

29. PLANNING APPLICATIONS:

To consider the following planning applications:

29.1: 17/01123/FUL – St Cuthbert's RC First School, Links Avenue, Amble – Demolition of First School and erection of residential development comprising of 7 town houses and 7 bungalows.

Amble Town Council object to this planning application and has submitted the following comments:

A prime objective of the existing Core Strategy is 'Improve the quality of life in the district's settlement by promoting healthy, safe and inclusive communities and ensuring equal access to homes, jobs, services, open space, recreational, cultural and community facilities and opportunities. This application seeks to remove a valued past and a potentially future needed community facility which currently provides recreational and open space well used by the community's children.

'Policy 3 of the emerging Core Strategy identifies Amble as a main town, and a key hub for housing, employment, education, healthcare, retail, transport and tourism. Whilst the town seems to have an abundance of developers seeking to satisfy the housing aspect, little thought appears to have been given to the other elements.

'This site was designated D2 in the sale documents- hence a school is here- but no change of use has been applied for. The Supporting Planning Assessment states '1.1. The site therefore has a lawful land use of D1 (non-residential institution) where there is no permitted change.' If a change was to be requested, then I would object. The town is currently expanding with more housing applications to be determined; the likelihood is that a much greater number of children will be entered into the educational system. Even with the resultant increased pupil funding, the current first school facilities will be unable to accommodate the projected numbers without expansion of the actual buildings. This site is adjacent to an existing school with all its facilities including a secure fence and playing fields. It would seem perverse indeed in these times of financial restraint and lack of suitable land to use this valuable asset for housing and then have to finance other means for our children's education.

'Objection also on safety grounds. This site is adjacent to an extremely busy road and a well used footpath. The design, access and planning statement clearly states '6. Access, Vehicle Parking and Highway Safety- Access to the proposed dwellings will be via a new adopted road through the centre of the properties.' The Supporting Planning Assessment repeats this at 2.8. However the site plans shows this is clearly not true. The seven town houses all have individual driveways crossing the footpath to access the highway. This is extremely dangerous to the many pedestrians who walk here to access the Links area or alternatively to go into the town and also the many people who come to and from the Caravan site. Twice a day this route is widely used by children attending the Links First school site.

'There is adequate means to include the affordable housing element on site yet the applicant seeks to fund this off site.

'Objection on the grounds that there is no clear indication of the type of boundary division between this estate and the adjacent first school- children's safety is of paramount importance.

'This site is close to the environmentally important coastal dunes strip but no thought has been given to the detrimental effect of the extra footfall this will engender.

However if this application is to be approved then we would respectfully suggest that:

'The layout is reviewed so that the town houses have minimal space in front and vehicular access is, as stated in the applicant's Design, Access and Planning statement and the Supporting Planning Assessment, through the new roadway to the rear of the properties- for reasons stated earlier.

'The materials for the town houses are changed as the timber cladding is not in keeping with the surrounding houses.

'The grassed area opposite the development is enhanced with a pavement in the interest of pedestrian safety or, at a minimum, kerbs to prevent visitor parking here which is detrimental to the adjacent Links area.

'Facilities for waste storage are incorporated.

'Working hours are restricted in the interests of residents

'All materials, equipment and vehicles are parked on site to minimise danger and disruption. Wheel washing facilities are needed on site and regularly road cleaning.

29.2 17/01095/FUL – Land South of Lindisfarne Road, Coquet Enterprise Park, Amble – Proposed erection of 51 dwelling houses, new access road plus other infrastructure works.

Amble Town Council object to the application and have submitted the following comments and also included a signed petition from all residents of Lindisfarne Road opposing the development.

Amble Town Council works hard to promote growth and development in Amble, we cannot afford to lose this land to housing development.

The very first point in the applicant's Planning Statement is 'keen to bring forward development opportunities that will help to regenerate Amble town and create employment opportunities.' Yet here we have an application for residential dwellings on an Enterprise Park designed to encourage business use and thus employment for the town's residents!

At 14 of the Planning Statement, the applicant states that although they have marketed the site for 5 years with little interest, there has been significant progress with other plots within the Enterprise Park. This interest has come about in the last 12-18 months which suggests that the town is now becoming more attractive to businesses/employers than previously. NCC Planning Department assured this Council that to gain jobs, the town needed to expand housing which in turn means more footfall which is a greater desirable commodity to any prospective business looking to locate in the town. With recently approved residential developments and many more seeking approval, Amble has the potential to increase households by approximately 25%. Therefore the likelihood is that businesses will want to open up here in the near future.

At 30 in the same Planning Statement, the applicant states there are large parts of the site that remain disused and undeveloped; yet in 14 and in recent advertising material the same applicant contradicts this by confirming that approximately 50% of these areas now have planning permission or are in advanced stages to have applications brought forward.

Therefore the available land is diminishing and it becomes vital that this site needs to be kept for future employment use. It is not acceptable to this town to indicate that the South East area of the County has sufficient employment land available. This is the only area designated for such usage in this town. Where will future employers go if they want to come here? Where will all the future residents of this expanding town find employment? There is scope for many types of businesses to locate to Amble if this area is kept for employment use. The jobs for this development are only whilst it is in construction; it is vital we retain land for permanent jobs.

Even the NCC Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment states 'not suitable for housing as it is located in designated employment land which is to be retained in emerging policy.' Retention of employment land is desperately needed to allow for our town's future expansion and viability.

A large percentage of the properties are located in close proximity to a waste disposal unit on the Enterprise Park. This has a woodchip and stone crushing facility with the accompanying noise and dust when in operation. This will make it extremely unpleasant and unhealthy for these residents to access their garden area.

Access to the site is from the main A1068 between a bend, an estate entrance, two schools and near to a Pedestrian Controlled Crossing- not a very safe position.

It is unacceptable to remove mature trees to allow for access to the site and to build the dwellings. There does not appear to be any consideration given to access, should that be required, to the public sewer which runs across this site.

Whilst the applicant states that rents will be of market level, there is no element of affordable housing within this site.

Should planning consent be given then we would respectfully suggest:

The bungalow layout is redesigned. At present the bedrooms are on the front with the path from the Enterprise Park to the town realigned to the front of the properties instead of the rear of the site as at present. This is an extremely well used path accessed by many from the East of the town to go to the town centre and by pupils going to the Middle school and JCSC- High School-sites. This is not conducive to elderly or less able bodied people's rest- in the morning or especially when people are returning late in the evening from using the town's amenities.

Where the estate road changes to a 'T' shape in front of the bungalows and the visitor parking- each end should have some form of barrier to prevent vehicles going onto the footpath in the interests of pedestrian safety or onto the grassed areas in the interest of visual amenity. This will also prevent entry to Northumbria Terrace or Coquet Enterprise Park itself.

The timber cladding and colouring palette are changed as they are not in keeping with the other properties in the vicinity.

The 'desire line' between the rear of Lindisfarne Road and this development is to have a new path. This is currently, in the main, a haphazard strip of underused land. The applicant states there is currently a post and rail fence and a wall here but this is not the case for the whole boundary. This area needs to have detailed landscaping and a maintenance programme for the future. Similarly a maintenance programme needs to be in place for the estate and the bund boundary.

The operational hours for HGV and Construction are stated as 7am to 7pm Monday to Friday. This needs to be amended to 8am to 5pm in the interest of residents adjacent to the site. All materials, equipment and vehicles need to be kept on site. Wheel washing facilities are needed on site and regularly road cleaning.

Permeable materials need to be used in the landscaping wherever possible to assist with surface drainage of water.

Photographic evidence needs to be made of the historically important ridge and furrow agriculture workings before development commences.

Mrs June Watson reported that there has been some works taking place by Gas and Electric companies at the bottom of Lindisfarne Road and queried whether preliminary work had already begun without planning permission. Council would make enquiries.

Cllr Hinson also mentioned that there is no safeguarding for traffic through to Northumbria Terrace. He did not object to the application as there has been no business interest in this area for quite some time. While this was acknowledged, it was also agreed that over the past 18 months, Amble has become more attractive to businesses which is resulting in more interest in enterprise.

Cllr Horn agreed with all comments that objected to the planning application and said that if this planning application was to go ahead it would blight the chance of commercial development of nearby land due to the housing. If this land is lost to housing we will never get it back.

30. DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING: The next Meeting will be held when required.