

**PRUDHOE TOWN COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Planning, Contract and Works Meeting held in The Spetchells Centre, Front Street, Prudhoe at 7:00pm on Wednesday 11 November 2015**

**PRESENT** Cllr Mrs J McGee (Chair), Cllr Mrs C Cuthbert, Cllr Ms J Rose, Cllr B Futers, Cllr G McCreedy, Cllr G Price, Cllr G Simpson, Cllr A Gill  
In attendance: R Whinney (Clerk)

**1516/1056 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** Cllr Mrs E Burt, Cllr E Dobson, Cllr A Reid, Cllr Mrs N McGee, Cllr A Piper

**1516/1057 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr A Gill – planning application 15/03331/COU – Cllr Gill stated that he was declaring a personal interest, and said that he would neither speak nor vote on this matter.

Cllr Mrs C Cuthbert – planning application 15/03331/COU – Cllr Mrs Cuthbert stated that she would make her own response to this application once she had been consulted by the Planning Authority.

In response to Cllr Mrs Cuthbert, the Clerk advised that there was no obligation on the councillors to leave the room while this matter was considered.

**1516/1058 PLANNING APPLICATIONS – Ref. 15/03331/COU**

At the request of the Chairman, it was agreed to take the above item immediately, owing to the presence of the applicant at the meeting. Cllr Mrs J McGee then invited the applicant, Mr Trevor Jones, to address the meeting.

**Mickley Ward**

**Ref. 15/03331/COU**

Proposal: Change of use for part of site to be used for preparation and storage of firewood

Location: High Close Wood, St Georges Church, Eastgate Bank, Mickley, Northumberland NE43 7BE

Applicant: Mr Trevor Jones, 12 Hillcrest Court, Prudhoe, Northumberland NE42 5PQ

Response deadline: 2 November 2015

Mr Jones explained that his was a local business, employing two people. Work, mainly carried out in Prudhoe and Mickley, often involved being off-site, and it involved tree surgery, hedging, and wood trimming. When trees were felled, they were often not brought back to the site, with customers taking the felled wood to process themselves. Mr Jones had had the wood for nine years, and was unaware that planning permission was required to process firewood at the site. The grant of planning permission would strengthen employment, as it would be good to be able to process wood on the site. He added that most of his work was local, but that he had had to give wood away in the past as there was nowhere to store it.

After a brief discussion, it was **AGREED** to respond to the Planning Authority, indicating **SUPPORT** for the application.

Proposed: Cllr B Futers

Seconded: Cllr Ms J Rose

**1516/1059 NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL PLAN: CORE STRATEGY PRE-SUBMISSION DRAFT – STATUTORY CONSULTATION**

Cllr Mrs J McGee summarised some of the objections raised by the Northumberland and Newcastle Society, particularly in respect of the scale of the housing development proposed by the Core Strategy. She noted the difference between the Government's current population projections and the forecast figures provided by NCC, and also noted the Society's objections to the proposed deletions from the Green Belt. Cllr Mrs McGee then noted that the Tynedale Local Plan had indicated that the land south of Highfield Lane was of high landscape value.

Cllr Mrs McGee stated that she would propose responding to NCC, supporting the majority of the Core Strategy, but that she wished to bring the following to the attention of the meeting:

- Policy 19 – affordable housing – she read the wording of the policy
- Policy 43 – the road network – she read the wording of the policy
- Deletions from the Green Belt – she listed the site, and noted that all of the sites south of Highfield Lane would be accessed from the lane. She noted that a response to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) would be considered by the Council at the November Ordinary Meeting, but noted that the SHLAA was understood to have a bearing on the Core Strategy. She highlighted the following issues in the SHLAA regarding the sites at Highfield Lane:
  - The capacity of the lane for the anticipated traffic levels
  - Coal mining – the area was stated to be a ‘high risk’ area
  - As the SHLAA anticipated that 300 homes would be built by 2031 (and 200 more after that point), more than one point of access would be required
  - Restricted water capacity: Mr Les Hall of Northumbrian Water Limited had been at the ‘drop-in’ event held at the Spetchells Centre on 4 November, and he had said he would check this matter out
  - The Highfield Lane sites were located close to local schools
  - The reason these sites were proposed was because of developer interest, and they were described on the SHLAA as ‘suitable’ and ‘available’
  - However, on the previous (2014) SHLAA, the sites now proposed for Green Belt deletions had been coloured brown on the map. This meant they had been discounted, but now they had been included “at the last minute”
  - An additional 900 homes would be built in Prudhoe over the period 2011-2031: including the permission for the hospital site, 625 of these had been accounted for – possibly 667 if the *first* permission for housing on the Front Street opportunity site was included.

Cllr B Futers stated that he was surprised at the proposed location for development south of Highfield Lane. He expressed particular concern at the need to deal with surface water run-off and sewerage, noting that the land dropped away very quickly towards Humbles Wood and the Stanley Burn: major drainage was required and was not there. He added that houses in the Humbles Wood development were not selling.

Cllr G McCreedy stated that Mr Hall of NWL had said that the town “could not take” any more services coming from this [Highfield Lane] location. Cllr McCreedy felt that the previous proposed deletions from the Green Belt {at the west end of the town} would have made more sense. He said that the current locations had been “developer driven” and that expensive houses would be built. He highlighted traffic issues, saying that the road would not be safe or secure any day in the week. The proposed roundabout [outside Highfield School] would be “no solution”. The schools were becoming ever busier, and developers would not be prepared to pay for the required infrastructure. He concluded that the result would be “gridlock” in the town. He said that he had asked three planners from NCC why the proposed allocation of land had been moved from Bewick Grange, and had received three different answers. He asked why, if the land at Bewick Grange was now regarded as unsuitable, it had been included in the first place.

Cllr G Simpson stated that he agreed with Cllr McCreedy regarding the original site being a more sensible option. He said that Highfield Lane was a natural boundary: the land to the south was a beautiful open area, and one of the few green spaces left in the town. The proposed use of the land to satisfy the demand for housing in Prudhoe represented “an enormous expansion” and he could not believe that NCC had suddenly come up with this. Cllr Simpson considered that the plans to build more houses in Prudhoe would make Prudhoe a commuter town to serve Tyneside’s population growth, not internal Northumberland growth. There was no concrete methodology. Prudhoe was a small town, with an

infrastructure which was “starting to creak”, and NCC had no money. The reduction in the level of affordable housing proposed in the Core Strategy meant that the needs of local people were not being catered for. Cllr Simpson concluded by proposing that the Council took a strong line on this issue, because what was proposed for the town was “very badly wrong.”

Cllr Ms J Rose stated that the town had “reached saturation point” and stated that investment in infrastructure was needed.

Cllr Mrs McGee commented about suggested modifications to the road system connecting any development with the town, and stated that, of the alternative routes into the town, Edgewell Road was hazardous, while Beaumont Way was difficult in winter. She also noted that, while any development would take place in stages, the number of houses that might be built off Highfield Lane could lead to an additional 400 to 600 cars accessing the highway system. Cllr Futers added that, while the SHLAA stated that development on Highfield Lane, on the scale envisaged, would need two entrances, the development on the Prudhoe Hospital site had only one confirmed access only despite the fact that over 400 homes were proposed. Cllr Mrs McGee concluded that the reason the land south of Highfield Lane was now favoured was due to the fact that a developer was interested, and the landowner was willing to sell.

Cllr G Price stated that the Strategy made no contribution to the improvement of the road network. He said that NCC had nothing to contribute beyond two traffic islands, and that the road problem referred to above could not be solved. He suggested that NCC would probably be opening themselves to legal challenge by residents as a result of the overloading of the road system.

**It was AGREED** to respond to the consultation as follows, answering the questions on the response sheet as follows:

- Objecting to the Core Strategy, indicating that the Council considered that the document was at fault for including proposed Green Belt deletions south of Highfield Lane
- Stating that the Core Strategy Pre-Submission Draft had not been prepared in compliance with the law governing its production
- Stating that the Core Strategy was “unsound” on the grounds that it was:  
Not positively prepared — Not effective — Not justified — Not consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework, owing to the adverse effect it would have on environment and amenity
- Commenting with regard to water, highways, mining, the proximity of the sites to local schools, access to the wider road network, and the value of the landscape to the town over decades. Reference should also be made to the objections of the Northumberland & Newcastle Society, and that a sufficient amount of housing had already been allocated to the town. Reference should be made to the commercial element of the opportunity site off Front Street, and to possible developments at Eltringham
- The reason why the Council was raising concerns about the proposed Green Belt deletions at Highfield was because these sites had been included for the first time in this version of the Core Strategy: the proposed deletions had been “dropped” on the town
- With respect to land earmarked for development at Eltringham, Cllr Mrs Cuthbert asked if anyone was aware how the land had been earmarked, and said that answers should be obtained at the Civic & Community Forum meeting scheduled for 23 November
- In conclusion, the Core Strategy should be amended because it was not legal compliant or sound, and the Highfield Lane sites should be removed from the proposed Green Belt deletions. Reference should be made to the Front Street opportunity site
- The Council should request representation at the public enquiry at which the Core Strategy was subject to independent examination / inspection.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs J McGee

Seconded: Cllr B Futers

The Clerk was requested to supply all councillors with the draft response for comment prior to its being submitted to NCC.

## **1516/1060 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING CONTRACT & WORKS COMMITTEE HELD ON 14 OCTOBER 2015**

It was **AGREED** to receive the minutes as a true record.

Proposed: Cllr B Futers      Seconded: Cllr G McCreedy

### **1516/1061 MATTERS ARISING.**

1516/1044 Erection of New Bus Shelter, Mickley Square: The Clerk circulated photographs of the proposed new shelter, and confirmed that the order for the shelter had been placed. Cllr Mrs Cuthbert enquired whether the seat currently *in situ* would be re-positioned.

1516/1024 NCC Planning Protocols: Cllr Mrs Cuthbert stated that she had received a response from Cllr A Reid, though she was not sure she agreed with it

1516/1037 Edgewell Cemeteries: The Clerk reported that the new Cemetery Attendant was now in post

1516/1039 Aviva Tour of Britain Cycle Race: The Clerk reported that Active Northumberland had now proposed a meeting to take forward proposals for a cycling initiative in the Prudhoe area

1516/1048 Northumbria in Bloom: Cllr Mrs McGee reported that the letter conveying the Council's comments to the Northumbria in Bloom organisation had been despatched

1516/1049 Town Centre Opportunity Site: Cllr Mrs McGee reported that the meeting with Mr G Paul (NCC) had taken place, and that Mr Paul had listened to the views of the councillors who had been present. Cllr Futers commented that Mr Paul had not previously appreciated how large the site was

1516/1053 War Memorial / Lychgate: the Clerk would report progress to the November Ordinary Meeting

1516/1054 Prudhoe Miners' Races: Cllr Mrs McGee reported that St Matthew's RC Primary School had won the schools' incentive, with a total of 13.71% of the school roll having taken part in the races.

### **1516/1062 PLANNING MATTERS**

#### **1. Planning applications considered**

##### **Prudhoe Hall Ward**

###### **Planning Ref. 15/03356/FUL**

Proposal: Proposed first storey extension to side and rear creating new kitchen / diner, master bedroom and bathroom

Location: 35 Park Lane, Prudhoe, Northumberland NE42 5LN

Applicant: Miss Nina Clark (address as above)

Response date: 3 November 2015

**SUPPORT**

##### **Castlefields and Low Prudhoe Ward**

###### **Planning Ref. 15/03399/FUL**

Proposal: Proposed rear single storey extension

Location: 10 Mill View Rise, Castlefields, Prudhoe, Northumberland NE42 5QX

Applicant: Mr John William Maxwell, (address as above)

Response date: 4 November 2015

**SUPPORT**

##### **Castle & Eltringham Ward**

###### **Planning Ref. 15/03383/FUL**

Proposal: Front single storey porch and roof over garage

Location: 138 Western Avenue, Prudhoe, Northumberland NE42 6QB

Applicant: Mr Glen Gillroy, (address as above)

Response date: 5 November 2015

**SUPPORT**

## **General - West Wylam Ward**

### **Planning Ref. 15/03538/FUL**

Proposal: Change of use from a game shop to a 'micropub'

Location: Unit 2, 10 Front Street, Prudhoe, Northumberland NE42 5HJ

Applicant: Mrs Allison Thear, 8A Cranbrook Drive, Prudhoe, Northumberland NE42 6QF

Response date: 13 November 2015

**It was AGREED** to defer consideration of this application, as it was understood that the Council would be notified that additional information had been received which would lead to the application being considered afresh at a later date

## **General - Mickley Ward**

### **Planning Ref. 15/03234/FUL**

Proposal: Erection of two three storey semi-detached dwelling houses (Use Class C3) with associated parking

Location: Land East of Burnside Lodge, Eastgate Bank, Mickley, Northumberland

Applicant: Mr S Porter, Lyndene, Millfield Road, Riding Mill, Northumberland NE44 6DL

Response date: 20 November 2015

**OBJECTION** citing the following material considerations:

Overlooking / loss of privacy; loss of light or overshadowing; layout and density of building. The proposed development would "tower above" existing properties; it would represent over-development of the existing site; the front elevation is not in line with the existing streetscape; and the roof elevation is not in line with the existing roof elevations. It was also felt that the proposed development was out of character for the area

## **2. Notifications of the Planning Authority in respect of planning applications**

### **(i) Decisions**

#### **Prudhoe Hall Ward**

##### **Ref. 15/02956/FUL**

Proposal: Construction of single storey extension to side, rear and front creating new lounge, porch and utility

Location: 29 Homedale, Prudhoe, Northumberland NE42 5AY

Applicant: Mr Roy Giles, (address as above)

Response deadline: 1 October 2015

**Northumberland County Council decided to GRANT permission**

[The Council had responded supporting the application]

It was agreed to receive the above notification.

#### **1516/1063 RE-DEVELOPMENT OF FORMER PRUDHOE HOSPITAL SITE: STREET NAMING**

Cllr G Simpson stated that he was not in favour of the suggested names Infirmary Row and Nurses Crescent on the list supplied by Gentoo. Cllr Gill suggested the surname Garrett, in view of former councillor Mr W Garrett's 40 years of service on the council, and he also suggested Badger Walk, and Deerlands Avenue. Cllr B Futers noted the existence of a former township one mile south-east of Prudhoe with the Scandinavian name of Ducashagg or Dukeshagg.

**It was AGREED** to respond to Gentoo, putting forward the suggestions made by Cllr Simpson, removing Liddell Drive along with Infirmary Row and Nurses Crescent from the Gentoo list of suggestions.

Proposed Cllr Mrs J McGee                      Seconded: Cllr G Simpson

#### **1516/1064 HIGHFIELD PARK: POST INSTALLATION INSPECTION**

The Clerk reported that the post-installation playsafety inspection had now been carried out by RoSPA Playsafety. Their report had been received and was tabled at the meeting. Of the issues arising, those

which were for the Council to deal with would be taken forward, while those relating to the recently installed play equipment would be raised with Sutcliffe Play as the supplier / installer. A photograph of the approaches to the Park on Highfield Lane in the fog supported the inspector's recommendation for signage warning of the vehicle entrance. Regarding the zip wire in the junior play area, councillors were referred to the data provided with the agenda papers: the Clerk advised that this showed the 'stopper' should not be moved to increase the length of travel, as this would be at odds with the safety specification for the item. Lastly, the Clerk read the inspector's summary comments, which included the following: "The site is in good condition and appears to be well-maintained. Considerable resources and work have been put into the site, which has resulted in a much higher standard of provision"

Councillors welcomed the positive comments made by the inspector.

**It was AGREED** to receive the report, and endorsed the actions indicated by the Clerk.

Proposed Cllr Mrs J McGee          Seconded: Cllr G McCreedy

*It was resolved that, in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the press and public be excluded for consideration of the following items, in accordance with section 68 of the Council's Standing Orders.*

Proposed: Cllr Mrs J McGee

Seconded: Cllr B Futers

#### **1516/1065 REDWELL ALLOTMENTS: EXTENSION OF WATER LINE**

Cllr Mrs J McGee reported that, as stated in the briefing supplied to councillors, three contractors had been invited to submit quotations for the work, however only that presented with the agenda papers had been received. She stated that the funds for the work were in the allotment budget.

**It was AGREED** to accept the quotation provided by Gary Watson, for the installation at the Redwell Allotments of a "new water supply including two stand pipes", at the cost of £1140.

Proposed Cllr Mrs J McGee          Seconded: Cllr G McCreedy

**END OF MEETING**