

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **County Planning Committee** held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham on **Tuesday 7 November 2017 at 1.00 pm**

Present:

Councillor J Robinson (Chairman)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors H Bennett, J Clare, D Hicks, I Jewell, C Kay, L Maddison, H Nicholson, G Richardson, A Shield, A Simpson and F Tinsley (Vice-Chairman)

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Laing and P Taylor.

2 Substitute Members

Councillor H Bennet as substitute for Councillor A Laing.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Prior to consideration of the planning applications the Chairman informed the Committee that, due to discussions at previous meetings, Thomas Bennett, Senior Policy Officer in the Spatial Policy Team was in attendance to answer Members queries about the five-year housing land supply figure.

Councillor Shield asked whether the housing land supply figures could be identified by areas to match the areas used for the three Area Planning Committees. The Senior Policy Officer replied that this would not be done because County Durham had been identified as one housing market area. In response to a follow up question from Councillor Shield as to whether this could or could not be done, the Senior Policy Officer informed the Committee that County Durham had been identified as a self-contained housing market area with a countywide housing requirement and therefore the area on which to base the 5 year housing land supply figure. The Senior Policy Officer offered to further discuss this with Councillor Shield outside of the meeting.

Councillor Robinson asked the Committee whether it had any further questions on five year housing land supply. No further questions were forthcoming.

5 Applications to be determined

a DM/17/01757/FPA - Land North East of Trent Crescent and East of Scorers Lane, Great Lumley

The Committee considered a report of the Senior Planning Officer regarding an application for the development of 70 residential dwellings (Use Class C3) with associated access, infrastructure, landscaping and open space on land north east of Trent Crescent and east of Scorers Lane, Great Lumley (for copy see file of Minutes).

G Blakey, Senior Planning Officer gave a detailed presentation of the application which included a site location plan, site photographs north from Trent Crescent and from the proposed access point, proposed site layout and streetscene. Members of the Committee had visited the site the previous day and were familiar with the proposed development and its relationship with its surroundings.

Councillor Robinson informed the Committee that he had received feedback from local Member Councillor A Bell that local residents had commented about lack of education provision for residents of Great Lumley and there was concern that this would be exacerbated by further development.

Graeme Plews, School Places and Admissions Manager informed the Committee that for last year's secondary admissions, some parents in Great Lumley did not get their choice of school, but this was due to their applications being late and not because the school was oversubscribed for the village. If the applications' had been submitted in a timely manner then all pupils in the village would have obtained a place at the school.

Ms C Strugnell, Senior Planning Manager at Bellway Homes addressed the Committee.

The application, which was a landscape-led scheme, was the result of three years' work. Local consultation had taken place in the spring of 2016 and the proposed development had received a welcome level of support. However, the developer had listened to local residents concerns and had reduced the number of proposed residential units from 86 to 70 and had also increased separation distances from Trent Crescent. Additionally, the developer had agreed to remove the hedgerow adjacent to Scorers Lane to achieve a traffic calming effect.

There were relatively few objections to the application and the developer would continue to work with the local community to address their Public Rights of Way concerns. The proposed development achieved the required level of affordable housing and would bring with it a £50,000 contribution to the community centre and £147,000 towards the provision of secondary school places in Chester le Street.

Councillor Richardson informed the Committee that he had attended the site visit the previous day and had been surprised by the size of the site. He was pleased

about the green infrastructure which was proposed for the middle of the development. The visibility splays at the proposed access were sufficient and surveys had actually demonstrated that traffic left the village faster than it entered the village. Councillor Richardson **moved** approval of the application.

Councillor Shield informed the Committee that he had been unable to attend the site visit. While the proposed development appeared to be an encroachment into the countryside, it was bounded on two of four sides by development. While he was pleased that the number of properties had been reduced following the consultation process, he was disappointed that no bungalows were being proposed, which he considered failed to plan for a future ageing population. Councillor Shield sought assurances that there would be no issues in the future regarding education provision for the area. The School Places and Admissions Manager replied that £147,000 Section 106 money had been secured to expand education provision at Chester le Street when this was required.

Councillor Shield **seconded** approval of the application.

Councillor Hicks informed the Committee that he had attended the site visit and he was impressed with the proposed layout of what appeared to be a good development. However, he was disappointed that no bungalows were being proposed. The Public Rights of Way on the site were being protected and access issues had been addressed. He was therefore in agreement with the Officer's recommendation.

Councillor Clare informed the Committee that the development had some negatives in that the north end of the site was raised and therefore would potentially be visually intrusive and also that the development would lead to a loss of public amenity space, although he appreciated that the public had no right to use it as such.

Councillor Clare considered that bungalows were not necessarily needed to cater for an ageing population if houses were designed as 'homes for life' to cater for the elderly and asked whether the proposed properties would be designed as such.

Councillor Clare informed the Committee that he was impressed by the spacious nature of the layout of the development which had been dictated by the water main which crossed the site. Councillor Clare referred to Condition 18 of the proposed permission which made reference to an Ecological Appraisal carried out in May 2017. An additional Ecological Appraisal had been carried out in September 2017 and this should be referenced. He also referred to paragraph 34 of the report and asked about a possible lack of control in terms of the SUDS adoption.

Ms Strugnell informed the Committee that the proposed properties would be built to DDA standards and as such would have some lifetime elements to them. However, they were not designed to be lifetime homes as Councillor Clare had referred to.

The Senior Planning Officer informed the Committee that Condition 18 in the proposed permission would be amended to reference the September 2017 Ecological Appraisal and also explained how the SUDS would work.

Resolved:

That the application be approved subject to the completion of a Section 106 Legal Agreement to secure the following:

- provision of 15% affordable housing units on site
- £147,096 towards the provision of secondary school places in Chester-le-Street
- £55,440 towards the provision or improvements to open space and recreation within Great Lumley Electoral Division,
- £50,000 towards the improvement of, or provision of a new, Great Lumley Community Centre,
- £24,235.54 towards offsite biodiversity improvements,

and subject to the conditions contained in the report, subject to Condition 18 being amended to refer to the September 2017 Ecological Appraisal.

b DM/16/03318/FPA - Land West of Wingate and South of Junction of A181 and Durham Road, Wingate

The Committee considered a report of the Senior Planning Officer regarding an application for the construction of 10 holiday lodges, access, associated landscaping, roadways, lighting, drainage and other services on land west of Wingate and south of Junction of A181 and Durham Road, Wingate (for copy see file of Minutes).

C Harding, Senior Planning Officer gave a detailed presentation of the application which included a site location plan, aerial photograph of the site, site photographs looking south from the A181 and proposed site layout.

Councillor Clare, in moving approval of the application, informed the Committee that tourism was a future building block for County Durham. He expressed surprise that there was no comment from the Coal Authority and sought clarity on this. Councillor Clare also referred to proposed Condition 15 of the permission which related to occupancy and informed the Committee that on previous applications such as this the condition had referred to an 11-month occupancy. For consistency Councillor Clare considered that this Condition should be amended.

The Senior Planning Officer replied that the proposed site was not within a high risk coal mining area and therefore the Coal Authority had offered no comment. With reference to Condition 15 the Senior Planning Officer informed the Committee that this was merely the way the condition had been written and could be amended to stipulate 11 months. N Carter, Planning and Development Solicitor added that there was more than one way to word a condition such as this and it was not felt necessary to impose a restriction on the totality of months that the lodges could be occupied.

Councillor Tinsley referred to the previous imposition of an 11 month occupancy rule and also the requirement for the maintenance of a register of the names of the owner-occupiers and questioned the reasonableness of this when the leaseholder

would be taking on the restriction and the freeholder the responsibility for maintaining such register.

The Planning and Development Solicitor informed the Committee that the requirement to maintain a register of occupancy was a standard condition. The proposed conditions relating to the register and the term of occupancy were in his view acceptable as outlined in the report, however, if Members wished, delegated authority could be given to Officers to look at this again in greater detail and amend if necessary, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee.

Councillor Shield mentioned that he had seen a condition restricting occupation to 50 weeks of the year on other applications and for consistency was of the view that the same wording should be used here for Condition 15.

Councillor Nicholson, in seconding approval of the application, informed the Committee that the ability to attract more tourists was paramount, with tourist spend increased significantly when overnight stays were involved.

Resolved:

- (i) That the application be approved subject to the Conditions contained in the report;
- (ii) That delegated authority be granted to the Head of Planning and Assets to finalise the wording of Condition 15 as appropriate, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee.