

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **County Planning Committee** held in Council Chamber - County Hall, Durham on **Tuesday 2 July 2019 at 1.00 pm**

Present:

Councillor F Tinsley (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors J Atkinson, J Blakey, J Clare, K Corrigan, K Hawley, I Jewell, G Richardson, A Shield and S Wilson

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Kay, Laing, Robinson, Shuttleworth and Simpson.

2 Substitute Members

Councillor J Blakey as substitute Member for Councillor Shuttleworth.

3 Declarations of Interest

Councillors Clare and Corrigan declared an interest in Agenda Item 5(b) as Directors on Business Durham Advisory Board and withdrew from the meeting during discussion of this Item.

4 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5 Applications to be determined

a DM/19/01060/OUT - Land to the west of Startforth Park Startforth DL12 9AL

The Committee considered a report of the Senior Planning Officer regarding an outline planning application, with all matters reserved other than access, for the erection of up to 210 dwellings and associated infrastructure on land to the west of Startforth Park, Startforth (for copy see file of Minutes).

C Harding, Senior Planning Officer provided a detailed presentation of the application which included a site location plan, aerial photograph, site photographs, and submitted indicative site layout, although the application was in outline and no detailed layout had been provided. The Senior Planning Officer provided the Committee with the following updates:

- Paragraph 47 – the County Durham Plan had now been submitted but no weighting could be given to it.
- Paragraph 70 – the police now agreed that an extension of the 40 mph speed limit would be inappropriate.

Councillor R Bell, local Member was not able to attend the meeting but had submitted the following representation to the Committee:

I support the recommendation to refuse this application.

It does not have the support of local residents who have seen hundreds of houses built in Startforth on the Bowes Road over the last few years, a process not yet over.

The village has no school, pub, or shop to support more houses.

The proposed development would represent a significant encroachment into the countryside, and because of its elevation would be visible from the Castle and a wide surrounding area and spoil many nice views.

Councillor P Estall of Startforth Parish Council addressed the Committee to object to the application, which was both ill-considered and poorly researched. Startforth had no services or amenities, which were all located within Barnard Castle and this development would impact on existing services in Barnard Castle which were already overstretched. The development would result in an extra 200 to 400 cars which would place an increased strain on the County Bridge and would increase congestion. Inaccurate information had been used in the application regarding the access to services in Barnard Castle and no physical research had taken place. The only facilities in the area were in Barnard Castle which was accessed by the single-lane County Bridge and controlled by three-way traffic lights.

Councillor Estall expressed concern that the proposed development would lead to the doubling of the number of dwellings in the village in a period of less than 10 years, since 2011. There were additional concerns regarding the assertions of the developer in relation to the ecological value of the site.

While acknowledging that it was in draft stage only, Councillor Estall informed the Committee that the draft Startforth Neighbourhood Plan stated that no new developments of more than 10 dwellings per site should be considered for Startforth.

Finally, Councillor Estall informed the Committee that Startforth Park was served by a private sewer, and that should incapacity issues arise, residents of Startforth Park would be unacceptably affected.

Councillor Estall asked the Committee to refuse the application.

Councillor J Blissett of Barnard Castle Town Council addressed the Committee to object to the application, which would be to the detriment of Barnard Castle and the surrounding area.

Infrastructure and services in Barnard Castle, for example GP services, were already under severe strain and the proposed development would add to this. There was nothing in the application to address this issue. Additionally, schools in the area were all near capacity, and Startforth school had been closed. Again, there was nothing in the application to address this.

The walk to get to school from the proposed development would involve crossing the A67, which would not be safe.

There were no plans to boost employment in Barnard Castle and the local employer, GSK was losing jobs. As a result there was a fear that Barnard Castle and the surrounding area would become a commuter belt.

The development would lead to an increase in traffic which would lead to major problems, particularly around the County Bridge which was a single lane crossing into Barnard Castle controlled by three-way traffic lights. An increase in the number of vehicles waiting at the traffic lights would lead to increased air pollution.

Startforth had no pub, no shop and no healthcare facilities and the Town Council urged the Committee to refuse the application.

Mrs Selley. Local resident, addressed the Committee to object to the application. There had been two large developments in Startforth with a total of approximately 200 houses and time was needed for these to assimilate. The proposed development site was not an infill site but was an add-on to Startforth and was on land of high agricultural value. The development would have adverse effects on conservation and the development site was home to curlews, tree sparrows, woodpeckers and owls.

The proposed development was not sustainable and would lead to an increase in traffic travelling to Barnard Castle because there was no pedestrian access. There were no adequate bus services into Barnard Castle, and car parking in Barnard Castle was already difficult.

Access to Barnard Castle would be via the County Bridge which was controlled by three-way traffic lights. An increase in queuing traffic would lead to an increase in air pollution.

Facilities in the area were already overstretched and this development would worsen this. The Council had a 6 year housing land supply and Mrs Selley asked the Committee to refuse the application.

The Senior Planning Officer replied as follows:

- The School Places and Admissions Manager had advised there were sufficient primary and secondary school places to accommodate the development;
- The NHS had been consulted on the application and no response had been received whilst the local surgery website stated that new patients were being accepted;
- Northumbrian Water had stated that public sewers were located within the area which the development could potentially be served by.

Councillor Jewell informed the Committee that he considered the application to be outside the boundaries of Startforth and had a significant number of valid objections. Councillor Jewell **moved** that the application be refused.

Councillor Shield considered that only one exit and entrance to the development from the busy A67 to be insufficient. The development was not in a sustainable location and was in an area of high landscape value. The infrastructure for the development, including GPs, transport and schools was inadequate and Councillor Shield **seconded** refusal of the application.

Councillor Wilson informed the Committee that he supported refusal of the application.

Resolved:

That the application be refused for the reasons contained in the report.

Councillors Clare and Corrigan left the meeting.

b DM/19/01316/FPA - Jade Business Park Phase 1 Jade Enterprise Zone Murton SR7 8RN

The Committee considered a report of the Senior Planning Officer regarding an application for the erection of 7 units (5 buildings) for B2/B8 industrial use with integrated offices and associated service yards, car parking and landscaping at Jade Business Park Phase 1, Jade Enterprise Zone, Murton (for copy see file of Minutes).

L Eden, Senior Planning Officer provided a detailed presentation of the application which included a site location plan, aerial photograph, site photographs, site layout and visuals of the proposed units. The Senior Planning Officer informed the Committee that an amendment to the proposed Conditions was necessary to add an extra document plan to the list of approved plans at Condition 2.

Councillor Tinsley informed the Committee that there were no speakers registered to speak on the application, although Mr G Marsden had registered on behalf of the applicant should the Committee have any questions.

Councillor Blakey informed the Committee that she was in agreement with the recommendation that the application be approved. This application was good for the area and good for jobs and would also bring into use a road which had already been constructed but never used. However, she asked whether the opening of the road, which was long and straight, could lead to traffic related anti-social behaviour.

Councillor Atkinson referred to paragraph 124 of the report and asked what further information was required, as mentioned in the paragraph. The Senior Planning Officer replied that further information was required to inform the contaminated land remediation strategy. This requirement was addressed by proposed Conditions 4 and 5 of the permission.

Councillor Shield referred to paragraph 57 of the report which highlighted the shortage of new industrial units and stated that there were good reasons to be confident of early lettings, and Councillor Shield asked what the good reasons were.

The applicant, Mr Marsden, informed the Committee that extensive marketing of this opportunity had been carried out and there was significant demand for the accommodation. There was a keen interest in $\frac{1}{3}$ of the overall development from a 24-hour operation, which would address any security concerns which had been mentioned. There would also be a security presence on site.

Moved by Councillor Shield, **seconded** by Councillor Blakey and

Resolved:

That the application be approved subject to the Conditions, as amended, contained in the report.