

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Area Planning Committee (South and West)** held in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Spennymoor on **Thursday 13 December 2012 at 2.00 pm**

Present:

Councillor M Dixon (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors E Tomlinson (Vice-Chairman), D Boyes, K Davidson, G Holland, R Todd, J Wilkinson, J Rowlandson (substitute for G Richardson) and J Blakey (substitute for M Williams)

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Burn, M Campbell, P Gittins, G Richardson and M Williams

Also Present:

A Inch – Principal Planning Officer
A Caines – Principal Planning Officer
C Cuskin – Legal Officer

Prior to the commencement of business the Chair informed Members of the death of Councillor Paylor and a minutes silence was observed as a mark of respect.

1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

2 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2012 were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

3 Applications to be determined

3a 6/2012/0310/DM - The Countryman Public House, Dunwell Lane, Bolam

The Committee considered a report of the Principal Planning Officer regarding an application for the change of use of field to provide 20no. pitches for touring caravans and camping and formation of access track (for copy see file of Minutes).

A Caines (Principal Planning Officer) gave a detailed presentation on the application which included photographs of the site.

In presenting the report the Officer advised of a proposed amendment to condition 3 which would ensure that no static caravans were allowed on the site.

Mr Stabler, applicant stated that since purchasing the property 9 years ago he had developed a busy thriving business, but to ensure its viability in the current economic climate he needed to attract new trade.

Currently the site attracted people to the surrounding countryside and local attractions, and the proposals to increase the number of caravans to 20 would encourage more visitors to the Teesdale area.

Mr Stabler respected the tranquil nature of the village and had amended the application in order to reduce the visual impact of the site.

To conclude he stated that the pub had been in the village for over 200 years and the proposals would promote tourism and support local employment without causing inconvenience to neighbours.

Councillor Boyes referred to a comment made by an objector that the site was unmanned outside the opening hours of the pub. Mr Stabler assured the Member that there was someone living in the premises at all times and that he was on site between the hours of 9am and 11pm, 6 days a week. With this assurance, and as the number of pitches had been reduced significantly Councillor Boyes considered the proposals to be acceptable.

Councillor Holland noted that there were no residents in attendance to make representations against the application, or comments from the local Member.

With regard to the impact on the surrounding landscape Councillor Davison noted that the screening issues had now been overcome and had been addressed by condition.

Following discussion it was **Resolved:**

That the application be approved subject to the conditions outlined in the report and to condition 3 being amended to read as follows:-

- '3. Notwithstanding the provisions of Class A and B of Part 5 Schedule 2 of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or in any Statutory Instrument revoking or re-enacting that Order with or without modification) the number of caravans or motorhomes on the site shall not exceed 20 at any one time. There shall be no static caravans on the site.'

3b 7/2012/0199/DM - Greenfields Nursing Home, Alston Crescent, Newton Aycliffe

Consideration was given to the report of the Principal Planning Officer regarding an application for the demolition of the former Greenfields Nursing Home and redevelopment to create 22no. dwellings (for copy see file of Minutes).

A Inch, Principal Planning Officer advised that the application had been approved by the Committee in September 2012, however for the reasons outlined in the report it was now proposed that the provision of affordable housing be reduced from 100% to 30%, and that the developer make a financial contribution of £15,000 towards off-site open space provision/improvement.

Mr Atkinson, the applicant was in attendance to respond to Members' questions and gave an assurance that the reason for the reduction in affordable housing was because the financial institutions funding the development were unable to enter into a legal agreement guaranteeing 100% affordable housing in perpetuity.

In discussing the application Members noted that despite the reduction, 30% affordable housing provision was double the requirement for the area.

The Chair noted that the applicant's intentions to develop the site for Livin had not changed, with the proposed dwellings to be used as affordable rented accommodation. The financial contribution towards off-site recreation facilities in the area was welcomed.

Councillor Tomlinson offered his full support to the revised scheme which he considered was still a very good proposition, particularly in view of the current housing climate.

Councillor Boyes asked if the financial contribution for recreational facilities would include proposals for a MUGA. The Member was advised that on-site recreation facilities was not feasible for a scheme of this size and that the Section 106 Agreement would secure a contribution towards off-site open space provision/improvement. A decision as to how the commuted sum of £15,000 was allocated would be subject to negotiation.

Resolved:

That the application be approved subject to the completion of a Section 106 Legal Agreement to secure the provision of 7 affordable housing units with a financial contribution of £15,000 towards off-site open space provision/improvement, and to the conditions previously agreed in the report dated 20 September 2012.