



**MINUTES OF THE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD ON Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> February 2008  
AT NORTHUMBERLAND NATIONAL PARK HEADQUARTERS, HEXHAM**

**In the Chair:** Cllr A Murray

**Present:** Cllr S Bolam; Cllr D Edwards; Mr A Hinchcliffe;  
Cllr I Hutchinson; Cllr R Pearson; Cllr J Riddle; Mr J Vaughan.

**In Attendance:** Mr J Mullard, Director of Policy and Strategy  
Ms L Butler, Development Control Manager  
Mr D Coverdale, Planning Officer  
Ms E Sinnamon, Legal Advisor  
Mr P Rogers, Historic Buildings Advisor (DCC 04/2008)  
Mr D Hand, Regional Account Manager, Communities and  
Local Government Planning Portal, DCLG (DCC 05/2008)  
Miss L Pinkham, Committee Administrator

**Public Speakers:** Mr K Butler [in support of 07NP0053]  
Mr J Chown [in objection to 07NP0053]

**DCC 01/2008 Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

The Chairman welcomed members of the Development Control Committee and members of the public to the meeting. Public speaking to planning applications was being introduced at this meeting.

Apologies were received from Cllr T Flaws; Cllr J Grant; Mr P Nicholson.

**DCC 02/2008 Declarations of Interest**

None.

**DCC 03/2008 Minutes of Previous Meeting: 12<sup>th</sup> December 2007**

**Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2007, as circulated, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

Copies of reports DCC 04/2008 to DCC 05/2008 are attached to the signed minutes.

**DCC 04/2008 Applications for Planning Consent and Listed Building Consent**

Cllr A Murray explained the procedure for public speaking as set out in the Authority's 'Public Speaking at Development Control Committee Meetings' guidance leaflet.

*07NP0053 Conversion of agricultural building to provide 1 dwelling with integral office; construction of detached double garage; conversion of agricultural building to bed and breakfast holiday accommodation; conversion and extension of agricultural building to provide café, art gallery and performance space with manager's flat over; conversion of agricultural buildings to craft studios, farm shop and storage; conversion of agricultural shed to provide bunk house accommodation, toilets, showers, drying room and mixed use space for campsite, change of use*



*of land to camp site with up to 20 pitches; and new vehicular access at Charlton Farm, Charlton, Bellingham*

The Development Control Manager, Ms L Butler, introduced the report. An amendment had been submitted by the applicant proposing the use of stone rather than glazing for the walls of the porch and enclosure over the external stairs on the front of the proposed B&B unit.

A letter dated 08/02/08 from the applicant, Mr J Morrison-Bell, to the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) was tabled.

Mr P Rogers, Historic Buildings Advisor, addressed the Committee. He felt that the village of Charlton warranted designation as a Conservation Area and that Range 1 warranted spot listing, which would give it Grade II status. He confirmed that he did not have problems regarding the majority of the proposals for the site but drew attention to significant concerns regarding the proposals for Range 1, which was on the Authority's proposed Local List of historic buildings, as he considered that enclosing the stone staircase would destroy its historical and architectural interest. The proposal for a front extension did not reflect guidance in the Building Design Guide and he felt that it should be possible for the building to be converted without detriment to its special interest. He also raised concerns regarding the introduction of domestic details and loss of vernacular character.

The Development Control Manager updated Members:

Since the Members' Site Visit on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2008 it had been clarified that the planning condition recommended by the Highways Authority regarding the eastern access route would not affect existing residents who could continue to use the existing junction. The applicant had also indicated that the route to the north west end of the village and the new junction would be available to residents.

It was not felt that the proposed change to the staircase was significant as it was the design rather than the materials which was the concern. However, as a result of the proposed change in materials it was proposed that the wording of reason 7 in the report be amended to remove the word 'glazed'.

Additional information had been submitted by the structural surveyor which indicated that the retaining wall to the live-work unit could be constructed without compromising the integrity of the existing building, albeit this was a more costly alternative. It was therefore proposed that reason 2 in the report be amended to delete the second sentence starting 'In addition, it has not been satisfactorily demonstrated ...' and to amalgamate the remainder of reason 2 with reason 4.

The Development Control Manager addressed the points raised on policy issues in Mr J Morrison-Bell's letter of 8<sup>th</sup> February 2008 which made reference to a letter from the Government Office North East (GONE) to the Authority with respect to the Local Development Framework (LDF), and quoted the paragraphs referred to in PPS3 and the Housing Green Paper, which were not considered to change the recommendation.

The Chairman reported that the Development Control Committee had held a site visit on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2008. He felt that it had been helpful viewing all aspects of the application on the ground and seeing the relationship between the application and the hamlet.



Mr K Butler, agent for the applicant, spoke under the Public Speaking Scheme in favour of the application. No clarification points were sought by Members.

Mr J Chown spoke under the Public Speaking Scheme as an objector to the application.

Cllr J Riddle sought clarification of the status of the public highway through the hamlet. There was still uncertainty about the situation but the Development Control Manager reported that this was a Highways issue which would need to be addressed separately, irrespective of the planning decision.

Questions to Officers:

Mr J Vaughan enquired about potential loss of trees. The Development Control Manager reported that the application did not indicate any trees would be felled but that reason 5 in the report related to concerns, as there has not been an arborist's report and it was felt that trees may be affected, particularly as the garage site would require excavation.

Cllr S Bolam raised concerns about the principle which resulted in a lack of on-site accommodation for what would be, if permitted, a substantial development and enquired whether it was possible to link residential aspects of the bed and breakfast unit and the live-work unit. The Development Control Manager reported that it would be difficult to make a precise, reasonable and enforceable condition to relate to this. Under PPS7 a functional test has to be applied to new residential development allowed in relation to rural development but this application does not meet that test. The Chairman had raised this aspect with Officers and it was noted that aspects of the situation might change in the future however the applicant had wanted the development considered as submitted.

Cllr J Riddle felt that the settlement was not far removed from basic services being 3 miles from Bellingham, the 'capital' of the North Tyne. He considered that the application represented agricultural diversification and would provide a re-use for dilapidated buildings. He did not consider the GONE points had been refuted. The application site was on the main route to Kielder Water, a major visitor attraction in the area, there was a need for camping and that this proposal would provide employment.

The Development Control Manager responded that the phrase 'far removed from basic services' in Local Plan Policy CD8 was not clearly defined in the Local Plan. The Local Plan identifies a number of villages in which to focus development and thereby sustain those facilities which do exist. By allowing new development which encourages services outside those identified villages trade is potentially removed from the priority settlements.

The Development Control Manager stressed that the regeneration and new use for the buildings was welcomed in principle but the details of this particular scheme did not follow adopted Local Plan policy and therefore could not be supported by Officers.

The provision of a new garage building in this situation would conflict with Local Plan Policy CD10, and as it would not be within the curtilage of an existing dwelling it would not be considered reasonable to depart from Policy in this instance.

Members noted that there were differing views about the access issue relating to rights of way or permissive rights of way which could not be resolved at the meeting.



Members were informed that there was a bus route from Kielder – Lanehead to Bellingham, a post bus and a taxi in Bellingham. However Officers considered that the development would generate a significant additional need to travel and this would mostly be by car.

The recommendation, with the amended reasons 2, 4 and 7, was proposed and seconded.

- Cllr I Hutchinson noted that there were a lot of elements in this large application, and whilst some were acceptable, he was concerned about the siting of the hopper, the enclosed staircase, access and rights of way. On balance therefore he supported refusal but hoped that the applicant would bring back an application which was acceptable.
- Cllr S Bolam also appreciated that the application had to be taken as a whole and had reservations about the staircase and was concerned about the principle of living accommodation. She supported the useful conversion of redundant farm buildings and was concerned that it was felt that a Section 106 Agreement could not be implemented here. She was concerned about the apparent message being conveyed that there should be a commercial development here to which employees would have to travel, which she felt was as bad as residents having to travel to reach services.
- Mr A Hinchcliffe felt that this was an imaginative scheme, using redundant buildings for alternative purposes in line with the Authority's vision and with that of residents, representing sustainable tourism and economic benefit leading to a sustainable community. However he recognised that some aspects were not acceptable and which could be addressed and he hoped that the applicant would come back with a revised scheme. He reminded Members that they needed to consider current policy within the Local Plan and had to make a decision on the application in front of them. It was not possible to predict the outcome of the LDF Examination in Public (EIP) process.
- Mr J Vaughan recognised that this was a difficult case which was exacerbated by the need in the report to consider individual components of the application. Because of that approach there was a danger of losing sight of the overall picture which was of intensification of use on a site in a quiet location which would affect the setting of the National Park and tranquillity. He had serious concerns about the overall impact of the application. However Mr Vaughan did consider that it should be possible to allow live work units in the future as a result of changes in government thinking.
- Cllr R Pearson felt this was an acceptable location, served by buses and within walking and cycling distance of services. She also highlighted the recent loss within Bellingham itself of a performance space at the Bellingham Mart, gallery space and shops. Overall Cllr Pearson was happy with the plan but recognised that some elements did not sit within the current policies.

Members voted on the recommendation as amended. Voting was recorded as follows:

For	5
Against	0
Abstentions	3

The motion was carried.

**Resolved that permission be refused for the reasons set out in the report and as amended during discussion.**



*07NP0054LBC Conversion of agricultural buildings to craft studios, farm shop and storage at Charlton Farm, Charlton, Bellingham.*

The application was withdrawn by Mr K Butler, the agent for the applicant, at the meeting. No discussion took place.

Mr David Hand, Regional Account Manager, Communities and Local Government Planning Portal joined the meeting for the item DCC 05/2008.

**DCC 05/2008 NEW INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE VALIDATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND OF A STANDARD ELECTRONIC PLANNING APPLICATION FORM**

This report informed Members of new guidelines, based on the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) document "The Validation of Planning Applications; Guidance for Local Planning Authorities", December 2007, which set out the minimum requirements for the information necessary for planning and related applications to be accepted as validly made by Northumberland National Park Authority.

The Development Control Manager, Ms L Butler, introduced the report.

Mr D Hand reported that these changes would result in their standard application form being used by planning authorities from 6 April 2008, whereas currently the 424 local planning authorities in England and Wales could be working to different validation guidelines and each had their own design of forms.

The recommendation in the report was proposed and seconded.

The following points were raised in discussion:

- Members noted that 'sustainability' was not specifically referred to in the documentation. Mr D Hand reported that sustainability was usually covered under the planning statement; however he acknowledged that this may not be clear and an amendment might be needed to specifically refer to this as a separate requirement. This issue would be monitored by CLG over the next 6 months. Cllr J Riddle emphasised that as the Authority was moving towards sustainable building requirements he would like sustainability (renewable energy, materials) included in the checklist. The Director of Policy & Strategy reported that this could be raised in the Authority's response. – to what?
- Members generally welcomed the move to standardisation.
- Mr A Hinchcliffe enquired whether the Authority, as a special purposes local authority, needed to introduce slightly different requirements to other planning authorities. It was noted that there had not been substantive discussions on this aspect at the National Parks Heads of Planning Group. Cllr Riddle urged caution with regard to introducing a 'different' form for National Park Authorities when there was a public perception that planning permissions were more difficult to secure for applications within National Parks.
- Cllr J Vaughan enquired if the Authority was adequately resourced and serviced to implement these proposals. The Development Control Manager reported that the proposals would not make a significant difference in this respect. This Authority has already adopted the Office of Deputy Prime Minister's (ODPM) Best Practice Guidance on Validation, and these proposals are a natural evolution in seeking to front load the application process. This avoids the



situation whereby applicants are advised of the need for additional information at a late stage in the application process. In addition, as this is a small Authority the Planning Officers are involved in the validation process. Therefore omissions are generally picked up at this stage.

- Members were reminded that this proposal ensured that an application can still be invalidated if the Authority has not received all the details required up front, and officers would still be able to request additional information if necessary.
- Mr D Hand clarified that an application could still be invalidated post validation if the information should have been submitted with the application, even if it had not been specifically asked for, but an application could not be invalidated if an applicant was asked for a completely new area of information which was not on the national or local validation checklists.

Members agreed the recommendation.

**Resolved that the validation scheme set out in Paragraph 5 of the report be approved.**

**DCC 06/2008 Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 12.20pm.