

NORTHUMBERLAND NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
MINUTES OF THE DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
Eastburn, South Park, Hexham NE46 1BS
Wednesday 13 September 2023, 2.00pm to 3.00pm

Present:

Cllr Julian Morrison-Bell (SoS Parish) (Chair)
Cllr John Riddle (NCC) (Deputy Chair)
Cllr Sue Bolam (SoS Parish)
Ms Marie Fallon (SoS National)
Cllr Val Gibson (SoS Parish)
Cllr Len Glen-Davison (SoS Parish)
Cllr Mark Mather (NCC)
Mr Chris Mullin (SoS National)
Cllr Alan Sharp (NCC)

In attendance:

Pauline Wall (Director of Park Management)
Susannah Buylla (Head of Planning & Policy)
Tom Jenkins (Legal Representative for NNPA, Ward Hadaway)
Jayne Longlands (Corporate Support Officer)

PART ONE

DMC2023-15 Welcome and Apologies for Absence

No apologies for Absence were received.

The Chair welcomed members, officers and members of the public to the meeting.

DMC2023-16 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

DMC2023-17 Minutes of Previous Meeting: Wednesday 28 June 2023

The draft Minutes of the Development Management Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 28 June 2023 were proposed as a true and correct record by Ms Marie Fallon, seconded by Cllr Len Glen-Davison, and it was further;

RESOLVED

That the draft Minutes of the Development Management Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 28 June 2023, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

DMC2023-18 Determination of Application for Planning Permission

23NP0015 Proposed construction of 1 detached principal residence house at Land adjacent to Larkes Cottage, Elsdon, Northumberland, NE19 1AZ

Susannah Buylla (Head of Planning & Policy) provided a detailed overview of her report. The application was supported by location maps, photographs, a boundary plan, and elevation plans.

The Head of Planning & Policy noted that correspondence had been received, with local representations in objection to this proposal, including the Parish Council.

The impact on NNPA special qualities were stated, and the important issue of potential flooding was raised, as well as the proposed surface water drainage strategy to address this.

The recommendation was to approve conditional planning permission, as noted by the Head of Planning & Policy, for the reasons as stated within her written report.

Public Speaking

Dr Christopher Moll spoke against the application; he has lived at nearby Batt Hall for 18 years during which time four flood events had occurred. He recapped on several key points as follows:-

- Pollution would be a risk if the surface water drainage strategy were implemented and there would be an issue with raw sewage.
- Flood risk damage further downstream could also be a problem causing pollution, and effluent could cause harm.
- A further level of treatment for sewage would be required, as harm to human health and the environment were concerns.
- The impact on residential amenity could be a problem resulting in legal implications.
- Water company press coverage regarding sewage works were topical at the present time.

Dr Moll summarised on three potential available options as he saw them; 1. approve the application and risk a pollution incident, 2. refuse the application, with valid reasons or 3. defer and ask the applicant to amend drainage strategy/increase level of treatment to be a tertiary system.

In response to Committee member queries, Dr Moll noted that the last flooding incident at this location had taken place several years ago and thankfully did not come into the main living space .

Mr Michael Rathbone then spoke to the room in support of the proposal. He noted the application for a dwelling house had been assessed for flood risk and had satisfied the relevant laws, he added that Mr Emm was an expert in this line of work and had assessed all potential issues.

Mr Chris Emm addressed the meeting; he explained he had 23 years' experience working as an engineer, specialising in flood risk and drainage. He was aware of the concerns raised, however noted that the strategy was in line with planning policy and had been carefully researched to deliver to requirements. He said that the treatment plant provided secondary treatment and it would not be necessary to apply to the Environment Agency for relevant permits. Mr Emm reassured members that the treatment plant would only result in clear effluent and would be operated in accordance with general binding rules. Mr Emm also explained the plant would not cause harm in a flood event.

Members then extended the following questions to Mr Rathbone and Mr Emm:-

- Cllr Len Glen-Davison queried where excess water would go in the event of a bad flood; Mr Emm responded that the plant would operate for at least 24 hours, effluent could be held back until at which point the flooding subsided or it was removed professionally.
- Cllr Val Gibson asked if the ancient culvert needed improving. Mr Emm noted the two gulleys next to the road where further investigation could be taken in order to explore this matter further. Although outside the remit of this meeting, Cllr Gibson queried whether this could potentially be further considered. Mr Emm explained about riparian responsibilities of various parties.
- Mr Chris Mullin probed as to whether implementation of a herringbone system could help. Mr Emm said that, in this situation, the treatment process would be anaerobic, and it would therefore not be any more beneficial than what is already proposed. Proprietary systems may be available to assist with the issue however this would be more complex resulting in more things that could go wrong.
- Cllr John Riddle queried whether a treatment plant needed to be serviced on an annual basis, to which Mr Emm confirmed this was part of environmental regulations and was indeed a legal requirement.

Questions and Debate

The Chair invited members to present questions and general discussions ensued as follows: -

- Cllr Alan Sharp noted that Northumbrian Water had not responded to the consultation.
- The Chair queried the sewage system for Larkes Houses. The Head of Planning & Policy said that the treatment plant was located within the grounds of property number 4, although it would not have sufficient capacity for an additional dwelling to tap into this.
- Cllr John Riddle said that self-builds may take a long time to construct and asked if we could put powers on the timescale. The Head of Planning & Policy noted this was not possible.

- Cllr Val Gibson asked whether Parish Council concerns had been addressed; the Head of Planning & Policy was satisfied these could be addressed through conditions.
- Cllr Len Glen-Davison asked if conditions for drainage were sufficient, to which the Head of Planning & Policy replied that she was satisfied they were.

Proposal of, and vote on, the Motion

Cllr Bolam said she would propose the recommendation subject to the conditions be tightened up so that the sewage system be maintained appropriately. The Head of Planning & Policy said that an informative could be added to highlight the maintenance of this when the property was sold.

Cllr Alan Sharp suggested that he would rather the relevant condition to be amended “subject to legal requirements” and “and shall be maintained in accordance with the approved scheme” be added to condition 10. He also encouraged applicants and neighbours to work together and with NCC to sort out the cundy issue.

Cllr Sue Bolam proposed the motion set out in the report subject to the amendment to condition 10, which was seconded by Cllr Alan Sharp. Members then voted on the proposal, which was agreed unanimously, and it was;

RESOLVED that conditional planning permission be approved for this application, subject to the minor amendment to condition 10 relating to the treatment plant being maintained in accordance with the approved strategy

DMC2023-19 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

Members were invited to consider passing the following resolution:

“That under section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Item DMC2023-20 (P) and DMC2023-21 of the Agenda as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act and that the public interest against disclosure was satisfied”.

At 2.50pm, Ms Marie Fallon proposed the motion, which was seconded by Cllr John Riddle, and members voted unanimously to move into Part Two of the meeting.

Following conclusion of Part Two of the meeting, there being no further business, the meeting closed at 3.00pm.

Signed:

Date: