

Minutes of a Community Meeting, held in Middleham Key Centre on Wednesday 13 September 2017 at 7.00 pm.

Present

The Chairman Cllr Mrs S Fairhurst, Cllr Mr M Cade, Cllr Mr J Kirkbride, Cllr Mrs E Stocker, Cllr Mr S Wheeler and Cllr Prof B Shorrocks of Middleham Town Council ('MTC')

In attendance: the Clerk, Mr D Keep; Mr G Hoerty representing Gary Hoerty Associates (the applicant for the planning application); Mr C Gillespy representing GSC Grays (acting for the landowner); Kieran Howarth representing Kieran Howarth Planning Limited (the applicant's planning consultant); and Mr P Featherstone, Planning and Development Manager of Richmondshire District Council ('RDC').

Individuals as recorded on the attached attendance sheet.

1. Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting which had been convened by the Town Council to discuss a significant potential housing development in Middleham. The Chairman's address is attached to and forms part of these minutes.

2. Outline Planning Permission with All Matters Reserved for a Proposed Development of up to 70 Residential Dwellings on land behind St Alkelda's Road

Mr Howarth spoke briefly to a presentation that is attached to and forms part of the minutes. Mr Howarth noted that the stated number of houses (70) shown on the RDC website had not been specified within the application.

3. Open Forum and Questions

The Chairman opened the discussion to the floor for contributions, the following comments and suggestions were made.

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| Mr M Offard | Q: | Why was any development necessary in Middleham as the town was distant from centres of employment, in the countryside but appeared to be building houses for the sake of it? |
| Mr Featherstone | A: | Referred to an assessment of projected housing needs within Richmondshire for the period 2012 to 2028 that underpinned the agreed Local Plan. The District Council anticipated a need for 3,000 new homes or 180 per year and this overall demand was spread across the main centres such as Catterick Garrison as well as 'service areas' such as Middleham. A target of 45 houses had been set for Middleham and reflected a necessary element of growth for a sustainable community. |
| Mr M Offard | Q: | Did not believe his question had been addressed as Middleham comprised a mostly older population. |
| Cllr Wheeler | A: | Noted that the Town's primary school currently had only 38 pupils and might not be sustainable; accordingly new housing was required to maintain the school and other facilities. |

- Mr M Offard Q: What would the potential residents do as there was no work available?
- Mr Hoerty A: RDC required that 40% of new homes should be 'affordable' which would enable younger families as well as retirees to move to the town.
- Mrs M Dawson Q: What are the broken black lines on the parameters plan?
Mr Howarth A: Pedestrian links or minor roadways
- Mrs M Dawson Q: What proportion of the housing would be affordable and what would be the 'ball park' purchase price?
Mr Hoerty A: RDC has adopted a policy that 40% of new housing should be affordable, which might be either discounted rent, shared ownership or discounted sale. These conditions would apply in perpetuity for all subsequent transfers of ownership. Prices would be dictated by the size of the homes which was not normally defined for an outline application so could not be advised at this stage
- Mrs J Polley Q: Noted that approximately 15% of Middleham's housing is second homes or holiday lets and felt that 40% affordable was insufficient to secure the future of the local school. Why not 100% affordable?
Mr Hoerty A: The 40% requirement set by RDC was amongst the highest of any planning authority nationwide. The market price housing created a profit margin which support provision of affordable housing without which there was no financial incentive for builders. He also noted that some objections to the scheme had already been submitted by second home owners.
- Mr Gillespy A: Noted that most housebuilders aimed for a 20% profit margin so a 30% discounted sale effectively removed any profit. Schemes for 100% affordable housing were rare.
- Mr B Tyldesley Q: Was in favour of increasing the proportion of affordable dwellings. Also felt that the proposed highways access onto Leyburn Road would encourage residents to drive to Leyburn rather than benefit Middleham's businesses.
Mr Hoerty A: The proposal identifies a clear pedestrian link to Middleham's services which is a component for sustainable development to reduce reliance on car movements, although in practice car usage was beyond the influence of a developer. He advised that the plan anticipated some single storey buildings that might be more suitable for elderly residents and that some of the market rate housing could be smaller which might make them more affordable and accordingly within reach of younger buyers.
- Mrs J Baker Comment: Has recently moved to Middleham from Scotland seeking a quieter location and objects strongly to the prospect of noise during construction and additional traffic.
- Mrs H Fawcett Comment: Cited her personal experience as a younger local resident faced with the prospect of having to move away due to the lack of suitable housing.
- Mr S Brown Q: What is 'sustainable development', a key phrase used in the

- application?
- Mr Howarth A: Is a key concept with the government's National Planning Framework and in essence seeks to balance the benefits and costs of development with regard to impacts upon the environment, economy and social infrastructure. In respect of the proposal, it would have less impact than a large number of widespread smaller developments by virtue of being attached to an existing settlement.
- Mr S Brown Q: Noted the potential impact of 70 dwellings, each with, say, 2 cars and 3 residents i.e. an additional 140 cars and 210 residents. How would that be sustainable?
- Mr Howarth A: Accepts the potential numbers but this development would minimise impact by comparison to a similar number of houses scattered across a wider area as it provided options for accessing the town and supporting local businesses.
- Mr S Brown Q: Considered whether the additional pedestrian traffic might require a proper pavement replacing cobbles that were a feature of the town.
- Mr Howarth A: Did not accept that this would be necessary.
- Mr S Brown Q: Can Middleham cope with 45 additional homes
- Mr Featherstone A: Yes
- Mr A Rawson Q: Was it possible to provide a precise number of houses?
- Mr Hoerty A: Following discussions with RDC earlier that day, the applicant would be undertaking a viability appraisal to specify the number of houses; a precise figure was not currently available. He considered there were no practical constraints on capacity although the final number in a full planning application would need to consider all factors, such as the topography of the site. In practice, the number of houses applied for in a full application was likely to be lower than in an outline application. The mix of housing types would be specified in a detailed application.
- Mr Howarth A: This was the beginning of the application process and the final application would take note of RDC's conditions and be subject to further discussion and consultation.
- Mr A Rawson Q: What is a 'landmark development' as shown on the parameters plan?
- Mr Hoerty A: A house situated in a prominent position on the site with distinctive features to enhance the overall appearance.
- Mr C Barber Q: How much influence over the builder would RDC have regarding housing types and styles and to restrict use as holiday lets?
- Mr Gillespy A: There had lengthy discussions with MTC regarding certain features on the site that were important to the community and these were incorporated into a contractual agreement that would be binding on any developer regarding the proximity and scale of development along the southern boundary. Detailed review and approval was the responsibility of planning authority.
- Mr Featherstone A: Grant of planning consent would cover the areas of concern. The affordable housing provision was governed by what is

known as s106 affordable housing requirements.

- Mr C Barber Q: There would be an increase in people transiting to and from Leyburn; would there be any provision for additional river crossings and possible pedestrian or cycle routes?
- Mr Featherstone A: In short, the answer was likely to be 'no'. A planning authority would wish to improve provision but in practice such schemes would not be viable.
- Mr S Doherty Comment: Based on his knowledge of a local housing scheme, the 4 bedroom affordable properties were less popular than 2 or 3 bedroom ones; even with a 30% discount they were too expensive.
- Mr Hoerty Response: Noted the observation. Housing provision would be discussed in detail with RDC's housing officers.
- Mrs S Doherty Q: Will there be a consultation to assess local housing needs?
Mr Featherstone A: Local plans indicate demand for 2 and 3 bedroom properties within affordable and market-price sectors.
- Mr K Miller Comment: Noted that the town was part of a relatively low wage economy. He was also unsure regarding the definition of 'single storey in height on the southern edge of any such building' referred to in para 10 of the heads of agreement that had been available for inspection. He also noted that the low number of pupils enrolled at the town's school was not solely due to lack of housing as some children attended primary school in Leyburn.
- Cllr Cade Response: Spoke also in his capacity as governor of the school; was hopeful that the school would improve its situation following recent inspection outcomes as it might close unless pupil numbers were increased.
- Mrs D Green Q: Sought clarification on how much control RDC would have over final details of an application if outline permission was granted. She noted that the site was in a prominent position viewable from outside of the town.
- Mr Featherstone A: RDC, as planning authority, had 'pretty much' full control; outline consent was only an agreement in principle.
- Mr J Alderson Q: Whilst noting that the route of the access road was shown on the plans for illustration, he observed that it cut across the existing parking area for adjacent houses. He also cited significant issues with sewerage overflow in that area and was concerned that these matters should be addressed
- Mr Hoerty A: Undertook to flag both issues with the applicant's consultants.
- Mrs R Thompson Comment: Considered that the existing ginnels over which pedestrians would access the town were too narrow and was concerned that there might be an increase in the number of vehicles that already passed the wrong way through the one-way system at the top of St Alkelda's Road.
- Mr Hoerty Response: Observation was noted
- Mrs C Griffiths Q: What will happen to the lower field over which the access road is shown as curved?

A: This field is not part of the development proposal and the access road will be fenced off and remain agricultural

Mrs C Griffiths Q: How will sewerage be dealt with? If pumping is required, will this create noise?

Mr Hoerty A: Sewerage arrangements must be agreed with the local drainage authority. Pumped systems are common for housing developments and would comply with relevant regulations regarding noise outputs.

No other questions or comments were put forward. Having thanked everyone for attending, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.25pm.

Chairman