

Richard Laughton
Northumberland County Council
County Hall
Morpeth
NE61 2EF

24/03/2021

Re: Letter of objection to planning application (20/04423/OUT)

Dear Richard Laughton,

This letter is an objection to the recently submitted application '*Outline application seeking approval for access for construction of two storey 58 bed care home and associated but physically separate single storey 12-bedroom specialist unit with associated parking and hard and soft landscaping*'.

SLC Property are the planning consultants for the Northumberland Line, which provides for the re-introduction of passenger services on the 'Ashington, Blyth and Tyne' Line and the construction of six new train stations in Northumberland and North Tyneside.

The re-introduction of passenger services in South East Northumberland is a long-held ambition of Northumberland County Council and North East councils. The designs for the Northumberland Line are at an advanced stage and the application for planning permission for a railway station at Ashington was submitted in January 2021 (21/00387/CCD). The stations are currently programmed to be operational in Winter 2023.

Proposed new railway station at Ashington

The station is proposed to be constructed adjacent to the site of the original Ashington station. This site is safeguarded in both the Adopted Wansbeck Local Plan (Policy T1) and the Emerging Northumberland Local Plan (TRA5).

The construction of the new station will remove some of the existing car park spaces and will generate a significant demand for additional car parking spaces.

As the proposed station is located with Ashington town centre, there are very few available sites which are capable of meeting the necessary inclusive standards and accommodating the replacement or additional car parking spaces.

The development of the care home would preclude the replacement of the existing parking spaces and provision of the additional car parking. Negotiations with the landowner of the site of the care home application are ongoing with a view to the acquisition of the site. In the event that the acquisition of the site

cannot be agreed, an application is being made to the Secretary of State for an Order under the Transport and Works Act 1992. The order (if made) will authorise the compulsory acquisition of land and rights associated with the application site (should it not be possible for these to be acquired voluntarily).

In considering the planning balance of the application for the care home the following policies are relevant

Policy Context

T1: Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Rail Line (Adopted Wansbeck District Local Plan)

Policy T1 of the adopted plan states *'The re-introduction of passenger services on the rail line between Newcastle and Ashington will be supported and promoted. Land which may be required for associated facilities such as stations, bus stops and car parks will be safeguarded.'*

Such sites will include Woodhorn Colliery; Ashington Town Centre; North Seaton Road, Ashington; and Bedlington Station'.

At Ashington, the policy safeguards the section of the track adjacent to the site of the former railway station. Whilst the site of the proposed care home is not safeguarded as part of the policy, it is reasonable to assume that land in close proximity to the station site may be required for associated facilities. As such, it is considered the proposed care home is contrary to policy T1 of the adopted local plan.

TRA5: Rail transport and safeguarding facilities (Emerging Northumberland Local Plan)

The Phase 2 hearings on the Emerging Northumberland Local Plan were completed in November 2020 and the Inspector indicated that she did not envisage the need to hold additional hearings. As such, it is anticipated that the local plan will be adopted in Spring 2021. It is therefore considered that relevant policies can be given some weight presently and can be given increasing weight as the Plan moves towards adoption.

Policy TRA5 of the Emerging Northumberland Local Plan states *'Development which would prejudice the retention of rail transport facilities will not be supported unless the benefits of the development outweigh the importance'.*

Furthermore, the policy states that *'Development which would prevent the reintroduction of passenger rail services on the Northumberland Line along with associated stations, facilities and access to them from adjacent highways, and continued rail freight use of the Northumberland Line, its associated branch lines (including the branch line from Bedlington to Morpeth via Choppington, the Butterwell line north of Ashington and the line from Woodhorn to Newbiggin-by-the-Sea) and supporting infrastructure will not be supported'*

The policy also safeguards land required for a number of stations, including the site of the former Ashington Station.

It is considered the proposed development of a care home would prejudice the viability of the proposed station at Ashington for reasons stated above. It is not considered the benefits of the care home would

outweigh the public benefits of delivering a strategic transport scheme across South East Northumberland. As such, it is considered the development which is the subject of planning application ref. 20/04423/OUT is contrary to the Emerging Local Plan Policy TRA5.

Material Considerations

In addition to the emerging and adopted development plan policies, there are a number of strategic documents which support the realisation of the Northumberland Line scheme which should be given weight in determining this application.

This includes the Northumberland Economic Strategy (2018) which identifies “*Invest in high quality passenger transport including the reopening of the Northumberland to Newcastle rail line to passengers*” as Priority 5 of the Economic Strategy.

Furthermore, the Transport for the North’s Strategic Transport Plan (2019); the North East Combined Authority Transport Manifesto (2019) and Northumberland Local Transport Plan (2011) specifically support the re-instatement of passenger services on the Northumberland Line, between Ashington and Newcastle.

Notably, the Northumberland Local Transport plan identifies that ‘*the lack of available car parking at stations severely restricts passenger growth and demand for rail travel*’. The existing design of Ashington station has sought to provide for future passenger growth. The development of the land to the south as a care home would preclude this future growth and have a detrimental impact on the scheme.

Summary

The granting of permission for the care home has the potential to compromise and be prejudicial to the programme and delivery of the Ashington station, and as part of this the delivery of the Northumberland Line scheme.

For the reasons stated above, it is considered that the application (20/04423/OUT) is contrary to both to the Emerging Local Plan Policy TRA5, and the Adopted Local Plan Policy T1. Furthermore, substantial weight should be given to the considerable public benefits of the Northumberland Line scheme in the planning balance for the determining of the application.

I would respectfully request that the application be refused for the above reasons.

¹ Paragraph 6.33 Northumberland Local Transport Plan (LTP3) 2011

Yours sincerely



Allen Creedy MRTPI FIEMA

Planning Director for and on behalf of SLC Property

Application 20/04423/OUT Sheltered Accommodation at Kenilworth Road Ashington

Tony Rivero <Tony.RIVERO3@networkrail.co.uk>

Fri 16/04/2021 3:09 PM

To: Planning Comments <PlanningComments@northumberland.gov.uk>

Cc: allen.creedy <allen.creedy@slcproperty.co.uk>

OFFICIAL

We write in respect of the above planning application. Firstly it is disappointing to note that we (Network Rail) were not consulted on this application, even given the close proximity of the railway line to the application site. Notice of the submission of the application was in fact drawn to our attention from another source within the local authority but can we please remind you that we are a statutory consultee for any development proposal within 10m of the NR operational boundary.

Secondly we must put on record our objection to the proposal. The re-introduction of the passenger train service to the Blyth & Tyne route is a long-held ambition of the local authority and is of great significance to the well-being and re-generation of the North East region. The proposal is firmly embedded in local plan policy and has received significant Government backing and finance, with a target date for operation by December 2023; a planning application for Ashington station itself has recently been deposited with the Authority (application 21/00387 refers).

The proposal for the Care Home would prejudice the provision of adequate car parking to serve the proposed railway station. The provision of the station will affect existing car parking spaces and will also generate significant demand for further car parking. To reduce the level of car parking as provided for in the station planning application as a result of the care home scheme would reduce attractiveness of the station as well as exacerbate parking issues and congestion in and around the station. Approval of the care home proposal would affect the viability of the station and therefore be contrary to Policy T1 of the adopted Wansbeck District Local Plan (the current development plan document for Ashington) and Policy TRA5 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan. For these reasons it should be refused.

Yours Faithfully

Tony Rivero



Tony Rivero BSc (Hons) MRTPI
Town Planning Manager LNE/EM
Network Rail Property (Eastern)
George Stephenson House
Toft Green, York, YO1 6JT

E tony.rivero3@networkrail.co.uk

www.networkrail.co.uk/property

The content of this email (and any attachment) is confidential. It may also be legally privileged or otherwise protected from disclosure.

This email should not be used by anyone who is not an original intended recipient, nor may it be copied or disclosed to anyone who is not an original intended recipient.

If you have received this email by mistake please notify us by emailing the sender, and then delete the email and any copies from your system.

Liability cannot be accepted for statements made which are clearly the sender's own and not made on behalf of Network Rail.

Network Rail Infrastructure Limited registered in England and Wales No. 2904587, registered office Network Rail, 2nd Floor, One Eversholt Street, London, NW1 2DN



Northumberland County Council

Mr R Laughton
Senior Planning Officer
Planning and Economy Department
Northumberland County Council
County Hall
Morpeth
Northumberland
NE61 2EF

Your ref: 20/04423/OUT
Our ref:
Enquiries to: Mike Robbins
Email: [REDACTED]
Tel direct: (01670) 210000
Date: 26 March 2021

Dear Mr Laughton,

RE: 20/04423/OUT | Outline application seeking approval for access for construction of two storey 58 bed care home and associated but physically separate single storey 12 bedroom specialist unit with associated parking and hard and soft landscaping | Essendene Kenilworth Road Ashington Northumberland NE63 8AR

This letter is an objection to the recently submitted application '*Outline application seeking approval for access for construction of two storey 58 bed care home and associated but physically separate single storey 12-bedroom specialist unit with associated parking and hard and soft landscaping*'.

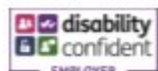
Northumberland County Council own land adjoining the application site and it is in the Council's role as landowner that this objection is made. The Council has approached the applicant with a view to purchasing the application site, as it is required to construct the new railway station at Ashington, which is part of a significant transport project, referred to as the Northumberland Line, for which provision has been made in the emerging Local Plan. This would see a passenger railway service being introduced, linking Ashington with Newcastle.

The designs for the station and the entire Northumberland Line are at an advanced stage and the application for planning permission for the railway station at Ashington was submitted on behalf of the Council in January 2021 (21/00387/CCD). The station is currently programmed to be operational in Winter 2023.

Mike Robbins, Strategic Estates Manager, Strategic Estates
County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF



www.northumberland.gov.uk



The Council's Development Company, Advance Northumberland is the owner of the nearby Wansbeck Square Shopping Centre and has ambitions for its refurbishment. The future development and use of the shopping centre is being considered in tandem with the new rail station.

The development of the application site for a care home has the potential to adversely impact on the comprehensive development of this area of Ashington Town Centre.

In particular, the development of the care home would preclude the replacement of the existing parking spaces and provision of the additional car parking to service both the new station and the shopping centre.

In the event that the acquisition of the application site cannot be agreed with the applicant, an application is being made to the Secretary of State for an Order under the Transport and Works Act 1992. The order (if made) will authorise the compulsory acquisition of land and rights associated with the application site (should it not be possible for these to be acquired voluntarily).

I would be grateful if you could report this objection to the relevant committee.

Yours sincerely

M Robbins

Mike Robbins
Strategic Estates Manager



Name, Position, Department
Address Line 1, Address Line 2, Northumberland, Postcode
T: 01670 62**** E: name@northumberland.gov.uk
www.northumberland.gov.uk

