

Extract from Coxhoe Chronicle December 2015

PUBLIC MEETING

Does Coxhoe need more housing?

**Wednesday 21 October
7pm at Coxhoe Village Hall**

See Coxhoe Parish Council Facebook or website for more details, or speak to the Parish Clerk at the Village Hall.

Your views and help are needed.

Neighbourhood Plan - Coxhoe is under the threat of development. Durham County Council has approved every planning application that has come forward despite Coxhoe Parish Council objecting to most of them. That's over 300 so far, please see the table below. That's not the end of it, because other potential sites in Coxhoe were identified by developers in the DCC SHLAA' (Strategic Housing Land Area Assessment). The Parish Council has therefore started work on a Neighbourhood Plan. The recent approval for 190 homes on our border with Parkhill set a most worrying precedent, and the further potential for another 300 at the 'Intergra 61' development between Bowburn Services and Tursdale.

In **October 2014** the application for 190 houses in Parkhill by Hallams was refused. At that time Draft County Durham Plan given significant weight in planning decisions as the Inspectors Report into 'Examination in Public' was awaited. DCC Planners considered that the proposal was an inappropriate **unsustainable** residential development in the countryside and would result in the merging of Parkhill and Coxhoe and would affect local nature conservation contrary to local and national planning policy. Whilst this application was only for 190 houses, the previous owners of this land were seeking to build 600 houses! In **February 2015** the Inspector issued a report on Examination in Public (EIP). He criticised the Draft County Durham Plan and said housing should

not take place in Green Belt around Durham City and should take place elsewhere in 5 villages around Durham including Coxhoe. The Inspector takes the view that Coxhoe and Parkhill are one settlement on the basis of one representation at the EIP – that of Hallams, the Parkhill developers! This changed everything.

In **June 2015** the Parkhill Development was resubmitted. On **14 September** DCC Planning Committee reconsidered and Planners argued that the application should be approved under Paragraph 14 of the Government's new National Planning Guidance which states that there is a **"presumption in favour of sustainable development"**. Planners argued that the City of Durham Local Plan is out of date and the Draft County Durham Plan can't be taken into account as a result of the Planning Inspector's Report. The Planners advised the Planning Inspector considered Coxhoe and Parkhill are actually one settlement and the coalescence/merging argument couldn't be used. DCC Planners changed their minds and now consider the proposals to be sustainable when they felt it was **NOT** sustainable before. DCC Planners changed their minds and now consider that there are now benefits which outweigh the harm when those benefits existed previously and DCC Member Councillors (Not our Local County Members who strongly objected) are minded to grant planning permission. Coxhoe Parish Council asked the Secretary of State to take decision away from DCC but they refused to do so Planning Permission Granted **On 21st September the Inspectors EIP is quashed by the High Court.**

At the moment if any planning applications come along they will be considered under the same tests and probably approved. As a result of an application for Judicial Review Durham County Council have to have another go at their County Durham Plan i.e. re-do the consultation and another Examination in Public. What can we do? We need to make sure they know loud and clear what the people of Coxhoe think! CPC are a consultee and have no planning powers, CPC are powerless in respect of current planning decisions, however. CPC do have the power (not a duty) to develop a **Neighbourhood Plan** within our parish boundaries and have already done the basics. In **February 2015** CPC made an application to DCC for Designation of a neighbourhood Plan covering the whole of the Parish. In April 2015 DCC approved the Designation.

Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. They are able to choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built, have their say on what those new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided, and grant planning permission for the new buildings they want to see go ahead. Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right types of development for their community where the ambition of the neighbourhood is aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area.

Local communities can choose to: set planning policies through a neighbourhood plan that is used in determining planning applications, grant planning permission through Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders for specific development which complies with the order.

Neighbourhood Plans have to: Comply with Local Planning policy; comply with national planning policy; and comply with European standards and requirements. **Neighbourhood Plans therefore cannot simply block development.** There is a complex process to go through which requires a lot of work and consultants and this is expensive. There's an examination in public and at the end of the day there is a referendum. Above all, the community need to be involved and engaged and this means the community getting involved and helping out. The Parish Council are committed to progressing a Neighbourhood Plan, and this was endorsed by those present at our initial Public Meeting 21 October. There will be more consultation exercises and public meetings. We can't do this alone.

If you want to help come along to our next open meeting 16 December 7pm at Coxhoe Village Hall.

Site	Houses	Parish View	DCC Decision
Potteries	31	Objected	Approved
Station Road	50	Objected	Approved
Parkhill	190	Objected	Approved no infrastructure
Phase 3 The Limes	55	Requested infrastructure contributions	Approved, £70,000 school contribution
Old School House	8	Objected	Approved
Bogma Farm	162	Objected	Approval likely although some infrastructure contribution likely
Total	486	SO FAR ???	

