

**NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL**

**ASHINGTON & BLYTH LOCAL AREA COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the **Ashington & Blyth Local Area Council** held in the Collingwood Suite, Newbiggin Sports & Leisure Centre, Woodhorn Road, Newbiggin, NE64 6HG on Wednesday, 21 June 2017 at 5.00pm.

**PRESENT**

Councillor G Webb

(Chair, in the Chair for agenda items 1 - 3 and 6 - 11)

(Planning Vice-chair Councillor B Gallacher in the chair for item 5)

**MEMBERS**

E Cartie  
J J Gobin  
J A Lang  
K Nisbet

K Parry  
E Simpson  
T S Wilson

**OFFICERS**

H Bowers  
M Carle  
T Carter  
G Gavin  
M Ketley  
N Masson  
J Murphy  
D Lally  
J Roll  
R Weallens

Democratic Services Officer  
Highways Delivery Manager  
Principal Planning Officer  
Head of Neighbourhood Services  
Head of Planning Services  
Principal Lawyer  
Principal Planning Officer  
Interim Chief Executive  
Democratic Services Manager  
Area Manager, Neighbourhood Services

**ALSO PRESENT**

Z Bottrell - Culture Creative  
N Walsh - Service Manager, Culture, Heritage and Libraries  
8 members of the public

**01. MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting and referred to the committee's terms of reference, following which it was:

Ch.'s Initials.....

**RESOLVED** that the Local Area Council's membership and terms of reference, as agreed by Council on 24 May 2017, be noted.

**02. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Campbell, G Davey, S Davey, M Purvis, J Reid and L Rickerby.

**03. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of Area Committee – South East held on Wednesday, 15 March 2017 at 6pm, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

**DEVELOPMENT CONTROL**

***Councillor Webb then vacated the Chair, for Planning Vice-chair Councillor Gallacher to chair the development control section of the agenda, as was the arrangement for all Local Area Councils.***

**04. DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The attached report explained how the Local Area Council was asked to decide the planning applications attached to the agenda using the powers delegated to it, and included details of the public speaking arrangements. (Report attached to the official minutes as Appendix A.)

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

**05. 17/01585/FUL**

**Refurbishment of the existing two storey mid terrace property (currently use Class B1) including part demolition of existing rear single storey extension and construction of new single storey rear extension. The proposed use is for offices and staff facilities for bus drivers.  
9 Lintonville Terrace, Ashington, NE63 9UN**

Principal Planning Officer Tony Carter introduced the application with the assistance of a Powerpoint presentation.

Following the presentation, Members then asked questions to officers in relation to parking. The Principal Planning Officer advised that as the current parking situation was very limited, a condition had been added to take into account a car parking strategy for the users of the premises.

Councillor Cartie then moved the officer recommendation to grant the application. This was seconded by Councillor Wilson..

On being put to the vote, it was then agreed unanimously that it be:

**RESOLVED** that the application **APPROVED** subject to the conditions and reasons in the report.

## **OTHER LOCAL AREA COUNCIL BUSINESS**

*On the conclusion of the development control business at 5.10pm, Councillor Gallacher vacated the Chair and the meeting adjourned as the remainder of the agenda consisted of other Local Area Council business scheduled to begin at 6pm. Councillor Webb returned to the Chair and continued the meeting at 6pm, beginning with public question time.*

### **06. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The Chair explained that this item provided an opportunity for members of the public to have their say.

**Anna Moore, NE24 2BT** stated that the bus route in Newsham was being misused by cars and queried how that could be stopped. Michael Carle, Highways Delivery Manager advised that he would take details and refer back to the Principal Programme Officer, Highways for a response.

An email was read out by Councillor Parry on behalf of **John Glenton** who had emailed the Leader of the Council with no response. He would pass the details to the Democratic Services Officer for action.

**Marjorie Chambers, Ashington Town Council** asked if the building work on the rest of the main street - Woodhorn Road/Grand Corner would be finished and where the money would be coming from now that County Hall was not being sold. Councillor Richard Dodd referred to the Government's Borrowing Board and advised that a lot of work was still required and an email response would be provided.

She further queried whether Arch were back on track for the rest of the regeneration in Ashington. The Interim Chief Executive advised that a written response would be given via email.

**Lynn Burns, Newbiggin Town Council** had major concerns about the infrastructure in Ashington which would provide the people in Stakeford and Choppington places to shop. Ashington needed a fundamental infrastructure to provide jobs and build the economy. She was disgusted and dismayed. What Ashington needed was jobs to build the economy. The Interim Chief Executive understood the frustration and stated that a robust piece of work

was required to put forward proposals. It was not just about retail but upskilling, digital technology and business skills. It was also confirmed that investment has been made in Ashington, for example for the new leisure centre.

Councillor Burns queried the cost of County Hall staying at Morpeth. The Interim Chief Executive advised that it was a difficult question, any new building would have cost many of millions of pounds.

**Michelle Brannigan, NE63 8NP** asked about the actual timescales and if there were any proposals to look at. The Interim Chief Executive advised that some form of arrangement would be ready by September 2017.

Mrs Brannigan stated that the people of Ashington wanted more recreation and asked if that could be put forward as an option. The Interim Chief Executive advised that it could be put forward and with anything else suggested and she could be written to directly at County Hall.

Mrs Brannigan reported that the residents and businesses needed communication and queried when they would find out. The Interim Chief Executive advised that a written answer would be provided.

**Mike Slaughter, Clerk, Ashington Town Council** stated that the Town Council and people of Ashington wanted reassurance and commitment for the town, whether for education, retail, or leisure. He had received communication from residents regarding the abandoned site. Some public reassurance, by press release or announcement should be given. It was not about Ashington vs anyone else, the town had had a major commitment. The Interim Chief Executive advised that she had recently been to the AGM of Arch and was working with Jackie Kell, Chief Executive, to look at schemes. A commitment was given on schemes already in place. It was business as usual and work was on-going. There were some schemes which needed to be looked at for clarity and robustness.

At this point in the meeting further questions were raised by Members regarding County Hall and the site at Ashington:

On behalf of Ashington Town Council and the residents of Ashington, Councillor Gallacher asked for some guidance regarding the Ashington, Blyth, Tyne link, the County Hall site and the Portland Park site.

The Interim Chief Executive advised of a piece of work being done around all capital commitment and how to take forward. Potential opportunities would be discussed with Ashington residents. It was early days and she gave assurance that the the issues were a priority.

Councillor Richard Dodd, Business Chair advised that the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne link was still on track and the former County Hall site was being looked at for education purposes and possible college. A Member stated that residents should be consulted at every step.

Councillor Lang queried how much money was being lost with the site standing idle and requested a written response.

## **07. PETITIONS**

Members were advised that no new petitions had been received, there were no reports due on petitions previously received, nor any updates due on petitions previously considered.

## **08. LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES**

The Chair explained that this item enabled members to raise issues about services provided by the Local Services group with the area managers from Technical Services and Neighbourhood Services.

The following matters were raised/discussed:

- a Member referred to illegal parking on Cowpen Road and queried how problems would be tackled if budgets were to be cut and what were the plans for Ashington and Blyth in times of austerity? The Business Chair took the comments on board and would pass to the Portfolio Holder. Those questions could also be asked as written questions at Full Council
- a Member had received an email from a resident regarding the traffic at Market Place which was an on-going problem. The Head of Neighbourhood Services advised that a blacksmith had been out to the gates, however, that would not stop the problem of people driving on to the Market Place. There was a dedicated officer on market days, but the issue should be controlled by the police rather than the Council
- in response to a request that Station Road, Ashington should be closed for half an hour at the end of market day, the Head of Neighbourhood Services advised that had been monitored ever since the market opened. There had been some concerns from residents and traders which would be monitored and reviewed. A formal letter had been received from the market traders and he would be meeting with the Head of Technical Services to see if a road closure would be appropriate
- a Member referred to flooding at Cambois caused by a faulty non-returnable system. The Highways Delivery Area Manager advised that the tidal flap created issues and there was a problem of land ownership which was currently being investigated. The Member requested he be contacted once the situation with ownership was resolved
- a Member requested an update on Ashington on the various issues around front line services for officers. He stated that Ashington Town Council wished to work in partnership with officers to make the town a better place

- a query was raised as to whether short stay car parks would be implemented. The Highways Delivery Area Manager advised that it was out of his remit.

**RESOLVED** that the items identified be followed up by Local Services.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS - CORPORATE**

### **09. TOUR OF BRITAIN**

A Powerpoint presentation was provided by Zoe Bottrell of Culture Creative (copy of presentation filed with the official minutes of the meeting).

Mr Walsh explained that the whole Stage 2 of the tour would take place in Northumberland on Monday 4 September, unlike the previous tour in 2015 which had hosted a staged start and finish, this year's would see completed stages.

The Tour of Britain was an important international event which gave people the chance to see world class riders. Mr Walsh commented on the Council's commitment to providing investment in events and listed a few of the benefits which included: bringing communities together; an economic return of £7 for every £1 invested; raising the profile of the county via television coverage and increased the number of users to the Council's website.

The 2015 tour had been a significant economic driver for investment and publicity for the county. Both ITV4 and Eurosport would be televising it this year, with five to six hours of live television broadcast to 166 countries. The tour also provided the opportunity to promote cycling, healthy lifestyles and other benefits. Work had taken place with the Tour of Britain to create the race with a number of parts.

Zoe Bottrell advised that the race would begin at Kielder Dam, head further north to Bamburgh before heading back south to Blyth.

It was hoped to reach as many communities as they could and also tourist centres, cyclists, clubs and schools. They would be working with schools over the summer terms to ensure young people aware with the regional launch being imminent.

The race would begin at 10:15 am and the route would follow Bellingham - Otterburn - Elsdon - Rothbury - Alnwick - Eglington - Chatton - Belford - Bamburgh - Seahouses - Beadnell - Embleton - Lesbury - Warkworth - Amble - Widdrington - Widdrington Station - Ulgham - Morpeth - Bedlington - Blyth - Seaton Sluice - Seaton Delaval, then conclude back at Blyth. The expected finish time was around 3.30pm.

For the Blyth area, it was anticipated that the tour would pass through Waterloo Road to the coastal road to Seaton Sluice, Seaton Delaval, Laverock Hall Road, Broadway and Waterloo Road.

Consultation was being launched with transport providers and it was hoped that disruption would be kept to a minimum.

In response to a query regarding the King of the Mountain, Ms Bottrell advised that the race consisted of a steep hill and cyclists competed as teams and individuals. If they won the sprint stage and were the first cyclist across the line, they would win the points.

A Member queried why Ashington was not being included in the race when it was one of the largest towns, it was advised that Ashington had been included in the Tour of Britain 2015.

Mr Walsh and Ms Bottrell were thanked for the presentation and it was:

**RESOLVED** that the update be noted.

## 10. **APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

Members considered a list of appointments to outside bodies for 2017/18. Following this it was:

**RESOLVED** that the following list of appointments be confirmed:

- BLISS Mediation Service - K Nisbet
- Blyth Valley Disabled Forum - K Nisbet
- Briardale Community & Training Centre Community Association - D Campbell
- Buffalo Community Centre - K Nisbet
- Community and Voluntary Action Blyth Valley - G Davey
- Industrial Communities Alliance - K Nisbet/S Davey
- Northumberland Community Voluntary Action - T Wilson
- Blyth Star Enterprise - had contacted NCC last year to advise they did not need NCC involvement

## **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

### 11. **LOCAL AREA COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME**

A list of agreed items for future Local Area Council meetings was circulated (copy attached to the official minutes as Appendix C).

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

**CHAIR**.....

**DATE**.....