

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

ASHINGTON & BLYTH LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **Ashington & Blyth Local Area Council** held in the Briardale Community Centre, Briardale Road, Blyth, Northumberland, NE24 5AN on Wednesday 12 July 2017 at 5:00 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor G Webb
(Chair, in the Chair for agenda items 1 - 3 and 8 - 15)

(Planning Vice-chair Councillor B Gallacher in the chair for items 4 -7)

MEMBERS

D Campbell
E Cartie
G Davey
S Davey
J J Gobin
L Grimshaw
J A Lang

K Nisbet
K Parry
M Purvis
J Reid
E Simpson
T S Wilson

OFFICERS

H Bowers
M Carle
P Jones
M Ketley
N Masson
J Murphy
D Lally
A Rawlinson
R Weallens

Democratic Services Officer
Highways Delivery Manager
Director of Local Services and Housing Delivery
Head of Planning Services
Principal Solicitor, Regulation
Principal Planning Officer
Interim Chief Executive
Senior Planning Officer
Area Manager, Neighbourhood Services

ALSO PRESENT

I Hedley - Community Regeneration Officer
P Hedley - Chief Fire Officer
T Kirsop - Community Regeneration Manager
M McCarty - Deputy Chief Fire Officer

10 members of public

Ch.'s Initials.....

01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor L Rickerby.

02. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Ashington & Blyth Local Area Council held on Wednesday, 21 June 2017 at 5pm, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

03. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillors D Campbell and K Nisbet declared a declared a personal, non prejudicial, interest in agenda items 5 and 7 as they had both been lobbied by Mr N Wilson.

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.)

An additional report was circulated to members at the meeting providing them with further information following the Council's decision to formally withdraw the submitted Core Strategy on 5 July 2017 from examination.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the reports be noted and that
- (2) references to the Core Strategy cited in the Officer's reports should be disregarded.

05. 17/00889/VARYCO

Variation of condition 2 (approved plans), condition 6 (extended phase 1 survey), condition 10 (provision of car park) to planning appeal APP/P2393/W/14/3001929 - in order to allow amendments (comprising the provision of larger car park, installation of six floodlights, provision of hard standing around pitch, re-siting of boundary fence, provision of admission kiosk and lighting control box), felling of trees and use of development before bringing car park fully into use
South Newsham Recreation Ground, South Newsham Road, Blyth.

Principal Planning Officer, Ann Rawlinson introduced the application with the assistance of a Powerpoint presentation.

Following the presentation, Mark Ketley, Head of Planning Services read out the following statement from Ward Councillor Rickerby:-

Dear Colleagues

I am sorry I am unable to attend this evening and address you personally. May I take this opportunity to thank you in advance for listening to my submission.

The item before you with reference to South Newsham Recreation Ground, as you can see from the papers, has quite an extensive history and whilst I am aware that the matter went to the Planning Inspector following an appeal, I would still, as I did in the first instance, object to the application being granted permission.

There is a long history and ongoing negativity between residents and Blyth Town Football Club, who lease the area from Northumberland County Council. Whilst the sterling work and activities carried out by the club for young people cannot be faulted and indeed, is to be applauded, one cannot ignore that the application before you is for the benefit of the senior team.

Residents have long been aggrieved with the extensive development and overuse of the site and despite, in the conclusion, the statement that the proposal would not deter access to public open space, this is far from what the residents perceive and experience, as access has been denied in the past.

It has to be recognised, that facilities will be improved but must also be acknowledged, the massive impact the alterations will have on the area and the residents. I am of the opinion that the site has been allowed to grow exponentially and that the area has been overdeveloped, at the expense of the immediate environs.

Problems have arisen due to previous conditions to applications being ignored, as with the matter before you today necessitating a variation, as additions and alterations have been made that did not have Planning Permission.

In the event that the application is approved, I would respectfully request that action is taken immediately on the non-removal of the excess soil mound.

I was informed by officers that the soil mound was to be removed by the club and that if it had not been removed by Friday 24th March, then enforcement action was to be taken. It has not been removed, no enforcement has been actioned and indeed from the papers, the applicant has been advised to submit a further application to rectify the situation.

This, I believe, is unacceptable. Enforcement Action should have been implemented long before now.

I, simply, cannot support the recommendation and respectfully, ask the council not to grant permission.

In the event that permission is granted, then I would seek that stringent conditions be applied and monitored and that non-compliance with conditions, should that occur, be dealt with immediate effect.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my concerns.

Margaret Nickalls, Club Secretary spoke in support of the application, her comments included the following:-

- She had received information that the trees would not be affected by the mounds
- Junior teams had to play off-site
- The floodlighting had been put in place to get the club up to standard and legal advice had been taken
- Advice had been sought from Abacus in relation to increasing the floodlights from 4 - 6 to lessen light pollution
- In relation to the access - a lot of people assumed the gates were closed.
- The original plan had not agreed the amount of car parking spaces required and the car parking had been added at a cost to the club
- It was hoped the works could be completed not just for the seniors as there was a lot of children doing charity events
- It was an illusion to say the club only benefitted the senior members
- She hoped that the gates would be kept open

Members' questions

Members then asked questions to officers of which the key points from responses were:

- What sanctions would be taken if the applicant did not comply with approved plans? Officers had been working with the applicant who were aware of the conditions being recommended. It was important that conditions were implemented as soon as possible. That would be monitored and the necessary enforcement action taken if not adhered to. However, the applicant would have a right to appeal any enforcement. Officers were actively trying to work with the club to manage issues. The previous application had been refused because of the formation of mounding on public open space and insufficient information had been submitted to accompany the refused application to demonstrate that the proposed mounds would not result in damage to, or loss of trees to which the applicant subsequently appealed. This application sought to regularise those elements which the Planning Inspector had accepted. If the applicant did not comply then court action would be imposed with a fine.
- Enforcement action should have taken place in March and that had not happened. The applicant did not have a very good history of delivering conditions before them. Failure to comply with conditions and Breach of Notice would be sent out setting out a compliance period to remedy the breach.
- Trees had been felled and not replaced, what action could be taken? The first phase of enforcement action resulted in the previous application being refused. It was felt that some of the elements in the previous application were acceptable and some were not. In addition, the Planning Inspector recognised certain elements were acceptable in planning terms. This application appeared to deal with the tree issues. Condition 8 referred to replacement tree/landscaping of the site which the applicant was aware of.
- Local people in the area had complained about several issues.

- A Member requested that a report be brought back to the committee to confirm that the issue with the mounding had been carried out. The mounding did not form part of this application but it was recognised that it was an on-going concern
- External lighting being switched on past 10:30 pm. Condition 2 referred to the times for the external lighting. If those conditions were not adhered, that would have to be monitored. If Members were minded to approve the application and consider condition 2 to be unacceptable, the wording could be amended.

Some discussion took place regarding the external lighting and a Member thought it was unfair if the the lighting was switched off before 10 pm due to the distance visiting teams might have to travel.

Councillor Gobin then moved the officer recommendation to grant the application. This was seconded by Councillor Parry.

Councillor Reid moved a motion to the amendment of condition 8 but the motion fell.

Debate then followed regarding the lease which was further discussed under Urgent Business.

On being put to the vote, the motion to grant the application was agreed by a vote of 8 in favour, 0 against and 7 abstentions so it was:

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** permission subject to the conditions and reasons set out in the report.

06. 16/01904/CCD

Works to the north of the academy with the removal of existing timber playground equipment and an excavation to the depth of 0.3m to provide a new 24m X 12m synthetic turf multi-purpose Multi Games Use Area (MUGA) pitch, green, with 2 x 4m recessed goal ends surrounded by a 2m steel twin bar fence system, green, including double gated entrance (additional information received 25.07.2016 and 12.05.2017; amended location plan received 02.08.2016 and amended description 26.06.2017).

Malvins Close Primary Academy, Albion Way, Blyth, Northumberland, NE24 5BL

Principal Planning Officer, Judith Murphy introduced the report with the aid of a Powerpoint presentation.

Members' Questions

Members' questions followed the presentation, of which the key points were raised:-

- Would the MUGA be locked when not in use? It was understood that the gates would be locked after hours
- How available would the MUGA be to the community? The MUGA was only for the use of the school from 9.00 am until 5.00 pm but there were other facilities nearby.

Councillor Webb then moved the officer recommendation to grant the application. This was seconded by Councillor Parry and unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** permission subject to the conditions and reasons in the report.

07. 16/03937/VARYCO

Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) pursuant to planning permission 14/01635/FUL-new plans and elevations.
South Newsham Recreation Ground, South Newsham Road, Blyth, Northumberland

The Senior Planning Officer Ann Rawlinson introduced the application with the assistance of a Powerpoint presentation.

Members' Questions

Members' questions followed the presentation, of which the key points were raised:-

- Was there a strict use policy? Public Protection Officers had been consulted and had raised no objections to the proposal subject to a condition to ensure there was no increase in noise. In addition Environmental Health were also satisfied with the conditions
- Noise levels. The conditions listed in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 protected residential amenity and reduced the impact of noise.

Councillor Gobin then moved the officer recommendation to grant the application. This was seconded by Councillor Parry.

Councillor Reid moved a motion to the amendment of condition 4 to include the wording "and windows". On being put to the vote, 10 voted in favour and 3 against with 2 abstentions. Therefore the motion was carried.

All new doors shall be acoustically insulated so as to prevent noise breakout.

A show of hands was then taken for the recommendation to grant the application which was agreed by a vote of 13 in favour of the application and 2 against so it was:

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** permission subject to the amendment to condition 4 to read '*All new doors and windows shall be acoustically insulated so as to prevent noise breakout*', and subject to the conditions and reasons as set out in the report.

OTHER LOCAL AREA COUNCIL BUSINESS

On the conclusion of the development control business at 6.00 pm, 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 6.05 pm, beginning with public question time.

08. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

Marjorie Chambers, Ashington Town Council stated that she had not received all of the answers to questions from the Business Chair which she had raised at the last meeting regarding the County Hall site. The Interim Chief Executive ensured she would receive a reply.

09. PETITIONS

Members received a report with an overview of petitions considered from 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2017.

Members were informed that, since the previous meeting, no new petitions had been received, there were no reports due on petitions previously received, nor any updates due on petitions previously considered.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

10. 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:

- Councillor Gobin had not received a reply regarding his question on flooding at the last meeting.
- The roads into Cambois had been dug up and repaired by Bernicia. Could they be repaired to a decent standard?
- Weeds along the roadsides at Bedlington Station and overgrown vegetation obscuring road signs.
- Flooding to the cellar of the Buffalo Community Centre, Blyth
- Could portable cctv cameras be installed at Ridley Park to discourage vandalism and could the wi-fi in the cafe be switched back on ?
- Problems with flooding on Ellington Road.
- Paving slabs at Disraeli, Durban and Maddison Street, breaking up due to traffic
- Drains flooding beside the bus stop next to The Elephant pub, Ashington.
- Litter complaints around bins in Ashington town centre.
- Following recent rape allegations in the Ashington area, could the cctv cameras in the main street be moved up to the west end of Ashington?
- The fence beside Maxwell's shop on the road towards Pegswood required painting. Could this be done in partnership with Ashington Town Council?

- The drains in Blyth Town Centre were full of rubbish. Could they be cleaned on a regular basis?
- Could communal bins be phased back in street by street?
- An email had been forwarded to Local Services regarding flooding beside the Co-op at Southend Avenue in Blyth, but no response had been received.
- Loss of tv reception opposite Thropton Court, Blyth due to a large tree

Members were informed that the issues raised would be followed up by the relevant officer of Local Services.

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

DISCUSSION ITEMS - CORPORATE

11. FIRE & RESCUE PLAN

Members received a presentation from Paul Hedley, Chief Fire Officer, about the draft Fire and Rescue Plan (Integrated Risk Management) 2017 - 2021. (A copy of the presentation is filed with the signed minutes). A copy of the draft document was circulated to members at the meeting.

Members were informed that every Fire Authority must produce a plan that identified fire and rescue risks in their county, and details on how they would mitigate those risks. Northumberland's *Fire and Rescue Plan 2017 - 2021* identified the most common incidents occurring in Northumberland, detailed performance against those incident types, and provided information on what the Service was doing in terms of prevention, protection and emergency response. The *Fire and Rescue Plan 2017 - 2021* was being consulted on between 5 July 2017 and 30 August 2017 and feedback from Local Area Councils (and town and parish councils) as part of the consultation process was welcome.

The Chair thanked the Chief Fire Officer for the presentation and report.

The issue of private housing was raised following the Grenfell tower fire and it was reported that if anyone had any particular concerns to contact fire services. Inspections were still being carried out to determine which properties required further audit.

A Member praised the dedication of Fire Officers locally and those who were involved in the Grenfell tower fire. This was echoed by Members. The Chief Fire Services Officer informed Members that it had been a difficult situation to envisage and he had written on behalf of the Fire Authority to express high regard to those involved.

Members comments included:-

- Locks for the elderly
- Call outs due to faulty tumblers/washing machines
- Budget reduction/resources
- Responsible landlords and vulnerable people
- Could up to date information on landlords and vulnerable people be sent out to Parish and Town Councils. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer reported that this would be sent out shortly

RESOLVED that the reported be noted.

12. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR AND PLANNING AND ECONOMY

Community Chest

Members received a report outlining the changes proposed to the future operation of the Community Chest. (Report attached to the signed minutes as **Appendix C**).

The Interim Chief Executive reported that it was necessary to appoint a Panel to consider applications for funding from the community chest scheme.

Iain Hedley, Community Regeneration Officer reported that the aim of the current scheme was to support local community groups and charities.

The Scheme will be facilitated by a Grant Panel reflecting the political makeup of each Local Areas Council, The process would be managed through two rounds with deadlines for applications this year in September and January.

The Community Building and Social Welfare Centre Fund had been deleted, with part added to the countywide element, doubling that amount to £60,000, and the remainder taken as a saving. The funding allocations for each of the LACs would be based on the equivalent of £1 per head of the population

For the local element, each LAC would have the flexibility to identify particular priorities which were particularly relevant to their local area. Ashington & Blyth and Cramlington, Bedlington & Seaton Valley LACs would have the ability to ring fence an element of their allocations. The upper element of the Scheme would be £5,000 with a maximum grant award of the 75% of the initiative's costs. Each LAC would pilot from its allocation a 'Help for You' initiative which would seek to provide up to £200 to support young people aged under 18 to pursue a particular ambition subject to parent/guardian approval. Members were advised they could send comments to the portfolio holder up to 26 July 2017.

The launch date would be 31 July and the first deadline 29 September.

Members raised comments/queries on the following:-

- The timing of the rounds for the 'Help for You' would not work.
- Was there an element of fairness to the proportion to the south east area of Northumberland?
- The fairness on the grants for young people in the south east area of the county compared to other areas

The Community Regeneration Officer advised that the countywide pot had remained the same but had been doubled to £60,000.

RESOLVED that

- (1) The revisions of the Community Chest Scheme and the report be noted.

(2) the Community Chest Panel comprise the following membership:-

Councillors L Grimshaw, K Nisbet, J Reid, E Simpson and T Wilson.

13. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LOCAL SERVICES AND HOUSING DELIVERY

Local Pothole Fund 2017-18

Councillor Glen Sanderson, Environment and Local Services Cabinet Member provided information on the introduction of a Northumberland Local Pothole Fund as a pilot scheme for 2017-18. The Local Pothole Fund of £500,000 was to be allocated towards the permanent repair of repeated potholes and drainage issues. (Report attached as **Appendix D**).

Each Local Area Council would be allocated £100,000 and all submissions should be made on a request form indicating the locations and details and emailed back to the address on the form.

It was hoped that the Local Pothole Fund would help repairs at a local level.

Staff in Local Services had been very helpful in setting up the pilot scheme but if the system did not work it would cease at the end of the year.

Members raised comments/queries on the following:-

- The funds should be distributed more evenly in the south east area
- A Member was pleased with the £100,000 being made available. However, in south east Northumberland, there had been a fantastic regime of Highways Inspectors. From 2008, officers had delivered those services very well through the LTP Programme
- The scheme might work in rural areas but not in urban areas where there was more traffic

RESOLVED:-

- (a) The Local Area Council note this new initiative to fund improvements to the County's roads
- (b) Local Councillors consider the needs within their own Wards and put forward locations to be considered for repair

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

14. ASHINGTON & BLYTH 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 E**).

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 16 August 2017, at 5.00 p.m at Ashington Children's Centre, Sure Start, Alexandra Road, Ashington, NE63 9EF.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

16. URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair referred to the lease of Blyth Town Football Club and the recent planning applications. He explained that the club had not been adhering to conditions and regulations. There was a lot of distrust from some members about the use of the club.

Members requested for the enforcement of the removal of the lease in the event the club did not comply with the planning permission and members of the Local Area Council receive a copy of the lease and the conditions attached to it.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....