

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

ASHINGTON & BLYTH LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **Ashington & Blyth Local Area Council** held in the Ashington Children's Centre, Sure Start, Alexandra Road, Ashington, Northumberland, NE63 9EF on Wednesday, 13 September 2017 at 5.00 pm

PRESENT

Councillor G Webb
(Chair, in the Chair for agenda items 6 - 16)

(Planning Vice-chair Councillor B Gallacher in the chair for items 1 - 5)

MEMBERS

Cartie E
Gobin J J
Grimshaw L
Parry K

Reid J
Simpson E
Webb G
Wilson T S

OFFICERS

Bowers H
Bracken P
Ketley M
Lally D
Harwood-Scorer E
Wealleans R

Democratic Services Officer
Solicitor
Head of Planning Services
Interim Chief Executive
Planning Assistant
Neighbourhood Services Area
Manager

ALSO PRESENT

Inspector S Fryer, Northumbria Police
Inspector N Oakley, Northumbria Police
Press/Public: 5

22. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G Davey, S Davey, K Nisbet and L Rickerby.

Chair's initials

Ashington & Blyth Local Area Council - 13 September 2017

23. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Ashington & Blyth Local Area Council held on Wednesday, 116 August 2017, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor E Simpson declared a personal interest in application 16/04655/CCD as she had a signed petition previously submitted to South East Area Committee last year and would not take any part in the discussion or voting thereon.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

25. DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The report requested Members to decide the planning applications attached to the report using the powers delegated to it. Members were reminded of the principles which should govern their consideration of the applications, the procedure for handling representations, the requirement of conditions and the need for justifiable reasons for the granting of permission or refusal of planning applications. The procedure at Planning Committees was appended for information.

Discussion followed regarding the changing of the format and the timing of the meeting to consider the planning applications. A Member stated that as a local area council, members should have the autonomy to decide the format and timing of the meetings. The Chair stated that this would be raised at the next Local Area Council Chairs' meeting.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

Councillor Simpson left the meeting.

26. 16/04655/CCD

**Demolition of Former Library and Council Offices, site to be retained as vacant hardstanding (as supplemented by additional information) and to undergo a change of use to a public carpark.
Newbiggin Library, Gibson Street, Newbiggin By The Sea, NE64 6UZ.**

The Planning Assistant introduced the application with the aid of a powerpoint presentation and explained the proposed layout of the application.

Following the presentation, the following information was provided in response to questions from Members:-

- The main entrance would remain from Cleveland Terrace.
- There were details in the report regarding the type of hardstanding to be installed.

- There were no bats or evidence of bats using the building but any bats would be most vulnerable during the hibernation period and was covered in a standard condition in the report.

A Member raised a concern regarding the timescale for demolition due to vandalism and hope the building was demolished sooner rather than later.

Councillor Burt proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the application subject to the conditions in the report which was seconded by Councillor Reid and was unanimously agreed.

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

OTHER LOCAL AREA COUNCIL BUSINESS

On the conclusion of the development control business at 5.15 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 6.00 pm, beginning with public question time.

27. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

Paul Taylor, NE24 3TQ

- 1) What was happening with the cctv in Blyth? Ray Wealleans, Neighbourhood Services Area Manager advised that he would obtain details from Mr Taylor after the meeting. It was further advised that the parish and town councils were responsible for cctv rather than NCC.
- 2) Street cleaning and litter in Blyth. The Neighbourhood Services Area Manager advised that he had recently taken over the street cleaning in Blyth. Cleansing rotas would be examined and any changes needed would then be considered, he would obtain the details from Mr Taylor after the meeting.
- 3) Could landscaping be carried out at Market Square in Blyth to make it more attractive to visitors. The Neighbourhood Services Area Manager would discuss this with Mr Taylor and take forward to the Head of Neighbourhood Services.

Eva Hartley, NE64 6HR

The public toilets in Newbiggin were not being cleaned. Newbiggin was a lovely place for visitors, but the toilets were a disgrace. The Neighbourhood Area Services Manager was aware of the problem and were looking into having the toilets deep cleaned in the hope that they would be improved for visitors.

28. 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.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

29. 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.

There were no issues raised.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

DISCUSSION ITEMS - CORPORATE

30. ANNUAL POLICING UPDATE

Inspectors Trevor Oakley and Sue Fryer were in attendance.

Inspector Oakley informed Members of work carried out to improve the force to give a good quality service on a smaller budget. The Force Improvement Team had looked at what had been done in the past and how that could be improved but also give a good quality service.

Inspector Fryer explained that she was based at Ashington Station and had just taken responsibility of the station at Bedlington. Due to recent cuts she was carrying out work which had previously been done by 3 officers.

The recent review had also seen changes in the front office due to changes in technology and the footfall at each office. There had also been

changes to the opening hours at Bedlington and Middle Engine Lane offices, however, Ashington office had remained the same.

Different ways of reporting and demand had been examined and the budget cuts had affected the Neighbourhood Police Team which would no longer be open. Any problems would be dealt through the 101 system. The closures had not caused many problems, the decision made had been as a result of demand.

Members comments included:-

- The length of waiting time for 101 calls
- The amount of anti social behaviour in Blyth and the request for cctv cameras
- The impact of budget cuts
- Burglar alarms ringing through the night
- Jobs being self financed
- Ashington police station being void of officers
- A Member welcomed the idea of front line officers with mobile phones
- Community Officers with a personal area contact would be helpful to the community

The Chairs thanked the officers for their presentation.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

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

Hirst Park Revival

Mike Jeffrey, Countryside and Green Spaces Manager updated Members on the progress with the Hirst Park Revival, Parks for People Project. (Report attached to the signed minutes as **Appendix B**).

Mr Jeffrey explained that the park was 100 years old and situated in the middle of the Hirst area. The park had been underinvested over the years with a struggle to keep it maintained.

An opportunity had arisen to make an application for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and officers had been working with community partners including Ashington Town Council.

A bid had been submitted in February this year which had been approved by the Heritage Lottery Fund in June. The bid for the total project was £2,728,910 and would be spent over the next 5 years to restore and revive with contributions from Ashington Town Council, community stakeholders and Northumberland College.

A new children's play area and water play area had been suggested following community consultation. Gateways, paths and walls would be renewed and the buildings behind Hirst Park House would be restored to create a horticultural training area run in partnership with Northumberland College.

Training opportunities would also be provided and the re-establishment of 'Friends of Hirst Park' group.

It was anticipated that the detailed design work would commence in October 2017 and the fully designed scheme would go out to tender in April 2018. Work was expected to be commence in July 2018 and completed in July 2019.

Members raised comments/queries on the following:-

- It was a brilliant scheme but concerns were raised about sufficient car parking
- The report was welcomed and thanks extended to all those concerned in the hard work and making the project possible.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

32. 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 C**).

33. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 11 October 2017, at 5.00 pm in the Collingwood Lounge, Newbiggin Sports and Leisure Centre, Woodhorn Road, Newbiggin, NE64 6HG.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....