

## **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, NE24 5AN on Wednesday, 15 November 2017 at 5.30 pm

#### **PRESENT**

Councillor E Simpson  
(Chair, in the Chair for agenda items 1-3 and 6 - 16)

(Planning Vice-chair Councillor B Gallacher in the chair for items 4 and 5)

#### **MEMBERS**

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

K Nisbet  
M Purvis  
J Reid  
L J Rickerby  
T S Wilson

#### **MEMBERS ALSO PRESENT**

H G H Sanderson, Cabinet Member, Environment and Local Services

#### **OFFICERS**

H Bowers  
M Carle  
U Filby  
P Jones

M Ketley  
J Murphy  
M Patrick

R Strettle  
R Wealleans

Democratic Services Officer  
Highways Delivery Area Manager  
Solicitor, Regulation  
Director of Local Services and  
Housing Delivery  
Head of Planning Services  
Principal Planning Officer  
Principal Highways Development  
Management Officer  
Senior Economic Policy Officer  
Neighbourhood Services Area  
Manager

#### **ALSO PRESENT**

C Kolek, Blyth Business Improvement District (BID) Project Manager  
L Davie, Business Member of Blyth Pre BID Steering Group  
S Reay, Business Member of Blyth Pre BID Steering Group

Chair's initials .....

*Ashington & Blyth Local Area Council - 15 November 2017*

Public: 15 (approx)

#### **40. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E Cartie, Parry and Webb.

#### **41. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Ashington & Blyth Local Area Council held on Wednesday, 11 October 2017, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

#### **42. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Councillor T Wilson advised that he would be speaking as Ward Councillor on planning application 17/02792/FUL and would withdraw from the planning committee and take no part in the determination of the application. .

### **DEVELOPMENT CONTROL**

#### **43. 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.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

#### **44. 17/02792/COU**

**Proposed development of an Early Years Centre including associated parking, landscaping and outdoor space for children. Land south of Ashington Minors Nursery, Ashington.**

The Principal Planning Officer introduced the report to the Committee with the aid of a powerpoint presentation.

Following the presentation, Councillor Tom Wilson spoke as Ward Councillor and made the following comments:-

- Residents were not against the new building, but were worried about the traffic in the area
- The present problem of parking
- The car park across the road (Milburn Road) would be the preferred site for the parking of staff and drop off point for parents which would alleviate traffic problems

- He was prepared to have a pedestrian crossing installed from his Members' Small Scheme
- The amount of traffic after school by people using the Gala Bingo, shops and dentist
- Children playing in the back street
- Motorbikes driving up the street and through bollards next to the Salvation Army building

### Members' Questions

At this point, Councillor Gobin requested a site visit on the grounds of traffic safety. Before making a decision, the Chair asked if there were any questions from Members, of which the following comments were made:-

- Was there anything officers could do about the situation without a site visit ?
- Most schools suffered from traffic problems which needed to be examined
- The carpark on Milburn Road was outwith the school's control
- Parking permit scheme was outwith the planning remit and was subject to a separate process
- A travel plan should be submitted for the development
- The school was in a densely populated area and it was requested that the delivery and operation times on Saturdays be amended to 9.00 am to 12.00pm or 9.00 am to 1.00 pm
- Were any conditions attached to the report regarding the boundary walls due to their age?

The Principal Planning Officer advised that the proposed parking provision conformed with NCC standards. In response to the query regarding delivery and operation times, the Principal Highways Development Management Officer advised that would be dealt with at the Construction Management Plan stage. It was confirmed that there were no conditions regarding the boundary walls.

Councillor Gobin moved the proposal for a site visit on the grounds of traffic safety, which was seconded by Councillor Campbell and unanimously agreed.

**RESOLVED** that the application be **DEFERRED** pending a site visit.

***On the conclusion of the development control business, Councillor Gallacher vacated the Chair and the meeting adjourned at 6.00 pm. Councillor Simpson chaired the remainder of the meeting on its resumption at 6.10 pm.***

## **OTHER LOCAL AREA COUNCIL BUSINESS**

### **45. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The Chair stated that Public Question Time was not a platform for Town and Parish Councillors to report Local Service issues which should be reported through the normal channels through the Town Clerk.

#### **Eva Hartley, Newbiggin Town Council**

When the new funding for pothole repair was made available, a number of Newbiggin Town Councillors undertook a survey of potholes of which there were many in their own ward and subsequently put requests forward for repair.

The report issued in the agenda included only 7 requests for the whole of Ashington and Blyth LAC area and she asked the reason for so few applications as opposed to 27 requests from Morpeth and 24 from Tynedale. Other areas had received between £38,000 and £49,000 worth of funding for repairs yet, because of the small number of applications submitted, only £3,000 had been received. Since the roads were in as poor repair as other LAC areas, was there a reason why County Councillors were not submitting more applications for this funding?

It was advised that due to funding, potholes were being cleaned, re-surfaced and repaired as best as they could.

#### **Councillor A Wallace, East Bedlington Parish Council**

A written question had been received from Councillor Wallace in relation to the recent fire at St Bede's School, Bedlington. Daljit Lally, Chief Executive replied that a written response would be provided. The school was an Academy and not under Local Authority control. She would liaise with the Academy and a response would be provided.

#### **Peter Henderson**

Resources should be spent on building in Blyth, Choppington and Ashington and in places which required generation.

### **46. PETITIONS**

This item was to:

#### **a) Receive any new petitions:**

**Regeneration of Ashington Town Centre** - an on-line petition had been received and a report was to be considered at the January meeting.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

**b) Consider reports on petitions previously received** - there were no reports to consider.

**c) To consider updates on petitions previously considered** - there were none to consider.

#### **47. 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:

- An update was requested on trees and branches covering lamp posts in Ashington which seemed to have stagnated
- The area around Homezone in Cowpen Quay, Blyth needed to be examined
- Can the 30 mph sign along Wingate Way, Ashington be moved further back to the Rugby Club as a matter of urgency

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

#### **DISCUSSION ITEMS - CORPORATE**

#### **48. WINTER SERVICES PREPAREDNESS AND RESILIENCE**

Members received an overall update of the pre-season preparations ahead of the forthcoming winter services period. (Report attached to the signed minutes as Appendix B).

Councillor Sanderson reported that the service was aiming to be more efficient by doing the same job previously but in a better way. A careful analysis had been carried out of routes and population and it was not intended to change the system or the gritting programme.

The following matters were raised/discussed:

- The turnaround from emptying and re-loading wagons and the time taken to re-fill
- Refreshing and replenishing of grit bins in South East Northumberland

The Highways Delivery Area Manager advised that all routes were planned. Gritters would load up and do one route which took approximately 2 ½ hours. He reassured Members that the grit bins were restored and replenished and anything

not fit for purpose was removed. If there were any problems these should be reported and entered on to the LAGAN system.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

#### **49. LOCAL POTHOLE FUND UPDATE**

The report provided an overall progress update on the Local Pothole Fund.

Councillor Glen Sanderson, Environment and Local Services Cabinet Member referred to the pilot scheme when Members were asked to suggest locations of permanent repair of repeated potholes. (Report attached as Appendix C of the signed minutes).

New tranches would be commencing soon and completed as soon as possible. He encouraged Members to put forward schemes in their area.

The following matters were raised/discussed:

- Different parts of Northumberland should be taken into consideration, eg, urban areas which should be repaired as soon as possible
- A policy should be set up to fix smaller potholes quicker to save money
- Highways Officers and Members should work together to deal with issues and be more proactive
- The roads just out of Blyth town centre were in a dreadful state
- Can the road in Cambois (where the old power station was sited) near the roundabout be repaired

Councillor Sanderson advised that certain sized potholes were being repeatedly filled.

The Highway Delivery Area Manager advised that he would be more than happy to come out and explain, criteria, frequency and inspections.

**RESOLVED** That the report be noted.

#### **DISCUSSION ITEMS - LOCAL**

##### **50. BLYTH BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID)**

Members received a presentation and briefing regarding Business Improvement Districts (BID) and background regarding the development of the Blyth BID proposal.

Chris Kolek, Blyth BID Project Manager explained the reasons for developing a BID and the potential benefits for town centres. Across the country towns and

cities were undergoing major changes with declining footfall from competition from out of town retail parks.

The potential benefits of a BID included, business leadership, new investment, action oriented, economies of scale, adding value and influence.

In Blyth a pre-BID Steering Group had been formed which provided advice and assistance which involved clear project planning. The process takes several months and involved decisions about which areas of Blyth should be identified.

There were five steps to developing a BID:-

- Feasibility
- Planning
- Compliance
- Campaign
- Establish

Consultation on the BID would be starting shortly with meetings with businesses taking place after Christmas. It was hoped to establish a BID in Blyth by October next year.

Compliance was an on-going process which involved the preparation of number of documents in liaison with the Local Authority. This included the preparation of a baselines services statement with the county council and other partners as the BID should only propose delivering additional services to those that existed already. Prior to a ballot of eligible businesses, a campaign would be carried out from approximately April next year aimed at maximising business interest and participation in the BID ballot which was currently planned for June / July 2018.

Rob Strettle, Senior Economic Policy Officer, Northumberland County Council advised Members that the report was the first of two reports to the Committee summarising the BID proposals which were in the early stages, as such this meeting was an opportunity to comment prior to detailed proposals being finalised. Members would have a further opportunity to comment on the proposals prior to NCC considering the BID proposals next year. He thanked Chris Kolek, (BID Project Manager) Lesley Davie, and Steven Reay (local business owners who were members of the Blyth pre BID Steering Group) for attending the meeting to ensure members of the committee were able to comment at this stage..

Following the presentation, the following questions/comments were raised:-

- The perception of Blyth due to the number of empty shops in Blyth and the rubbish in the area. The cleansing of streets had declined. If the area was clean and tidy, it would encourage businesses
- Issues of security and safety in the town and the need to address them to encourage trade
- The persistent presence of a traffic warden which was not needed
- Controversy surrounding the Hexham BID

- A lot could be learned by the BID process and be beneficial for future BIDS
- Would smaller business be expected to pay the same rent as larger businesses?
- Future proofing - how will this benefit Blyth?

Mr Kolek confirmed that

- the charge was variable so would be less for smaller companies than large ones. This was governed by national guidelines, and charging was based on an agreed percentage of a company's rateable value which must be proposed in the BID Business Plan.
- Importantly the Blyth BID must reflect the issues and most appropriate arrangements for the town but the BID would be developed learning from practice elsewhere as there were now over 280 BID nationally.
- The development of the BID would consider the issues raised by businesses and how a BID could assist in addressing them which from discussions so far are similar to those raised by the committee such as cleanliness and security issues.

**RESOLVED** that:-

- 1) The report and presentation be noted
- 2) A further detailed report summarising the BID proposals be brought back to a future Ashington and Blyth Local Area Council.

## **51. UPDATE ON ASHINGTON/BLYTH/TYNE LINE**

A presentation was given by Stuart McNaughton, Strategic Transport Policy Manager.

Mr McNaughton explained the scope of the proposed scheme, the hourly peak service, the 7 new stations and the aspiration for a 30 minute journey time which would complement freight operators. The plan showed the strategic context and the connectivity which would hopefully ease traffic congestion. The key findings of GRIP 2 confirmed that the scheme was technically feasible and the completion of GRIP 3 was necessary in order to deliver requirements around costs and timescales. A cost challenge exercise with Network Rail would confirm the key drivers of the project, review the scheme of works and identify opportunities for efficiencies. Value engineering opportunities included, level crossing, signalling, electric power and plant and track. High level risks would need to be taken into account such as freight, ground conditions due to previous mining, path and platform capacity and level crossing.

The target was 4 months to complete value engineering and additional tasks which had been identified. GRIP 3 would commence in Spring 2018.

Following the presentation, the following comments were made:-

- The difference the railway would make to people's lives in Ashington and Blyth



- Officers were thanked and congratulated for their hard work

**52. HIGHWAYS SAFETY AT BROADWAY CIRCLE ROUNDABOUT**

Councillor Susan Davey referred to the road safety at and on the Broadway Circle Roundabout. Michael Carle, Highways Delivery Area Manager advised that he had spoken to Neil Snowdon, Principal Programme Officer (Highways Improvement). A meeting would be arranged and the matter taken forward.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

**ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

**53. ASHINGTON & BLYTH LOCAL AREA COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME**

A list of agreed items for future Local Area Council meetings was circulated.

**54. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 13 December 2017 at the Josephine Butler Academy, Ashington.

The meeting ended at 7.35 pm

**CHAIR**.....

**DATE**.....