

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

ASHINGTON & BLYTH LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **Ashington & Blyth Local Area Council** held in Northumberland YMCA, North View, Ashington, NE63 9XQ on Wednesday, 12 September 2018 at 5:30 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor G Webb in the Chair for items 1 - 4 and 7 - 16
Councillor Gallacher in the Chair for items 4 - 6

MEMBERS

E Cartie	K Parry
G Davey	M Purvis
S Davey	J Reid
J J Gobin	E Simpson
L Grimshaw	T S Wilson

OFFICERS

H Bowers	Democratic Services Officer
M Carle	Highways Delivery Area Manager
F Churchill	Interim Head of Planning
U Filby	Solicitor, Regulation
G Horsman	Senior Planning Officer
D Lally	Chief Executive
A Lawson	Community Regeneration Officer
J Murphy	Principal Planning Officer
P Soderquest	Head of Housing and Public
Neil Snowdon	Protection
R Wealleans	Principal Programme Officer
	Neighbourhood Services Area
	Manager

ALSO PRESENT

C Kolek, Blyth Business Improvement District (BID) Project Manager
Inspector T Oakley, Neighbourhood Inspector, (Blyth and Cramlington area),
Northumbria Police
Inspector K Waring, Neighbourhood Inspector, (Ashington area), Northumbria
Police

12 members of the public

Chair's initials

Ashington & Blyth Local Area Council - 12 September 2018

(Councillor Webb in the Chair)

28. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lang, Nisbet and Rickerby.

29. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Ashington & Blyth Local Area Council held on Wednesday, 11 July 2018, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

(Councillor Gallacher in the Chair)

30. DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The report explained how the Local Area Council was asked to decide the planning applications attached to the agenda using the powers delegated to it. (Report enclosed with official minutes as Appendix A).

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

31. **18/01958/FUL - Heritage Lottery Funded refurbishment. Area A: Fourth Avenue entrance - new entrance feature, improvements to access and signage, reconfiguration and laying of existing block pavers, resurfacing of footpaths and introduction of 1.2 m high bow top metal fence and 2 x double gates. Area B: Growing zone & full circle development - restore existing redundant depot buildings behind lodge house into a multi-purpose education and training room and community garden development, with kitchen, toilets, a workshop, office, boot room and associated landscape and external works of polytunnel, greenhouses, shade tunnel and raised planters. Area C: Tennis court fence realignment and new fenced multi-use games area with associated landscaping and seating area.** (Report attached as Appendix B).

Geoff Horsman, Senior Planning Officer firstly referred Members to the plans on screen and explained the layout of the application site and the proposal. The application concerned works that required planning permission and related to three areas of the park in the submitted plans as areas A, B and C.

The following updates were reported:-

- 1) Confirmation had been received from Sport England, the Conservation Team and Fire and Rescue Service that there were no objections.

- 2) No objections from Highways Services subject to conditions regarding a Construction Method Statement and cycle parking which were both included in the report.
- 3) No objections from Ecology subject to conditions being added in relation to landscaping, the protection of bats and nesting birds.
- 4) No comments had been received from Northumbrian Water

Since the report had been published minor amendments had been made to the following conditions:-

- 1) Condition 2 in relation to the number of trees.
- 2) Condition 5 relating to landscaping to reflect the comments from the Ecologist.
- 3) Condition 6 relating to cycle parking should include Area C as well as Area B.

The following additional conditions were also to be added on the advice of the consultees:-

- 5) *No development shall commence in an area until full detail of soft landscape works in that area have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This shall comprise only the planting of locally native trees, shrubs, grasses and/or wildflowers of local provenance. The approved works shall be implemented in full within the first planning season following the commencement of development in that area. Any soft landscaping removed, dying or becoming seriously damaged, defective or diseased within 5 years of planting shall be replaced within the next planting season with soft landscaping of a similar size and species to that which it is replacing.*

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and biodiversity in accordance with Policies GP13 and GP32 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

- 6) *The development hereby permitted in Areas B and C shall not be occupied unless and until cycle parking in respect of that area has been provided in full accordance with details submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter such cycle parking shall remain in place at all times.*

Reason: In the interests of sustainable travel choices in accordance with Policy T3 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

- 8) *No development is to take place unless in full accordance with the recommendations of 'Protected Species Risk Assessment, Workshops,*

Hirst Park, Ashington', by Northumberland County Council, dated January 2018 including:

- a) *Prior to the commencement of works on the buildings a pre-commencement check shall be undertaken by the project ecologist.*
- b) *Roof coverings, windows, doors and anti-vandal boards shall be stripped carefully by hand.*
- c) *Building demolition will be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season (March to August inclusive) unless a checking survey by a suitability experienced ornithologist confirms the absence of active nests.*
- d) *In the event that bats are discovered during the works then work will stop immediately and the project ecologist will be informed.*
- e) *All contractors working on the site are to be briefed on this via a toolbox talk to be delivered by the project ecologist before work begins.*
- f) *The new building will include a 1WQ Schwegler Summer & Winter Bat Roost will be affixed to a west facing wall. 2 no. Schwegler Waller Nest cups will be affixed to an east facing wall with a suitable cover over. This is to be agreed with the project ecologist.*
- g) *No fewer than 2 tree mounted bat boxes and 2 tree mounted bird boxes shall be erected prior to the commencement of development in agreement with the project ecologist. Bat boxes shall be mounted at a height of no less than 4m.*
- h) *Any water tanks present in any roof space will be covered to prevent debris and bats from falling in.*
- i) *Timbers will be treated only with 'bat friendly' products, permethrin or cypermethrin as insecticides for example. Further information is available if the contractor requires it.*
- j) *External lighting will be low level and low lux. Security lighting shall be set on a short timer, directed away from bat roost access points, flight paths and shall be motion sensitive only to larger objects.*
- k) *A re-survey of the site and buildings for bats in the event that development does not commence within 2 years of the date of the emergence surveys (i.e. on or before 7 January 2020. If the mitigation requires significant amendment following a re-survey this shall be reported to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.).*

Reason: To maintain the favourable conservation status of protected species in accordance with the NPPF.

Members were advised that all the key issues were outlined in the report.

In terms of the principle of the development, this was considered acceptable. Hirst Park had been identified as a strategically important park and open space in accordance with REC1 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

The development accorded with the Transport, Drainage and Flood Risk policies, therefore it was recommended that approval should be granted subject to the conditions in the report, the varied conditions and the updated conditions.

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

- Access would remain from the car park. The gates would be kept open and gated at appropriate times to allow access with better demarcation on hard surfacing
- The management of parking issues were beyond the scope of planning however, access would be retained for vehicles
- The proposal was to retain established trees and work to be carried out on trees across the park
- Concerns about trees blocking the light would be taken back to colleagues

Councillor Davey then moved Officer recommendation to grant the application which was seconded by Councillor Webb.

On being put to the vote, the motion to grant the application was unanimously agreed.

It was therefore:-

RESOLVED that the application be GRANTED permission subject to the conditions and reasons as set out in the report, the varied conditions and the updated conditions.

(Councillor Purvis joined the meeting, after arriving at 5.45pm during consideration of the application and did not participate in any of the debate or voting).

32. PLANNING APPEALS UPDATE

The report was for members' information to report the progress of planning appeals.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

OTHER LOCAL AREA COUNCIL BUSINESS

Development control business concluded at 5.55 pm. Councillor Webb returned to the Chair and other local area business commenced at 6.05 pm.

33. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No questions were raised from members of the public.

34. PETITIONS

(a) **Receive any new petitions:** No petitions were received.

(b) **Consider reports on petitions previously received:**

(i) **Nuisance by seagulls in Blyth**

Mrs Weir, lead petitioner was in attendance and referred to mess left by gulls and to the screeching from first light. During the hot weather, doors and windows had to be kept closed because of the noise. She stated that there were no other birds in the area due to the gulls predating.

Mrs Weir commented that the report was relevant to the 'Living' and 'Enjoying' priorities included in the NCC Corporate Plan 2018-2021 and stated that residents were having to live with mess, chicken bones and skeletons from smaller birds. The noise emanating from the screeching gulls down the chimney was unbearable. Only last year 2 seagull chicks had fallen off the roof into the garden which had been very upsetting. One chick had fallen into the telephone wires where the adults had not been to reach. She had contacted the RSPB but after being put on hold several times were eventually told that they were not interested.

Philip Soderquest, Head of Housing and Public Protection advised of similar problems within Northumberland in many seaside towns.

A number of options had been explored when considering the request set out within the petition.

The removal of nests and culling would have to be carried out under a licence which would only be granted under exceptional circumstances. It was unlikely that Blyth would be regarded as exceptional. It was also important to note that any culling of birds was likely to be subject to bad publicity.

In relation to target hardening, it would be likely that the approach would only displace the problem to another nearby location and would not remove or reduce the number of gulls in Blyth. Whilst this may be the case, the responsibility for target hardening would be a matter for individual owners who could carry out works should they wish to do so.

The provision of signage to discourage feeding of the birds and improved waste disposal facilities were, based upon recent similar concerns in Berwick and associated investigations, considered to be the most appropriate solution. It was proposed that Parish and Town councils could be approached to fund signage to remind residents and visitors not to feed the birds which would spread the cost and that work could similarly be done to try and improve waste disposal facilities to prevent the birds gaining

access to food.

This would be supported by campaigns and officers also working with the Town Council and Neighbourhood Services.

Mr Soderquest advised that the Council was trying to find a long term solution and the culling of the gulls was not a long term solution.

Discussion took place regarding problems countywide and members were informed of 2 experiments which had taken place in Newbiggin and Amble where bins were fitted with rubber flaps.

Mr Soderquest advised that officers would continue to work with Mr & Mrs Weir and other town councils.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

(ii) Safety improvements to Plessey Road/Post Office area

Wendy Hogg, lead petitioner was in attendance and stated that she had lived in the area for 45 years and had seen first hand the impact of the traffic and the consequences on the community.

Many properties did not have off street parking which many drivers did not take into consideration.

Mrs Hogg stated that residents' primary concerns was the speed at which many cars travelled along the busy route, with wing mirrors flying by daily and referred to a recent accident where police and ambulance had been in attendance.

Speed calming measures were required that would not impact on businesses with signs for speed to be reduced to 20 mph with penalties for those who did not comply.

Neil Snowdon, Principal Programme Officer responded and advised that all traffic calming measures would be taken into account including the 20 mph.

Some discussion took place regarding the speed problems and Members requested to be kept up to date.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

- c) **Receive any updates on petitions for which a report was previously considered:** No updates were received.

35. LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES

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.

Ray Wealleans, Neighbourhood Services Area Manager, informed Members of the reasons behind the investment in 2 new refuse rounds due to the expansion in housing stock and of the current replacement programme for the refuse vehicles.

There had been a delay in grass cutting following the dry weather.

Weed spraying was on-going. The overall approach had worked well but there were some issues which officers were aware of. Councillors would be informed of the planned routes and if there were any problems to let officers know.

A trial would be rolled out on South Beach with larger bins regarding the problems with seagulls.

Members raised the following issues:

- (i) Electric refuse vehicles
- (ii) Exhaust fumes coming from refuse vehicles
- (iii) Communal bins
- (iv) Overgrown footpaths in Cambois
- (v) Bins being left out in Unity Terrace, Cambois
- (vi) The use of blue dye for weed spraying
- (vii) Services being redirected during less busy periods
- (viii) Hedges being cut back especially to cycle routes
- (ix) The pelican crossing at the junction on the A197/A1068 (Ellington Road Ends)
- (x) What was happening with the Impact Assessment at Ellington Road Ends?

RESOLVED that the information be noted and reported to the relevant officer.

DISCUSSION ITEMS - CORPORATE

36. ANNUAL POLICING UPDATE

Inspectors Trevor Oakley and Kevin Waring were in attendance.

Inspector Oakley advised Members that he served the Blyth, Seaton Delaval and Holywell areas. There were 12 Neighbourhood Officers and 5 Community Support Officers.

The Neighbourhood Team tried to resolve community issues and safeguard vulnerable people in relation to long term antisocial behaviour issues, dealing with different agencies and protecting the most vulnerable.

Inspector Waring had worked in the Ashington area for the last 5 months and as part of the Neighbourhood Team for 1 month. He had 16 years police experience. He had discovered a good community spirit and passion and desire for the community. He referred to a recent PACT meeting which had been very motivational.

There had been a major reduction in antisocial behaviour in Ashington with a reduction of 9% from last year.

A significant amount of crime prevention had been carried out and an Engagement Event had been held in Hirst Park which had been supported by Councillors and Coast Radio.

There had been a significant increase in online harassment, however, burglaries had decreased.

Members comments included:-

- Contact details for Neighbourhood Officers
- Safe places for people
- Speeding and parking of cars at night time
- Engagement with the youth
- A Member commended the work over the last few years
- Better communication with County Councillors
- Issues with 101

The Chair thanked the officers for their presentation.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

DISCUSSION ITEMS - LOCAL

37. BLYTH BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Members received a presentation and briefing regarding Business Improvement Districts (BID) and background regarding the development of the Blyth BID proposal. (Report attached to the signed minutes as **Appendix F**).

Chris Kolek, Blyth BID Project Manager explained the background of the Blyth BID proposals as described in the report and explained the four key objectives of the programme as outlined in the presentation (presentation attached to the signed minutes).

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

- Previous concerns raised about the Hexham and Morpeth BIDs
- What if businesses did not want to join the programme?
- Clarification of the boundaries on the map
- Would larger businesses have more votes than smaller businesses?
- Would doctors and/or owners of old people's homes be entitled to vote in the referendum as they paid business rates ?
- Is it going to cost the Council to vote?

Mr Kolek confirmed that:

- BIDs were different in each area. Previous mistakes could be learnt from
- The programme was a democratic process, there would be some businesses who would vote in favour and those against
- The BID would have to pass two tests:
 - A majority of all eligible businesses who vote (one vote per business premises)
 - A majority by percentage of rateable value of all eligible businesses voting
- The majority would have to be more than half. If that happened, those that voted in favour, would have more than half aggregated rateable value
- The Authority had to make a decision whether to vote and would be a Cabinet decision

RESOLVED that:-

The report and presentation be noted

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

38. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PLACE

The Green Dog Walkers Scheme and Dog Fouling Enforcement

Members were informed that the report provided an update on the progress of the Green Dog Walker Scheme and also on dog control enforcement in 2017/18.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

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

Members Local Improvement Schemes - Progress Report

Members received a progress report on the Local Improvement Schemes for the Ashington and Blyth area. (Attached as Appendix H).

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

40. LOCAL AREA COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME

Members received the latest version of agreed items for future Local Area Council meetings (attached to the official minutes as Appendix I).

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted.

41. FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday, 10 October at 5:30 pm. Venue to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 7.40 pm

CHAIR.....

DATE.....

Ch.'s Initials.....