

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, 14 November 2018 at 6:00 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor G Webb (in the Chair)

MEMBERS

G Davey	L Grimshaw
S Davey	J Lang
B Gallacher	T S Wilson

OFFICERS

J Brown	Consultant in Public Health
M Carle	Highways Delivery Area Manager
D Dodds	Operations Manager, Self Directed Support, Prevention and Carers
D Lally	Chief Executive
J Marley	Locality Co-ordinator Team Manager
K Norris	Democratic Services Officer
R Strettle	Principal Policy Officer
F Wardlow	Locality Co-ordinator for Blyth and Ashington
R Wealleans	Neighbourhood Services Area Manager

ALSO PRESENT

5 members of the public

42. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Campbell, Cartie, Gobin, Nisbet, Parry, Purvis, Rickerby and Simpson.

43. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Ashington & Blyth Local Area Council held on Wednesday, 12 September 2018, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

44. URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair referred to planning application 17/04659/VARYCO - Variation of Condition 1 pursuant to planning permission 16/02735/FUL in order to extend the time frame for seawall works which had been granted subject to a condition that members be updated through a report to committee, after each key date, so that they could monitor the progress made. To date no information had been received and he advised that planning officers would be requested to provide that at the next meeting. The Planning Vice Chair pointed out that negotiations could be at a delicate stage of legality and, as such, he would ask that information be sent to members direct.

RESOLVED that planning officers be requested to send information regarding planning application 17/04659/VARYCO - Variation of Condition 1 pursuant to planning permission 16/02735/FUL to members of the committee.

45. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No questions were asked by members of the public.

46. PETITIONS

- (a) **Receive any new petitions:** No petitions were received.
- (b) **Consider reports on petitions previously received:** There were not reports to consider.
- (c) **Receive any updates on petitions for which a report was previously considered:** No updates were received.

47. LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES

This item was to allow 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, referred to the changes in refuse services across the county which had commenced two days ago. This was going well with only a couple of minor issues having been reported.

Grass cutting was finished and weeds were being attended.

The winter programme was in place.

A member referred to his meeting with Peter Bowman, Neighbourhood Services Senior Team Leader, regarding a review of the refuse route around Ashington and asked that a follow up be provided.

RESOLVED that the information be noted and Councillor Gallacher be provided with an update about a review of the refuse route around Ashington.

DISCUSSION ITEMS - CORPORATE

48. NORTHUMBERLAND ECONOMIC STRATEGY

Rob Strettle, Principal Policy Officer, was in attendance to talk about the Economic Strategy for Northumberland which was part of the County Council's strategic policy framework and was last published in 2015 for a 5 year period. It set out a strategic economic framework regarding the county's economic needs and priorities supporting case making and bids for funding. The Strategy guided the work of the Council, its development company and other partners in delivering economic growth.

There had been many changes over the last few years and the current Economic Strategy was currently being refreshed as the new North of Tyne Combined Authority developed, the North East Strategic Economic Plan was being revised and new opportunities, such as the Borderlands Growth Deal, were sought. The refresh also took into account macro economic policy changes such as the new national Industrial Strategy and the potential impact of Brexit.

Members had been briefed in the summer about the refresh and the Council was currently engaging stakeholders in the process. Mr Strettle provided a presentation to guide members through the new Strategy and explain how it would take the county forward in terms of delivery. (A copy of the presentation is filed with the official minutes of the meeting and uploaded to the Council's website.)

Key areas covered were:

- The Refresh Process;
- Economic Trends for Northumberland;
- Policy and Funding Opportunities;
- Economic Assets - what could be done to deliver growth;
- Focus of the new strategy - inclusive, industrial growth across Northumberland;
- Strategy Priorities;
- Delivery and Next Steps.

During the presentation it was noted that this part of Northumberland had a series of industrial assets with, for example, Akzo Nobel having first class facilities as an advanced manufacturing factory on one of the regions Enterprise Zones, Ashwood Business Park. Other examples included businesses in the offshore energy, renewables and subsea sector based in Blyth which were trading internationally. Long term support was needed to deliver further economic growth building on the area's strengths. In work done so far six priorities had been listed (as detailed in the presentation). The new Strategy would be launched next year with a delivery plan to

follow. Key opportunities in 2019 included the new North of Tyne Combined Authority, the proposed Borderlands Growth Deal and the Future High Streets Fund. The Council was supporting business case development and working with partners going forward.

The presentation included a link to the Council's External Funding Bulletin and members were encouraged to promote this service to partners. Details had also been passed to Democratic Services for inclusion on the Council's website, Facebook page etc.

Comments/Questions from Members:

- Concern was raised that media reports suggested that national unemployment figures had risen by 4%. 17% of Northumberland's workforce were employed in tourism so why had car parking charges been introduced to main areas for tourists? What was the logic behind it?
- Connectivity had been mentioned regarding IT but it was equally important to maintain roads and infrastructure. Akzo Nobel had favoured the area because of its close proximity to the spine road (A189).
- Town centre shopping was important but towns in general must be looked at. There had been discussions about what could be done in Ashington and, although the need for funding was acknowledged, timescales were vital due to Brexit.
- Concerns were raised as to what would happen after Brexit as there were a number of foreign owned companies in the region. In response the Principal Policy Officer stated that the North East Brexit Group had reported earlier in the year about risks to the regional economy, including key sectors in Northumberland, and that had influenced the Council's approach. Most of the bigger businesses, in terms of manufacturing, had been here for 20 to 30 years and the Council's development company maintained a close relationship with them to provide support. It was important to continue that approach and work with businesses to help them to be resilient during the Brexit process.
- The importance of the Northumberland to Newcastle Line (Ashington/Blyth/Tyne rail link) was highlighted. In response the Principal Policy Officer said an update had been arranged for the new Ashington Town Forum which would meet for the first time in December.

The Chair thanked Mr Strettle for his presentation and it was

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

49. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Empowering Communities Project

Dr Jim Brown, Consultant in Public Health, was in attendance on behalf of Liz Morgan, Director of Public Health, to provide a presentation about the Empowering Communities Project (copy of report and presentation enclosed with the official minutes as Appendix A).

Key details of the presentation included:

- The need for a cultural shift in improving health and wellbeing; moving away from single issue, individual lifestyle change; focusing on what made people well and wellbeing; building on the positives; working more with communities.
- Drivers for change (National and Local).
- Community centred approaches: strengthening communities; volunteer and peer roles; collaborations and partnerships; access to community resources.
- The benefits and risks.
- An overview of the Empowering Communities project (2 ½ years): Five Locality Co-ordinators funded out of the Public Health grants accumulated underspend and employed by Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, one for each Local Council area, to be embedded in communities within the voluntary and community sector/not for profit host organisations;
- Objectives of the Empowering Communities Project - the initial role of co-ordinators, including
 - their role in the first six months
 - their role from six months onwards
 - the role of host organisations
 - Locality Co-ordinator recruitment
- The request to the Local Area Councils to help Locality Co-ordinators to identify local communities' assets;
- Working with the Locality Co-ordinator and communities to identify needs, build on aspirations and link assets to strengthen individuals and local communities.

Fiona Wardlaw, Locality Co-ordinator for Blyth and Ashington, Debra Dodds, Operations Manager, Self Directed Support, Prevention and Carers and Julia Marley, Team Manager were also in attendance to introduce themselves to members and give a brief overview of their role.

A member said he had been lucky enough to work with the third sector for a number of years and had been involved in a community provision survey with the health services which had produced a directory of services. However, at that time he felt there had been a missing link regarding the sharing of information and he hoped that would be addressed. Dr Brown acknowledged the comments made and confirmed there would be collaborative working between partners in the future.

Other issues raised were:

Concerns about roles and how the sector was tiered up to be population driven;
Links with Parish and Town Councils;
Reduction in funding from this Administration to the Voluntary Sector;
Loneliness;
Links with Planning.

The Chair thanked Dr Brown for his presentation

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

50. COMMUNITY CLOTHING SCHEME

Members received information about the community clothing scheme in Northumberland (leaflet attached to the official minutes as Appendix B).

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

51. MEMBERS' LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES 2018/19

Members received an update report on Members' Local Improvement Schemes, as of 1 November 2018 (attached to the official minutes as Appendix C).

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

52. LOCAL AREA COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME

Members received the Local Area Council's work programme (attached to the official minutes as Appendix D).

53. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday, 12 December 2018 - time and venue to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 6.55 pm

Chair _____

Date _____