

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

ASHINGTON & BLYTH LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **Ashington & Blyth Local Area Council** held at YMCA Ashington, North View, Ashington, NE63 9XQ on Wednesday, 13 February 2019 at 5:30pm.

PRESENT

Councillor G Webb
(Chair, in the chair for items 74 - 78 and 82 - 84)

Councillor B Gallacher
(Planning Vice-Chair, in the chair for items 79 - 81)

MEMBERS

E Cartie
G Davey
S Davey
L Grimshaw
K Nisbet

K Parry
M Purvis
J Reid
T Wilson

OFFICERS

M Bird
M Bulman
R Laughton
J Murphy
J Sanderson

N Snowdon

Senior Democratic Services Officer
Lawyer
Planning Officer
Principal Planning Officer
Senior Planning Manager (Planning Policy)
Principal Programme Officer
(Highways Improvement)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Public: 3

74. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Campbell, Gobin, Lang, Rickerby and Simpson.

75. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Ashington & Blyth Local Area Council held on Wednesday, 16 January 2019, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

At this point in the meeting the Chair referred to minute 68's reference to the left light being out on a Belisha Beacon on Newsham Road in Blyth. This had still not been fixed, so Democratic Services would follow it up.

A member also referred to reference in minute 69, page 9 regarding Councillor Oliver saying that the decisions about increasing Council Tax and cutting Council Tax support were not made lightly but savings had to be made; she had also asked at the meeting for a breakdown of information about who had responded to the consultation undertaken about the budget. Democratic Services would also follow this up.

76. DISCLOSURES OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Cartie declared an interest in relation to application 18/03900/FUL as she was part of the Friends of Ridley Park group who had submitted the application, so did not participate in discussion about the item or vote on the motion.

77. COUNCILLOR BERNARD PIDCOCK

Everybody at the meeting observed a minute's silence in memory of Councillor Bernard Pidcock, who had recently passed away.

78. URGENT BUSINESS

With the agreement of the Chair this item was brought forward on the agenda; Councillor Wilson asked for a progress update regarding the planning application passed in 2018 for the Early Years Learning Centre in Ashington. He had been seeking clarification about why the traffic management arrangements were not going ahead as he understood that they had been included in the agreement; however he since had been advised that his Members' Local Improvement Scheme funding would need to pay for the scheme.

RESOLVED that Democratic Services follow this issue up and a response sent to Councillor 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.)

79. DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The report (enclosed with the official minutes as Appendix A) 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.

80. 18/03900/FUL

**Erection of one new decorative steel archway and four new decorative steel columns in Ridley Park, Blyth
Ridley Park, Park Road, Blyth, Northumberland**

Richard Laughton, Planning Officer, introduced the application with a slides presentation.

In the absence of any public speakers registering, in response to a question members were advised that the presentation included pictures from local schoolchildren about their ideas for the site, which were not actually included in the design.

Councillor Reid moved that the application be approved in line with the officer recommendation and conditions, which was seconded by Councillor Parry.

Upon being put to the vote, the motion was carried unanimously FOR: 10, AGAINST: 0, as Councillor Cartie was not entitled to vote and did not participate. It was thus:

RESOLVED that the application be GRANTED subject to the conditions in the report.

81. PLANNING APPEALS UPDATE

Members received information on the progress of planning appeals. (Report enclosed with the official minutes as Appendix B.)

In response to a question about whether a number of appeals withdrawn had been through the pre-planning process, members were advised that it was up to the appellant whether they withdrew their appeal. This could at times be a result of further issues arising at the appeal stage. Issues could also have arisen at the pre-application stage.

It was also clarified that one report about all appeals in Northumberland went each month to all the Local Area Councils rather than the applications being split into a report per area, which provided members with more information.

The planning vice-chair added that he had requested that in future all the planning vice-chairs received a regular list of all the officer delegated decisions being made.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(Councillor Webb then chaired the remainder of the meeting.)

OTHER LOCAL AREA COUNCIL BUSINESS

82. REPORT OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PLACE

Local Transport Plan Programme 2019/20

The report set out the detail of the draft Local Transport Plan (LTP) programme for 2019-20 for consideration and comment by the Local Area Council prior to final approval of the programme. (Report enclosed with the official minutes at Appendix C.)

Members discussed the item and made the following key points:

- a member considered that as the most used roads were in south east Northumberland, the area wasn't getting its fair share of available funding
- the budget for the LTP had remained static since local government reorganisation; it did not rise in line with any increase such as inflation. A backlog had been created as all the work had not been completed in the previous year, and there was not enough money available to do what was required for all of Northumberland's roads. The Council should raise this with the government; Wiltshire Council had done so
- a member expressed concern about the highway maintenance budget including requirements for the A189, which impacted on Blyth, Bedlington and Ashington. It was requested for figures to be provided about the amount spent on both the A189 and internal routes through towns
- cycle routes could be better signposted; currently this resulted in cyclists using main roads and being put at risk
- it would be helpful if a review of traffic management costs could be undertaken, as the cost for sealing off areas for work could double the cost of small projects
- the Homezone area in the Cowpen Quay area of Croft electoral division needed attention. Roads in Durban Street, Disraeli Street, Wright Street, Union Street and Maddison Street received road repairs but many returned to a poor condition within weeks
- the budget was unrealistic as roads would be impacted from the number of new houses, increasing levels of traffic, and furthermore if new jobs and factories located nearby
- concerns were expressed that there was a lack of give way signs in Croft electoral division, leading to many near misses. Support was expressed for the removal of the cement ball bollards, but the positioning of trees within the road layouts also needed to be looked at; the homezone layout had not met its intended purpose
- less than £1m of over £18m available had been allocated for the Ashington/Blyth area. No funding from the surface dressing plan allocation was being spent in the Ashington/Blyth area.

Clarification was also provided from officers about:

- both the integrated scheme and maintenance scheme funding were allocated through a scoring system
- Northumberland had 5200km of roads; it would take 60 years of funding to bring them all up to the same level
- concerns expressed about Cowpen Quay areas would be raised with the Principal Programme Officer (Highways Maintenance), as would concerns about the condition of the road in Monkseaton Terrace in Ashington; Mr Rumney would be asked to call the local member

- the Principal Programme Officer look into why the double yellow lines due to be put in at Park School to the rear of St Andrew's Church in Ashington.

RESOLVED that members' comments on the plan be considered in the finalisation of the programme for the LTP 2019/20, and members' queries be followed up.

83. Northumberland Local Plan - Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19)

Members received a presentation on the Northumberland Local Plan, which provided information on the progress to date on the Local Plan and details on the Publication Draft Local Plan. The presentation also covered the next steps in the Local Plan process as well as providing advice on how to submit formal representations on the Publication Draft Plan. Details were also provided about site specific proposals for Blyth, Ashington, Bedlington and Bedlington Station, Newbiggin, Bothal and Cambois. Details were also provided about other forthcoming consultation events in the Ashington/Blyth Local Area Council area. (Copy of presentation attached to the official minutes of the meeting.)

Discussion followed during of which members' key points were:

- it was requested that all members in south east Northumberland receive an update about any land identified to be used for council housing prior to any formal consultation beginning
- concern was expressed about the change of name of the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line to the Northumberland Line; there should have been the opportunity for public involvement in this decision
- officers had worked extremely hard on the Local Plan; it was requested that the cost of the whole process from when the previous Core Strategy version had been withdrawn in July 2017 to the end of the current consultation be provided
- the emerging Local Plan should recognise main destinations in the county; road signs should reflect destinations in the county as the main towns. For example, the signage at the new junction at the A1 for the north Morpeth bypass listed Morpeth and Ashington and then Morpeth and Newbiggin at the next junction, whereas the ultimate destination on that route was Blyth. Blyth was the largest town in Northumberland and a growing port, so should be signposted from the A1, particularly on the southbound direction from Scotland. A member expressed concern that there was more road signage for Gilsland than the town of Blyth, and another member referred to how away football fans travelled long distances to Blyth Spartans matches yet there was little signage directing them there
- disappointment was expressed that no Ashington or Blyth local members had been advised about or invited to meet and discuss the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne / Northumberland Line with the Secretary of State for Transport when he recently visited. Members expressed concern that they were not being consulted on a route that went directly through this Local Area Council's area.

In response to members' questions the following information was clarified:

- the 17,700 new houses identified as required in the emerging plan was the minimum figure needed
- if an application for housing in West Hartford was received, members were advised that under the provisions in the emerging plan the site in question

would still be protected as employment land. The applicant would have to demonstrate that the land was not required for employment purposes if the application was refused it and went to appeal

- the emerging plan included a policy for supporting military establishments, which assisted with national defence infrastructure
- 1000 council houses were planned for the county. A joint exercise was taking place with Housing Services regarding examining areas of need, allocated sites and areas where affordable housing had already been agreed to be built
- areas were to be identified for a gypsy/traveller site in south east Northumberland, as there was currently a shortage. Any decision on this needed to understand gypsy and travellers' need including where they could more likely access employment
- the emerging Local Plan could currently not be given any planning weight, but in accordance with the NPPF the published plan it could be given more weight once the representation period had been completed and more again when it was submitted. This could depend on individual policies and levels of objections. The development management section of Planning Services were taking relevant policies into account when assessing planning applications but would not be able to refuse any applications under this current draft plan until it was further through the approval process
- regarding the robustness of the Wansbeck Local Plan, as it predated the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) some of the policies might be non-compliant with the NPPF and might therefore only be given limited weight. However the Local Plan would still be the starting point in policy terms when determining applications. Neighbourhood Plans gathered more weight the further their development progressed and once made they formed part of the statutory development plan and were given full weight. Old district council Local Plans might also vary in their fitness for purpose depending on their evidence base.

RESOLVED that members' comments be noted and any queries be followed up.

84. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Ashington and Blyth Local Area Council would take place on Wednesday, 13 March 2019 at Newbiggin Sports and Community Centre - time to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 6:41pm

Chair _____

Date _____

