

## **NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **ASHINGTON & BLYTH LOCAL AREA COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the **Ashington & Blyth Local Area Council** held in the former Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Blyth, NE24 2BX on Wednesday, 10 July 2019 at 5:00 pm.

#### **PRESENT**

Councillor G Webb  
(Chair, in the chair for items 1, 2 and 6)

Councillor J Lang  
(Planning Vice-Chair, in the chair for items 3 - 5)

#### **MEMBERS**

D Campbell  
E Cartie  
B Gallacher  
J J Gobin  
K Nisbet  
K Parry

M Purvis (part)  
J Reid  
L J Rickerby  
E Simpson  
T Wilson

#### **OFFICERS**

M Carle  
G Gavin  
D Hadden  
G Horsman  
D Lally  
S McNaughton  
J Murphy  
K Norris  
N Walsh

R Wealleans

Highways Delivery Area Manager  
Head of Neighbourhood Services  
Lawyer  
Senior Planning Officer  
Chief Executive  
Strategic Transport Policy Manager  
Principal Planning Officer  
Democratic Services Officer  
Service Manager - Culture, Heritage  
and Libraries  
Neighbourhood Services Area  
Manager

Also in attendance:

G Campbell - Culture Creative  
Public: 12  
Press: 1

#### **18. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G Davey, S Davey and Grimshaw.

## 19. MINUTES

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Ashington & Blyth Local Area Council held on Wednesday, 12 June 2019, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

At this point in the meeting Councillor Gobin stated that he still had not received a written update about the proposed works regarding the road into Cambois. The Chair advised him to raise this with the Area Manager for Highways Delivery under the Local Services item later in the meeting.

## DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

Councillor Webb then vacated the Chair, for Planning Vice-Chair Councillor Lang to chair the development control section of the agenda, as was the arrangement for all Local Area Councils.

## 20. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Lang declared an interest in planning application 18/03795/FUL and would withdraw from the meeting for that item taking no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

## 21. DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Planning Vice Chair 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. (Report attached to the signed Minutes as Appendix A.)

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

*(Councillor Lang vacated the Chair and left the meeting.)*

Councillor Parry proposed that Councillor Webb take the Chair which was seconded by Councillor Reid and unanimously agreed.

Councillor Webb in the Chair

## 22. 18/03795/FUL - Erection of 29 Dwellings with Associated Access, Parking and Landscaping, Land South of Wansbeck General Hospital, Seaton Vale, Woodhorn Lane, Ashington, Northumberland (Report attached to the signed Minutes as Appendix B.)

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Geoff Horsman, Senior Planning Officer, summarised the above application as set out in the report with the aid of a slide presentation.

*(Councillor Nisbet left the meeting at 5:10 pm)*

With regard to conditions it was stated that Public Protection had proposed slightly revised wording to conditions 3 and 4 as follows:

Condition 3 - If during redevelopment contamination not previously considered is identified then an additional method statement regarding this material shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No building shall be occupied until the method statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and measures proposed to deal with the contamination have been carried out. Should no contamination be found during development then the applicant shall submit a signed statement indicating this to discharge this condition.

Condition 4 - Change to first sentence of condition to read: No buildings shall be constructed until a report detailing the protective measures to prevent the ingress of ground gases, including depleted Oxygen (less than 19%), to the CS2 standard required in BS 8485:2015 plus A1:2019 (Code of Practice for the design of protective measures for Methane and Carbon Dioxide ground gases for new buildings), have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

With regard to the s106 obligations, it was stated that there was an amendment to the outdoor sports contribution which is now to be a contribution of £21,171 (twenty one thousand one hundred and seventy one pounds).

*(Councillor Nisbit returned to the meeting at 5:15 pm)*

The wording of all conditions, including pre-commencement conditions, had been agreed by the applicant. The revised outdoor sports contribution had also been agreed by the applicant.

The Senior Planning Officer advised that the Recommendation in the report had now been slightly amended to read as follows:

That Members resolve that they are minded to GRANT planning permission and delegate authority to the Director of Planning to grant such permission for the proposed development subject to no objections being received within the remaining Press Notice publicity period, completion of a Section 106 Agreement as detailed in the report, as amended re the updated sport and play contribution figure, and the conditions set out in the report with the amended conditions 3 and 4, which are to be amended as per the officer update.

### Members' Questions

In response to questions the following information was provided:

- Stability reports had been submitted for the previous application in 2016 and officers had been happy to rely on those.
- With regard to concerns about contamination, it was confirmed that Condition 3 could be amended to include specific reference to Japanese Knotweed if members wished to include this.
- Section 106 contributions must be for specific projects. Newbiggin Town Football Club and Hirst Park had been identified as key projects as per applications for 800 dwellings to the immediate east approved in late 2018.
- In terms of Newbiggin Town Football Club, it was stated that their business plan had not been sufficiently robust and the proposal was no longer going ahead. In response it was stated that, although that project was currently defunct there was a possibility that, within the timescale, the Football Club could submit another proposal. However, if not the sport and play contribution would be paid to Hirst Park.
- The previous application had been for 22 dwellings and no more recent monitoring had taken place with regard to mines. However, the site was not within a high risk area and wording had been included in Condition 4 about gas protection measures.
- With regard to climate change, no specific details had been included at this stage, but it was covered in general by condition 8.

*(Councillor Purvis at arrived at 5:30 pm but did not participate in the planning section of the meeting.)*

- A member expressed concerns about the reduced Section 106 contributions and felt that, as large profits were made by developers, no reduction should have been made as £35,000 could have gone a long way to help local residents. He also felt that, as this was an Ashington site, the money should stay in Ashington. In response the Senior Planning Officer reiterated that two projects, which met the specified criteria, had been identified for the sport and play contribution. In the past contributions could be pooled into a general sports and play fund but current regulations limited pooled contributions to a maximum of five, which had been reached in Ashington.
- There was a Section 106 Monitoring Officer who ensured payments were received and distributed according to the Agreement.
- The Section 106 Agreement had to be determined as part of the planning application and projects must be identified.
- There had been no requests to upgrade the existing play areas on the site, however, it was believed these areas were in private ownership.

Councillor Reid moved approval of the officer recommendation as amended with the revised outdoor sport contribution figure and the amended conditions 3 and 4, with the further addition of specific reference to Japanese Knotweed in the first sentence of Condition 3, so that the updated condition 3 now reads as follows:

If during redevelopment contamination not previously considered is identified, including Japanese Knotweed, then an additional method statement regarding this material shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No building shall be occupied until the method statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and measures proposed to deal with the contamination have been carried out. Should no

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contamination be found during development then the applicant shall submit a signed statement indicating this to discharge this condition.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Webb.

#### Members' Comments

A member reiterated his concerns that more thought should be put into the distribution of Section 106 contributions. He stated that Hirst Park already benefited from other forms of funding and the money could be put to better use elsewhere in Ashington.

Upon being put to the vote the motion was carried FOR: 9, AGAINST: 0, ABSENTIONS 0.

1 member did not vote.

It was therefore:

**RESOLVED** that Members are minded to GRANT planning permission and delegate authority to the Director of Planning to grant such permission for the proposed development subject to no objections being received within the remaining Press Notice publicity period, completion of a Section 106 Agreement as detailed in the report, as amended re the updated sport and play contribution figure, and the conditions set out in the report with the exception of conditions 3 and 4, which are to be amended as per the officer update and with the additional reference to Japanese Knotweed in condition 3.

*(Councillor Lang returned to the meeting and resumed the Chair)*

### **23. PLANNING APPEALS UPDATE**

Members received information on the progress of planning appeals. (Report attached to the signed Minutes as Appendix C.)

Members suggested that the Appeals Update should be split into areas as there was only one piece of information in the report relevant to the Ashington and Blyth Local Area Council. In response the Principal Planning Officer stated that would be very time consuming and it was much quicker to produce one report.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

On the conclusion of the development control business at 5:50 pm, Councillor Lang vacated the Chair and the meeting adjourned as the remainder of the agenda consisted of other Local Area Council business scheduled to begin at 6.00 pm. Councillor Webb resumed the Chair and continued the meeting at 6.00 pm.

## OTHER LOCAL AREA COUNCIL BUSINESS

### 24. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

#### **Conn Ruddick, NE24 5TJ**

Mr Ruddick explained he was one of the trustees of a new Church which would serve the Isabella Estate in Blyth and they were proposing to hold some meetings at the Isabella Pavillion. They had held discussions to obtain a licence to use the building on a Sunday but had now been formally advised by the Planning Department that they would need planning permission for a change of use from D2 to D1. As a completely new charity, with limited funds, and the objective of improving life of residents on the estate, he said to be faced with a bill of £462 was extremely daunting. In response to a request for clarification Mr Ruddick confirmed that the church would only use one part of the building and the changing rooms would remain unchanged. Priorities had been established and the pavillion would be used for football use and for worship. He was not disputing the requirement for change of use but was making an appeal for the charge to be waived.

**Agreed** that Daljit Lally, the Chief Executive, would look into this on behalf of Mr Ruddick.

#### **Alan Duffy, NE24 2ND**

Mr Duffy said in the 1800's work had started to sink a mine shaft into Princess Louise Road and asked if a proper survey of the area had been carried out in relation to the Blyth Relief Road project.

Stuart McNaughton, Strategic Transport Policy Manager, confirmed that once a decision had been made about the route technical surveys would be carried out before any work commenced.

#### **Peter Henderson, NE24 4AD**

Mr Henderson queried the position regarding the land next to the Commissioners at Blyth Quayside, formerly owned by Arch, now Advance Northumberland. He said the sales office had been moved and a fence had been pulled down but there was no sign of any building work.

No information was available at the meeting and Democratic Services would follow this up.

He also referred to New Delaval Park which was deep in weeds and said the bowling green was cut very quickly and to a poor standard. In the past he had done work there himself but had recently been ill and was unable to continue. The park was a mess and he should not have to keep reporting this, it should be kept tidy as a matter of course.

Councillor Campbell offered to fund a grass cutter from her Members' small schemes fund to be used for bowling greens.

**Agreed** that the Neighbourhood Services Area Manager make arrangements to look at the park.

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Mr Duffy referred back to the land at Blyth Quayside and said, some years ago, Roman mosaics had been discovered by Fergusons when working in the area. This had been reported to the Council but it was stated that no money was available to carry out surveys. He suggested looking into this as they could be valuable.

## 25. PETITIONS

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

(b) **Consider reports on petitions previously received:** No reports to consider;

(c) **Receive any updates on petitions for which a report was previously considered:** None.

## 26. LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES

The Neighbourhood Services Area Manager and Highways Delivery Area Manager were in attendance to provide verbal updates about any key recent, ongoing and/or future planned Local Services work and to respond to issues raised by members.

### Neighbourhood Services

#### Waste Service

Residual and recycling waste collection services continued to perform well. Garden waste services had been stretched several times in the season already even though adjustments had been made to take account of new houses being built. Service take up had exceeded expectations.

#### Cleansing

**Ashington:** the new partnership with the Town Council was going well showing a marked difference within the town. The new rapid response team had received training from Enforcement in capturing evidence from fly tipped materials to speed up the process.

**Blyth:** the new partnership was performing well within Blyth with positive signs of improvement to the general environment. New staff had been employed to provide extended cover over the weekend to address litter issues in and around the town.

**Newbiggin:** Seasonal partnership with the employment of two seasonal workers had seen a marked difference on the promenade and around the town itself.

### Grass Cutting and Floral

- Now on cut seven of eight in the Blyth and Ashington areas which included Newbiggin and Bedlington.
- Warm and wet conditions meant the grass continued to grow quickly.
- Wild flower displays were brightening up the area in Blyth and teams were in the process of finishing the summer bedding programme throughout the area.

### Weed Control

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- The service was being delivered in house again this year as the approach had worked well last year.
- Work was slightly behind in comparison to last year. Weeds needed to be visible for the contact product to be effective but work had been delayed by rain or wind.
- The Neighbourhood Services Manager would email Councillors and Town Councils when he had confirmation that work in their areas was complete.
- Blue dye was being used again this year after its success last year.

#### Verge Cutting

- Work started mid June and was on target.
- There was 6.8 million sq metres of verge to cut in the county and work was ahead of schedule (should be complete in the first week of August).

#### Memorial Testing Update

- NCC was responsible for safety testing of all memorials in Northumberland's cemeteries/churchyards.
- There were approximately 49,000 memorials to test.
- Many had not been tested in a 5 year period and a project had been set up to correct this in February 2018.
- After a lot of hard work, it was now 100% back in scope.

Northumberland in Bloom - Blyth judging would take place on 19 July.

Members raised the following issues which were noted by the Area Manager:

- Whitley Terrace, Bedlington - grass was growing over signs onto the road.
- The wildflower displays in Blyth were beautiful and it was suggested more should be planted in front of Crofton flats. This would result in less grass cutting and would brighten up the area.
- The flower beds were in need of weeding in the bowling green park at Seaton Sluice (this would be passed to Tony Gribbin, Area Manager for that area).
- Councillor Gallacher said the partnership with Ashington Town Council was working very well and conveyed his thanks, however, there was a larger amount of litter than expected and the rapid response team should respond.
- How was NCC going to address the problem of Japanese Knotweed which was known to be in and around Ashington? The Area Manager acknowledged that officers were aware of this problem which had been identified in four places in Ashington.
- Blackthorn Way - hedges needed trimming back as they were blocking the footpath.
- When would Station Road, Ashington have summer flower displays? The Area Manager stated a meeting had been organised with the partnership to see what was required.
- St John's Church Yard, North Seaton was in a very poor state with high weeds around graves and paths.
- Councillor Nisbet said the new partnership in Blyth was working very well and conveyed her thanks stating the litter situation had greatly improved.
- Church Point Church Yard, Newbiggin was in a poor state and sand needed to be cleared from the disabled bays as parking tickets were being issued due to bays not being visible.



- Bushes and trees were in need of cutting back from Woodhorn Road to Sixth Avenue, Ashington.

Councillor Campbell then referred to a planning enforcement issue at 5-7 Elliott Street, Blyth raising concerns about the planning enforcement process. She had continuously reported this land being in a dreadful state but the landowner had refused to clear the site. Planning Enforcement had commenced action some time ago but as yet nothing had changed. Councillor Campbell said the situation was not acceptable and she was frustrated to attend another residents' meeting with nothing positive to report. Councillor Gallacher supported the comments made and proposed that a message be sent from the Ashington and Blyth Local Area Council to move this forward. The motion was seconded by Councillor Campbell and unanimously agreed.

### Technical Services

The Highways Delivery Area Manager reported that winter services work had begun with the completion of a new salt barn at Cowley Road, Blyth.

Four new gritters had been purchased, one of which was based in Blyth and one in Morpeth (which treated part of Ashington).

Tarmac patching had been carried out in 8th Avenue, Blyth; Coquetdale Place, Blyth; Beadnell Road, Blyth; Castle Terrace, Ashington and Belsay Court, Blyth.

Drainage improvements had been made in Ashington and Blyth and micro surfacing works had been completed at Blackthorn Way, Ashington; Carlton Grove/Lyndhurst Road, Ashington (to be re-done at the end of the programme), Moorhouse Lane, Ashington; Scoular Drive, Ashington and Argyle Terrace, Newbiggin.

Upcoming tarmac resurfacing work was due to take place in Newsham Road, Blyth; Bebside Road, Blyth; Josephine Butler Campus, Ashington; Manley View, Ashington; Wansbeck Road, Ashington and North Seaton Road, Ashington.

Upcoming tarmac patching work would take place at the Northern Relief Road, Ashington; Park Villas, Ashington; Belgrave Crescent, Blyth; Woodhorn Road, Ashington; Hawthorn Road, Ashington and Wensleydale Terrace, Blyth.

The Area Manager also confirmed that the written information requested by Councillor Gobin about the road in Cambois had now been provided to him.

In response to concerns about the road breaking up outside of the new school on Sycamore Street, Ashington, the Area Manager said he would request the Principal Programme Officer (Highways Maintenance) to look at it.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted and issues raised by members needing resolution be followed up after the meeting.

## DISCUSSION ITEMS

### 27. TOUR OF BRITAIN

Nigel Walsh, Service Manager - Culture, Heritage and Libraries and Gary Campbell, Culture Creative UK were in attendance to provide an overview of Stage 3 of the 2019 Tour of Britain.

A presentation was provided (a copy of which is filed with the signed Minutes of the meeting), the key details of which were as follows:

- Stage 3 of the event would visit Northumberland on Monday, 9 September 2019.
- It was the biggest, most prestigious cycle race in the country and attracted the world's best riders and teams.
- Northumberland County Council was working jointly on the event with British Cycling, Sweetspot and the North of Tyne Combined Authority.
- This was the first time the event had been brought to the North of Tyne Combined area covering 182 kilometres from Berwick to Newcastle and it was the first time it would go through the city.
- The event had been to Northumberland twice before in 2015 and 2017 when there had been a great economic impact boosting the local economy.
- 100,000 people had watched the race with 71% coming from outside the county, many of them staying over.
- It was a high profile event and would be shown live on ITV4 and Eurosport with a TV audience covering 190 territories.
- The route would begin in Berwick at 11:00 am, finishing at 3.30 pm on Grey Street, Newcastle. The route was highlighted in the presentation and would take in many Northumberland towns and villages including Seaton Sluice and Whitley Bay in the South East.
- It was hoped that local residents and school children would be inspired by the event and they would be encouraged to decorate the roadside with banners etc.
- Some road closures would be necessary but would be restricted to a maximum of 45 minutes to minimise inconvenience to residents.
- Event contact details were provided.

Discussion followed during which points were raised by members and responses from officers were:

- It was 182 kilometres (115 miles) from Berwick to Newcastle. Cyclists would pass through at an incredible pace at just under 140 miles per hour.
- The route was created by Sweetspot in accordance with 4 hours of TV coverage.
- Blyth was a densely populated town and to include it in the route would make logistics more complicated. It would cause too much disruption as closing Laverock or Cowpen Road for 45 minutes would be very difficult.
- Members in other areas had also asked why their towns had not been included and it had been explained that it was a case of getting the balance right.
- This would be the first time the event had been in Berwick.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

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## 28. BLYTH RELIEF ROAD PROJECT

Stuart McNaughton, Strategic Transport Policy Manager, was in attendance to give an update on progress on the Blyth Relief Road Project. A slide presentation was provided (a copy of which is filed with the signed Minutes of the meeting), the key details of which were as follows:

- The transport network, in its current form, did not have the available capacity to accommodate the future levels of growth to address the transport problem in Blyth.
- Of the Route Options put forward, Route 3 had scored the highest. This was for a new link road from Princess Louise Road to the existing A192/A189 “Three Horseshoes” interchange to provide an escape point from central Blyth.
- A public consultation had taken place, details of which were provided, and issues raised were highlighted.
- Option 3 had been agreed at Cabinet the previous day and a planning application would be submitted in April 2021.
- Other key dates were set out and it was envisaged that construction would start in March 2013 with the scheme being open to the public in March 2024.
- There would be further consultation throughout the process.
- There was an Emerging Funding Opportunity in that Transport for the North (TfN) was working with partners across the north to compile a list of up to ten top priority Major Road Network (MRN) investments across the TfN area for the period April 2020 to March 2025.
- Blyth Relief Road was well placed to be prioritised within the TfN top 10 list, the reasons for which were provided.

In response to questions and comments the following information was provided:

- There was an allocation in the Council programme for match funding but, as this would be a 3 year programme and the Relief Road Programme would stretch beyond 3 years, the Council would need to commit funding beyond the three years approved in the current capital programme.
- Any issues at Broadway Circle would be looked at as part of the design process.
- It was acknowledged that the mineral railway line was disused and steps were being taken to secure that land. The possibility of using that land to divert traffic from Ogle Drive and Broadway Circle would be looked at.
- The cost did include optimism bias, which was usually 40%.
- With regard to the planning process, a Steering Group would be set up to drive the project forward.

Members of the public commented as follows:

- In the past property owners had taken the Council to court for noise issues and won their case. Some houses were next to the highway, it was unknown what the speed of traffic would be and what damage would be caused to the structure of the buildings as there was no impact traffic study available.

- The relief road would not generate more traffic, it was a relief road and was unlikely to cause problems for Broadway Circle.
- The proposal to build a school at the bottom of Princess Louise Road should not be an issue as there was a huge amount of land there.
- The Council would have to provide allotments elsewhere in place of those that would be lost.

In response to further comments, the Strategic Policy Transport Manager stated:

- The relief road would address existing capacity problems but it was acknowledged there could be a small element of drivers who would start to use it who were currently put off by the amount of traffic.
- The building of a bridge was the most likely way for traffic to cross the railway line.
- Soil contamination issues would need to be addressed by the Engineers.

The Chair thanked the Strategic Transport Policy Manager for his presentation and said the problem had to be addressed for the future as more housing would be built and there would be more vehicles on the roads. He hoped that this project would be considered very carefully and that the right decisions would be made.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **29. MEMBERS' LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES 2017/20 - PROGRESS REPORT**

Members received an update report on Members' Local Improvement Schemes as of 1 July 2019 (attached to the official minutes as Appendix D).

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

### **30. 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 E).

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

### **31. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday, 14 August 2019, time and venue to be confirmed.

### **32. URGENT BUSINESS**

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With regard to Outside Bodies, the Chair stated that, due to other commitments, Councillor Grimshaw could no longer be the appointed representative for Northumberland Community Voluntary Action and asked for a volunteer to take her place. The next meeting would take place on Monday, 16 September at 6:00 pm and he asked that anyone interested contact Democratic Services.

The meeting closed at 7:20 pm

**Chair** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_