

## **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, 13 November 2019 at 5:00 pm.

#### **PRESENT**

Councillor G Webb  
(Chair, in the chair for items 1-3 and 8-15)

Councillor J Lang  
(Planning Vice-Chair, in the chair for items 4-7)

#### **MEMBERS**

G Davey  
S Davey  
B Gallacher

J J Gobin  
L Grimshaw  
J Reid

#### **OFFICERS**

J Blenkinsopp  
M Carle  
P Jones  
D Lally  
J Murphy  
K Norris  
T Palmer

A Peadon  
N Walsh  
R Wealleans

Lawyer  
Highways Delivery Area Manager  
Service Director - Local Services  
Chief Executive  
Principal Planning Officer  
Democratic Services Officer  
Head of Procurement Shared  
Services  
Library Services Manager  
Head of Cultural Services  
Neighbourhood Services Area  
Manager

Also in attendance:

Public: 2  
Press: 1

#### **47. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

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

## 48. MINUTES

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Ashington & Blyth Local Area Council held on Wednesday, 11 September 2019, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair subject to an amendment to show Councillor L Grimshaw in the list of those present.

## DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

Councillor Webb 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.

## 49. 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.

## 50. 19/01842/FUL - Erection of 28 dwellings with associated access, parking and landscaping, land south of Wansbeck General Hospital, Seaton Vale, Woodhorn Lane, Ashington, Northumberland.

Geoff Horsman, Senior Planning Officer, introduced the above application with the aid of a slide presentation.

In response to questions from Members, the following information was provided:

- When the original outline application was approved in 2000 there was no affordable housing specifically secured. Instead it was agreed that a substantial payment be made to East Ashington Life for regeneration projects in the Ashington area and just under £1 million had been paid by the developer to satisfy that obligation. The current application was for a change of layout to part of the site and, in line with current policy, 17% affordable housing should be requested, equating to 5 affordable units. However, to take into account the aforementioned sum of nearly £1 million already paid by the developer to cover the wider site, a discount had been agreed and the number of affordable units required had been reduced to 3.
- If further applications came forward for the site, the same approach would be taken to take into account the contributions already paid.
- Since the application was previously discussed at July's meeting, there had been a slight change in the law with regard to sport and play contributions. Restrictions

were no longer in place to identify specific projects and contributions could be pooled. In this case funding could be used for projects in the Ashington or Newbiggin area whereby organisations could submit a bid to be determined by a Section 106 Panel.

- In terms of climate change, there were a number of issues to consider when planning applications were submitted. Reference was made to conditions 8 and 16 in the report which related to energy efficiency/renewable energy generation and surface water drainage. Developers were also encouraged to consider links to public transport, especially for large developments.
- Glass collection for recycling was not an issue that could be secured through a scheme of this scale.
- In terms of the width of roads and footpaths, the scheme was compliant with current policy.
- Allowance had been made for two cars per dwelling which was considered to be acceptable for this site.
- The Council was bound by national legislation with regard to Section 106 contributions. If the developer had already made contributions for the wider site then they must be taken into account.
- It was recommended that Section 106 contributions should go into a general pot for Ashington or Newbiggin to avoid having to identify specific projects and to allow more flexibility. If members wished to specify contributions be restricted to Ashington that would be their decision, however, it could result in the money not being spent if no projects came forward.
- Clarification would be sought, and members would be informed, regarding who sat on the Section 106 Panel.
- Officers would feedback member's comments that Section 106 funding should be spent in the Ward where disruption had taken place and, if no projects were identified, it should be rolled over into the town of Ashington.
- In terms of the design and size of affordable housing, in this instance the affordable housing team had given advice that 3 dwellings should be provided at 70% market discount and had approved the specification.

Councillor G Davey moved approval of the recommendation, as set out in the report, adding that it should be recorded that the committee was not happy with the number of affordable homes provided on the site. The motion was seconded by Councillor Reid.

Upon being put to the vote the motion was unanimously agreed and it was therefore:

**RESOLVED** that Members were minded to GRANT permission subject to completion of a Section 106 Agreement and conditions, with reasons, as set out in the report.

- 51. 19/03369/CCD - Retrospective: Installation of ground source heat pump system comprising of 2 no. 35kw heat pumps and associated ground array, Ashington Community Association Football Club, Woodhorn Lane, Ashington, NE63 9FW.**

The above application was withdrawn from the agenda.

- 52. 19/02913/CCD - Installation of additional windows together with replacement of others, addition of render and extension to existing car park so as to provide 28**

**no. additional spaces as amended by drawing received 10/10/2019, Blyth Sports Centre, Bolam Avenue, Blyth, Northumberland, NE24 5BT.**

Malcolm Thompson, Planning Officer, introduced the above application with the aid of a slide presentation.

In terms of climate change, a member queried if the Council should be recommending additional car parking spaces when the public was being encouraged to use public transport. He also queried if any electric vehicle charging points would be provided. In response the Planning Officer said the Highways section had considered the application against current and emerging policy and, on balance, did not have any objections. He added that he was unaware of any proposals to provide electric vehicle charging points.

A member raised concerns about the entrance and exit to the car park and queried if there were any plans for improvement. In response the Principal Planning Officer said that was a separate issue which the Highways Section would need to consider.

Councillor Reid moved that the application be refused as no electric vehicle charging points were included in the application and it was contrary to the Council's climate change policy. Councillor Gallacher seconded the motion.

The Principal Planning Officer advised that should members agree to approve the recommendation, it could be subject to a condition that, before extra car parking was brought into use, electric charging points would be provided.

At that point Councillor Reid and Councillor Gallacher agreed to withdraw the motion.

Councillor Reid moved approval of the recommendation subject to the provision of an appropriate number of charging points which was seconded by Councillor Gallacher.

The Chair said the proposal would tidy up the site and prevent cars from parking on the grass.

Upon being put to the vote the motion was unanimously agreed and it was therefore:

**RESOLVED** that planning permission be granted subject to the conditions, with reasons, set out in the report and an extra condition to ensure that an appropriate number of electric charging points would be provided (exact wording to be delegated to the Director of Planning).

### **53. PLANNING APPEALS UPDATE**

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

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

On the conclusion of the development control business at 5:55pm, Councillor Lang vacated the Chair and the meeting was 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 6.03 pm.

## **OTHER LOCAL AREA COUNCIL BUSINESS**

### **54. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions raised.

### **55. PETITIONS**

#### **(a) Receive any new petitions: Basketball Court at Ridley Park, Blyth**

The Chair advised members that an e petition had been received on 19 September proposing the provision of a basketball court within Ridley Park. The petition was still live and currently had 7 signatures. Members were reminded that, in line with the petition protocol, 50 signatures were required before a report could be requested for a future meeting.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

#### **(b) Consider reports on petitions previously received: E Petition - 'Please help us improve Seaton Vale Roundabout.'**

The Chair referred to the above report which was enclosed with the agenda papers as Appendix C. The report was self explanatory and members confirmed that they did not have any questions.

**RESOLVED** that the content of the report be noted.

### **56. 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

R Wealleans, Neighbourhood Services Area Manager, provided the following information:

#### **Grass cutting**

- Grass cutting was now complete. It had been a challenging year due to good growing conditions.
- Finished on 13/14 cuts in the Ashington and Newbiggin area and 16/17 in Blyth with an early cut planned for March 2020.

*Chair's Initials.....*

*Ashington and Blyth Local Area Council, 13 November 2019*

- All core service grass cuts achieved (10 to 13) and enhanced service with Blyth (17/19)

### **Street Cleansing**

- Work was taking place on leaf hotspot areas in an attempt to prevent localised flooding.
- Cleansing Teams were keeping to their set routes and hotspots with noticeable results in all areas.
- Fly tipping had been targeted within the identified problem areas in Ashington and Blyth, namely the Hirst and Cowpen Quay. Work was being carried out with Enforcement on this with all cleansing teams having been given training with regards to identifying and logging evidence.
- Weeds had been an issue again due to the ideal weather patterns and action was being taken to tidy up the problem areas.
- Sweeping routes were constantly reviewed in order to improve efficiency and record keeping.
- The winter works programme had started and new winter working hours had commenced. Members were invited to come forward with any requests at their earliest convenience.
- Edging and shrub pruning were scheduled on a programme of works for which consideration had been given to the historical dates from when the areas were last serviced.

### **Waste**

- Other than a few minor vehicle breakdowns residual, recycling and garden waste collection services were operating well considering the growth in the housing market within the Ashington and Blyth area.
- Garden waste collections would come to an end soon with the last collections commencing week beginning 2 December.
- Income from commercial waste, garden waste and bulk collections was on target.
- With the continuing expansion to trade waste within the South East, the Council was looking to invest in an RCV and 2 crew to start in the New Year.

### **Other Information**

- Neat Teams were deployed to War Memorials across the area to bring them up to the highest standard possible for the remembrance services. The Neighbourhood Services Area Manager added that the sites he had seen looked first class and compliments had been received.
- Northumbria In Bloom - Blyth had achieved a Silver Gilt award (Town Category) and Ridley Park had achieved gold award in the parks category.

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

- Officers were aware of the overgrown hedge affecting the footpath on the corner of Bebside Road to Horton Road and this would be looked at.
- With regard to the winter programme with Ashington Town Council, this year the enhanced service was only for Street Cleansing and core work on Grounds Maintenance.
- Concerns about the blue dye used for spraying weeds had been received, some stating that it was too dilute and could not be seen and others that it was too bright. These concerns were acknowledged and it was a case of trying to achieve a happy medium.
- Salt bins would need to be refreshed.

- There was a plan going forward to address overgrown trees and the problems with leave on the Haydon Road Estate.

Members thanked the Area Manager and his team for their excellent work.

### Technical Services

M Carle, Highways Delivery Area Manager, provided the following information:

- Tarmac patching had been carried out in Ashington at Haydon Road Estate and North Seaton Road Footpath and in Blyth at 12th Avenue, Briardale Road, Tynedale Drive and Druridge Drive.
- Drainage works had been completed at the following locations - Aldborough Street, Blyth, Morpeth Road, Ashington, A189 Spine Road (Three Horseshoes Northbound), Wensleydale Terrace, Blyth, Cowpen Road, Blyth and Broadway, Blyth.
- Tarmac resurfacing works had been completed at the Eve Black Way footpath and Bebside Road, Blyth. Colas were programmed to apply fiberdeck finish in April next year, weather permitting. Some positive feedback had been received.
- Verge hardening works had been carried out in the Haydon Road Estate, Ashington.
- Upcoming tarmac patching was scheduled for: Blyth - Devonworth Place, Ennerdale Road, Lonsdale Avenue; Ashington - Park Road, Castle Terrace, Black Close Bank.
- Resurfacing work at Cambois was progressing well and it was hoped that it would be complete by the end of the following week.

Councillor Gobin asked that his thanks to the Highways Delivery Team and to Councillor Sanderson, Cabinet Member for Environment and Local Services be placed on record for the work they had done regarding the road into Cambois.

### **Winter Services Operations Across Northumberland**

The Highways Delivery Area Manager provided members with a leaflet entitled 'Highway Services in Winter' for their information. (Copy filed with the signed Minutes of the meeting.)

The Council planned to be able to respond appropriately to forecast weather conditions and had sufficient manpower and resources available. Currently for the 2019/20 season there was:

- 28 serviced multi-purpose gritting vehicles with snow plough attachments with 5 new to the fleet this year.
- Two dedicated Snow Blowers.
- 6 reserve vehicles.
- 4 gully tankers positioned throughout the county to deal with potential flooding caused by rapid snow melt.
- 3 mechanical fitters on 24-hour emergency standby in the north, west and south-east of the county to deal with emergency repairs.
- 43,500 tonnes of rock salt from the beginning of October at 11 depots across the county, additional salt could be ordered throughout the season if necessary.

- Recently constructed 2 new salt barns and a 6700 tonne strategic store at Powburn for winter resilience. (Follow on from the Quarmby report).
- over 1600 salt bins in areas which were steep, had steps or difficult junctions
- over 200 grit heaps in rural areas.

The service had 28 primary routes covering around 37% of the network, 8 of which were in South East Northumberland.

There were 106 staff required to deliver winter services and rotas were in place to ensure sufficient staffing resources were available on a three shift rota. The majority of staff involved in winter services came from Technical Services.

The 3 Winter Services Delivery Managers operated on a three weekly rota (24/7) and it was their job to consider the variable forecasting information and make a decision on the most appropriate course of action based on the forecast information provided by the Council's forecaster and bureau provider. The role could be very stressful and hectic at times so members were, therefore, asked to only contact them directly in an emergency situation. All non-emergency situations should be reported through the Council's CRM and the out of hours arrangements via Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service in the usual way.

### **Customer Services**

Winter services information contained on the NCC website would be reviewed and updated accordingly to accurately reflect operations. There would be ongoing meetings between Technical Services and Customer Services to ensure call handling procedures and internal communications were in place so that a joined up service was delivered to the customer with one point of contact.

As in previous years, a customer information leaflet had been produced (as circulated) and provided useful information to the public on all aspects of the service. Copies of the leaflet were available from various Council buildings including customer contact centres, libraries, depot reception areas and also online. The leaflet would be distributed to Town and Parish Councils as well as County Councillors. Updated and accurate information was now included on the website and included details of policies and maps of primary gritting routes, along with those showing the strategic footpath network which would be treated in severe conditions.

Alerts were sent out daily during the winter using social media. This would advise people on weather conditions and the Council's proposed response. This information would also be placed on the NCC website.

In response to comments/questions, the following information was provided:

- With regard to resurfacing works at Devonworth Place, it was noted that some blockages had occurred and these would be looked at.
- In response to a request that new grit be provided rather than topping bins up, it was stated that before a bin was restocked, any leftover grit should be loosened up and, if beyond repair, removed before the bin was restocked.
- Information would be provided to members regarding patrols for community activity via a direct link available through the Business and Customer Support Team Leader.



- Works on Malvins Road, Blyth were included on the LTP programme for this year, however, there were some issues to be sorted which should be done by the end of the financial year.
- The Chair requested an update on traffic calming proposals for Southend Avenue and the road alongside West Court.

Members thanked the Highways Delivery Area Manager for his update.

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

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **57. NORTHUMBERLAND LOTTERY**

Teresa Palmer, Head of Procurement Shared Services, provided a presentation to give an overview and understanding on how the Northumberland Lottery would operate. The presentation included a demonstration of the test Northumberland website and a live website for another local authority. (A copy of the presentation is filed with the signed Minutes of the meeting.)

Following the presentation questions/comments and responses were as follows:

- It was essential for the Council to be inclusive regarding organisations which would benefit from the proceeds of the Northumberland Lottery, however, if concerns were raised about a particular organisation, mechanisms would be in place for that organisation to be looked at.
- Several members agreed that having a Northumberland Lottery was not a good idea and said the administration was encouraging poor and vulnerable people to gamble. They considered that this should have been discussed at full Council.
- Clarification was provided that no funding would be taken away from the community chest.
- In response to comments, the Chief Executive stated that the Northumberland Lottery had been brought to Cabinet after being put forward by officers in the management team. This was a form of charitable giving and, from a service perspective, the Council had always supported the voluntary sector. She acknowledged concerns about gambling, particularly in relation to vulnerable people, but pointed out that safeguards were in place as approved policies.
- A member was concerned that money raised in South East Northumberland would not be used to the benefit of residents who lived there and would be spent in other parts of the county instead.

**RESOLVED** that the information and comments of members be noted.

### **58. RESPONSE TO CLIMATE EMERGENCY DECLARATION**

Paul Jones, Service Director - Local Services provided an update of the actions taken, progress made, the future measures and areas of focus in the Council's response to a

climate emergency declaration. (A copy of the presentation and information leaflet (Appendix D) is filed with the signed Minutes of the meeting.)

Following the presentation questions/comments and responses were as follows:

- With regard to tree planting, this would take place in South East Northumberland on public open space and would be fit for purpose.
- Reference was made to page 3 of the information leaflet and clarification was sought about the Ground Source Heat pumps at Bellingham Fire Station and Allendale Fire Station which had a completion date of November 2019. The Service Director - Local Services said he would follow this up and report back to members.
- In terms of electric vehicles, viable options were being explored. There was currently no viable electric HGV refuse collection vehicle on the market but these were in development. The Council was monitoring this and expected to trial a demonstration vehicle in the near future.
- A members said it was reassuring that the report acknowledged work on climate change had been on-going since 2010/11. He added that this should be in conjunction with Town and Parish Councils and the Council's partners, who had also recognised it must be tackled, but unfortunately that had not gained approval by full Council.
- Reference was made to planning application 19/02913/CCD heard earlier in the meeting which included an extension to the existing car park at Blyth Sports Centre. Approval had been granted subject to the provision of electric charging points which demonstrated that planning and climate change could work together. The Service Director - Local Services said he would look at this.
- Many new houses were being built in the area in line with outdated policies and new policies should be introduced as soon as possible. In response, reference was made to the Local Plan and the need for it to be approved. Once that happened, additional documentation could be considered.
- With regard to mine water, it was stated that the Council had submitted a business case for funding and once a response had been received from the Government, members would be advised.
- The Service Director - Local Services said that sustainability had been on the Council's agenda for a number of years but going forward climate emergency had seen a change of pace and if it was not acted upon quickly there would be serious consequences.
- In response to concerns about solar panels, it was pointed out that technology continued to advance and the cost of these had come down. There should be more incentives and returns going forward.

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

## 59. LIBRARY SERVICE CONSULTATION UPDATE

Alison Peaden, Library Services Manager, provided a presentation regarding the library service consultation which would commence this month (a copy of the presentation is filed with the signed Minutes of the meeting.)

The Library Services Manager said she would be very grateful for members' help in raising awareness of the consultation.

*Chair's Initials.....*

Following the presentation questions/comments and responses were as follows:

- It was confirmed that this would be presented to the relevant Scrutiny Committees.
- A library was not just a place to go for a book, it was also a social meeting place.
- Town and Parish Councils would be consulted, the Library Services Manager had already attended the Town and Parish Council Conference and the Town and Parish Council Liaison Group. Communications would also be put in the Town and Parish Council newsletter.
- Work was being carried out with the communications team to enable information to be widespread.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

### **INFORMATION ITEMS**

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

The report provided a progress update on Members' Local Improvement Schemes for 2017/19 as at 1 September 2019 (attached to the signed minutes as **Appendix D**).

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

#### **61. LOCAL AREA COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME**

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

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

#### **62. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday, 11 December 2019 at Newbiggin Sports and Community Centre - time to be confirmed.

A member raised concerns that the next meeting was scheduled to take place the evening before the General Election and said it should be moved.

**RESOLVED** that confirmation of the date be followed up by Democratic Services and members be informed accordingly.

The meeting closed at 7:25 pm

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

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