

## CABINET 10 SEPTEMBER 2019

### FEEDBACK FROM LOCAL AREA COUNCIL MEETINGS 8-17 JULY 2019 - EXTRACTS FROM MINUTES

*(Details of planning and rights of way applications are not included.)*

#### Castle Morpeth LAC, 8 July 2019

#### 34. PETITIONS

Members were informed that, since the previous meeting, one new petition had been received, and there was an update on another.

(a) **Receive any new petitions:** Members were informed that the following petition had been received. The lead petitioner was not in attendance. A response to the petition will be submitted to the September meeting.

- **School Transport in Guide Post**

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

(c) **Receive any updates on petitions for which a report was previously considered:** Members received the following verbal update:-.

- **Riversdale House Flats, Stakeford, Choppington**

Phillip Soderquest, Head of Housing and Public Protection, reported that multi agency meetings continued to be held on a monthly basis to review the progress and actions being taken to improve Riversdale House and its impact on surrounding residents. The primary agent was involved and now managed 26 of the 30 properties. The agent was ensuring that there was a strict lettings policy and that only suitable tenants were placed.

Environmental protection had reported that there was much less flying tipping now and the area had improved greatly. The police reported fewer complaints from the area. Additional bins had been provided. In view of these improvements, the multiagency group had decided to meet quarterly rather than monthly in future. The next meeting would be held on 23 September 2019.

Eight members of the public who were resident in the Riversdale House area were present and passed a list of concerns to Mr. Soderquest. He reported that some of matters raised were directly contradictory to his report to Members. These issues included inadequate vetting of tenants,

wheelie bins being used by non residents, fighting and foul language. Other issues were raised about burglaries and tenants breaking the tenancy agreement. Members noted that some of the issues raised were police matters and could not be dealt with by the Local Area Council.

Members agreed that some time was needed to consider the items raised and it was suggested that a further report be submitted to the September meeting.

**RESOLVED** that

- (1) the report be noted.
- (2) a report be submitted to the September meeting.

### **35. LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES**

Members received a verbal update from the Area Managers with the opportunity for members to ask questions afterwards.

#### **Highways**

- It had been a busy summer period and lots of patching had been carried out.
- Two thirds of the planned micro surfacing and surface dressing had been completed in the Castle Morpeth area.
- A large flood alleviation scheme was due to begin in Morpeth.
- Work at Bennetts Walk had been completed and had gone well.
- Other day to day, reactive work was ongoing.

#### **Neighbourhood Services**

- Residential and recycling collections were going well but the garden waste service had been more stretched.
- There had been eight grass cuts due to the warm wet weather. New machines were performing well.
- Weed control work had been kept in house and progress was slightly behind. Rain and wind had caused problems but they were catching up by working at weekends.
- Countywide verge cutting was ahead of target and this enabled time to be built in should there be any breakdowns.
- Britain in Bloom and In Bloom judging was taking place in July.

## **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

### **36. TOUR OF BRITAIN**

Members received a presentation on the forthcoming Tour of Britain. A copy of the presentation will be filed with the signed minutes and distributed to Members.

- Stage 3 of the event would visit Northumberland on 9 September 2019.
- Northumberland County Council was working jointly with British Cycling, Sweetspot and the North of Tyne Combined Authority.
- Previous visits to Northumberland in 2015 and 2017 were estimated to have brought in £3.9 million to the local economy. 100,000 people watched the race and 70% came from outside the County
- The event would be shown live on ITV4 and Eurosport with a TV audience covering 190 territories.
- The media value was estimated at £1 million. It was important to get communities behind the event.
- The route would begin in Berwick at 11 a.m. with the finish at 3.30 p.m. on Grey Street, Newcastle. The route was highlighted in the presentation and would take in many Northumberland towns and villages including Wooler, Bamburgh, Warkworth, Morpeth, Choppington and then pass through North Tyneside via the Priory before ending in Newcastle.
- Road closures would be necessary but would be restricted to a maximum of 45 minutes to minimise inconvenience to residents.
- It was hoped to involve communities that the race passed through as much as possible and they were being encouraged to decorate the roadside.
- Businesses were being encouraged to welcome visitors and to be as cycle friendly as possible.
- A design a jersey competition for school children had been launched and it was planned to have the winning designs made up for the day.
- 160 schools had expressed an interest in viewing the event. Some schools from the west of the County which was not being visited on this occasion wanted to bus children over to watch.

**RESOLVED** that the presentation be noted.

### **REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LOCAL SERVICES AND HOUSING DELIVERY**

#### **37. Members' Local Improvement Scheme - Progress Report**

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

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

Members received the latest version of agreed items for future Local Area Council meetings. (A copy of the report is filed with the signed minutes as **Appendix C**)

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

### **Tynedale LAC, 9 July 2019**

#### **35. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions from members of the public.

#### **36. PETITIONS**

This item was to:

##### **a) Receive any new petitions:**

There were none to consider.

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

There were none to consider.

##### **c) To consider updates on petitions previously considered:**

There were none to consider.

#### **37. LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES**

Members received the following updates from the Area Managers from Neighbourhood Services and Technical Services:

##### **Neighbourhood Services:**

- The residual and recycling waste services were performing well. Ward Councillors were normally emailed regarding missed collections which had unfortunately occurred earlier in the day due to employee illness. Missed bins would be emptied the following day.
- Around 6,700 households participated in the garden waste service which brought in £278,000 per annum.

- Grass cutting was on the 5th / 6th cut of the season. Warm and wet conditions meant that the grass was continuing to grow rigorously.
- Weed control was being undertaken in-house and was slightly behind expected progress due to wet and windy conditions. Areas of concern should be reported.
- Verge cutting started in mid June and was expected to be complete by the end of July / beginning of August.
- Memorial testing was now up to date after falling behind in 2018. This was normally undertaken on a 5 yearly basis.
- Support was being provided to the In Bloom competitions in Hexham and Haltwhistle. The teams were also supporting local elections with the delivery of polling booths.

Issues discussed by Members included:

- The frequency of grass cutting at the Sele. It was cut on the same frequency of amenity grass which was on a 2-3 week cycle.
- Following a request from a climate change group, some grassed areas were being left long although weeds had been removed and grass paths were cut to provide access.
- Glyphosate herbicide was used to kill weeds and did not require specialist protective equipment. The apparatus applied large droplets on the plant surface and did not mist so there was no plume of herbicide in the atmosphere. Other alternatives were available at a greater expense however there was no statutory reason not to use the current product.
- The Council's waste recycling strategy was in the process of being reviewed and a decision would be taken after it had concluded as to whether it would be necessary to reissue guidance regarding recyclable materials. Properties or areas were targeted where there were a lot of contaminated loads or recycling was poor. A county wide issue of new labels for the recycling bins would cost approximately £60,000.
- A new commercial waste officer was in the process of visiting premises to ensure that waste was disposed of in the correct way.
- Wheelchair accessibility was to be checked at bus stops in Humshaugh.
- Graffiti on a bus shelter in Tyne Green would be checked and removed.

#### **Technical Services:**

- The network continued to be inspected on a frequency determined in accordance with the road hierarchy.
- 17,392 defects had been repaired within the 24 hour or 14 day response within the last 12 months.
- A new hot box to transport 6 tonne of tarmac had recently been purchased for the Tynedale area to reduce time lost travelling back to depot.
- A new camera had recently been acquired to check pipework; the gully wagon would be next working in Haydon Bridge and Newbrough.
- Over 200,000m<sup>2</sup> of structural patching had been carried out in the County in the last 12 months with 95,965m<sup>2</sup> had been carried out in the Tynedale

area. This equated to 1650 km of road which was a substantial amount. Additional work was also carried out under the LTP Programme included road surface dressing and micro surface dressing.

- The Mayrise administration system was to be replaced with a new system called Alloy which was expected to be operation in December 2019. The new system would be interactive and enable members of the public to see where defects had been reported and provide email updates when completed.

The following issues were raised by Members:

- Flooding issues at Tyne Green were in part due to a small bore pipe the responsibility for maintenance and replacement was the councils. The area was now identified as a hotspot and was to be included in a programme to be cleaned on a quarterly basis. Flooding in the area would be monitored and prioritised particularly if there were any properties at risk of flooding.
- An update on dropped kerbs in Wark included in the LTP Programme in 2017/18 would be provided to the local Councillor.
- The timescale for the rectification of the highway following installation of fibre would be obtained from the Street Works section.

The Chair and members thanked the Local Services teams for their work and efficient response to issues raised.

**RESOLVED** that the updates be noted.

## **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

### **38. OUTSIDE BODIES**

Councillor Homer reported that she was unable to attend meetings of the Tyne Youth Forum due to a clash with another meeting.

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Cessford be appointed as a replacement on the Tyne Youth Forum.

### **39. TOUR OF BRITAIN**

The Chair reported that the 2019 Tour of Britain race will be travelling through Northumberland as part of Stage 3 of the event. The event this year was a partnership stage for the North of Tyne and would run from Berwick to Newcastle via North Tyneside.

All schools had been invited to participate and take a safe place to stand along the route.

Councillor Homer, the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Arts, Leisure and Tourism was delighted that the event was again taking place in the county for the third time. It was a fantastic opportunity for tourism related businesses in the Tyne Valley which could be used as a base by spectators as the race came along the Northumberland coast and then from Gateshead to the Lakes.

She also advocated the benefits of cycling and reminded everyone that maps of cycle routes were available on line or from the tourist information centres.

A copy of information regarding the race route, road closures and contact details for event officers would be circulated to Members by email after the meeting.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

#### **40. MEMBERS' LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES 2018/19**

The Local Area Council received a progress update on Members' Local Improvement Schemes as at 1 July 2019. (A copy is enclosed with the minutes as Appendix C.)

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

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

A list of agreed items for future Local Area Council meetings was circulated. (A copy is enclosed with the minutes as Appendix D.)

It was agreed that the following suggestion be referred to the Local Area Chairs Briefing for consideration for inclusion in the work programme:

- Physical Activity Strategy

**RESOLVED** that the work programme be noted and the Physical Activity Strategy be referred to the Local Areas Chairs Briefing for consideration for inclusion in the work programme.

### **Ashington/Blyth LAC, 10 July 2019**

#### **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.

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

- 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.

## **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**

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.

## **North Northumberland LAC, 16 July 2019**

### **38. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

This item was to reply to any questions received from members of the public, which could either be received in writing in advance of the meeting or asked at the meeting. Questions could be asked about issues for which the Council had a responsibility. The Vice-chair (Planning) explained that as the meeting was taking place during purdah, no questions could be allowed about any matters regarding the forthcoming Police and Crime Commissioner by-election.

**Brian Darling, local resident**, raised three issues:

1. he expressed concern that Berwick had been overlooked for the inaugural Borderlands meeting, especially given its proud heritage
2. could any television coverage of the Tour of Britain possibly capture any recent footage of dolphins in Berwick bay?
3. he was disappointed that the Berwick lifeboat fete had been cancelled this year.

The Vice-chair (Planning) reassured Mr Darling that local members were working hard to raise Berwick's profile.

### 39. PETITIONS

No new petitions or any reports or updates on petitions previously considered were available.

### 40. LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES

Members received a verbal update from the Area Managers from Technical Services and Neighbourhood Services in attendance about any key recent, ongoing and/or future planned Local Services work for the attention of members.

#### **Neighbourhood Services Update:**

- **grass cutting:** cuts number seven and eight were currently being delivered. The warm and wet conditions meant the grass continued to grow quickly and there was no sign of this slowing. The new machines purchased in 2018 continued to perform well with improved efficiency through lack of down time due to any breakdowns
- **weed control:** the in house approach was working well and return visits were organised to any areas reported. As the spray only worked on visible weeds, after completing some areas further weeds could sprout up after further good weather, and delays could be caused by either rain or wind
- **verge cutting:** work began in June 2019. The county had 6.8 million square metres of verge to cut, and officers were 264,394 metres ahead of where they were at the same time in 2018. This indicated that work was due to be completed earlier than in 2018 - the first week in August
- **In Bloom:** judging was taking place in Alnwick on 16 July and in Berwick on 19 July. Judging had taken place in Lesbury the previous week. The results would be announced in September
- **cleansing:** all summer routes were working to plan and going as well as expected, but it was an ongoing challenge as ever
- **waste services:** residual and recycling waste collection services continued to perform well.

#### **Technical Services Update:**

Members were advised of resurfacing, surface dressing and other work to a variety of locations, including Carterside Road, Rothbury; A1068 Percy Drive, Amble, the Hipsburn to Alnmouth footpath; Embleton footpath; Beach Estate; Market Street in Alnwick; Swinhoe Road at Beadnell; Newton on the Moor to Swarland; Biddlestone village; Church Street in Amble; Ravensdowne Road in Berwick; Goldstone Estate; and Blakelaw Road in Alnwick.



Members then raised a number of issues of which the key points were:

- officers were congratulated on the excellent grass cutting service delivered
- residents in rural areas could see the Council's investment in roads. Short term inconveniences caused by detours/diversions were worth the result
- officers were thanked for their work at Beech Estate in Shilbottle and road resurfacing from Newton on the Moor to Swarland
- thanks expressed for work done to Longframlington closed cemetery.

Members also asked for a number of issues to be followed up, of which the key points, including any responses from officers, were as follows:

- Hazon needed some resurfacing; members were advised that this was due to a drainage issue which was being discussed with the landowner
- Lee Avenue in Shilbottle needed maintenance to remove soil, pebbles and weeds covering kerbs
- the farm road to The Hope at Brinkburn and road to Overgrass Farm at Newton on the Moor both needed attention
- regarding any possible complications arising from the use of plastic materials in road resurfacing, members were advised that this had been trialled in some areas. The issue concerned whether the plastic element would bond into the material and cope with any wear and tear pressures; the granules had to be heated to a sufficient temperature to melt in
- a spike of complaints had been received about the condition of Eastcliffe Estate in Spittal; could a walkabout be organised? Members were advised that a meeting had taken place with Bernicia about the numbers of flagstones missing; they would be programming updating of the drying areas
- concerns were expressed about vandalism and breach of the barrier at Spittal Point; the Director of Local Services would follow up the position regarding the expected repair cost
- complaints had been received about the tidiness of cemeteries in Berwick; members were advised that a programme of work was being organised; there had been an issue with power supplies to chapels. The use of the Total Mobile app made it easier to track where work had been undertaken and cemeteries would be tidied more frequently in future. Strategic Estate officers were undertaking a full condition survey of chapels in the area. The property stewardship fund would be used to bring them up to the required standard.

Officers were thanked for their work and updates and it was:

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

## DISCUSSION ITEMS

### 41. TOUR OF BRITAIN

Members received an overview of Stage 3 of the 2019 Tour of Britain, including the route and opportunities for communities and schools to be involved. A presentation was provided (copy attached to the official minutes of the meeting)

Key details from the presentation, introduced jointly by Nigel Walsh, Gary Campbell and Ruth Tweedie, were:

- stage 3 of the event would visit Northumberland on 9 September 2019
- Northumberland County Council was working jointly with British Cycling, Sweetspot and the North of Tyne Combined Authority
- previous visits to Northumberland in 2015 and 2017 were estimated to have brought in £3.9 million to the local economy. 100,000 people watched the race and 70% came from outside the county
- the event would be shown live on ITV4 and Eurosport with a TV audience covering 190 territories
- the media value was estimated at £1 million. It was important to get communities behind the event
- the route would begin in Berwick at 11am with the finish at 3.30pm on Grey Street in Newcastle. The route was highlighted in the presentation and would take in many Northumberland towns and villages including Wooler, Bamburgh, Warkworth, Morpeth, Choppington and then pass through North Tyneside via the Priory before ending in Newcastle. Full details were provided at the meetings of the timings through the north Northumberland area
- road closures would be necessary but would be restricted to a maximum of 45 minutes to minimise inconvenience to residents
- it was hoped to involve communities that the race passed through as much as possible and they were being encouraged to decorate the roadside
- businesses were being encouraged to welcome visitors and to be as cycle friendly as possible
- a design a jersey competition for school children had been launched and it was planned to have the winning designs made up for the day.
- 160 schools had expressed an interest in viewing the event.

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

- the previous tours had been excellent events
- regarding what benefits were expected to come to Berwick businesses from the tour, many visitors were expected who might perhaps stay overnight locally and use local shops and restaurants. It was estimated that around 10,000 people might watch the beginning of the stage in Berwick, who would all need food and drink. Sweet Spot had contacted all local businesses near the route. All chambers of trade and commerce on the route were being contacted. A meeting would take

place with the Berwick Chamber of Trade on 17 July about how Berwick businesses could engage

- whether sufficient notification had been sent to schools, especially as the stage through the County in 2017 had been on a Saturday and the summer holidays were coming up, members were advised that the Director of Education had directly contacted all schools to advise them. Equivalent officers had also done so in Newcastle and North Tyneside
- work was taking place with schools; 65 children and adults were going to lead the teams out
- road closures of 90 minutes was required based on an estimate of whether the race was proceeding from a slow to a fast pace. The race was expected to travel through within a 45 minute window, and time was required either side. The police, ambulance service and public transport companies were all involved. The Council's communications team would be issuing regular updates about the timing of the race
- councillors were encouraged to spread the word about the event and encourage people to be involved.

The Vice-chair (Planning) thanked officers for their presentation and hoped that all communities would be interested in the race.

**RESOLVED** that the update be noted.

## **42. HOLY ISLAND CAUSEWAY**

This item was being presented to address concerns about recent cases of vehicles stranded by the tide on the causeway and discuss current arrangements in place and any possible further actions. The Director of Local Services, Martin Lowe the north Northumberland Coastguard from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and Nick Ayers and Rachel Farr from the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) were all in attendance for this item.

Mr Ayers introduced the item by referring to how Holy Island was a big tourist attraction and the RNLI had developed a media campaign to help reduce the number of prevent vehicles stranded on the causeway. Ms Farr, the RNLI's media marketing manager provided a display of the various designs of posters and publicity developed. The artwork would be used in a number of formats that could be used on hot drink wraps, bags and other materials, which would be shared with relevant partners including the tourist board. The posters included a QR code that people could scan to take them straight to the tide timetable webpage, and a GIF had also been produced. A range of ideas had been developed and the campaign would target local businesses, holiday companies and other relevant organisations plus also aim to raise general awareness.

Mr Lowe explained the arrangements for responding to emergencies on the causeway. 999 calls went to the coastguard operations centre at Bridlington from where contact was made with either the Berwick or

Seahouses offices, who would then assess and take action. Statistics for vehicle strandings in recent years were as follows: 2015: four incidents (three tidal / one stuck in mud/sand); 2016: 13 (10 tidal, three mud/sand); 2017: 14 (10 tidal / four in mud/sand); 2018: 16 (14 tidal / two in mud/sand); 2019 to date: 12 (10 tidal / two in mud/sand).

Questions/discussion then followed of which the key details were:

Regarding how any similar situations elsewhere had been addressed, members were advised that the Sunny Island causeway in Florida used a traffic light system. Holy Island residents did not however support either a physical barrier or traffic light system. Feedback received from a walkabout on the island included concerns that there were no easy links in place to the tide timetables. This publicity campaign, with its use of a QR code, addressed that.

Members stressed that it was important to circulate information from this campaign to all local tourist providers, inns/bed and breakfasts etc to educate visitors about the tide times and not risking journeys when the tide was coming in. Members were advised that information was included in welcome packs for holiday companies.

A member enquired about any advertising advice received and whether more graphic images of stranded vehicles had been considered to raise awareness and shock people into not risking the tide. Members were informed that such images had been used previously, but this campaign tried a different approach, was very clear that the problem was tidal, and the animation was suitable for demonstrating how water came across the causeway.

Other key points in response to questions included:

- it was always holiday makers who got stranded; 90% of cases were people coming off the island trying to avoid getting stuck there
- the message needed to be clear - if there was any water on the causeway, do not cross
- it was difficult to make any physical changes to the causeway as a result of the high level heritage and ecological protections in place. It had taken two years to get approval for cutting grips in the salt marsh
- local residents knew the timetables; on occasions visitors might follow thinking that they had time
- 700,000 people were estimated to visit Holy Island each year
- the Council was the highways authority and had responsibility for the causeway, supported the work with the RNLi and its communications team could also assist with getting the campaign's message out further. Consideration was also being given to how to upgrade the existing digital signage
- the Council had no powers to remove the blocks in the car park on the mainland as this was privately owned land

- further consideration would be given to any link between the changes to the electronic signage in 2016 and any change in the numbers of vehicles being stranded since then
- the yearly cost of lifeboat rescues for the whole country was £2m per year.

Members fully welcomed the proposals, welcome packs and posters, and agreed that all networks should be used to publicise and pass on these messages.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted, the proposed campaign supported and details circulated as widely as possible.

#### **43. NORTHUMBERLAND COAST & LOWLANDS LEADER PROGRAMME**

Members received a presentation which aims to give an overview of the 2014 - 2020 LEADER programme, a community-led, rural development fund designed and delivered to support rural communities and businesses in the Northumberland Coast and Lowlands area. (Briefing note filed with the official minutes as Appendix A.)

The presentation was delivered by Ross Lowrie, Chair of Northumberland Coast and Lowlands LEADER Local Action Group attending and Ivan Hewitt, Northumberland Coast and Lowlands LEADER Programme Officer. (Copy of presentation filed with the official minutes of the meeting.)

Mr Hewitt provided an overview which detailed the three LEADER areas, its funding arrangements; how applications for fund had now closed; its six key themes of micro and small enterprises and farm diversification/ support for rural tourism/increasing forestry productivity/ increasing farm productivity/provision of local services/culture and heritage activities, a history of LEADER to date beginning with LEADER II from 1994 onwards; principles of the LEADER approach; the role, remit and memberships of Local Action Groups; details of LEADER delivery and programme expenditure; how applications were received and processed; headline figures for each priority theme, how LEADER was about “real people in real places having a real impact on their communities and businesses”, and learning taken from the LEADER approach.

Mr Lowrie added that as LEADER was now ending, choices were needed about the future of rural support, and he had written to local MPs and DEFRA about the issue. He referred to copies of a brochure that had been circulated to members at the meeting (copy attached to official minutes of the meeting) and emphasised the learning gained from the LEADER approach. He expressed concern that opportunities had been missed about incorporating a LEADER element into either the Borderlands of North of Tyne remits and possible future regret if the approach was discontinued. He asked members to highlight the

issue where possible, and stressed the benefits of continuing a community led rural development initiative within Northumberland.

Discussion followed in which a member referred to how the Local Action Groups included a committee of committed local people who knew what they wanted and what a scheme could produce and agreed that more could have been done to include it within the Borderlands proposals. Another member added that LEADER was a fantastic way to support local businesses and projects and referred to responses at the Borderlands meeting at Dumfries that it would focus instead on big projects rather than LEADER's small projects approach.

Mr Lowrie also added that businesses had been able to apply for 40% funding and community projects up to 100% funding.

Members agreed that it was important for members and other interested parties to keep lobbying where appropriate to continue some type of LEADER approach in future and thanked Mr Lowrie and Mr Hewitt for their excellent presentation.

**RESOLVED** that the update be noted.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **44. MEMBERS' LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES 2017/19 - PROGRESS REPORT**

Members received a progress update on Members' Local Improvement Schemes for 2017/19 as at 1 July 2019. (Copy of report enclosed with the official minutes as Appendix B.)

Reference was made to progress on new bins for Seahouses and Bamburgh, and the sleeping policeman design for the Morwick Road to Gillan Road at Warkworth.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

### **45. BERWICK REGENERATION COMMISSION**

This was a standing item on the agenda for verbal updates. Members were advised that a public consultation event about the new leisure centre had recently taken place. Feedback had been wholly positive about the design. The proposal would now proceed through the planning application process.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

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

This item was to note the latest version of agreed items for future Local Area Council meetings. (Copy of report enclosed with the official minutes as Appendix C.)

Members were advised that August's meeting would not be planning only as a report responding to a petition would be considered also. Reference was also made to a proposed presentation about the Northumberland Lottery at September's round of meetings.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

#### **47. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME RESPONSES**

Details about questions asked at a previous North Northumberland Local Area Council meeting about Berwick Hospital and the responses subsequently provided were presented (copy enclosed with the official minutes as Appendix D).

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

### **Cramlington/Bedlington/Seaton Valley LAC, 17 July 2019**

#### **19. Public Question Time**

Keith Dalton, resident referred to youths congregating and causing in vandalism and asked when the commando sockets were going to be fitted to the CCTV. Councillor Robinson advised that the scheme was being commissioned by West Bedlington Town Council.

Mr Dalton also queried the protocol of Councillors in the run up to an election. Mr Dalton was advised that there were specific restrictions that Councillors must follow. Whilst Councillors could attend formal council meetings, publicity, communication and Council resources were more restricted.

Adam Hogg, resident asked what happened to the surplus money from any NCC assets that had been sold and if any monies ring fenced from Wansbeck District Council had gone into a joint pot? Mr Hogg was advised that the question would be referred back to the relevant officer for a response.

#### **21. Local Services Issues**

Members received a verbal update from the Area Managers with the opportunity for members to ask questions afterwards.

## **Technical Services Update**

Members were advised of patching work carried out at Double Row, Seaton Delaval; Melrose Avenue, Clayton Street and Vulcan Place, Bedlington; Highburn, Cramlington and Tillmouth Avenue, Seaton Delaval.

Footpath resurfacing had also been carried out at Hartford Road, Bedlington and East Hartford Footway, Cramlington and drainage improvements had taken place at Klondyke, Nelson Village, Westmorland Way and Fisher Lane, Cramlington and Barrass Avenue, Seghill.

Micro surfacing work had been completed in Huntington Drive, Totnes Drive Area and Doddington Drive, Cramlington and also The Wynding, Bedlington.

Upcoming work was required in Barrass Avenue, Seghill, North Ridge, Bedlington  
Fisher Lane, Cramlington, A1068, Cramlington, Nelson Avenue, Cramlington B1326 East Cramlington, Nelson Industrial Estate, Cramlington and Stead Lane, Bedlington

Work at Westmorland Way roundabout was continuing and progressing well.

Construction works on the salt barn at Cowley Road, Blyth was complete.

Four new gritters had been purchased, one based in the south east with a second treating parts of the south east but based in Morpeth.

A member referred to resurfacing work carried out at Hartley Square, Seaton Sluice and stated that this had started to lift. The Highways Delivery Area Manager would report this back to Street Works.

## **Neighbourhood Services Update**

Waste services was continuing to operate satisfactorily. Grass cutting was between 9 and 13 cuts but growth should slow down within the next few weeks.

The A189 Spine Road would be closed every Saturday during August from 8:00 pm until 6:00 am for grass cutting, litter removal, patching; safety barrier work and maintenance. A Member raised a concern regarding this as major work was due to be carried out at Moor Farm.

Bereavement memorial testing was due to be carried out on church memorials. In response to a comment regarding the method of testing, it was reported that a risk assessment would be carried out.

A Member queried the timing between the binmen and road sweeper in the Seaton Delaval area and this would be reported back on.



Concerns were raised in relation to the closure of the A189; the amount of litter in the recycling bin at Seaton Sluice harbour; litter on the pavilion at Cramlington Town Football Club and fly-tipping at Holywell Dene. The issues would be followed up for response.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted and issues raised by Members be followed up by Local Services.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS - LOCAL**

### **22. Tour of Britain**

Members were provided with a verbal presentation on the progress of the Bedlington town centre redevelopment. (The presentation would be circulated to Members following the meeting and filed with the signed minutes).

- The Tour of Britain would take place between 7 and 14 September. Stage 3 would take place between Berwick upon Tweed and Newcastle
- Northumberland County Council was working jointly with British Cycling, Sweetspot and the North of Tyne Combined Authority
- Previous visits to Northumberland in 2015 and 2017 were estimated to have brought in £3.9 million to the local economy. 100,000 people watched the race and 70% came from outside the county
- The event would be shown live on ITV4 and Eurosport
- The route would begin in Berwick at 11:00 am with the finish in Grey Street, Newcastle. The route of the tour was outlined in the presentation and would take in many Northumberland towns and rural villages including Ford and Etal, Wooler, Belford, Embleton, finally finishing at Stobhill, Morpeth at 2.50 pm
- Rolling road closures would take place but would be restricted to a maximum of 45 minutes to keep disruption to a minimum
- Communities would be encouraged to get involved with decoration
- Towns with schools would be provided with safe places to stand
- Posters giving information would be distributed and displayed and it was hoped that the broadcasting of the tour would showcase Northumberland as the place to visit
- It was hoped that the tour would encourage health and well being
- A design a jersey competition for school children had been launched and it was planned to have the winning designs made up for the day
- A toolkit for businesses was available on line and Members would be provided with the link
- An invite would be sent out to Parish and Town Councils and relevant Chambers of Trade

Discussion followed during which the key points raised by Members and responses from officers were:

- The tour would be linked with Sustrans and tips on safety would be available on the website
- Live updates would be given on the routes
- There would be safety barriers all along The Avenue past Seaton Delaval Hall

Officers were wished well with the tour and thanked for their presentation.

**RESOLVED** that the presentation be noted.

## **REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LOCAL SERVICES AND HOUSING DELIVERY**

### **23. Members' Local Improvement Scheme - Progress Report**

Members were provided with an update on Members' Local Area Schemes during 2018/19 as at 1 November 2018. (Report attached with the signed minutes).

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

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

Members noted the latest version of agreed items for future Local Area Council meetings (any suggestions for new agenda items would require confirmation by the Business Chair after the meeting). (Work Programme enclosed with the official minutes.)

A member expressed concern at the lack of future items on the work programme. This had been raised at the recent briefing of the Local Area Council Chairs.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.