

CABINET 10 MARCH 2020

FEEDBACK FROM LOCAL AREA COUNCIL MEETINGS 13 - 23 JANUARY 2020 - EXTRACTS FROM MINUTES

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

CASTLE MORPETH LOCAL AREA COUNCIL - 13 JANUARY 2020

111. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair explained that this item provided an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions either at the meeting or submit them in advance.

There were no public questions.

112. PETITIONS

Members were informed that, since the previous meeting, no new petitions had been received, there were no reports due on petitions previously received, nor any updates due on petitions previously considered.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

113. LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES

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

Neighbourhood Services

- Waste collections over the Christmas/New Year period had gone very well, despite an increase of 40 tonnes.
- Ground maintenance work was going better than planned and members were asked to make any requests as soon as possible.
- Leaf clearance was under way and there were a number of problem areas.
- Recruitment for summer staff would soon be underway.
- Members should let the Area Manager know if they were aware of any reactive work that was required.

Highways Services

- There were a large number of potholes and the numbers were likely to increase due to the high level of rain recently.
- Potholes would be repaired as quickly as possible.
- Resurfacing was due to commence on Middle Drive, Darras Hall shortly along with work at Morpeth Railway Station car park.
- A message would be sent to members soon regarding the patching programme due to start in April.
- Work at Cottingwood Lane had been delayed to allow utility works to take place.
- Timber kerbing had been installed at Pegswood school to prevent damage to the grass by vehicles. Cllr Towns praised these works for the design and value for money
- A local resident had been informed that posts that had been placed on land at the Shilivington/Kirkley road end, should be removed.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

114. BUDGET 2020-21 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

The Local Area Council received a presentation as part of the State of the Area Debate, which outlined the Council's strategy for the 2020-21 Budget, within the context of the Corporate Plan. A copy of the presentation is filed with the signed minutes.

The presentation covered a number of areas including:-

- Reviewing the achievements of the current administration since 2017.
- Investment in local authority housing and provision of additional affordable housing.
- Most residents were satisfied with support received in health and social care.
- All of Northumberland County Council's services were rated good or outsta
- Northumberland was being promoted in a positive way and £1 billion had come into the county via tourism spend.
- Funding for improvements to rural broadband.
- Road improvements including the Blyth relief road and car parking in towns.
- Improvements to cycling and walking network.
- Investment in schools in Ponteland, Hexham, Amble and Seaton Delaval.
- Increase and develop the SEN capacity in Northumberland.
- Availability of apprenticeships.
- Significant investment in infrastructure in local towns
- Transforming and upgrading sport and leisure facilities
- Grasping all opportunities to bring funding into Northumberland

- There was confidence that £21.7 million savings could be achieved over a two year period whilst protecting front line services.
- A transition team had been set up.
- An increase in Council Tax of 1.99% was proposed. Further details would be considered in February 2020.

Discussion followed and points raised included:-

- There needed to be more public participation in the Local Area Council meetings and ideas on how to achieve this were welcome.
- Choppington Parish Council had a People's Panel which provided feedback on local issues. The Panel's views were taken into account before decisions such as on the budget were made.
- Local organisations could use the Local Area Council meetings as a vehicle to showcase their work and services.
- Forums in towns such as Hexham, Morpeth, Alnwick, Blyth and Berwick could also be used as a way of engaging with the community.
- Groups of towns and villages could be formed for discussions with Councillors and to show that the community was being listened to.
- It was suggested that the venue for the Castle Morpeth LAC should move around the area. It was noted that this would be necessary from July 2020 to January 2021 whilst refurbishment work took place in the Council Chamber.

RESOLVED that the presentation be received.

115. SOCIAL CARE APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME 'CARE FOR LIFE'

Members received a presentation about the Social Care Leaders Apprenticeship programme and opportunities for offering existing social care staff and/or new talented individuals to enter social care as potential future managers and leaders. A copy of the presentation is filed with the signed minutes.

A number of points were made during the presentation, including:-

- The programme aimed to raise the profile of adult social care and to allow succession planning by nurturing a younger workforce in 16-25 age group.
- A website had been developed along with TV and radio adverts, a leaflet and posters.
- Much of the development was in-house to reduce costs.
- The campaign reached over 150,000 people and the website had over 7,000 hits.
- Engagement events were held and achieved varying levels of attendance and recruitment.
- Interest was generated from outside Northumberland but all the recruitment had taken place from local residents.

- Interviewees had mainly fallen in the 18-25 year old bracket with a number of Looked After Children and school leavers being involved.
- A new recruitment campaign would commence in spring 2020 and current apprentices would be used as case studies for the next cohort.

Members welcomed the presentation.

RESOLVED that the presentation be received.

116. HEALTHWATCH NORTHUMBERLAND

Members received a presentation from Derry Nugent, Co-ordinator of Healthwatch, covering current work and feedback received by Healthwatch from health and social care service users. Members' feedback and insights into current health and social care issues in their communities was welcomed. (A copy of Healthwatch Northumberland's Quarterly Report for July – September 2019/20 is attached to the signed minutes as **Appendix C.**)

The following points were raised during the presentation:-

- The quarterly report was sensitive to local issues and could produce spikes in the data at certain times.
- The report could be refined to cover any issues of particular interest to the Local Area Council.
- Most feedback received was health related but it was acknowledged that the care provider referred to in comments was not necessarily the County Council.
- Healthwatch had the power to 'Enter and View' care facilities although it was not an inspection. This power had not previously been used but would be from February 2020.
- Meetings of Healthwatch moved around the county and meetings always had a drop in session beforehand. Healthwatch would be happy to come along to any Local Area Council meetings.
- Upcoming work for Healthwatch included:-
 - The annual survey - to receive comments about people's experiences of health and social care over the last 12 months. A number of meetings were set up during February and March. The last annual survey had about 800 responses.
 - Patient participation group report.
 - Audiology services report.

Members made the following comments:-

- Audiology services had been available locally in the Choppington area but had now moved to Cramlington. This caused transport difficulties both for parking or for those relying on public transport.

- Eye screening had now moved from being available at local opticians to different locations and, again, could cause problems for those with transport difficulties.
- Hospital to Home care - this was a valuable service but it had been difficult to find out about it and to co-ordinate everyone who needed to be involved. This could be particularly problematic at a difficult time for a family.
- Healthwatch should consider attending forum events which were held occasionally in the major towns in Northumberland.

RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

117. MEMBERS' LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES

Members received a progress report. (A copy of the report is attached to the signed minutes as **Appendix D.**)

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

118. 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 E**)

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

119. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Monday, 10 February 2020, at 4.00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Morpeth.

TYNEDALE LOCAL AREA COUNCIL - 14 JANUARY 2020

116. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from members of the public.

117. PETITIONS

This item was to:

a) Receive any new petitions:

There were none to consider.

b) Consider reports on petitions previously received:

(i) Request for Reduced Speed Limit on Hexham Road, B6528 AND Holeyn Hall Road, Wylam

A petition had been received which requested that Northumberland County Council improve safety for pedestrians by reducing the speed limit from 60mph to 40mph on Hexham Road/B6528 towards Holeyn Hall Crossroads and on Holeyn Hall Road leading into Wylam.

The Chair read out the following statement from Cllr Quinn, the local member, who had been unable to attend the meeting:

“I am writing to give my full support to the Petition being discussed this evening requesting the reduction of the speed limit on the Hexham Road B6528 at Holeyn Hall Crossroads and on Holeyn Hall Road, Wylam.

As an almost daily user of this road I agree totally with the concerns of the residents in relation to road safety. I note the results of the speed survey carried out on Holeyn Hall Road, and accept that the average speeds recorded north and southbound are under 40mph, but the fact that vehicles were recorded travelling at speeds up to 61mph is a matter of great concern - I have personally seen vehicles clip the kerb and mount the pavement on many occasions and there is no doubt in my mind that pedestrians using the pavement are at risk from traffic moving at such speeds.

Whilst I agree wholeheartedly with the petitioners that the speed limit should be reduced, I am pleased to see recommendations for management of the encroaching vegetation, and that drainage concerns will be investigated, and I look forward to seeing the results of the speed survey to be undertaken at Holeyn Hall Road crossroads. I am also pleased that a review will be

undertaken to consider whether the layout of the road is such that further safety measures are appropriate.

The petition has my full support.”

The Principal Programme Officer confirmed that he would be liaising with the Highways Delivery Area Manager to see what improvements could be made quickly. A speed survey would be carried out at Holleyn Hall Road crossroads to gauge the effectiveness of current safety measures and consider if further works would improve safety.

The Lead Petitioner thanked members and officers for their support and enquired about the time frame for any work.

The Principal Programme Officer confirmed that overgrown vegetation would be addressed quickly. More time would be needed to consider other safety measures which would involve the design team and discussions with the local Councillor and Parish Council.

RESOLVED that:

- a) The contents of the report be noted, and
- b) The Local Area Council support consideration of the potential inclusion of a funding allocation in the draft LTP programme for 2020/21, to allow appropriate safety measures and maintenance to be investigated.

c) To consider updates on petitions previously considered:

i) Removal of double yellow lines, Beech Grove, Prudhoe

The Local Area Council received an updated report which explored a number of options that Members had recommended be investigated following consideration of the matter on 14 May 2019.

The Principal Programme Officer explained that, whilst sympathising with residents and the situation, it was not recommended that any changes be made to the current parking restrictions as it was not a Council's responsibility to provide parking for residents.

Members noted that:

- Many residents did not have off-street parking and there were limited opportunities nearby.
- Removal of restrictions from a section on one side of the road or overnight would be of assistance to residents.
- The cost of building a retaining wall to create a nearby parking area was prohibitive.

The Lead Petitioner commented that:

- Residents did not have anywhere to park in the vicinity of their homes.
- She enquired if a speed survey had also been carried out Beaumont Terrace and Woodbine Terrace, as the road was the same width as Beech Grove, and they did not have yellow lines along that stretch.
- A parking area which had been used by residents was now locked and unable to be used.
- Many road users did not observe the speed limit and she was of the view that cars parked outside properties on Beech Grove would slow traffic down.
- She pleaded for assistance as she could not afford to move to a house with a driveway.

The Chair thanked the petitioner for attending and suggested that residents liaise with their local member, Councillor Stow, and the Principal Programme Officer.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted including the recommendation that no changes be made.

118. LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES

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

Technical Services:

- Maintenance was ongoing as a result of Highways inspections. Actionable defects were being rectified within the time specified in the policy. The hotbox was undertaking work in the area carrying out patching and more permanent repairs.
- The carriageway was breaking up in certain areas, especially on high routes, as a result from ground conditions changing from wet to frost. Inspections were taking place more regularly in known problem areas with rectification work being carried out where possible.
- Gully operations were ongoing within the area on planned routine works and also from issues logged within the system as a result of calls from members of the public and Councillors. Work in some wards would be carried out following letter drops or when traffic management was arranged.
- The drainage gang was still operational rectifying any problems as well as a JCB carrying out ditching works. Work in Warden by the railway line was now complete.
- Safety schemes were still being delivered.
- Completion of construction and LTP works were weather dependent and would be carried over into the next financial year, if necessary.

Winter Service Update

- 60 gritting runs had been carried out to date across primary and high ground routes.
- Grit bins and heaps were being replenished in response to requests from members of the public and Highways Inspectors.

Issues raised by Councillors included:

- Areas of the hard shoulder on the A68 were narrowing or disappearing and were dangerous as the road was unlit. The Highways Delivery Area Manager confirmed that this was a known issue and was being monitored.

Neighbourhood Services:

- Refuse collection staff have worked extra shifts to catch up after the Christmas bank holidays. An extra 40 tons of residual waste and 33 tons of recyclable waste had been collected. This represented an 8% and 13.5% increase on the average for this time of year.
- There had been some capacity issues at a few of the bottle bring sites. The excess had been cleared away quickly and skips emptied. They would look to increase capacity at some locations for the next Christmas period.
- Extra bulky waste slots had been made available to respond to an increase in demand in the run up to Christmas.
- Leaf clearance had been close to completion but recent high winds meant that some areas would need to be revisited. Councillors with concerns regarding particular areas were requested to contact the officer.
- Cutting back of hedges and shrubs was being carried out.
- The recruitment process for seasonal staff had commenced for summer 2020.
- Grounds and cleansing staff from the Tynemills and Low Prudhoe depots were assisting with the Highways winter services rota and gritting in town centres.

Issues raised by Councillors included:

- Waste bins on the A68 and A695 laybys needed to be emptied.
- Street sweeper required for paths in Hexham central. Locations to be emailed to the officer.
- Gulleys between Catton and Allendale were blocked.
- Gulley between Wentworth Car Park and Bristol Street Motors garage in Hexham were blocked. This would be checked as work had been carried out in the previous 12 months.

Members of the Local Area Council expressed their appreciation to Local Services staff for their work over the festive period.

RESOLVED that the updates be noted.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

119. Budget 2020-21 and Medium Term Financial Plan

The Local Area Council received a presentation as part of the State of the Area debate which outlined the Council's strategy for the 2020-21 Budget within the context of the Corporate Plan. The presentation provided details of the approach to setting the budget for the next financial year and the broad impact this would have on the delivery of services. (A copy of the presentation is enclosed with the minutes of the meeting.)

Councillor Oliver, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services and Councillor Daley, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Children's Services gave the presentation which covered:

- Core beliefs
- Delivery of manifesto pledges, completion of projects and other key achievements since 2017.
- Aims and achievements in the following areas:
 - Living - residents feel safe, valued and part of their community.
 - Enjoying - residents live in distinctive, vibrant places, which they value and in which they feel proud,
 - Connecting - residents can easily get to work, to learn and to the various facilities and services they want to use.
 - Learning - residents regardless of their age, have the right qualifications and skills to ensure a good job that pays well, and provides the prospect of a rewarding career.
 - Thriving - businesses booming with the council doing everything in its power to create the right connections for economic growth.
- Future priorities
- The budget context:
 - Savings of £9.8 million identified for 2020/21 with work ongoing for 2021/22.
 - A transition team was driving service integration.
 - Impact on frontline services to be minimised.
- Projected spend of £677 million on the capital programme between 2019-2022 whilst being mindful of debt levels.
- Next steps - consideration by Scrutiny, Local Area Councils and on-line consultation with final version being considered by Council in February 2020.
- A 1.99% increase in Council Tax was proposed for 2020/21.

The following issues were discussed:

- Additional investment in gully machines should be considered to prevent further deterioration of road surfaces.
- Business rate discounts for high streets were to be considered on a town by town basis. There was an overcapacity of retail units in some locations

and landowners should consider other uses. Examples of successful bids for government funding had been obtained in a number of areas including Heritage Action in Hexham. If discounts were provided on business rates, additional income would be required from other sources to maintain services elsewhere.

- The 'Discover Our Land' campaign had recently been refreshed to address the diverse nature of the county.
- Small businesses needed to be encouraged to relocate to town centres. Some buildings were already being used for multiple purposes such as the Queens Hall Arts Centre in Hexham and Alnwick Playhouse.
- The night time economy was to be encouraged.
- The pods at Amble were an excellent initiative and something similar should be replicated in Hexham marketplace.

RESOLVED that the presentation be received.

120. Northumberland County Council's Adult Social Care Apprenticeship

The Local Area Council received a presentation about the Social Care Leaders Apprenticeship programme and opportunities, for existing social care staff and/or new talented individuals, to enter social care as potential future managers and leaders. (A copy of the presentation is enclosed with the minutes of the meeting.)

Janice Gerard, Careers, Acting Manager, Learning & Skills Service and Audrey Kingham, Director Business Development, Children's Services gave the presentation which covered:

- The Care for Life campaign had aimed to raise the profile of adult social care and to allow succession planning by nurturing a younger workforce in the 16 - 25 age group.
- Involvement by 'real' members of staff who were enthusiastic about their jobs, opportunities for progression and had volunteered to act as ambassadors.
- Development of a website, adverts, leaflets and other materials. A copy of A5 leaflets were circulated at the meeting.
- Analysis of the communications plan, what had worked well and would be replicated in future campaigns.
- Budget considerations: work undertaken internally and location of engagement events to minimise costs.
- Analysis of campaign statistics and review of the success of engagement events. Over 150,000 people had seen the campaign with 7,000+ visits to the website.
- Web analytics and geographical spread, which included many locations outside Northumberland and the North East area.

- Recruitment impact: 78 people provided personal data, 40 invitations issued for interviews, 31 interviews held, 19 individuals offered apprenticeships resulting in 14 new apprentices in post.
- The majority of interviews had been held with people who had fallen in the 16 - 25 age bracket and had included Looked after Children, school leavers and individuals who had experience of caring for a family member. Candidates had been chosen for their caring and compassionate nature and not dependent on previous experience or academic qualifications. Managers had been delighted with the new staff.
- Campaign to begin again in Spring 2020.
- Outcome awaited for 2 award nominations for the campaign.

The following information was provided in answer to questions:

- One individual had dropped out to date.
- This was the first time the campaign had been run and would be more targeted next time.
- Adverts had been aimed to reach the particular age group and therefore time slots had been chosen on catch up tv around programmes such as 'Love Island'.

It was agreed that the links to radio and media adverts, which were unable to be demonstrated at the meeting, would be circulated by email.

RESOLVED that the presentation be received.

121. Healthwatch Northumberland

Members received a presentation that covered current work and feedback received by Healthwatch from health and social care service users, and sought from members insights of current health and social care issues in their communities. (A copy of Healthwatch Northumberland's Quarterly Report for July – September 2019/20 is enclosed with the minutes as Appendix E.)

Derry Nugent, Healthwatch Northumberland - Project Coordinator, circulated details of engagements events that were scheduled to be held at different locations across the Tynedale area between 5 February 2020 and 26 March 2020 to promote the organisation's Annual Survey for 2020. Over 800 individuals had completed the Northumberland Healthwatch annual survey in 2019 and they hoped to increase participation in 2020 in order that user experiences were improved. She explained they used a variety of forums to raise awareness of their organisation including voluntary sector organisations, lunch clubs and over 60's groups.

In 2019 66% of respondents had described their overall satisfaction with services as good or excellent and they wanted to hear from more health service users. Their Twitter tag was #speakup2020.

A copy of the Northumberland Healthwatch feedback form was circulated at the meeting. Councillors were a valuable resource having many contacts in their communities. Further copies were available for Members surgeries or other community groups. Copies were also available in a variety of locations including libraries, GP surgeries, pharmacies, community halls.

The following information was provided in answer to questions from Members:

- An electronic copy of the feedback form or Twitter handle would be emailed to Members so they could raise awareness of the annual survey via their social media accounts.
- Some patients were finding dementia assessment and support in rural areas difficult to initiate. The Project Coordinator agreed to obtain more information from Councillor Riddle after the meeting.
- A report on Patient Placement Participation Groups was due to be published in the following month.

RESOLVED that the presentation be received.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

122. MEMBERS' LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES 2018/19

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

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

123. 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 G.)

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted.

124. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 11 February 2020 at Hexham House, Gilesgate, Hexham at 4.00 p.m.

ASHINGTON & BLYTH LOCAL AREA COUNCIL - 15 JANUARY 2020

69. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

David Mallon asked why Northumberland County Council found it acceptable to pay off bullied staff. Councillor Oliver, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, said he was not aware of bullied staff and could not comment on individual cases. However, in terms of compromise agreements, these were only used after a person had taken appropriate legal advice and was willing to sign.

With the agreement of the Chair, the agenda was re-ordered to discuss the following item next.

70. 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.

Technical Services

M Carle, Highways Delivery Area Manager, provided a very brief update stating that winter services were ongoing with routes being upgraded and checked. It had been a mild winter so far and maintenance was on-going. He had no significant issues to report.

Neighbourhood Services

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

Waste Service:

- Staff had picked up an extra 104 tons in the week following the holiday period. There had been a 17% increase from Stakeford Depot and 64 tons from Blyth Depot which was a 10% increase on a normal period. Staff had worked overtime shifts to catch up for the bank holidays.
- There had been capacity issues at some of the bottle bring sites, excess was cleared away and skips had been emptied. Officers were looking to increase capacity for the Christmas period next year at some locations with extra skips.
- Extra bulky waste slots had been made available to cover a rise in demand in the run up to Christmas and these had been taken by residents.

Grounds Maintenance:

- Leaf clearance was close to completion and if members had any areas of concern they should inform the Neighbourhood Services Area Manager.
- High winds had resulted in some areas which had been completed requiring extra attention.
- Cutting back of hedges and shrubs was ongoing in all areas with Newbiggin 90% complete, Ashington 75% complete and Blyth 60% complete. Officers were confident that all core works would be completed and requests would be taken into consideration.
- The process of recruiting seasonal staff for the coming summer period had commenced.

Street Cleansing:

- Leaf clearance had been a priority and leaf hot spot areas had largely been addressed.
- Street cleansing teams had worked hard on the lead up to the Holiday period and over the Bank Holidays to ensure streets were up to standard.
- There was reactive work for the mechanical sweepers as a result of the high winds and heavy rains but planned work started last week within the area.

General:

- Staff from Stakeford Depot continued to work on the Highways operated winter services rota and would assist when needed for any footpath gritting within the areas.

In response to questions the following information was provided:

- The green machine used on Station Road in Ashington had been out of action for two months due to it requiring a part but it would be back on the street shortly.
- In terms of gullies being blocked by leaves, issues were addressed in line with reports of flooding and hotspots were prioritised.
- There would be an update about weed spraying at the next full meeting of the Local Area Council.

It was requested that conversations about community bins continue, especially in the colliery rows as burst bags could cause problems for front line services. This had been trialled in parts of Ashington and had been a success. Positive views were expressed about the partnership with Ashington Town Council.

Thanks were expressed to officers for the work carried out on potholes and it was queried if the roads around the St Johns area at Bedlington Station could be inspected. The Highways Delivery Area Manager said there was a 6 monthly inspection rota but he would put forward the request to the Area Inspector.

In response to a query about fly tipping, it was reported that this had gradually decreased over the last few months.

Members thanked officers for all of their hard work over the festive period and asked that their appreciation be conveyed to their teams.

71. PETITIONS

(a) Receive any new petitions: Request for Footpath from Seaton Vale to NCEA School

The Chair advised members that an e petition had been received requesting a footpath from Seaton Vale estate to the NCEA school. The petition had gone live the previous day and, 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: None to consider.

(c) Receive any updates on petitions for which a report was previously considered: No reports to consider.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

72. BUDGET 2020-21 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

The Local Area Council received a presentation as part of the State of the Area Debate, which outlined the Council's strategy for the 2020-21 Budget, within the context of the Corporate Plan. It provided details of the approach to setting the budget for the next financial year and the broad impact it would have on the delivery of services. (A copy of the presentation is filed with the signed minutes.)

The Leader of the Council introduced Cabinet Members and thanked them for attending. He said he would recap on what had taken place over the last year and expressed the administration's ambitions to make Northumberland a place where people would love to live, work and have careers.

His presentation covered the following:

- The Administration's Core beliefs to guide how they believed the Council should serve the community.
- Delivery of manifesto pledges, completion of projects and other key achievements since 2017.
- Living - residents to feel safe, valued and part of their community. Commitment to deliver 1,000 Council owned houses, improve 2,000 Council owned properties, develop a Northumberland Joint Health and Wellbeing

Strategy for the next 10 years, training in health, social care and voluntary sectors, supporting vulnerable residents, achieving high levels of satisfaction (91% of people surveyed said they were very satisfied with the care and support they received, 90% of residents said the services they used made them feel safe and secure), excellent services for young people.

- Enjoying - residents to live in distinctive, vibrant places, which they valued and in which they felt proud.

Campaign to promote county positively, winning gold in 2018 and silver in the 2019 British Travel Awards UK, achieving a tourism spend of over £1 bn for the first time ever, tourism one of the most important industries for creating employment, integrating services such as libraries and creating community hubs, cultural programme, investing in parks and green spaces, green flag awards, Hirst Park refurbishment in Ashington, valuing partnership agreements with Town and Parish Councils.

- Connecting - residents to get to work easily, learn and have access to various facilities and services they want to use.

Scrapped travel fares for post 16 travel and providing free transport for students, nearer to securing the Northumberland to Newcastle rail line, significant road improvements, additional £7.7m for highway maintenance, identified preferred route for Blyth Relief Road, improved digital connectivity and improved that in rural areas.

- Learning - residents regardless of their age, to have the right qualifications and skills to ensure a good job that paid well, and the prospect of a rewarding career. Invested £130 m in schools development across the County, school performance improving, 90% of primary schools good or outstanding, 66% secondary schools, good or outstanding, ambition for 100% on both. High emphasis on special educational needs, developed a North of England Education Challenge fund to ensure people have better jobs to build their careers and a thriving local economy.

- Thriving - businesses booming with the Council doing everything in its power to create the right connections for economic growth.

Securing significant funding for the regeneration of town centres, huge investments in the Portland Park area of Ashington, investment in Bedlington and town centre funding for Blyth, investment in leisure services. Through partnership with Advance Northumberland, significant progress with Northumberland Energy Park, 660 new jobs created on former Blyth Power Station site, working actively with businesses for expansion plans based around renewable energy, new training centre at Port of Blyth. The purchase of Ashwood Business Park and plans to develop jobs there.

- Future priorities - aim for people to stay in Northumberland and work in Northumberland. Put customers at the heart of everything, deliver on commitments.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services said the budget would be presented to full Council in February. He thanked senior officers in all departments for the work they had done on the budget and the contributions they had made. All savings for the next year had been identified and the approach was to drive efficiency where

possible with as little impact on front line services as possible. He then went through the budget as follows:

- Budget Context - the budget was for 2 years. To date no long term funding plan from the Government had been received due to the December election.
- Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement - NCC proposed a council tax increase of 1.99%, £2.6m social care support grant, £1.5m winter pressures grant, £5.8m social care funding.
- Capital Programme 2019-2022.
- Next steps - questions were invited. There would be an opportunity for all to read the published document and the final version would be considered by full Council in February.

Following the presentation, members raised the following issues:

- There were a number of vacant flats in Blyth which people did not want to rent and concerns were raised as to what might happen to those properties.
- It was confirmed that the 1,000 planned new homes would be social housing and would be spread across the county with an emphasis on starter homes for the young and elderly people's accommodation.
- Some sites owned by Advance Northumberland were specified for employment use but the Leader confirmed that all possible sites would be considered for affordable housing.
- Concerns were raised about the derelict site behind the coastline restaurant in Blyth. The Leader responded that the site was privately owned but he believed a proposal was in the pipeline.
- Extra funding was requested for Newsham Park in Blyth which now had a national bowling club. Grass cutting and maintenance was not carried out to an acceptable standard and residents were relied upon to keep the park tidy.
- In response to comments that work on the Northumberland to Newcastle rail link had been on-going for a number of years, the Leader said the £3 ½ m investment study had made a huge impact.
- It was queried if NCC employed any apprentices with special educational needs and it was stated that schools were not performing well enough in deprived areas. In response the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Services said there were employees working on the county coffee kiosk with special educational needs and from the care system. He said that, morally, the Council had an obligation to look at this and education should be provided in-house. There were special schools in Ashington and Hexham and there was to be a new free school in Blyth for children with special educational needs. In terms of education performance, there had been issues for a number of years but the number of permanent exclusions had decreased by 27% . He agreed, however, that performance in the South East of the county needed to improve and believed the Education Challenge would show significant improvements.
- Concerns were raised about the support given by NCC to maintain town centres in Ashington, Blyth and Newbiggin and it was suggested this should be reviewed.

- In response to queries about the Portland Park development and the lack of information provided, the Leader referred to commercial issues and said they had been unable to have open discussions until the business case had been signed off. He advised that the cinema should be delivered in around a year's time and he was happy to discuss the details with local councils.
- For the last two years weed control had been diabolical.
- The proposal for Ashwood Business Park was welcomed. Could times and deadlines be provided?
- With regard to climate change, figures quoted were from 2010 and had cross-party involvement.
- At Scrutiny meetings lots of questions were raised but reports did not highlight any of the discussion so how could they be reviewed? In response the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services said the administration welcomed scrutiny at a local level but reports were brief for a reason and were a list of what had been agreed, they were not minutes.
- Partnerships with local councils were paramount.
- In response to a request for more measures to be in place to aid disabled people to be more independent, the Leader agreed there was always more to be done. There were a number of projects in place throughout the Council and work was taking place with Town Councils on access plans for town centres. There was a budget in the Local Plan for improvements for disabled people and Members could also use their local improvement scheme budget.
- Reference was made to untidy gardens at Council properties and how officers should be reminded that tenants had a duty to maintain them. Dog fouling did not seem to be as much of a problem as it used to be. The Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing and Resilience said he had attended walk-about around Blyth with a local member in the past and had taken on board the points raised. He had been in discussions with the Head of Housing that week and they were going to review what was required of Estate Management Officers in their reports. He agreed that improvements were needed and gave a commitment that this was a priority.
- There were major problems for Councillors trying to engage with officers at Bernicia and it was queried if the Cabinet could do anything about that? The Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing and Resilience said they had a good relationship with senior officers at Bernicia and Karbon Homes and would take this up.
- A request was put forward to raise the £15,000 allocated to Members' Improvement Schemes and to remove the £2,000 minimum for each project. In response the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services said some members used this scheme more efficiently than others. It had been decided not to increase the figure this year but it would be looked at again next year. It was noted that a dispensation could be requested for special projects; the Community Chest was another option and the Northumberland Lottery would soon be launched.

RESOLVED that the presentation be received.

73. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL'S ADULT SOCIAL CARE APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME 'CARE FOR LIFE'

The Local Area Council received a presentation about the Social Care Apprenticeship programme and opportunities, for existing social care staff and/or new talented individuals, to enter social care as potential future managers and leaders. (A copy of the presentation is enclosed with the signed minutes of the meeting.)

Audrey Kingham, Director Business Development, Children's Services and Janice Gerard, Acting Manager, Learning and Skills Service were in attendance to provide the presentation and answer questions. The key points of the presentation were as follows:

- The Care for Life campaign had come about when adult social care teams had identified they had an ageing workforce.
- The campaign was commissioned to recruit 16-25 year olds to allow succession planning and improve perception by raising the profile of adult social care generally.
- Teams went out and talked to 'real' members of staff in Northumberland and found they loved their jobs and were enthusiastic about how helping others enriched their lives. This was the backbone of all marketing materials, the experience of 'real' colleagues to take this forward.
- Development of a website, replication of materials and partnership working gave the opportunity to showcase the investment the Council had made in young people and also provide a career changing direction for people of all ages.
- A 30 second video advertisement, radio advert, A5 leaflets and screensavers/posters were referred to.
- A brief overview of the communications plan was provided with the aim of targeting a wider audience. Face to face interaction and pop up engagements had worked particularly well and would be replicated in the future.
- In terms of budget considerations, a lot of work had been undertaken internally and Council owned centres and facilities were used to minimise costs. ITV hub adverts played around 'Love Island' for maximum exposure and to target a young audience.
- Analysis of campaign statistics showed that in excess of 150,000 people had seen the campaign through the ITV hub, the click through rate from the video advert was 4 times higher than similar campaigns and the website had received over 7000 hits.
- Web analytics were provided and with regard to geographical spread this included many locations outside Northumberland and the North East area.
- Recruitment impact - Over 150,000 people had seen the campaign, over 7,000 visited the website, 78 provided personal data, 40 were called for interviews, 31 attended interviews, 19 were offered apprenticeships and 14 new apprentices were in post.

- Interview demographics were provided - most candidates were in the 16 - 25 age bracket and included looked after children, school leavers and individuals who had experience of caring for a family member. Candidates had been chosen for their caring and compassionate nature and not dependent on previous experience or academic qualifications.
- The next campaign was to begin again in Spring 2020 to capture college student progression.
- There would be continued engagement with apprentices and they would be used as case studies for the next cohort.
- Two award nominations had been submitted for which the outcome was awaited.

Members then asked questions and the following information was provided:

- For the first year apprentices were employed on the Council's apprenticeship wage and thereafter, depending on age, the appropriate minimum wage. Details would be forwarded to Councillor Purvis as requested.
- It was suggested that other incentives could be offered as an inducement, for example driving lessons. It was acknowledged that this was a good idea and it would be beneficial to invest in individuals as it was hoped that they would be employed for the long term.
- At the first level apprenticeships were generic and at the next level became more specialised. Apprentices would be moving around different points of social care in order to gain more experience.
- Qualifications would be transportable and were part of the recruitment policy.

Members thanked the officers for their presentation stating social care work was a vocation and needed dedicated staff. They were particularly pleased that recruitment had included looked after children and they hoped apprenticeships would increase the following year.

RESOLVED that the presentation be received.

74. HEALTHWATCH, NORTHUMBERLAND

Members received a presentation that covered current work and feedback received by Healthwatch Northumberland from health and social care service users and sought member's insights into current health and social care issues within their communities. (A copy of Healthwatch Northumberland's Quarterly Report for July – September 2019/20 is enclosed with the signed minutes as Appendix D.)

Derry Nugent, Project Coordinator for Healthwatch Northumberland, thanked members for inviting her to the meeting. She said many of them would know that Healthwatch was an independent champion for people who used health and social

care services across Northumberland. They collected evidence and summarised feedback and concerns to those who were in a position to make decisions.

The quarterly report for July to September had been circulated to members and the next report was now in production.

Ms Nugent referred to Healthwatch's annual survey which had been distributed in many formats to ask people about their experiences in the last 12 months. Last year over 800 responses were received and it was hoped that participation would increase in 2020. Councillors were valued as a main source of help in achieving a good response rate through their networks and contacts in communities.

Details of scheduled engagement events to be held at various locations across Ashington and Blyth between 3 February 2020 and 18 March 2020 were circulated. Members were asked if they could promote the dates and times of these events and if they had any suggestions for improving the response rate, these would be gratefully received.

A copy of the Northumberland Healthwatch feedback form was circulated at the meeting and further copies were available for Members' surgeries and other community groups. Copies were also available in a variety of locations including libraries, GP surgeries, pharmacies, community halls etc.

The Chair thanked Ms Nugent for attending and praised the work of Healthwatch, encouraging all carers to register with them.

RESOLVED that the presentation be received.

INFORMATION ITEMS

75. MEMBERS' LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES 2017/20 - PROGRESS REPORT

The report provided a progress update on Members' Local Improvement Schemes for 2017/20 as at 1 January 2020 (attached to the signed minutes as **Appendix E**).

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

76. 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 F**).

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

77. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday, 12 February 2020 at Ashington YMCA - time to be confirmed.

CRAMLINGTON, BEDLINGTON & SEATON VALLEY LOCAL AREA COUNCIL
- 22 JANUARY 2020

65. BUDGET 2020-21 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

The Local Area Council received a presentation as part of the State of the Area Debate, which outlined the Council's strategy for the 2020-21 Budget, within the context of the Corporate Plan. It provided details of the approach to setting the budget for the next financial year and the broad impact it would have on the delivery of services. (A copy of the presentation is filed with the signed minutes.)

The Leader of the Council introduced Cabinet Members and thanked them for attending. He would recap on what had taken place over the last year and expressed the administration's ambitions to make Northumberland a place where people would love to live, work and have careers. He was delighted with team ethos in Northumberland and also the pride taken in the community of Bedlington.

The presentation covered the following:

- The introduction of free post 16 transport
- The achievements of the current administration
- The Northumberland Plan had been under examination and was due to be determined by the summer 2020
- A capital investment programme of £677 million was to be invested in roads, rebuilding of schools and leisure facilities with £1/2 million being invested in Bedlington
- **Living** - residents to feel safe, valued and part of their community. A commitment to deliver 1,000 Council owned houses, improve 2,000 Council owned properties, develop a Northumberland Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the next 10 years. Training in health, social care and voluntary sectors, supporting vulnerable residents, achieving high levels of satisfaction (91% of people surveyed said they were very satisfied with the care and support they received, 90% of residents said the services they used made them feel safe and secure), excellent services for young people.
- **Enjoying** - residents to live in distinctive, vibrant places, which they valued and in which they felt proud
- A campaign to promote the county positively, winning gold in 2018 and silver in the 2019 British Travel Awards UK. Investing in communities across the county, particularly the Bedlington town centre project which would commence this spring
- **Connecting** - Northumberland was huge geographically and it was important to build on those connections. It was hoped that the new Northumberland rail line would be in place in 2 or 3 years time. A significant investment of £6 1/2 million had been secured for rural roads from Central Government.
- **Learning** - Access to good quality education - 88% of the county's schools were either Good or Outstanding resulting in better life choices. Investment in infrastructure for new schools across the county. High emphasis on special educational needs, developed a North of England Education Challenge fund to

ensure people had better jobs to build their careers and a thriving local economy.

- **Thriving** - Trying to secure more inward investment to support businesses across Northumberland. Tourists had spent over £1 billion last year which was very important to the county. Funding had been secured through the North of Tyne Combined Authority and £395 million for the Borderlands Growth Scheme. The Bedlington town scheme was underway which would reinvigorate the town
- Future priorities - building on success and changing the way people thought about Northumberland and building on the history and pride of Northumberland; working with community groups for a county that worked for everyone

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services said the budget would be presented to full Council in February. He thanked senior officers in all departments for the work they had done on the budget and the contributions they had made. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) had recently begun benchmarking local authority financial performance, and a recent magazine article had identified the Authority's sound finances. All savings for the next year had been identified and the approach was to drive efficiency where possible with as little impact on front line services as possible. He then went through the budget as follows:

- Budget Context - the budget was for 2 years. To date no long term funding plan from the Government had been received due to the December election.
- Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement - NCC proposed a council tax increase of 1.99%, £2.6m social care support grant, £1.5m winter pressures grant, £5.8m social care funding.
- An ambitious Capital Programme that could deliver better council services
- Making best use of digital services. Improving administrative processes.
- Next steps - questions were invited. There would be an opportunity for all to read the published document and the final version would be considered by full Council in February.

Following the presentation, members raised the following issues:

- Training and enterprise - NCC were currently in collaboration with Active Northumberland and enterprise hubs would be included as part of the Borderlands Growth Deal.
- Retraining for adults - Northumberland College had faced some challenging issues but had recently merged with Sunderland College. Discussion was taking place regarding vocational programmes. The Council was one of the best performers in Apprenticeships and the 'Coffee Cart' had been run by people with special educational needs and more recently care leavers. The North of Tyne Combined Authority also focused on adult education.
- Development at the former Tesco site was welcomed but were there any guarantees this would take place? There had been a lot of delay because of negotiations with a 3rd party company. The Leader stated that he would

request a written response from Councillor Wearmouth, Economic Development Portfolio Holder.

- Further details on the social housing numbers - The Leader stated that he would find out this information. There were 176 in the plan for delivery however, those sites needed to be identified.
- How had the Authority received Silver and Gold Awards, with the amount of public toilets that were closed? Following the increase in tourism, extra car parking spaces had been provided and a programme of major improvements to toilet facilities was in process. The public had also voted for the Authority.

RESOLVED that the presentation be received.

66. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Keith Dalton, Bedlington resident referred to the blocked car park at the Tesco development site. Councillor Robinson stated that a response had been provided in the minutes of 18 December 2019. He added that the second part of the car park was closed off because of contractual obligations. The car park no longer belonged to NCC or Advance Developments. Mr Dalton would discuss this further with Councillor Robinson following the meeting.

Adam Hogg, Bedlington resident alluded to a query he had raised previously regarding land sales owned by the Council to which he had not received a response. Mrs Daljt Lally, Chief Executive apologised and advised that a response would be provided.

Mr Hogg also stated that there was very little information on the Council's website of parcels of land sold by NCC. He had recently been assisting the local town council with the local plan and said that this information would be helpful.

The Leader replied that the information should be available from the Land Registry however, this could be subject to Data Protection. He would take this up with the Legal Property Team.

Paul Miller, referred to the County Council not adopting estate roads and residents being forced into agreements. Was this because of savings to the County Council and would residents be given a discount?

Councillor Jackson stated that the Authority could not take up the responsibility of adopting a road if it was not up to standard.

Christine Turner, Bedlington resident, referred to the 20 mph Schools Programme. She had requested a 20 mph speed limit from the Red Lion to the Ridge Farm and asked if this could be investigated and implemented. It was advised that this would be looked into.

67. LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES

Members received updates from the Area Managers from Neighbourhood Services and Technical Services.

Neighbourhood Services

T Gribbin, Neighbourhood Services Area Manager, provided the following information:

- There had been no delays in bin collections but windy weather had caused some problems over the Christmas/New Year period.
- There had been an increase in bulk waste collections.
- Letters would be sent out soon to residents regarding garden waste collections
- Winter maintenance had gone well but there had been soggy/wet conditions
- Leaf collection from autumn had been completed. If any areas had been missed please advise
- Staff were in place for seasonal work

A Member referred to a recent request for the clearance at Denholm Drive/Woodside and thanked the Neighbourhood Services Area Manager for the speediness of response and conveyed his thanks to the team.

Highways Services

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

- All LTPs had been completed at Glassey Terrace junction improvements, Bedlington and Seaton Sluice First School and would be added to the LTP in April. Winter services were ongoing with routes being upgraded and checked. It had been a mild winter so far and maintenance was on-going. Statutory duties continued to be carried out.

In response to a question regarding double yellow lines which had not been carried out outside the Co-op at Netherton Lane, Mr Carle stated that this would be done if a Traffic Regulation Order was in place.

68. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL'S ADULT SOCIAL CARE APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME 'CARE FOR LIFE'

Members received a presentation about the Social Care Apprenticeship programme and opportunities for existing social care staff and/or new talented individuals, to enter social care as potential future managers and leaders. (A copy of the presentation is enclosed with the signed minutes of the meeting.)

Audrey Kingham, Director Business Development, Children's Services and Janice Gerard, Acting Manager, Learning and Skills Service were in attendance to provide

the presentation and answer questions. The key points of the presentation were as follows:

- The Care for Life campaign had come about when adult social care teams had identified they had an ageing workforce.
- The campaign was commissioned to recruit 16-25 year olds to allow succession planning and improve perception by raising the profile of adult social care generally.
- Teams went out and talked to 'real' members of staff in Northumberland and found they loved their jobs and were enthusiastic about how helping others enriched their lives. This was the backbone of all marketing materials, the experience of 'real' colleagues to take this forward.
- Development of a website, replication of materials and partnership working gave the opportunity to showcase the investment the Council had made in young people and also provide a career changing direction for people of all ages.
- A campaign which focused on 16-25 year olds was aired via radio and TV entitled "Grow Your Own".
- In terms of budget considerations, a lot of work had been undertaken internally and Council owned centres and facilities were used to minimise costs. ITV hub adverts played around 'Love Island' for maximum exposure and to target a young audience.
- Analysis of campaign statistics showed that in excess of 150,000 people had seen the campaign through the ITV hub, the click through rate from the video advert was 4 times higher than similar campaigns and the website had received over 7000 hits.
- Web analytics were provided and with regard to geographical spread this included many locations outside Northumberland and the North East area.
- Recruitment impact - Over 150,000 people had seen the campaign, over 7,000 visited the website, 78 provided personal data, 40 were called for interviews, 31 had attended interviews with 26 being in the 16-25 age bracket; 3 were looked after children and 11 school leavers. More than 20 already had some personal experience of caring for a family member. Candidates had been chosen for their caring and compassionate nature and not dependent on previous experience or academic qualifications.
- It was hoped that a second campaign would begin in Spring 2020 to capture college student progression.
- There would be continued engagement with apprentices and they would be used as case studies for the next cohort.
- Two award nominations had been submitted for which the outcome was awaited.

The following comments/questions were raised:

- The officers were congratulated on the campaign
- Would there be any further campaigns ? It was confirmed that the marketing campaign would be repeated

- It was important that a different message was given out regarding what adult and social care was
- Would the career pathway progress to a higher level? The model shared for Care For Life where the pathway ladder was clearly promoted would be replicated for other service areas. Where Higher Level programmes were available (not all sectors had developed Higher Level routes to date) they would be promoted as career pathways. Services and Employers would choose which pathways and levels they offered and the Learning and Skills Service would support the requests
- Past apprenticeships being terminated after 5 years; It was advised that apprenticeships were being shortened however, that was no guarantee an apprentice would retain their job after an apprenticeship programme came to an end
- Moira Smith, Cramlington was delighted with the promotion of caring for the elderly and questioned if the carers would solely be for residential care homes or if the carers would be able to home care due to some children losing their childhood in order to care for their elders. The Chair responded that the comment was not relevant to the presentation. Ms Gerard added that the Apprenticeship Programme was for anyone aged 16 and over but not for school aged children.

69. HEALTHWATCH, NORTHUMBERLAND

Members received a verbal presentation which covered current work and feedback received by Healthwatch Northumberland from health and social care service users and sought member's insights into current health and social care issues within their communities. (A copy of the report is enclosed with the signed minutes as Appendix A.)

A copy of the Northumberland Healthwatch feedback form was circulated at the meeting and further copies were available for Members' surgeries and other community groups. Copies were also available in a variety of locations including libraries, GP surgeries, pharmacies, community halls etc.

Derry Nugent, Project Coordinator for Healthwatch Northumberland, thanked members for inviting her to the meeting. She said many of them would know that Healthwatch was an independent champion for people who used health and social care services across Northumberland. They collected evidence and summarised feedback and concerns to those who were in a position to make decisions.

The quarterly report for July to September could be found on their website.

Ms Nugent referred to Healthwatch's annual survey which had been distributed in many formats to ask people about their experiences in the last 12 months. Last year over 800 responses had been received and it was hoped that participation would increase in 2020. Councillors were valued as a main source of help in achieving a good response rate through their networks and contacts in communities.

Details of scheduled engagement events to be held at various locations across Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley between February 2020 and March 2020 were being finalised and a list would be forwarded to Democratic Services for distribution to Members.

Members were asked if they could promote the dates and times of these events and if they had any suggestions for improving the response rate, these would be gratefully received.

The following comments/questions were raised:

- Leaflets could be distributed to Parish and Town Councils;
- Obtaining appointments at health centres - Ms Nugent advised that the service was not a decision maker but could work with Patient Participation Groups and make the public aware of other alternatives. The service continued to gather information and could also advise and signpost people to available resources;
- Raising the promotion of the service. Ms Nugent stated that independence was key to the Healthwatch role and wanted as many people as possible to know about Healthwatch Northumberland. She referred to the leaflet, feedback form and a link to the website would be provided to Members;
- The length of time for referrals;
- Funding for the distribution of leaflets;
- Leaflets could be given to patients being discharged from hospital;
- The leaflets could be brought up to date to attract younger people;
- The percentage rates of queries compared to responses - Ms Nugent said the biggest influence last year related to health and GPs and 66% of respondents had said good or excellent.

RESOLVED that the presentation be received.

INFORMATION ITEMS

70. MEMBERS' LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES 2018/19

Members' received a progress update on Members' Local Improvement Schemes during 2017-20. (A copy is enclosed as Appendix B).

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

71. LOCAL AREA COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME

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

A Member requested that the format be changed slightly to show the most recent meetings at the beginning of the work programme.

A presentation from Northumberland College was requested for the meetings in March.

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted.

72. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 26 February at Concordia Leisure Centre.

73. PETITIONS

- (a) No new petitions had been received.
- (b) There were no reports to consider.
- (c) There were no updates on previous petitions

NORTH LOCAL AREA COUNCIL - 23 JANUARY 2020

112. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No questions were asked by any members of the public.

113. PETITIONS

No new petitions were received nor any updates available on petitions previously considered.

114. 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.

Technical Services update:

- resurfacing schemes had been completed at a number of locations including Tweedmouth, Alnmouth, Littlehoughton, Longhoughton and Denwick
- structural patching work at Berwick, Longhoughton
- upcoming work at Norham and Milfield
- winter services were ongoing.

A member then thanked officers for traffic safety work in Longframlington which had also involved the local parish council, plus work to Shilbottle bus shelter.

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:

- a request about Denwick Road
- work at Berwick was due in the second phase the next year. Members would be advised when this was due
- work to Felton Bridge was due by the end of March 2020
- the work to Golden Square in Berwick was good but the roundabout had not yet been painted. This would have benefitted from coordination with resurfacing work at Sandgate by the Premier Inn, but members were advised that the Premier Inn contractors were not required to do so.
- there had been a delay with gully cleaning, but it was hoped that the tanker would be back fully operational shortly

The Cabinet member for Local Services and Environment expressed his thanks to all Local Services staff for their work to address the impact of inclement weather.

Neighbourhood Services update:

- there had been a great effort by the refuse collection staff picking up extra waste over the Christmas period. They had little time off having to work overtime shifts to catch up for the bank holidays
- the capacity at some glass recycling sites had been surpassed and additional capacity in certain areas was being considered for Christmas 2020
- extra visits had been organised for grounds maintenance and leaf clearance work, due to high winds with hotspot areas addressed
- preparatory work for summer services had begun
- road sweeping work continued, and the obstacle weed spraying programme would begin in February
- mechanical road sweeping and footpath sweeping continued
- there was still a lot of reactive work for the sweeper as a result of the high winds and heavy rain
- Neighbourhood Services staff continued to provide grounds and cleansing staff from Alwick and Berwick depots to work on the Highways operated winter services rota.

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

- thanks for staff for the maintenance work undertaken to much improve the condition of Longframlington Cemetery
- seasonal staff were employed for a six month period over spring/summer.

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

DISCUSSION ITEMS

115. BUDGET 2020-21 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

The Local Area Council received a presentation as part of the State of the Area Debate, which outlined the Council's strategy for the 2020-21 Budget, within the context of the Corporate Plan (copy of the presentation filed with the signed minutes).

The Leader of the Council's presentation covered the following:

- the Administration's core beliefs to guide how they believed the Council should serve the community
- delivery of manifesto pledges, completion of projects and other key achievements since 2017
- The Council's corporate values, and achievements undertaken for each:
(1) Living - residents to feel safe, valued and part of their community. Commitment to deliver 1,000 Council owned houses, improve 2,000 Council owned properties, develop a Northumberland Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the next 10 years, training in health, social care and voluntary sectors, supporting vulnerable residents, achieving high levels of satisfaction (91% of people surveyed said they were very satisfied with the care and

support they received, 90% of residents said the services they used made them feel safe and secure), excellent services for young people.

(2) Enjoying - residents to live in distinctive, vibrant places, which they valued and in which they felt proud.

Campaign to promote county positively, winning gold in 2018 and silver in the 2019 British Travel Awards UK, achieving a tourism spend of over £1 billion for the first time ever, tourism one of the most important industries for creating employment, integrating services such as libraries and creating community hubs, cultural programme, investing in parks and green spaces, green flag awards, Hirst Park refurbishment in Ashington, valuing partnership agreements with Town and Parish Councils.

(3) Connecting - residents to get to work easily, learn and have access to various facilities and services they want to use.

Scrapped travel fares for post 16 travel and providing free transport for students, nearer to securing the Northumberland to Newcastle rail line, significant road improvements, additional £7.7m for highway maintenance, identified preferred route for Blyth Relief Road, improved digital connectivity and improved that in rural areas.

(4) Learning - residents regardless of their age, to have the right qualifications and skills to ensure a good job that paid well, and the prospect of a rewarding career. Invested £130m in schools development across the County, school performance improving, 90% of primary schools good or outstanding, 66% secondary schools, good or outstanding, ambition for 100% on both. High emphasis on special educational needs, developed a North of England Education Challenge fund to ensure people have better jobs to build their careers and a thriving local economy.

(5) Thriving - businesses booming with the Council doing everything in its power to create the right connections for economic growth.

Securing significant funding for the regeneration of town centres, huge investments in the Portland Park area of Ashington, investment in Bedlington and town centre funding for Blyth, investment in leisure services. Through partnership with Advance Northumberland, significant progress with Northumberland Energy Park, 660 new jobs created on former Blyth Power Station site, working actively with businesses for expansion plans based around renewable energy, new training centre at Port of Blyth. The purchase of Ashwood Business Park and plans to develop jobs there.

- future priorities - aim for people to stay in Northumberland and work in Northumberland. Put customers at the heart of everything, deliver on commitments.

The Cabinet member for Corporate Services said the budget would be pre-scrutinised on 10 February, then considered by Cabinet on 11 February before being presented to full Council for final decision in February. He thanked senior officers in all departments for the work they had done on the budget and the contributions they had made. All savings for the next year had been identified and the approach was to drive efficiency where possible with as little impact on front line services as possible. He provided key details from the budget, as follows:

- budget context - the budget was for two years. To date no long term funding plan from the Government had been received due to the December election
- Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement - NCC proposed a council tax increase of 1.99%, £2.6m social care support grant, £1.5m winter pressures grant, £5.8m social care funding
- Capital Programme 2019-2022
- next steps - questions were invited. There would be an opportunity for all to read the published document and the final version would be considered by full Council in February.

Discussion followed and points of questions from Local Area Council members included:-

- Berwick residents were very grateful about the new post 16 transport arrangements, especially as it was easier for many to travel from Berwick to Newcastle rather than Ashington
- it was important for the Administration to reassure members that they continued to seek more support and more investment from the Government specifically for the North East region rather than just the wider northern England area
- were the investments promised affordable?
- the importance of the climate change agenda and local authority measures to help
- could residents be encouraged to give up their car if public transport incentives were promised?
- were there other sources for funding for cycle paths other than through the Local Transport Plan?

Key points from Councillors Jackson, Oliver and Sanderson's responses to questions included:

- more funding continued to be sought; there were now increased transport powers for the North East. The Northumberland Line had been promised £100m of government funding, plus work continued to pursue A1 dualling to the very north of the county
- the Administration was very conscious of affordability; the Council's debt could have been far higher now if they had not been elected in May 2017. Reference was made to the CIPFA guidelines about debt levels and what local authorities could afford; Northumberland was high up amongst the best run councils
- adult social care was the highest area of council budgetary spend, around £240m - 250m per year. Another area of increasing budgetary commitment was children's services - currently many children with special educational needs had to go outside of the county to receive services, but it was planned to develop more provision/capacity within the county
- funding levels depended on a number of factors including population and deprivation levels, but Northumberland also received an extra sum to take into account its rurality
- millions were spent on bus subsidies; a full review was due in the next year. Work was planned to encourage people to use buses more in the county

including for journeys up the coast, and whether bus companies could improve their links with Morpeth train station. Northumberland was in the top 5% nationally for its electric car charging provision

- there had been changes to government transport subsidies but this had been to make the spend more effective. It was important to influence bus companies to use more environmentally friendly resources
- it was important to acknowledge that cars were essential for most residents in rural areas. However other initiatives to also encourage more public transport usage were being considered, plus a new company would be providing train services between Edinburgh to London and provide more stops at Morpeth
- the Local Transport Plan now had a dedicated section for cycling and walking, and eight cycling and walking schemes had been submitted. Other partners involved with the Northumberland Cycling and Walking Board could also contribute resources.

Councillors Jackson and Oliver were thanked for their presentation and it was:

RESOLVED that the presentation be received.

116. SOCIAL CARE APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME 'CARE FOR LIFE'

Members received a presentation from the Director - Business Development about the Social Care Leaders Apprenticeship programme and opportunities for offering existing social care staff and/or new talented individuals to enter social care as potential future managers and leaders. (A copy of the presentation is filed with the signed minutes.)

A number of points were made during the presentation, including:-

- the programme aimed to raise the profile of adult social care and to allow succession planning by nurturing a younger workforce in 16-25 age group
- a website had been developed along with TV and radio adverts, a leaflet and posters
- much of the development was in-house to reduce costs
- the campaign reached over 150,000 people and the website had over 7,000 hits
- engagement events were held and achieved varying levels of attendance and recruitment
- interest was generated from outside Northumberland but all the recruitment had taken place from local residents
- interviewees had mainly fallen in the 18-25 year old bracket with a number of Looked After Children and school leavers being involved
- a new recruitment campaign would commence in spring 2020 and current apprentices would be used as case studies for the next cohort.

In response to questions, members were advised that:

- out of the 13 people recently appointed, 11 were female and two male
- a publicity campaign had been undertaken from July to September 2019

- further information regarding the recruitment phase including interview arrangements would be provided after this meeting
- members could help spread the word about these apprenticeships by passing on information/materials through their networks and on social media; some information booklets had been given out at the meeting and more could be provided.

Ms Kingham was thanked for her attendance and it was:

RESOLVED that the presentation be received.

117. HEALTHWATCH NORTHUMBERLAND

Members received a presentation that covered current work and feedback received by Healthwatch from health and social care service users, and to receive from members insights of current health and social care issues in their communities. (Copy of Healthwatch Northumberland's Quarterly Report for July – September 2019/20 attached to the signed minutes as Appendix C.)

Derry Nugent, Co-ordinator of Healthwatch, raised the following points:-

- information in the quarterly report circulated to members with the agenda papers
- everybody would use health services at some point, and Healthwatch wanted to hear views of people's experiences, for example the significance of adult social care budgets as referred to in the earlier budget presentation
- she wished to hear views from members about health and social care issues in their areas
- upcoming work for Healthwatch included the annual survey, to receive comments about people's experiences of health and social care over the last 12 months. A number of meetings were set up during February and March. The last annual survey had about 800 responses, and hopefully more people would reply to the next survey. Members were asked to pass on copies of the consultation leaflet through their networks
- one local issue was a forthcoming 'look and listen' visit to Castleview Care Home in Alnwick
- another key issue for Healthwatch was transport, as issues had been raised about access to GP and other health care services in Berwick, Rothbury and Wylam recently.

Members made the following comments:-

A member referring to the increase in social prescribing and how Healthwatch linked with it? Members were advised that social prescribing was now an established service and it would be helpful to hear more about whether people found it useful.

A member referred to concerns about the delay in establishing a new GP surgery in his area. Members were informed that this was an issue for NHS England and the

CCG but Healthwatch had been in touch with the local parish council about the issue, and the chair of Healthwatch regularly attended the CCG's Primary Care Commissioning Committee meetings.

A member hoped that progress would follow for redeveloping Rothbury Community Hospital and raised some residents' concerns about how the proposed arrangements would work. Ms Nugent advised that the CCG, Northumbria NHS Trust and the campaign group were all working together on this. The CCG had provided an update to the last meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7 January; members of the campaign group had been in attendance and were happy with the progress being made.

A member referred to feedback she has received from Berwick residents, including confusion caused by arrangements for physiotherapy appointments, as the system would benefit from improved IT and coordination. Ms Nugent acknowledged that work had taken place in Berwick and Wooler about such concerns with the appointments system, and encouraged residents to raise their concerns directly with Healthwatch. Less feedback had been received about this issue recently, so hopefully any teething issues with the appointments system had thus been addressed.

In response to a question, Ms Nugent explained that complaints were very rarely about the quality of healthcare provided, but access to it. She added that Healthwatch's feedback form was available online too, and she would also provide copies of the leaflet for councillors to make available at their surgeries and through other channels. Details could be added to a range of outlets, for example including community newspapers, Facebook and Twitter.

A member referred to a pilot joint initiative between the CCG and North East Ambulance Service in Berwick and hoped that it would continue. Such positive feedback was very helpful too.

A member referred to encouraging people to volunteer at care homes. Ms Nugent referred to the look and listen event at Castleview Care Home in Alnwick and hoped that more similar events could be organised.

In response to a question, members were advised that patient participation groups were independent to Healthwatch but were a key network; Healthwatch had contacted all local patient participation groups and were due to publish a report soon. Three of Healthwatch Northumberland's members were also involved with patient participation groups. It was important for Healthwatch to work with patient participation groups so the latter's views could be fed in.

The clerk of Alnmouth Parish Council asked if she could interview both Ms Kingham and Ms Nugent on Lionheart Community Radio about the topics they had presented at this meeting.

Ms Nugent was thanked for her attendance and it was:

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

INFORMATION ITEMS

118. MEMBERS' LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES 2017/19 - PROGRESS REPORT

Members received a progress update on Members' Local Improvement Schemes for 2017/19 as at 1 January 2020. (Report attached to the official minutes as Appendix A.)

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

119. BERWICK REGENERATION COMMISSION

This was a standing item on the agenda; no updates were available.

120. LOCAL AREA COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME

Members received the latest version of the Local Area Council's work programme (attached to the official minutes as Appendix B). The Chair added that the next meeting would also include a report about the Local Transport Plan programme for 2020-21.

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted.

121. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME RESPONSES

A copy of the questions asked at a previous meeting of the Local Area Council and the responses from the Head of Technical Services were circulated (copy attached to the official minutes as Appendix C.)

The Chair also read out a response from the Service Director - Local Services to a question previously asked about the Royal Border Bridge in Berwick:

The present position is that NCC has sought detailed costs for replacement and we are expecting these in the next couple of weeks, at which point there will be some internal discussion over the most appropriate next steps and future funding arrangements. A further update will therefore be provided in due course.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

122. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on Thursday, 20 February 2020 at St. James' Church Centre, Pottergate, Alnwick.

123. URGENT BUSINESS

North Northumberland Local Area Council (Rights of Way) Subcommittee

The Chair had agreed that it was urgent to appoint a councillor to the North Northumberland Local Area Council (Rights of Way) Subcommittee to replace Councillor Moore, who had now resigned since becoming an MP. Democratic Services would also email this request to all members of the North Northumberland Local Area Council after the meeting.