

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

AREA COMMITTEE - SOUTH

At a meeting of the **Area Committee - South** held at Briardale Community Centre, Briardale Road, Blyth, Northumberland, NE24 5AN on Wednesday, 15 March 2017 at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillor D Campbell (Chair)

MEMBERS

E Cartie
G Davey
J J Gobin
T Johnstone
D Ledger
K Nisbet

K Parry
L Pidcock
E Simpson
I C F Swithenbank
G Webb

OFFICERS

M Carle
G Gavin
D Laux
K Norris
R Wealleans

Highways Delivery Area Manager
Head of Neighbourhood Services
Head of Technical Services
Democratic Services Officer
Neighbourhood Services Area
Manager

ALSO PRESENT

15 members of the public

40. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Arckless, S Davey, Dickinson, Dungworth, Gallacher, Graham, Grimshaw, Lang, B Pidcock, Rickerby, Wallace and Wilson.

41. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Area Committee - South held on Wednesday, 11 January 2017, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

At that point the Leader referred to the recent announcement that Coty could be closing their factory at Seaton Delaval. He said there would be a European

Review Process to go through and a consultation with the workforce would need to take place. The workforce were not unionised so the Council would be assisting them with advice about workers' rights and doing everything possible to help them.

The Leader also reminded members that the Blyth Town Plan would be drawn up shortly and a consultation event was taking place on Friday afternoon in the Keel Row Centre. He said it would be an opportunity for members and the public to make their opinions known.

42. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Keith Dalton, Bedlington

Mr Dalton said he believed that Northumberland County Council, North Tyneside Council and Newcastle City Council were discussing devolution with the DCLG and queried the outcome of those discussions. He also queried the role of the Mayor. In response the Leader stated that, as yet, no response had been received from the Secretary of State. The Councils had put a lot of effort into the negotiations but it was up to the Government to decide if they were in favour of the process. If it was agreed, a Mayor would be appointed who would work with the Councils but would not dominate them.

Adam Hogg, Bedlington

Mr Hogg referred to the recent site visit at St Benet Biscop Academy and thanked those who had attended. He queried if officers felt there had been an improvement at the junction. In response the Deputy Leader said the Council had taken advice from professional officers and had been assured that it was the best working model available. The local member said there would always be issues due to the location of the school but had agreed to provide some funding from his small schemes budget to widen the exit. There was also some good news in the Local Transport Programme (LTP) for other safety improvements along that road.

The Senior Programme Officer (Highway Safety) advised that camera surveys had been carried out and the results indicated that the situation had improved. The Cabinet Member for Local Services added that there was insufficient space for buses to turn within the site but, if drivers did not conform to what had been agreed, the bus contract could be cancelled.

Mr Hogg said the local member had alluded to the potential puffin crossing detailed on page 33 of the report and assumed that the location stated, 'Ridge Terrace' was an error. In response it was confirmed that the proposed crossing would be located near the Co-op on Netherton Lane.

43. PETITIONS

a) Receive any new petitions

The Chair informed members that Democratic Services had received a petition containing 59 signatures from Mrs Moyra Smith, Cramlington, about parking issues in Cramlington Village which were having a detrimental effect on residents who

were unable to park outside of their own properties. The petition contained some suggestions of how that could be addressed and had been forwarded to officers for consideration. A report would be produced for the next meeting.

RESOLVED - That the petition be received and officers be requested to produce a report for the next meeting.

b) Consider reports on petitions previously received:

Request for Speed Reduction on Eastfield Estates, Cramlington

Neil Snowdon, Senior Programme Officer (Highway Safety) introduced the above report stating that requests for a 20 mph speed limit at Eastfield Dale and Chase and Dunsdale Drive in Cramlington had been added to the Directory of Requests database for consideration in future LTP programmes. The news was welcomed and the local member said she was fully supportive of 20 mph speed limits on all residential estates which she felt should be standard. She expressed concern, however, that these were not being adhered to and said a Police presence would be beneficial to enforce them and show that they must be taken seriously. In response it was stated that Police resources were extremely limited but cameras could be installed to monitor the situation. The member therefore requested that cameras be installed at the 'R' and 'T' streets in Parkside Range and Parkside Glade. She added that if enforcement was not carried out it, implementation could be a waste of Council expenditure. Further discussion ensued and it was acknowledged that it was often local people who caused problems. It was suggested that publicity surrounding this could be raised with the press office.

RESOLVED that the information be noted and the possibility of publicity being undertaken about 20 mph speed zones on residential estates be explored with the press office.

Request for Reduced Speed limit on Edendale Avenue, Blyth

Neil Snowdon, Senior Programme Officer (Highway Safety) introduced the above report stating that a speed survey had been arranged and once that had been completed, if the results met the necessary criteria for enforcement, they would be passed to Police for further investigation. A request for a 20 mph speed limit had been added to the Directory of Requests database for consideration in a future LTP programme.

It was noted that the local member was in support of the scheme.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

(c) Receive any updates on petitions previously considered

Request for the Council to support closure of a footpath known as 'the cut' between Sweethope Avenue and Albion Way, Blyth due to the increasing

amount of anti-social behaviour and various incidents causing anxiety amongst local residents.

An update had been provided by Philip Soderquest, Head of Housing. Members were informed that he had met with the lead petitioner, Mrs Kathryn Thompson, he had personally visited the area and had spoken with Northumbria Police in respect of the benefit of closing the cut. The Police had also visited Mrs Thomson in response to specific incidents affecting her.

Overall there had been a reduction in the level of ASB, the last reported incident being on the 2 February. In response to the incident and a previous incident, footage had been downloaded from the CCTV installed by the Council and supplied to the Police who were investigating. Mr Soderquest had spoken with Mrs Thomson and she had agreed with him that there were currently insufficient grounds to consider closing the cut. He advised her that, in the event of further issues, she should report them to the Police or the ASB/Community Safety Team who, in turn, would notify him.

Discussion ensued about incidents which had taken place in other areas of Blyth involving the same culprits. In response to comments that there should be more Police on the streets it was stated that there was a severe lack of Police resources and recruitment was currently taking place. The Deputy Leader stated that it was primarily a Police issue but if it was the same perpetrators causing the problems he would contact officers in Public Protection to see what could be done.

RESOLVED that the information be noted and the Deputy Leader follow up the issue with officers in Public Protection.

44. LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES

Members raised issues about services provided by the Local Services Group with Officers from Neighbourhood Services and Technical Services. In response to concerns it was stated that:

- Problems caused by trees growing around the lighting on the public footpath at the cut to the rear of Thropton Court leading to Blyth Sports Centre would be investigated.
- Work had started that morning to address problems with weed growth.
- Street lighting was provided to light roads and footpaths. LED lighting was more energy efficient and cheaper to use and there were no plans to dim the light between the hours of midnight and 8:00 am.
- Flooding to the road which dipped near Cambois Power Station, caused by underground tanks, was noted and would be taken up with the Area Maintenance Engineer.

Members praised officers in Local Services for doing a good job.

RESOLVED that the issues raised above be noted and followed up.

45. DRAFT LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 2017/18

The report set out detail of the draft Local Transport Plan (LTP) Programme for 2017-19, a copy of which is attached to the signed Minutes.

The Cabinet Member for Local Services emphasised the importance of members comments. He said if there were any schemes which needed adjustment, or if it was felt there were better alternatives, members should speak up or approach him after the meeting so that their suggestions could be considered in approval of the final LTP Programme. It was noted that it was a complex programme and funds were limited but the Programme was open for adjustment.

In response to a question about the connecting road between Pegswood and the A1, the Leader said it was almost finished although there was some tidying up required, such as tree planting and verge work. He commented that it was a spectacular piece of work and when the road was open it would enable easier access to the A1 which would be much quicker and safer.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

46. MEMBERS' LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES

The report provided details about the latest position on Members' Local Improvement Schemes 2013-17, a copy of which is attached to the signed Minutes.

The Deputy Leader stated that in the last 4 years no scheme had been turned down and special exemptions had been respected. The Chair and members agreed that it was a very good scheme which involved the public who could put suggestions forward and see them flourish.

The Deputy Leader referred to the benefits of NCC members working with Parish/Town Councils on some schemes which had been match funded by the Parish/Town Council.

A member of the public praised the Chair for the work carried out at New Delaval park and thanked her for the contributions from her small schemes fund.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

The Chair said it was the last meeting before the elections and, on behalf of members, thanked the officers for all of their help.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____