

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

CRAMLINGTON, BEDLINGTON AND SEATON VALLEY LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley Local Area Council** held in the Community Room, Concordia Leisure Centre, Forum Way, Cramlington on Wednesday, 18 April 2018 at 5.30 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillor C Dunbar (Chair in the Chair)

MEMBERS

B Crosby
B M Flux
A Hepple
B Pidcock
M E Richards (part)

M Swinburn
M Robinson
I C F Swithenbank
R Wallace

OFFICERS

K Norris
J Sanderson

Democratic Services Officer
Senior Planning Manager - Planning
Policy

ALSO PRESENT

Press: 0
Public:3

90. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Daley and Dungworth.

91. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley Local Area Council held on Wednesday, 21 March 2018, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

Chair's initials

92. PLANNING APPEALS UPDATE

Members were provided with a report on the progress of planning appeals (a copy of which is attached to the signed Minutes as Appendix A.)

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

93. NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL PLAN - UPDATE AND SPRING 2018 CONSULTATION

The Local Area Council received a report which provided an update of the Northumberland Local Plan and details of the Spring 2018 Local Plan Consultation. (A copy of the report and presentation are enclosed with the signed minutes as Appendix B.)

The Senior Planning Manager - Planning Policy said that members had been provided with a copy of the updated report on the Local Plan and details on the Spring 2018 Local Plan consultation and she would give a demonstration of the online survey. Members were aware of the withdrawal of the Northumberland Core Strategy in July 2017 and that work was being done on the preparation of a new Local Plan for Northumberland which would run until 2036.

Significant progress had been made to date, details of which were provided in paragraph 2 on page 2 of the report.

Members would recall that the Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government had written to the Leader of the Council in November last year expressing concerns about the Council's failure to adopt a 2004 Act Local Plan and the lack of progress made. The Council responded by the deadline date of 31 January and the Secretary of State confirmed that he did not intend to take any further action but he expected the Council to accelerate its plan preparation programme by up to 3 months and provide further information regarding its revised timeline.

It was stated that a spatial survey consultation had commenced on 28 March and would run for 6 weeks, ending on 2 May. Views were being sought on preferred locations for housing and employment as well as key issues the Local Plan should address.

The Senior Planning Manager - Planning Policy then gave a demonstration of the online consultation survey and how it worked. In terms of the survey so far, there had been over 1,700 hits on the system, over 350 people had registered their details and 72% of people responding had given positive feedback about the survey.

Feedback from the survey would be provided in Summer 2018 along with the consultation on the Draft Northumberland Local Plan.

In response to questions the following information was provided:

- The new Northumberland Local Plan would not cover what had already been put into Neighbourhood Plans, boundaries and allocations would not be duplicated in the Northumberland Local Plan and consultation would be done through the Neighbourhood Plan process.
- In terms of seeking views on locations for housing, views were only being sought on the broad location.
- There would be paper copies of the survey in information centres and libraries. There had also been press releases and all town and parish councils had been informed. Hard copies could be downloaded from the website and the survey had also been taken out to schools as those children were the adults of the future and should have a say.
- For those who found the map on the survey confusing, a step by step guidance on how to look at each layer was available.
- The Council was working with all of the Neighbourhood Plans whether emerging or made. The most recent made or adopted plan would take precedence for the most up to date policy.
- A member said the Local Development Framework Working Group were looking at the trends which were currently taking place regarding employment and job growth linking with housing. A member stated that the information gathered the first time was considered to be well balanced and robust. There had been little change to the economy in Northumberland, and it had been stated there would be an opportunity to tweak figures, so why was the process being started again? He also felt it was too simplistic to ask the public where housing should be and asked if the travelling community had been consulted. The member said the Leader of the Council had stated the process would only take months not years yet Senior Planning Officers were told it would take years. He then questioned the integrity of the Leader.

After further comments another member said, on a point of order, the question should be withdrawn. In response the Chair said the Local Area Council was not the correct forum to raise this and advised the member to put his concerns to the Leader in writing.

- With regard to employment land and housing numbers, at examination the inspector could say the number was too high, too low or just right. It was a possibility that the examination could be suspended and the Council be told to carry out further work.

A member said there may be some resistance from the Government that some sites would be unsuitable and the structure plan may be rejected again, resulting in the Council being criticised. In response to a comment, the Senior Planning Manager - Planning Policy confirmed that those points would still be valid when looking at the previous withdrawn plan.

- A member stated that the Local Development Framework was an all party working group and would look at numbers in detail but once the plan had been submitted it was not possible to guarantee a favourable opinion from the inspectors. The plan must also deliver on economic growth, it was not just about housing numbers.
- A member asked if there had been any significant change in Northumberland to invalidate the figures in the withdrawn plan and, if not, why was there a need to change it? In response the Senior Planning Manager - Planning Policy referred the member back to the withdrawal reasons which were provided to full Council. She said the withdrawn plan was based on 2012 population projection figures and the Council was now using the most recent figures.
- The member reiterated his previous point that the Government had said there could be tweaks. In response the Chair said she would take no more questions about that issue and the member should take it up with full Council.

RESOLVED that the Local Area Council note the content of the report and the presentation provided.

94. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would take place on **Wednesday, 23 May 2018** at Netherton Social Club - time to be confirmed.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____