

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **North Northumberland Local Area Council** held in St. James' Church Centre, Pottergate, Alnwick, Northumberland, NE66 1JW on Thursday, 24 May 2018 at 3.00pm

PRESENT

Councillor G. Castle
(Chair, in the Chair, items 1 - 4 and 11 - 18)

Councillor T. Thorne
(Planning Vice-chair, in the Chair, items 5 - 10)

MEMBERS

S. Bridgett (part)
T. Clark
G. Hill
W. Pattison (part)
R. Moore

A. Murray
G. Renner-Thompson
G. Roughead
C. Seymour
J. Watson (part)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

M. Bird
G. Bucknall
D. Feige

J. Hitching
P. Jones
H. Marron
D. Lally
N. Masson
C. McDonagh
R. Sittambalam
N. Snowdon

I. Stanners
C. Thompson

Senior Democratic Services Officer
Highways Delivery Area Manager
Principal Ecologist and AONB
Officer
Senior Sustainable Drainage Officer
Service Director - Local Services
Principal Planning Officer
Chief Executive
Principal Solicitor
Planning Officer
Senior Planning Officer
Principal Programme Officer
(Highways Improvement)
Housing Enabling Officer
Principal Highways Development
Management Officer

M. Cotton - North East Ambulance Service

40 members of the public and one member of the press were in attendance at 3pm, and 10 members of the public and one member of the press at 6pm.

Ch.'s Initials.....

(Councillor Castle in the Chair.)

01. MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

Councillor Castle welcomed everybody and explained the format of the meeting, with reference to the membership and terms of reference for the Local Area Council.

RESOLVED that the membership and terms of reference for the North Northumberland Local Area Council agreed by Council on 2 May 2018 be noted.

02. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lawrie. Councillor Bridgett would be arriving late for the meeting.

03. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of North Northumberland Local Area Council held on Thursday 19 April 2018, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair, although it was noted that since the meeting, in relation to minute 158, page 11, in relation to the additional condition for application 18/00560/OUT (Acklington), it has been agreed by the developer, Northumberland estates and the ward councillor, Jeff Watson that the speed monitoring devices proposed be modified from the provision of two speed cameras to one interactive speed sign. The approval would therefore be subject to the conditions and planning obligations set out in the recommendation as well as the additional condition to secure the interactive speed sign. Members agreed to support this change.

04. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

- Councillor Moore declared an interest in relation to application 17/01819/OUT as he was employed by the applicant's agent, so he would leave the meeting whilst the application was considered
- Councillor Renner-Thompson declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to applications 17/04574/FUL and 17/04565/FUL, and would leave the meeting whilst both applications were considered.

(Councillor Thorne then in the Chair.)

05. DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Ch.'s Initials.....

North Northumberland Local Area Council, 24 May 2018

The report explained how the Local Area Council was asked to decide the planning applications attached to the agenda using the powers delegated to it. (Report enclosed with official minutes as Appendix A).

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(3.07pm: Councillor Renner-Thompson then left the meeting in advance of the two applications that he had declared interests in relation to.)

06. 17/04574/FUL - Proposed sites for 9 new houses and change of use of agricultural to 14 unit Camp/Caravan site: Land Rear Of Blue Bell Hotel, West Street, Belford

Senior Planning Officer Ragu Sittambalam firstly updated the committee initially by clarifying that the application proposed three static caravans, seven glamping pods and four touring caravan pitches. He then continued introducing the application with the aid of a slides presentation and clarified the recommendation with the coastal contribution.

Phyllis Carruthers then spoke in the objectors' public speaking slot, of which her key points were:

- the site visit had taken place on 21 May in warm weather, but members needed to imagine the site during heavy rain and waterlogged
- no geophysics report was available on the Council's website
- how would the space be made - through blasting techniques? There was sandstone near the surface; it was important to know whether what was proposed was feasible. Heavy machinery and equipment could also impact on existing vegetation. There were no adequate safeguards against the effect of more rainfall and cases of extreme weather; current screening was a result of conditions already in place
- if the development proved too challenging to proceed/complete, it could scar the landscape
- water always ran to the lowest point, and if allowed, water, mud and machinery could all run downhill. Her house was at the lowest point. It was essential that if it went ahead, people with the appropriate experience ensured that the work was carried out safely.

Councillor Brenda Stanton then spoke on behalf of Belford Parish Council, of which her key points were:

- the site visit undertaken would have helped members understand the problems on the site. The site's topography was unsuitable and very steep; it had been long known as the 'sledging hill'
- a high level of excavation was required to enable the construction of the houses. The topsoil layer was very thin
- the site was in the Conservation Area, the village's historic centre, with Bluebell Gardens and St. Mary's Church and many listed buildings nearby. Parish councillors were concerned about the visual impact upon the local listed buildings

- the additional traffic and touring caravans were a concern; access and egress from West Street was tight; vehicles going north often travelled on the wrong side of the road as it narrowed. Cars often exited the supermarket car park opposite out of the entrance.

David Ratliff then spoke in the supporters' slot, of which his key points were:

- it was a medium sized scheme for which work had taken place with the case officer up to and beyond the pre-application stage; all matters had been discussed and agreed. He had spoken to neighbours and offered to rent or buy the small strip of land required
- the access was large as 19 properties were originally proposed; the previous application was still valid. It had better access than the caravan park had. The design, access and landscaping had been designed to create a good aesthetic scheme
- little traffic would be generated, as the application was only for four tourer caravans. The pods would attract cyclists travelling the coastal route
- visual impact and noise pollution would be low, and the east/west elevations would be reduced visually. It would provide a positive contribution to the Conservation Area
- the properties were for permanent occupation, benefiting local services, leisure, school and church. The holiday lets would provide well needed vitality and income, given the closure of other local shops recently.

Members then asked questions of which the key responses from officers were:

- the requirements on foundations were a matter for building regulations rather than planning, and the development would not be built if the proposals were insufficient
- the applicant had to provide a drainage and flooding report from an external assessor, which the Council would then consider. As the application was on a slope, it would be attenuated and discharged into a sewer. The information provided so far was sufficient for supporting the recommendation to approve; water would be collected on site at a restricted rate through conditions. Additional conditions addressed surface water concerns in the construction phase, i.e. topsoil, would only be removed for the parts being developed and silt prevention measures would be installed. The conditions required details from the applicant about how to prevent water from collecting at the bottom of the hill.
- the existing access was acceptable for traffic; drivers emerging would have visuals to both the left, right and opposite. Under National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) stipulations, it would only have a minor impact. Four touring caravans would only have a minor impact. The access was seven metres wide
- there was no need for a geophysical report within the drainage requirements. The Environment Agency had requested Condition 19, regarding the height of the housing in relation to flood risk from the Belford Burn.
- the presence of tombstones on the adjacent site was not a material consideration

- any new development would have a landscape impact, but it was not expected to be significant in this application
- the site was not attached to any listed buildings; it would have an impact on the setting of Listed Buildings and the Belford Conservation Area, but the Conservation Officer considered it to constitute less than substantial harm. The benefit of bringing tourism and tourist accommodation was considered sufficient to override any harm resulting from building the development
- the previous housing built was considered to have caused harm, so additional housing was not expected to cause as much.

Councillor Hill considered the application should be refused on the grounds of visual amenity and insufficient information regarding geological matters. Following procedural Clarification about the reasons, Councillor Hill then formally moved that the application be refused as the visual impact outweighed the benefits of the Scheme. This was seconded by Councillor Roughead.

Members then made the following key points:

- a member could not support the motion and considered that the development would not have a significant effect. Professional advice had been received
- the application would have some impact, but the slope would remain intact, so there was not enough to refuse it
- the site visited had assisted; the highways access was sufficient
- surprise was expressed that the original application was passed, and this application could overcrowd the site
- a member expressed concern that many proposals appeared weighted in favour of developers. Another member referred to the provisions in the NPPF about presumptions in favour of development.

The motion to refuse on the grounds of visual impact were then put to the vote; it was supported by three votes in support, with seven against. The motion thus fell.

Councillor Moore then moved that the application be granted subject to the conditions in the report. This was seconded by Councillor Pattison. This was then put to the vote and agreed by seven votes in support and three against, so it was thus:

RESOLVED that the application be GRANTED subject to the conditions in the report and a S106 Unilateral Undertaking to secure the following contributions:

- coastal mitigation contribution of £600 per dwelling (£5400 total) to be paid upon occupation of the first dwelling
- coastal mitigation contribution of £350 per unit of camp/caravan provision (£4900 total) to be paid upon the site being brought into use.

(Councillor Bridgett then joined the meeting, after arriving at 3.47pm during consideration of the previous application, for which he did not participate.)

07. 17/04565/FUL - Proposed camping pods, tree house, lodge and touring van bases along with amenities and services (amended 6th April 2018): Acton

Caravan Site, Felton, NE65 9NS

Planning Officer Chris McDonagh introduced the application with the aid of a slides presentation. He updated members firstly by explaining that the conditions had been updated to address highway safety requirements including passing places, improvements to access to assist access and egress to the site.

William Sidgwick and Moyra Horseman then shared the objectors' public speaking slot of which Mr Sidgwick's key points were:

- There was a danger at the 'S' bend in the road; the site sloped down to the road and a 25 metre puddle could build up along the side of the highway across the road and into the site. The soakaway would direct water away down the slope
- when two vehicles tried to pass on the road, one had to mount the grass verge
- local resident Mr Ferguson had had an accident on the road; car debris, and a broken fences had been witnessed locally plus one vehicle had got stuck in the verge
- the road was no quiet and for serving two properties as stated in the report; a further nine houses and community retreat were located further along. The road was used by many walkers, cyclists, horse riders and commercial vehicles
- the proposed laybys were insufficient; the application would only be acceptable if the road comprised two lanes and a greatly improved surface water management plan was provided.

Ms Horseman's key points were:

- the road had poor visibility; it needed conditions perhaps including straightening
- passing places would be inadequate if the verges were not drained and the hard standing area concreted
- it would be irresponsible to grant without such conditions, through fear for the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and other road users.

Neil Campbell then spoke in support of the application, of which her key points were:

- he had lived at the site all of his life and and were looking to diversify their farming business. After purchasing the land he had undertaken market research about possible uses, including contact with Northumberland Tourism; luxury camping was a popular option
- the permission for 10 caravans was being revised into a glamping site; it was an exciting opportunity as it would be the first tree house in the area that people could stay overnight in
- the site entrance was being improved; the gates and hedges were being put back to assist vehicles approaching and leaving the site
- drainage would be improved at the site
- the lodge was getting a change of use to a warden's lodge so somebody could monitor the site
- the application would support jobs, tourism and the local economy.

Members then asked questions of which the key responses from officers were:

- if a 20mph speed limit was to be put in place at the site, surveys and consultation would need to take place and a Traffic Regulation Order would be required; a speed restriction could not be added as a condition at this point in time
- the extant consent for 10 touring caravans would have created a significantly worse traffic situation. This application proposed three touring caravans and the rest of traffic was expected to be just cars. If refused, an inspector might point out that permission existed for 10 vehicles, yet this application proposed fewer. This proposal was an improvement on the permission previously granted and Highways could not recommend refusal when less traffic was likely. Checks could be made to see if any complaints had been submitted. A design check would place with the Highways Development Management team, which included minimum requirements. The parking places would ensure that the situation did not get any worse
- seven Leylandii trees and other foliage were proposed to be removed. Both would assist visibility and were included in the conditions
- it was not a major application, so the Lead Local Flood Authority was not a statutory consultee and therefore formally consulted. However conditions were recommended for drainage improvements and keeping water off the highway
- much discussion took place about highways drainage requirements with applicants before applications were presented for consideration.

Councillor Thorne referred to how permission had been granted for 10 caravans, and expressed sympathy for the objectors and neighbours, but moved that the application should be approved with the strong improvements to highways requirements proposed - improved visibility, passing places, and further detail from the applicant on improving drainage, with final details of highways improvement measures being delegated to officers in consultation with the Vice-chair (Planning). This was seconded by Councillor Murray.

Members then made the following key points:

- two caravans passing from opposite directions could cause problems, but extant permission had been granted and this application provided the opportunity to improve the situation
- a member commented that he had not been disappointed in how Highways team had treated applications previously and he had not witnessed any accidents in any new developments
- a member said she would need to abstain as she was concerned about lack of information on the highways requirements.

The motion to grant was then put to the vote, and agreed by eight votes in support, none against and three abstentions, so it was thus:

RESOLVED that the application be GRANTED subject to the conditions in the report and consultation with the Vice-chair (Planning) on the final details submitted for highways and drainage conditions.

(4.26pm: Councillor Watson exited the meeting, Councillor Renner-Thompson returned to the meeting, and Councillor Moore left the meeting for whilst application 17/01819/OUT was considered.)

08. 17/01819/OUT - Outline permission with All Matters Reserved; Development of up to 20 Dwellings (100% Affordable): Land South West of St Cuthbert Close, Main Street, North Sunderland

Mr Sittambalam introduced the application with the aid of a slides presentation; he firstly updating the committee that prior to the meeting a further four objections had been received in respect of the application, there were no further issues raised other than those already set out in the report. North Sunderland Parish Council had provided the following consultation response:

“The Parish Council wishes to object due to:

1. The development is not within the boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan
2. Dwellings to rent are required as many young families would be unable to purchase
3. Additional pressure put on local services eg. the medical practice which has a great increase in patients in summer months
4. There should not be any development until South Lane is widened.”

Steve Williams then spoke in objection of which his key points were:

- he was objecting also on behalf of other residents. After being twice withdrawn as an application, it was only now possible to approve as an exception site for affordable housing, as it lay outside the settlement boundary, in open countryside in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which was not usually permitted and designed to prevent urban sprawl. It would have an unacceptable impact on the AONB
- breaching the emerging North Northumberland Coastal Neighbourhood Plan boundary would be a blow to its credibility
- affordable housing needs should be met in suitable settlement sites; a housing evidence paper had not been taken noted of; 17 affordable properties were available in Seahouses and there was sufficient local turnover in affordable housing; the key point was housing need, not demand
- small scale dwellings were defined as those with nine or less dwellings, but this one proposed 20? The site’s 20 hectare site represented 8% of North Sunderland’s current total area
- in summary, it was not a small scale development, there was no local affordable housing need to justify the development as exceptional; there were alternative development sites within the settlement boundary, and the application was not in the local community’s interest.

Councillor Geoffrey Stewart then spoke on behalf of North Sunderland Parish Council, of which his key points were:

- the local Neighbourhood Plan had taken 54 months to develop, and breaching the boundary at this point would have a regressive effect and weaken the plan's case
- it would place additional pressure on local medical practices due to the increase in patients
- the narrow access road had been given little consideration; it would impact on all local residents
- if the application was granted, the S106 contribution of £32,000 towards education should include a share, perhaps £12,000, towards the local Primary School, which children from the three neighboring villages attended.

Stephanie Linnell then spoke in support, of which her key points were:

- the application promised 100% affordable housing, which was an acute issue as a result of the proportion of local holiday homes and high property prices
- the application was in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan; paragraph 4.54 stated that boundaries should not stop positive contributions to the local community, and policy 9 supported such affordable housing exception sites
- the AONB team considered that it would not have a significant effect on the AONB
- it was not a major application within the local context
- two registered social providers were interested in operating the site
- the majority of objectors were from St. Cuthbert's Close rather than the wider village area
- it would provide economic benefits locally.

At the Chair's request, Mr Sittambalam firstly responded to a number of points made:

- both Planning Services and the AONB team agreed it was not a major development; across the UK, on occasions up to 100 houses had been considered not major, but sometimes some between 5 -10 could had been; it depended on the local context
- it was not the case that 17 local affordable houses were currently available; this figure more likely referred to the number of properties within Bernicia's local housing portfolio
- policy 9 of the Neighbourhood Plan stated that developments outside of the settlement boundary that were wholly affordable would be supported
- the application was fully policy compliant.

Members then asked questions of which the key responses from officers were:

- the properties would not necessarily all be to rent, but most were expected to be. They would all be affordable as per the NPPF's definition, and in perpetuity
- it would help young people and other residents who needed affordable housing. All applicants were vetted. Other affordable housing locally at Embleton and Longhoughton had provided opportunities for young people and other ages to remain living locally

- the recommendation to grant was on the basis of its affordable housing exception status; any proposed change in use would require a new application. The principle was to develop affordable housing on the site in perpetuity to address the need identified now
- the site was not proposed for profit; if another application came in mostly for market housing, and represented the only way to get a share of affordable housing, the applicant would have to demonstrate the project was not viable without it. Viability considerations would be looked at as some sites brought large costs in
- a key consideration regarding sustainability included how easy it was to access services from sites. As it was near Seahouses, it was considered accessible within case law considerations
- the Neighbourhood Plan was being given as much weight in relation to this application as if it had been approved; the referendum was taking place that day. Due weight had been given to the settlement boundary, as per policy 9 of the plan
- the site was in the open countryside, but not Green Belt
- the landscape and AONB would be key considerations in any further developments. The application brought opportunities for buffers with the open countryside; the Main Street bordered to the west, it followed the line of the cemetery to the east, and there was greenfield to the south. Any further application would be subject to the same tests
- there was no policy requirement for playpark contributions for developments of this size
- if it was refused and overturned on appeal, the 100% affordable housing requirement would still apply
- strong expressions of interest had been received from two registered providers, but they could not currently be named due to commercial sensitivity restrictions
- education contributions to the local Primary School could only be sought if a need was confirmed for it. However capacity existed for more pupils in the Primary School, but not at the local secondary level. Contributions would be for structural improvements/extensions, but not for teacher salaries. The possibility of a share of the £32,000 contribution for the Primary School could be discussed with the education department
- a further application could request market housing for the site, but it would not be policy compliant, as the policy required 100% affordable housing for such sites.

Councillor Bridgett welcomed the 100% affordable housing proposal, given that the percentage was usually 15%. He felt reassured by officers that the site would remain affordable, and should any further applications come forward, what had been said here would be taken into account. He moved that the application be granted as per the officer recommendation. Councillor Castle seconded this, stressing that it was essential that Neighbourhood Plans had primacy otherwise they were not Worthwhile, and there was a clear exception in this case for 100% affordable housing. The need had been established and for perpetuity. There was a shortage of affordable housing, and he saw no planning reasons to refuse it.

Members then made the following key points:

- due weight was not being given to the settlement boundary and the local context was not being taken into consideration
- affordable housing could be better delivered in Northumberland; it was often an add on to market housing, but it was 100% affordable here. It enabled young people to continue living in the communities they grew up in; affordable housing also usually consisted of a range of housing and cross section of ages
- agreeing the application would mean supporting the Neighbourhood Plan and its policy 9 exemption for affordable housing
- the application was in the wrong place as there were many other acres within North Sunderland for development. The boundary was there for a reason and to enhance the tourist experience and not overdevelop into the fields. It was important to keep villages small, attractive and desirable. It was wrong to vote for this when other locations within the boundary could be used instead
- a member did not think the site would be sustainable
- it was not acceptable to disregard the settlement boundary
- it was important that if the local communities could demonstrate a need for a financial contribution towards local primary education, it should go to them
- It was important to agree an application with 100% affordable housing given the battles to get it included at all in some applications. The proposal was refreshing but surprising.

The motion to grant was then put to the vote. The vote was tied with five votes in support and five votes against. It then fell to the Vice-chair (Planning) to make the casting vote. The Vice-chair (Planning) voted to agree the motion, so it was thus:

RESOLVED that the application be GRANTED subject to the conditions in the report.

(5.28pm: Councillor Moore returned to the meeting; Councillor Bridgett left the meeting and did not participate in application 18/00839/FUL.)

09. 18/00839/FUL - Proposed extension to garage to create one bedroom holiday let annex (Resubmission of application 17/04006/FUL): 10 Wellfield Gardens, Alnmouth, NE66 2SE

The Vice-chair began by apologising that the applicant had not been informed of the change of time for the site visit on 21 May. However the purpose of site visits was for members to see the site, look at how the proposal would fit in locally and gain information to help with better decision making.

Planning Officer Chris McDonagh then introduced the application with the aid of a slides presentation.

Isabel Chalmers and Linda Osgood then shared the objectors' public speaking slot, of which Ms Chalmers' key points were:

- the development was unreasonably close to numbers 6 and 7 Arnewood. The south elevation of the proposal was only 9m from the rear elevation of 7 Arnewood, when a minimum of 10.7m was recommended for single storey properties
- the development would bring noise and be detrimental to her amenity, causing demonstrable harm, as it would impact on her small and private garden
- any noisy/antisocial behaviour from visitors to the property could affect her right to a peaceful life
- by covering the capped well under a building and concreting over, without the provision of grass to absorb, there would be the possibility of surface flooding.

Ms Osgood's key points were:

- the front window of the development would be 9m from her bedroom window
- how were holidaymakers meant to sustain Alnmouth when many properties were only occupied for seven months or so each year
- although sustainable development was favoured, this application would have an adverse impact on numbers 6 & 7 Arnewood. It could impact on their peaceful enjoyment of their properties
- the AONB team objected to the application.

Councillor Shaun Whyte then spoke on behalf of Alnmouth Parish Council, of which his key points were:

- Alnmouth Parish Council unanimously objected to the application
- 50% of properties in Alnmouth were holiday lets or second homes; there were too many already without adding this application
- a new development should be subject to permanent residency
- wouldn't the proximity to the boundary, resulting in a loss of view, outweigh the benefits of the development? It impacted on the neighbours
- of the 20 new builds in Alnmouth over the past three or four years, 70% were holiday homes.

Emma Wilcox then spoke in support, of which her key points were:

- they had worked with the planning officer on amendments and addressed original concerns. The application adhered to the Alnwick District Plan, Core Strategy and NPPF
- Alnmouth and Northumberland were tourist destinations; this would provide valuable facilities and sustainable employment
- it would not overshadow neighbours, as it was positioned to the north of them, and included adequate separation distances
- some trees on site had previously been removed with permission, and other trees on site would be protected
- the Wellfield Management Committee had not received any complaints about flooding or parking at any of the nearby properties.

Members then asked questions of which the key responses from officers were:

- it would not be reasonable in planning terms to presume that tourists staying at the property would be disruptive, which would also be a civil matter
- it would provide benefit as it would provide tourist accommodation helping sustain local services
- the shadowing would be towards the garage, which was not a reason to refuse
- the site was in the Conservation Area, so the removal of any trees would require permission.

Councillor Moore then moved that the application be refused on the grounds of loss of amenity and outlook for neighbouring residents, expressing concern about the distances from boundaries. This was seconded by Councillor Castle, who added that the development was a tight squeeze in the location, there were a large number of holiday lets nearby

Further points were made about the loss of privacy and how it represented a good case of an application providing an unacceptable loss.

The motion to refuse was then put to the vote, and agreed by nine votes in favour, none against and one abstention, so it was thus:

RESOLVED that the application be REFUSED for the loss of amenity and outlook for neighbouring residents.

10. Planning Appeals

To receive information on the progress of planning appeals. (Attached to the official minutes as part of Appendix A.)

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(5.58pm: the meeting then adjourned for a 15 minute break, Councillor Thorne vacated the Chair, and Councillor Pattison exited the meeting.)

(6.15pm: Councillor Castle in the Chair.)

OTHER LOCAL AREA COUNCIL BUSINESS

11. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

On the resumption of the meeting, as it was approaching three hours in duration it was RESOLVED to suspend standing orders to allow the meeting to continue beyond three hours in duration.

The Chair then explained how this item was for members of the public to ask any questions, which could be received in writing in advance of the meeting or asked

at the meeting. Questions could be asked about issues for which the Council had a responsibility.

Heather Cairns, NE67 5AX was pleased that the County Council had given its support for Active Northumberland and welcomed the new Chief Executive's background in leisure. She asked when job evaluation for employees at Willowburn Leisure Centre would be completed?

The Chief Executive replied that work was in progress and details of dates would be confirmed shortly.

Heather Cairns, NE67 5AX expressed concern about the condition of the Denwick to Longhoughton road, and when it would be resurfaced.

Members were advised that work was due to begin on 2 July and anticipated to take up to six weeks or thereabouts to complete. Ms Cairns replied that residents would be delighted at this news.

Brian Darling, Berwick resident asked how ambulance provision would cope with rising tourist numbers over summer, and how the ambulance service would meet one hour targets for areas in the county that were more than an hour's drive from a hospital? He was concerned that this resulted in a two tier service for residents depending on where they lived.

The Chair asked Mr Cotton from the North East Ambulance Service to respond to these questions as part of his presentation about ambulance performance standards later on the agenda.

Philip Angier, Alnwick resident and chair of Alnwick Markets asked if the County Council subsidised its markets service in the county and what policy justifications there were for this?

Members were advised that no subsidies were given as the markets service made a net return to the County Council. An updated Market Strategy for the County was being developed covering both public and private markets. There had already been discussion with private market operators, including the market in Alnwick, over the Strategy to inform its development, and the Council welcomed Mr Angier's input to this.

12. PETITIONS

This item was to:

(a) Receive any new petitions: no new petitions were received

(b) Consider reports on petitions previously received:

It was confirmed that neither lead petitioner for either of the two petitions were in

attendance.

(i) Request for Traffic Calming Measures on Derwentwater Drive, Scremerston (report attached to the official minutes as Appendix B): members received a report which explained that speed surveys would be undertaken, although not until the rugby season began later in the year, after which solutions could be considered.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the issues raised in the petition be noted;
- (2) A speed survey be carried out to help inform consideration of traffic calming measures;
- (3) A number of different options for potential traffic calming measures be set out for consideration by residents and the Rugby Club; and
- (4) the agreed measure(s) be considered as part of the Local Transport Plan Programme.

(ii) Request for 20mph Speed Limit at Lowick (report attached to the official minutes as Appendix C): members were advised that flashing speed signs were being looked at as part of the roll out of signs outside of schools, and road safety officers had contacted the school to discuss this further.

RESOLVED that the options outlined in the report be supported.

(iii) Request for Northumberland County Council to work together with Arriva, Morrisons and other interested parties to find a solution to the long standing issues with Alnwick Bus Station: it was noted that a report on this would be presented to a future Local Area Council meeting at the point when a full update could be provided. Both Northumberland County Council and Alnwick Town Council continued to work with Arriva and Morrisons and were hopeful of early resolution of some key issues that had actively involved all parties since early 2017, including improving the cleaning schedule.

(c) Receive any updates on petitions for which a report was previously considered: members noted that Amble Town Council agreed, at their meeting on 12 April 2018, to support the existing one hour parking restriction on Queen Street, Amble, following the North Northumberland Local Area Council considering a report at its meeting on 22 February 2018 responding to a petition received that requested that the time limit be increased.

RESOLVED that the updates be noted.

DISCUSSION ITEMS - CORPORATE

13. Presentation from the North East Ambulance Service

A presentation was provided from Mark Cotton of the North East Ambulance Service about ambulance performance standards (copy attached to the official minutes). Key details included:

- details of the 14 ambulance stations in Northumberland
- the categorisation of response time standards up until 30 October 2018 (Red 1 - 2 and Green 1 - 4)
- the need to change the standards due to increased demand, time frames over-ruling patient care, the high volume of crews diverted between cases, and Rapid Response on the scene for longer periods for a conveying resource; a decade old system would be replaced to meet modern needs
- ambulance call volumes 2005/06 to 2016/17
- details of the new standards, Categories 1 - 4, and specialist responses
- ambulance response objectives: a timely response to patients with life-threatening conditions; having the right clinical resources to meet the needs of patients; reducing multiple dispatches; reducing the diversion of resources; increasing hear and treat and increasing see and treat
- details for the ambulance response benchmark with other areas for categories 1 - 4 as of April 2018
- details of Northumberland's performance on C1, C2, C3 and C4 categories and performance against the new Ambulance Response Programme standards.

Key details of ensuing discussion and requests for additional information included:

- a member suggested it would be useful in future to assess the figures annually and see how they compared to the averages
- it had been the case until recently that if an ambulance crew were on a designated break, they would not be called to a Category 1 call. However discussions had taken place with staff and unions, and now crews would always respond to such calls. If the crew were less than 20 minutes into their break, they would receive a payment for responding plus another break in lieu, and if over 20 minutes into their break, they would receive payment but not another break in lieu
- a member requested additional data for the calls that did not meet the timescales; for example an ambulance picking up from the Coquet Valley and getting back to hospital might require an 80 mile round trip
- Mr Cotton would confirm whether the statistics included journeys by the air ambulance service also
- it would help if Northumberland's response figures could be compared with other similar rural areas in the future - for example rural Yorkshire, rural West Midlands and South West England
- it would be helpful to attain some details on cross border operations with the Scottish ambulance service
- it was important to keep delivering messages about the service to address some misperceptions, for example that unless called to C1 calls, then ambulances returned to their base area.

Further key points from Mr Cotton in response to questions included:

- details of response times to C1 and C2 calls from October 2017 - April 2018

- the full annual data would be available by the end of 2018. The 40 year old performance standards system was being changed; none of the 10 ambulance services in the country were yet being held accountable for the targets. The measures and accountability to the new standards would take effect from September 2018. NHS England did not want to place unnecessary burdens on ambulance services in the meantime
- more localised figures for rural areas could be provided; this had been done in the past for Berwick. The data could be provided by postcode area within electoral divisions
- it was now the case that if a north area based ambulance transferred a patient outside of the local area, another ambulance would move up to provide cover. Ambulances were instructed to return to their base area as soon as possible, unless they were needed for a nearby C1 call
- the timescales were calculated on the basis of the time taken for a clinician to see the patient - for example seven minutes for a C1 call
- from 2022, targets would apply for the time from the onset of symptoms of heart attacks and strokes for patients to beginning their ongoing treatment
- the NHS could not fund the air ambulance service as the latter was a charity and NHS guidelines did not allow its funds to be used for charitable causes. Any changes in possible support for the air ambulance service were a consideration for politicians at the national level
- Berwick's resources included two double crewed ambulances and a community paramedic based in Wooler
- Berwick's response rate, for the TD15 postcode, was higher than the rest of Northumberland and average for the North East
- regular work took place with the other nine ambulance services. The chief executives of the 10 services met as a group, and a further 10 - 15 workstreams existed underneath that group
- a report by Sheffield University on national ambulance performance found that no ambulance service met the average times in rural areas, but were likely overall to achieve the 90% target rate. The report concluded that it took longer for ambulances to travel from rural areas, but they were also less likely to be diverted to other local incidents in such sparsely populated areas

The Chair concluded by thanking Mr Cotton for his very clear and impressive presentation and answers given. He welcomed the offer made to receive further data to a future meeting.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the information be noted;
- (2) responses be arranged for members' queries and a further update be provided for the Local Area Council later in 2018.

(7.18pm: Councillor Bridgett then exited the meeting.)

14. LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES

(a) To receive 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 of the Local Area Council, who will also then have the opportunity to raise issues with the Area Managers.

Technical Services (Highways) Update:

- the service was dealing with its biggest challenge with potholes in many years, complaints continued to be received. Much work had been done but much more was required. The area managers had produced work schedules and were being costed
- resurfacing work was currently underway
- the Local Transport Plan (LTP) would be currently suspended for a few weeks to concentrate on the challenge fund scheme, £2 million of which would be spent in the north at Whittingham. A condition of the Challenge Fund money was that it had to be spent by the middle of the Summer 2018 and the LTP would resume immediately after completion at Whittingham
- micro asphalt schemes had been carried out in a number of local areas, including Bamburgh, Berwick, Alnwick, Amble, Longhoughton. Belford's had currently been delayed
- road dressing work was due to begin in the week commencing 28 May in old Swarland, Rock, Detchant, Powburn
- ditching measures along Holy Island causeway were currently being reinvestigated
- other projects were ongoing including traffic schemes, school schemes, and drainage improvements.

Key points then raised by members and responses then included:

- manpower resources were not a problem for fixing potholes, and capital funding had been received
- a range of funding had been received from the government for pothole fixing and structural patching of roads. Some elements of the LTP relating to bridge repairs were being re-prioritised and deferred to next year so that additional resources could be focussed on road maintenance due to the severity of the winter and extent of pothole damage. Members would receive further information about how micro asphalt schemes were addressed if contractors' work was not considered up to the required standard
- a request for potholes to be fixed on the Bamburgh - Belford road, although this was in the LTP programme
- all work had been programmed for up to the end of March 2019, so members would know when parts of their electoral division were due to be fixed
- Councillor Seymour would email Mr Hodgson with details of access required to enable tree cutting in the Berwick North division
- all roads were inspected and classified for their maintenance requirements, with some prioritised where required. For example, some main town centre roads were inspected monthly, whereas more minor roads were only

checked annually. Members and residents could raise any problems with roads with the highways service.

Neighbourhood Services Update:

- grass cutting provision had been put back due to the wet weather conditions, but was now back on track
- verge cutting activity had been re-tendered and the in-house service was supplemented by agricultural contractors where needed, the verge cutting programme was already underway
- NEAT teams had been supporting communities to ensure they looked their best ahead of independent assessors coming out to undertake inspections for the Northumbria in Bloom competition
- Highways England had opened a number of lay bys in the north Northumberland area. Further concern was expressed about the toilet in the layby by Haggerston, which required improvement
- an £8.6m fleet replacement scheme that included replacement of the Council's 52 refuse collection vehicles was underway, with the first batch of two new refuse vehicles having been delivered and put into service. The old fleet of refuse vehicles would be fully replaced over the next three years and in future would be put on a six year rather than a seven year replacement frequency
- new weed spraying arrangements were now in place; harmless blue dye was being used to demonstrate which areas had been treated which fades away after a few days
- in response to a question, it was confirmed that advertising / promotional information to support the Council's services would continue to be attached to the sides of refuse vehicles.

Members also received the following reports:

(b) Verge Litter Picking Programme/Plans

Members had received a letter from the Head of Neighbourhood Services on scheduled verge litter picking programme/plans over Spring, which was in response to a letter received from Alnwick Alnwick Friends of the Earth. (Copy of letter and original letter from Alnwick Friends of the Earth attached to the official minutes of the meeting.)

A further verbal update was provided by the Service Director - Local Services, of which his key points were:

- litter was a countrywide problem; in Northumberland, litter picking activities were organised and areas targeted, but the clearing of verges could be difficult, particularly alongside high speed roads
- liaison took place with Highways England and our own highways service so that verges could be cut / litter picked at the same time that other highway maintenance work was being undertaken, with this sometimes having to be delivered under night time road closures
- the Denwick - Lionheart Industrial Estate route was currently being intensively addressed, and the Shilbottle - Alnwick road was cleared

- regularly
- due to costs and manpower, some areas could only be undertaken on an annual basis. Areas along the main arterial routes were undertaken before summer
 - new legislation empowered local authorities to take action against people seen littering. Work was taking place with Legal Services to operationalise the enforcement. People could already provide car registration numbers of people seen littering and the Council would seek to take enforcement and, if needed obtain written witness statements. Photographs were not essential. The County Council would then liaise with the DVLA. Civil enforcement teams were now all trained also to give fixed penalty notices for people caught not cleaning up after their dogs or littering
 - a dedicated enforcement team was in place to address more serious flytipping activity as well as littering, dog fouling and other environmental offences
 - environmental campaigns had included the Love Northumberland, Hate Litter campaign with posters etc still being available along with litter picking equipment for volunteers, the litter campaign was being relaunched in summer 2018 to focus on littering from vehicles and plastic waste generally. The Green Dog Walkers Campaign was in full operation
 - plastic packaging was a particular environmental concern, and the message would continue to be publicised.

In response to a question on beach cleansing it was confirmed that beach promenades were regularly addressed. Sand rakes were also used for cleansing on some of the Blue Flag bathing beaches.

Mr Jones advised that voluntary groups could assist with verge litter collections, but were strongly encouraged not to in areas with speed limits above 30mph, as they could be dangerous.

If any voluntary groups wanted to help with manpower on the basis that the County Council could then close off parts of roads with temporary traffic lights, dialogue about any such offer could be considered.

Mr Swinbank of Alnwick Friends of the Earth responded that he was pleased that the offer of dialogue about possible measures had been offered and it would be taking this up. There was a common perception that littering was increasing, so it was important to look at possible ways to keep addressing it.

It was added that there were no reduced resources going into litter picking, but that it might be increasing and an attitudinal problem that continued to need to be challenged.

Mr Jones was thanked for his presentation and it was:

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

(b) Consultation on the Refreshed Functional Hierarchy and Resilient Road

Network

The report (attached to the official minutes as Appendix D) informed the Local Area Council about the consultation that was taking place with county councillors, town and parish councils and other key stakeholders on a periodic review of the Council's functional road hierarchy.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

15. OUTSIDE BODIES

Members were asked to make appointments to outside body organisations within the Local Area Council's remit. A list of outside bodies was attached to the agenda for consideration (attached as Appendix E to the official minutes).

It was agreed to reappoint the following:

- Amble Development Trust - T Clark, JG Watson
- Butler Ember Charity - JG Watson
- Eastern Borders Development Association - R Lawrie, C Seymour
- Glendale Gateway Trust - AH Murray
- Holy Island of Lindisfarne Community Development Trust - R Lawrie
- Northumberland National Park Joint Local Access Forum - I Hutchinson
- River Tweed Commission - G Hill, A Murray, G Renner-Thompson, G Roughead
- Seahouses Development Trust - G Renner-Thompson
- Tweed Forum - C Seymour.

One change was agreed:

- Lindisfarne Nature Reserve - C Seymour (replacing R Lawrie).

RESOLVED that the list of appointments to outside bodies be agreed.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

16. LOCAL AREA COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME

To note the latest version of agreed items for future Local Area Council meetings; any suggestions for new agenda items will require confirmation by the Business Chair after the meeting. (Attached to official minutes as Appendix F.)

17. FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on Thursday 21 June at St. James' Church Centre, Alnwick.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....

Ch.'s Initials.....

North Northumberland Local Area Council, 24 May 2018