

## **NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL AREA COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the **North Northumberland Local Area Council** held in Jubilee Social and Community Centre, Highcliffe, Spittal, Berwick-upon-Tweed, TD15 2JL on Thursday, 19 July 2018 at 3.00pm

#### **PRESENT**

Councillor G. Castle  
(Chair, in the Chair, items 35 - 37 and 43 - 51)

Councillor T. Thorne  
(Planning Vice-chair, in the Chair, items 38 - 42)

#### **MEMBERS**

G. Hill	G. Renner-Thompson (part)
R. Lawrie (part)	G. Roughead
R. Moore	C. Seymour
A. Murray (part)	J. Watson (part)

#### **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE**

N. Armstrong	Senior Planning Officer
M. Bird	Senior Democratic Services Officer
M. Bulman	Lawyer
N. Easton	Senior Policy Officer
G. Fairs	Highways Development Manager
B. Hodgson	Area Manager (North), Neighbourhood Services
H. Marron	Principal Planning Officer
J. Sanderson	Senior Planning Manager (Planning Policy)
R. Sittambalam	Senior Planning Officer
K. Westerby	Highways Development Manager

33 members of the public and one member of the press were in attendance from 3pm, and 15 members of the public and one member of the press were in attendance for the second half from 6pm.

**(Councillor Castle in the Chair.)**

#### **35. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bridgett, Clark and

Ch.'s Initials.....

Pattison. A member expressed concern that the Vice-chair had not attended any of this Local Area Council's meetings that had taken place in Berwick. This would be noted and raised with the Council Leader.

### **36. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of North Northumberland Local Area Council held on Thursday 21 June 2018, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

### **37. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

- Councillor Roughead declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in relation to application 18/01164/OUT as he had been the Mayor when Berwick Town Council considered the application, but he had not participated in that discussion/decision
- Councillor Hill declared a personal, but not prejudicial, interest in relation to application 18/01164/OUT as she was a member of St Boisils Residents Association, who were involved in the Goody Patch; some representatives of St Boisils were raising objections.

**(Councillor Thorne then in the Chair.)**

### **38. DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

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.

### **39. 18/01711/VARYCO**

**Variation of approved plans (landscaping) to reserved matters application for 50 dwellings**

**Land south of West Close, Guilden Road, Warkworth**

Senior Planning Officer Neil Armstrong introduced the application with the aid of a Slides presentation. He firstly updated members by referring to the site visit on 16 July and changes to conditions 11 and 12 and how an additional condition was proposed to require the boundary treatments to be implemented in full before the occupation of the dwellings, and retained thereafter, unless repaired or replaced on a like for like basis.

*(Councillor Murray arrived at the meeting during the officer's introduction and took no part in the consideration or vote on this application.)*

Councillors Sally Black and John Hoborough then shared the five minute speaking slot for local members on behalf of Warkworth Parish Council. Councillor Black's key points were:

- the wildlife corridor had been used by a wide variety of animals, including birds, badgers, foxes and deer. The applicant had given a verbal assurance that the four metre wide area would be protected; residents complained when subsequently the developer began clearing the area
- after some weeks, the planning department succeeded in getting the developer to admit that they had cleared the area in question without permission, however they then continued their development work
- only one of the four properties directly affected were willing to reinstate the wildlife corridor area. The proposed plans did not restore it to its previous condition.

Councillor Hoborough's key points were:

- the developer had shown disregard in removing an area which benefited the local community and health and wellbeing. This application retrospectively applied to legalise something which shouldn't have happened
- Compulsory Purchase Orders of garden areas should be considered to help the health and wellbeing of affected neighbours. Otherwise, it was enabling developers to do what they liked then get it retrospectively approved
- New Homes Bonus funding should be used to address situations; the area should be reinstated to its proper ecosystem.

David Brocklehurst then spoke in support of the application, of which his key points were:

- apologies were given for some discrepancies on the plans as there had been a miscommunication about the land in question. This application provided a palatable solution
- they had listened to and met parish council representatives on site, and thought that the issues had been resolved, as this application would create a better scheme than the previous one
- a management company was being set up, with residents paying into it. This would ensure that vegetation would be planted, and be in accordance with the plans.

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

- the discrepancies were a result of the hedgerow not being accurately shown on the submitted landscape plan drawings, as it was slightly off the boundary. Discussions with the developer and work with the County Ecologist then followed to reach the current position
- if planning permission had originally been applied for removing the wildlife corridor, officers' preference would have been for it to have been retained, but members could only consider this application as presented
- the recent meeting on site was to consider how the situation could be made to work. Warkworth Parish Council's response was repeated verbatim in the report and they were objecting at this meeting
- the total length of the hedge was 284m

- regarding not adhering to hedgerow regulations, both an investigation and enforcement had begun when the matter was first raised with Officers. It was being addressed as a breach of a current planning permission
- conditions in the report, and proposed to be amended in relation to conditions 11 and 12 addressed the ongoing management of the hedge and who was responsible if it failed. Enforcement options would be available
- there was a schedule for management across the whole site. Replanting would need to be undertaken in accordance with schemes as to be agreed. The 10 year management plan would be undertaken fully and include options for the maintenance work
- Warkworth Parish Council had submitted comments and were the only speakers objecting at this meeting
- the proposed replanting was intended to provide biodiversity enhancement; it was disappointing that the hedge had been removed but this new scheme was acceptable in its own right
- it had been a well established hedge, but information was not available at this meeting to confirm how old it was
- residents of other nearby properties had also submitted representations and alerted the enforcement team; details of their comments were summarised in the report
- the fences proposed were an improvement on the previous scheme
- the wildlife corridor had been between 5 to 5.5m at its widest point.

Councillor Castle then moved that the application be granted as per the officer recommendation, with the additional conditions as amended, acknowledging the objectors' views and also taking the applicant's word on how to rectify the situation acceptably. The proposal was probably the best that could be managed in unfortunate circumstances. It was not right to refuse it on the basis of making a point to the applicant, but hopefully this scenario would not happen again. This was seconded by Councillor Lawrie, who indicated that he did so reluctantly.

Members then made the following key points:

- as only one of the four dwellings directly affected had agreed to reinstate the hedge were it was meant to be, it would be extremely difficult to look at Compulsory Purchase Orders; any compensation would have to be agreed by the developer
- the local member commented that he had not been involved in Warkworth Parish Council's discussions about the application. All involved were disappointed; he did not support the removal, but the applicant thought the development was in accordance with the plans, which was a mistake. These plans were not as good as before but were as good as could get in the circumstances. The wildlife corridor mostly had birds and butterflies, which would come back, rather than animals. He was not happy with the situation but the proposal was the best that could be done with a sense of reality about the situation
- a member could not support the application given the public interest test being key
- it was concerning that even at the site visit the developer was using the area in question for storage

- such situations were taken very seriously; Warkworth Parish Council could be very assured of that. Any compulsory purchasing options would be very difficult and expensive. This proposal was meeting halfway; the committee were far from just accepting the situation.

Councillor Moore queried if the motion could be amended to require the developer to contribute to the costs brought to individual property owners so that the costs of the original hedge could be established? Members were advised that conditions 11 and 12 in the report would be amended so that maintenance was to be clarified in discharging these conditions. Furthermore, the developer could only owe obligations to the County Council, not any third parties, so the proposal for costs could not be legally required, so this was not pursued as an amendment to the motion. Conditions with the management company would be used to manage the requirements.

The motion to approve was then put to the vote, and supported by four votes for, two against and two abstentions, so it was thus:

**RESOLVED** that the application be GRANTED subject to the conditions in the report plus the amendments to conditions 11 and 12 plus the additional condition regarding boundary treatments.

**39. 18/01401/FUL  
1no Dwelling  
Land West of 15 Dunstanburgh Road, Craster**

Senior Planning Officer Ragu Sittambalam introduced the application with the aid of a Slides presentation.

Sue Chapman and Marion Gallon then shared the objectors' public speaking slot. Ms Chapman's key points were:

- the Highways Authority very clearly agreed that there was a lack of any safe access, which was around a right angle on a blind bend
- it provided vehicular and pedestrian access for only six properties
- the embankment was eroding and stone walls beginning to collapse
- nobody had calculated the likely tonnage of materials for the construction to have to be taken through the 3m access route.

Ms Gallon's key points were:

- the sharp left hand turn was dangerous - people did not realise that vehicles could come out as the bend was inconspicuous
- Craster was a major tourist attraction, with 250,000 people using the car park each year, and the numbers of people on foot walking along St Oswald's Way even greater
- Dunstanburgh Road might look like a quiet cul-de-sac but she had counted 100 vehicles pass within a single hour. This development would significantly increase the use of the access road, with delivery vehicles, family and friends visiting.

Amer Waheed then spoke in support of the application, of which his key points were:

- the applicant had been unaware of the recommendation to refuse the application until the report was published and had asked for it to be deferred to allow them to address the concerns raised
- the site was within the settlement boundary in a discrete corner of the site. The proposal's size and scale fitted with other local buildings. It was single storey, which reduced any visual impact, and the proposed materials could be altered
- the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) set a high standard for refusal on highways grounds. There had been no accidents on that road. Was it really severe enough to have to offer mitigation?
- there had been a methodist church at the end of the street which had been converted into a five bedroom house
- 2x2m visibility was achievable, as was a traffic management plan. The applicant was currently using the site to park at.

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

- the current parking arrangement was a private operation ran by the landowner. If agreed, the application would stop the use of the land as an informal car park
- the application could not be withdrawn from the agenda at this stage. It was being determined at this meeting to meet statutory timescales. The applicant could resubmit the application again in future; proactive work would take place with the applicant about the way forward
- the access had shortcomings for its width as it only permitting single vehicles. Visibility for pedestrians and drivers was below what it should be, especially for vehicles turning left into the access. Vehicles might have to reverse out
- this application would formalise the use of the space and there was no scope for mitigation. Overturning a planning reason here but make it difficult to overturn other applications
- the NPPF supported the reuse of buildings, such as the old church nearby
- the impact on amenity was not sufficient grounds to warrant a refusal of the application
- any conditions on the road could not be enforced as it was not adopted
- the access road was not within the application red line boundary
- the siting of a new dwelling in this location would be unacceptable due to the unsafe means of access.

Councillor Moore then moved that the application be refused as per the officer recommendation, adding that the access provided was not substantial enough to accommodate more traffic. This was seconded by Councillor Hill.

Members then made the following key points:

- it was difficult to see how granting the application would generate a greater amount of traffic except for during the construction process
- if the application was granted, vehicles would be less likely to informally park there, and thus improve highway safety

- the AONB Partnership had objected; the development increased the urbanisation of a rural village nor was it in the interests of the village
- people living at the site would not lead to more traffic than its current use
- although the AONB Partnership had objected, the site was not near the coast
- the access was narrow and used by a lot of people, but was it actually severe?
- if granted, residents and other current users would still have to deal with new housing at the site without any better access provided.

The motion to refuse was then put to the vote, and agreed by five votes in support to four against, so it was thus:

**RESOLVED** that the application be REFUSED for the reasons listed in the report.

**40. 18/01164/OUT**

**Outline permission (with some matters reserved): conversion of vacant pumping station to residential use, four dwellings, with associated works, including details of access, layout and scale  
Land East Of Kirks Yard, Dock Road, Tweedmouth**

Mr Sittambalam firstly provided a number of updates: following the preparation of the report, one further objection was received raising issues over the planning obligations being insufficient and other issues that had been already set out in the public responses section.

Amended plans were received on 29 March 2018 to address outstanding highways concerns by providing one in-curtilage parking space for each of the detached dwellings. Following consultation with Highways Development Management there were no objections raised on highway safety grounds subject to recommended conditions which have been agreed with the applicant. The amended recommendation would be read at the end of the presentation. There had also been a number of minor amendments to conditions which had been agreed by consultees, with no changes to the content or detail required with the exception of condition 8 of the report which now would require the provision of bird boxes only. A full copy of the amended conditions was available should members require it.

Mr Sittambalam then further introduced the application with the aid of a Slides presentation.

Ross Weddle then spoke in objection, of which his key points were:

- details about the history of the building
- the community had been informed in 2004 that they would be informed once plans were developed, but this had not happened and the application was in a different organisation's name
- it was located within Tweedmouth Conservation Area, which was an area of special architectural interest

- applying for outline planning permission made it difficult to judge what the subsequent development would actually look like. Could this be a way to raise the value of the site without actually building on it?
- there was a risk of flooding, the building was a community asset, and insufficient detail was included to judge what the impact would be on the rest of the Conservation Area.

Katherine Simpson then spoke in support of the application, of which her key points were:

- it was a high quality scheme which would regenerate the site. It would provide a range of benefits including market housing in a sustainable location; reuse the building; provide a sensitive conversion; retain trees; and provide economic benefits by providing jobs for the construction
- £6,000 was being provided for coastal mitigation measures, off street parking was included as were acoustic barriers
- neither Public Protection, Ecology or Highways consultees had objected
- full details would be provided at the reserved matters stage
- there would be no impact on the trees in the Goody Patch to the rear of the site; any work to trees would be subject to a separate application
- it was a sustainable development that would bring the building back into use.

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

- this application was for approving the description, layout and scale of the proposed development. Details of the appearance and landscaping would be subject to a future application. The Conservation Officer did not object but reserved judgment for details at the next application stage
- it was in Flood Zone 1, which was the lowest category of risk. The Lead Local Flood Authority had not objected. The Environment Agency would not have responded to the consultation as the site was not within zones 2 or 3
- there were properties nearby and it was on the adopted highway, so there was no reason why a mains connection would not be possible, but this would be addressed at the building control stage
- an application for removing trees was a separate matter submitted by the County Council, which was required as there were Tree Preservation Orders locally
- this process, of outline permission followed by a reserved matters application, was a more expensive application process as applications were charged per unit at the reserved matters stage
- there was a low to moderate risk of any problems arising from the nearby contaminated land; a precautionary approach was being taken
- the application was not likely to damage the roots of trees in the Goody Patch, as they were separated by a retaining wall with an embankment
- there was some parking to the north west area associated with the properties. The provision of one parking space per unit was less than desirable, but given the wide width of the carriageway, it would cause insufficient harm as to be unsustainable and not to such detriment as to refuse the application



- although some concern had been expressed about how details were being left to the next stage, it was legally proper to do it this way. Members needed to determine this application as presented
- discussions had taken place with education colleagues about any possible education contribution. It was considered that a contribution was unlikely to be required. There were no powers to require any such contribution
- although some cars were known to park on the nearby village green during busy summer months, this was not significant to warrant refusal given the amount of parking available on Dock Road.

Councillor Castle then moved that the application be granted subject to the conditions in the report and S106 contribution. This was seconded by Councillor Murray.

A member was concerned about a lack of detail included - it gave suspicions of a case of 'mission creep'. She would abstain as she could not judge it fully until more detail was received, which another member agreed with. The Vice-chair (Planning) confirmed that the reserved matters application would definitely be presented to this Local Area Council when it was ready for determination in due course.

The motion to grant the application was then put to the vote, and agreed with five votes in support to four abstentions, so it was thus:

**RESOLVED** that members authorise the Head of Service to GRANT permission subject to a Legal Agreement pursuant to s106 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) to secure the following contributions:

- coastal mitigation contribution of £600 per dwelling (£6,000 total); and
- delegated authority to impose the recommended conditions by consultees.

**41. 18/01036/FUL**

**2no dwellings on plot at Bernicia Way, Beadnell  
Land East of 21 Bernicia Way, Beadnell**

Mr Sittambalam introduced the application with the aid of a Slides presentation. He updated the committee initially by updating on an amendment to the recommendations for ecological mitigation and a variation of the agreement, plus it being noted that the recommendation should refer to principal occupation (not principle) in perpetuity of the dwellings. A members' site visit was carried out on 16 July 2018.

Following the preparation of the committee report a consultation response from Northumberland Coast AONB was received which has been provided to members. For the benefit of those attending this meeting the response reads as follows:

"Thank you for re-consulting the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership about the planning application detailed above, which I have the following comments.

“I am pleased to note that a scheme has been submitted for off-site habitat creation in the form of wetland scrapes. While this does not directly compensate for the loss of on-site landscaping, it will provide valuable new habitats for wading birds, thereby ensuring a gain in ecological value, if not in landscaping terms.

“I am also pleased to note that the application has been amended to residential primary occupancy rather than holiday lets, although introducing two residential units within the holiday park does seem a rather curious arrangement.”

Christopher Brown then spoke in objection to the application, of which his key points were:

- the estate had been designed and planned on the basis of a unique combination of concepts and features to make it distinct from a normal residential housing estate in the AONB
- the application in 2009 had been for 40 properties with a restrictive covenant designating them as holiday homes, but not for permanent occupancy/residence, and been approved as such
- the Section 106 Agreement Clause 25, signed in 2011, specifically required an ecological buffer zone to be sited alongside the wetlands adjacent to the pond, designated as a natural habitat
- amendments had been made only on 20 June 2018 to change this application from holiday homes to now include two permanent occupancy properties and on 6 July 2018 to relocate the buffer zone to off-site ecological mitigation area approved by the County Ecologist. The County Ecologist had previously said he was supportive of the unique/award winning style, but not of removing the buffer zone. This had been key to the proposal in 2009, and should not be picked apart.

Councillor Alison Nation then spoke on behalf of of Beadnell Parish Council, of which her key points were:

- the previous withdrawn application mentioned a vacant plot, but this one referred to undeveloped land. The land was a buffer zone to the wetlands and had been landscaped with trees and shrubs as would be expected
- Beadnell Parish Council and residents would prefer the development to remain as it was originally planned and detailed in the S106 agreement with 40 houses
- the application was only for two houses but touched on the integrity and ability to rely on S106 agreement. The S106 referred to the visitor centre, car park, recreational facilities and the remainder being landscaped to a high standard. The Local Area Council should not approve the application and the planners be urged to expedite completion of the development in accordance with the S106 agreement of February 2011
- if approved, other green/buffer zones could be open to similar applications with off-site mitigation sites. If approved, the following should be taken into account: (a) the agreed principal occupancy in perpetuity; (b) all outstanding community benefits in the S106 of February 2011 be completed before construction started; (c) that the mitigation sites are clearly defined and functional before construction begins; and (d) a freehold of the

wetland/scrub area is transferred, with development/sales restrictions to a competent organisation to manage

- the AONB coastal area had a special nature; its biodiversity and vulnerability could not be questioned. The area was worthy of conservation status and deserved careful consideration.

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

- the AONB Officer's position was now a comment on rather than an objection to the application
- the main concern was whether the offsite ecological enhancement was significant to outweigh the landscape impact from the proposal. However the value of the two areas of land was different; it was considered sufficient to outweigh the landscape loss of the original area whose value was lower
- it was not for Planning Services to enforce/guarantee the visitor centre component. The wetland area would be dealt with through conditions
- further discussions took place with consultees who objected depending on what issues they raised. Liaison had taken place with the County Ecologist to ensure that the proposal provided an enhancement. If a neighbour objected with strong grounds, officers would then liaise with the relevant consultee
- the lake would remain and be subject to a future application should development come forward
- a balancing act had been needed between the loss of landscape and ecological gain, following which officers recommended it should be approved; the proposal would not compromise the function of the buffer zone
- the principle had been established in the local area's new Neighbourhood Plan that new properties could only be for permanent occupancy.

Councillor Watson then moved the officer recommendation to grant the application subject to the conditions listed in the report and conditions as amended. This was seconded by Councillor Lawrie.

Members then made the following key points:

- a member would have objected to the application if the AONB Officer had continued to object, but he was now happy with it
- it was important that the improvements proposed were confirmed first. The principle of permanent occupancy was what members wanted to see.

The motion to grant refuse was then put to the vote, and agreed with six votes in support and three against, so it was thus:

**RESOLVED** that this application be GRANTED permission subject to the planning conditions set out below and a Legal Agreement pursuant to s106 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) to secure the following obligations:-

- in principal occupancy in perpetuity of the dwellings hereby approved;
- the financial contribution towards the Council's Coastal Mitigation Scheme (£1,200); and

- delegated authority to officers to either include terms, or to vary the legal agreement of N/09/B/0391 to provide 1000sqm of land as ecological enhancement area with a management plan.

## 42. Planning Appeals

Members received information on the progress of planning appeals (report attached to the official minutes as part of Appendix A).

**RESOLVED** that the application be noted.

*(The meeting then adjourned until 6pm; Councillors Lawrie and Watson exited the meeting, and Councillor Renner-Thompson arrived at the meeting. Councillor Castle then chaired the rest of the meeting.)*

## OTHER LOCAL AREA COUNCIL BUSINESS

### 43. COMMUNITY CHEST AWARDS

A second round of the presentation of certificates to recipients of Community Chest funding took place, following the last presentations given in February 2018. The Chair referred to the benefits and support provided for organisations that had received funding; the scheme was a great success. From the following year onwards, there would be one presentation event for each Local Area Council's area per year every February.

The following organisations had received an award but were not in attendance at the meeting:

- Amble Army Cadets - Northumbria Army Cadet Force
- Berwick Amateur Rowing Club
- Howick Village Hall Trust.

The following organisations had received an award and representatives were in attendance to receive their certificate, and had their photographs taken:

- Warkworth & District Flower Club
- Lionhearts (Alnwick) Mental Health Service User Group
- 1016 (Berwick) Squadron Air Training Corps
- North Sunderland Football Club.

### 44. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

This enabled members of the public to ask questions, which could be received in writing in advance of or asked at the meeting. Questions could be asked about issues for which the Council has a responsibility.

**Robert Veitch, local resident** asked for a progress update on when the speed humps on Spittal Hall Road would be removed.

Members were advised that the Local Transport Plan (LTP) programme for the current year included the resurfacing of Spittal Hall Road and this would include the removal of the speed humps subject to consultation taking place. Kris Westerby, the new Highways Delivery Manager, would take this up with the Traffic Safety Team.

**Michael Stewart, local resident** asked for an update on the results of a survey undertaken on Berwick Old Bridge.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer would take a note of Mr Stewart's contact details after the meeting and arrange for an update to be provided for him.

**Tim Kirton, Project and Funding Officer at Alnwick Town Council** asked if the County Council would be arranging any further presentations about the Borderlands Initiative for town/parish councils, after Alnwick Town Council had not received a direct invite to the Town/Parish Working Group meeting in May.

The Chief Executive confirmed that further updates and information would be circulated; an officer could attend a meeting of Alnwick Town Council to provide an update and discuss. If other town/parish councils were also interested in receiving an update, another meeting could be arranged to jointly brief representatives.

## 45. PETITIONS

### (a) New petitions

Local councillor for Berwick East Councillor Hill presented a petition entitled 'Petition to get Prince Edward Road Tarmacked with Kerbstones removed for the benefit of car parking and cutting down on tripping hazards' which was signed by 99 people, although some further additional sheets of signatures would also be provided separately. Some patching had been undertaken on the road but surface material was breaking away and dangerous. She hoped that this scheme could be pushed through the Local Transport Plan (LTP) process.

Ronnie Hartley, local resident and lead petitioner, explained that his wife had had an accident on 30 May which he said was a consequence of the condition of the highway, and might also need physiotherapy treatment. In response to a query from Mr Hartley, Mr Westerby confirmed that the minimum level before requiring action to defects was 40mm for roads and 20mm for footpaths in Northumberland; the national requirement for footpaths was 25mm.

The Chair confirmed that the situation would be investigated and a report produced for the next full meeting of this Local Area Council. The local member was also asked to follow up the issue through the LTP process.

**RESOLVED** that the request be investigated and a report produced for the meeting on 20 September 2018.

**(b) Updates on petitions previously considered:**

Senior Policy Officer Neil Easton provided an update, following the Local Area Council previously considering a report and a subsequent update about the withdrawal of the Border Buses Berwick evening service. Northumberland County Council (NCC) agreed temporary funding of a replacement scheme for a period of four months. NCC funding for the Berwick Town evening replacement service ceased at the end of May 2018.

Following the withdrawal of the Border Buses Berwick evening service, NCC agreed temporary funding of a replacement scheme for a period of four months. NCC funding for the Berwick Town evening replacement service ceased at the end of May 2018. The service continued to operate albeit at a loss for the operator Woody's Taxis. In terms of performance whilst not yet commercially viable the service was carrying passengers averaging 15 - 20 per night, more on weekends. The numbers were increasing slightly week on week as the summer season began.

NCC were in ongoing discussions with Steven Wood (Woody's Taxis) regarding this service, as it stood operators needed to give the traffic commissioner 56 days notice of their intention to cancel a service and this has not happened, therefore the service would continue to operate in the short term. In relation to the long term sustainability of the service, Woody's Taxis was just looking to cover the costs of this service, as a local operator who lived and worked in the community they wanted to provide this key local service. Woody's Taxis was talking to local supermarkets about sponsorship of the bus, in addition to the Town Council, and other funders regarding ongoing financial support for the service. Ultimately the viability of this service would rest with the local community, a concerted effort was needed from the residents of Berwick to use the service otherwise they risked losing the service, or as a minimum a reduction in service frequency.

The Chair welcomed the operator's commitment to providing the service. Another member referred to Border Buses' recent further timetable change; Mr Easton advised that further work was taking place to encourage greater bus usage following Border Buses deregistering more services. Consideration was being given to the route and timetables affected. Woody's Taxis continued to provide the same route that had been in operation since their service started, but data was being gathered for other options; officers were aware of the level of shortfall. Commitment was required to confirming the service longer term, after which further work on promoting it could be arranged.

In response to a further query it was confirmed that S106 funding was not available to support such initiatives as ultimately it was there to be allocated for infrastructure requirements.

**RESOLVED** that

- (1) the update be noted; and
- (2) a further update be provided for the Local Area Council in September 2018.

## 46. LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES

Members received a verbal update from the Area Manager from Neighbourhood Services and the Highways Delivery Manager 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.

### **Neighbourhood Services update, from Area Manager Bob Hodgson:**

- the sixth and seventh grass cut of the year were currently taking place. In the downtime available work was taking place on borders and planters. Regarding verge cutting, all sight lines were as required
- judging for the Northumbria in Bloom competition was taking place that week and the following week
- another new refuse vehicle for the Berwick area would be delivered on 20 July, which was part of a £8.6m fleet replacement plan
- a door knocking operation was being undertaken to promote increasing the rate of recycling. Bins were being stickered with details of what could be placed in the waste and recycling bins; work would take place to analyse the difference in the proportion of waste/recycling.

### **Technical Services update, from new Highways Development Manager Kris Westerby:**

- from March - June 2018, 7,500 road defects had been repaired. It represented a 156% increase in work compared to the previous year. 31,700 had been fixed countywide, with a peak in April of 10,500; there had been 2,500 for the same period the previous year. 30,000 road repairs had been based on 24 hour / 14 day repairs, but the next round would focus on more permanent repairs
- Details of progress locally delivering the Local Transport Plan programme for 2018/19, which included Challenge Fund money received.

Members raised the following issues, to which officers replied with updates or agreed to look into further, of which the key details were:

- weed spraying on bridges over the A697; this had taken place but Mr Hodgson would follow it up. Work had also taken place recently at Felton
- the delay in providing new white lines on the Hampeth to Shilbottle road
- some deterioration of the cycling path between Warkworth to Amble; repair work had also been undertaken in the weekend beginning 14 July
- environmental work required to the north entrance to Felton
- weed spraying on Berwick Old Bridge
- concerns about some residents leaving their bins outside for days after they had been emptied; the enforcement team could assist. Publicity about this had been issued but it was a countywide problem and there were limited powers available to address it
- thanks expressed for the speed for recent pothole repairs
- thanks for the work due to complete on Chapel Street car park in Berwick

- an old post had been left in since the new lights had been put in at the pedestrian crossing by the cobbles at Market Street, Alnwick. As it could be an NEDL power supply, Mr Westerby would check
- could the rusty and unsightly parking payment facility outside of Iceland in Alnwick be removed?
- concern that hedge trimming alongside the A1 on the junction to Belford was incomplete as it did not include the full width of the hedge; this could have resulted from highways safety requirements, for example if any obstacles had been in the way of the machinery
- the wall at the junction of the Lucker - Bamburgh road had been lowered to improve visibility, but this was currently redundant due to overgrown plants; Mr Hodgson would look into this
- clarification was sought and about the width for road marking in conservation Areas, with reference to Belford's Conservation Area
- some pavements just outside of the Alnwick Conservation Area were crumbling; what was the position regarding fixing them or arranging a particular complete resurfacing job? Members were advised that the focus was on actionable defects.

Officers were thanked for their work and were encouraged to report any further issues to Local Services staff.

**RESOLVED** that

- (1) the updates be noted; and
- (2) any unresolved issues raised be looked into by Local Services.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**47. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PLACE**

**Northumberland Local Plan - Regulation 18 Draft Plan**

Members received a report and presentation providing an update on the Northumberland Local Plan and details of the Regulation 18 Local Plan consultation. (Report attached to the official minutes as Appendix B.)

Senior Planning Manager - Planning Policy Joan Sanderson provided a presentation (copy attached to Appendix B with the official minutes) of which the details were:

- progress to date: preparing new Local Plan; number of updates to existing evidence base studies; call for sites undertaken; draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report undertaken; working with internal and external partners on evidence base studies and draft policies; Working Group reviewing and inputting into development of draft policies; working with Neighbourhood Plan Groups; Spring 2018 Local Plan consultation; threat of government intervention
- new plan would have full coverage and last from 2016-2036



- the Local Plan would set the strategic planning policies of the Council; set the general scale and distribution of new development to 2036; provide the planning principles, including detailed 'development management'; policies to guide planning decisions; show in detail where new homes, workplaces and facilities would be located through allocations of land; show key environmental designations and include site specific proposals for the conservation and enhancement of historic and natural assets; cover the whole of Northumberland (except the National Park); replace all local plans and core strategies; run alongside recent and new Neighbourhood Plans
- the draft vision of the Local Plan, and its objectives: growing and diversifying the Northumberland economy; extending housing choice; conserving and enhancing the environment and environmental assets; improving connectivity and movement; supporting healthy, sustainable communities by responding to service needs; mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change; the prudent use of natural resources; ensuring high quality design of buildings and spaces
- delivering the vision: plan needed to define level and distribution of development and include specific policies to deliver the vision; ambitious growth scenario for employment - aligned with the Strategic Economic Plan, North of Tyne and Borderlands Initiative; the plan included a spatial guide to location of development; main towns were main focus for development; Service Centres would accommodate development that maintains and strengthen their roles; Smaller scale development in other Service Villages and clusters of smaller settlements
- no Green Belt deletions were proposed other than for employment
- details of policies on climate change mitigation and adaptations, health and wellbeing and design
- use and details of settlement boundaries and Green Belt boundaries for main towns (Alnwick, Amble and Berwick), service centres (Belford, Rothbury, Seahouses and North Sunderland, Wooler), service villages (Broomhill/Togston (as part was in the Amble electoral division), Embleton, Felton, Longframlington, Longhoughton, Lowick, Norham, Scremerston, Shilbottle, Swarland, Warkworth) and smaller settlements (Acklington, Alnmouth, Craster, Dunstan, Holy Island, Rennington and Thropton)
- consultation timescales and next steps.

Discussion followed of which the issues and the responses from Ms Sanderson were:

- where areas had been identified as having a shortage of employment land locally, some Green Belt deletion was considered to be required
- if a Neighbourhood Plan began development but subsequently was suspended or not completed, officers would look at whether any additional policy requirements were required for the area in question needed to be included in the emerging Northumberland Local Plan
- more social housing was needed in Berwick, particularly for three or four bedroomed properties; Ms Sanderson agreed that it was important to gain evidence to help support this aim, and although discount market housing was important, the rental sector also needed to come more to the fore and

views on the emerging Local Plan had been sought from the registered social providers

- there was enough land available within the settlement areas highlighted to deliver the required levels of housing. Any allocated sites were only for areas where it had been identified that there were not enough housing sites coming forward to meet the required housing need
- whilst there were planning permissions in excess of the 610 housing allocation for Berwick, consideration had been given to which sites would definitely come forward. As permission for sites in Berwick tended to expire, officers had looked at more possible allocations to make up for any shortfall
- infrastructure requirements were acknowledged to be a key concern; a draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan had been produced and consultation would be taking place with key infrastructure providers including education, the Clinical Commissioning Group regarding General Practitioner (GP) provision, Northumbria Water and the Environment Agency
- a member also stressed the importance of the Economic Strategy and Borderlands Initiative; transport was a key focus, as for example Newcastle to Edinburgh rail connectivity was very important and being looked at by the Berwick Regeneration Commission.

Ms Sanderson was thanked for her presentation and it was:

**RESOLVED** that the report, presentation and members' comments be noted.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

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

Members received a progress update on Members' Local Improvement Schemes during 2018/19 as at 1 July 2018. (Report attached to the official minutes as Appendix C.)

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

### **49. BERWICK REGENERATION COMMISSION**

This was a standing item on the agenda for verbal updates; members were advised that a presentation from the River Tweed Commission about consultation being undertaken by the Scottish Government about the introduction of the Sea Fishing (Enforcement) Regulations 2018. Also, the Berwick Town Strategy Forum had been established to address town centre issues.

**RESOLVED** that the verbal update be noted.

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

Members received the latest version of agreed items for future Local Area Council meetings. If members wished to put forward any possible future agenda items, they should contact the Chair. (List attached to the official minutes at Appendix D.)

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

**51. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on Thursday, 23 August 2018 in St James' Church Centre, Alnwick.

**CHAIR**.....

**DATE**.....