

## **NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL**

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

At a meeting of the **North Northumberland Local Area Council** held at Northern View, Highcliffe, Spittal, Berwick upon Tweed, TD15 2JL on Thursday, 21 November 2019 at 3.00pm.

#### **PRESENT**

Councillor G Castle  
(Chair, in the chair, items 82 - 85, 88, 91 - 100)

Councillor T. Thorne (part)  
(Planning Vice-chair, in the Chair, items 86 - 87, 89 - 90)

#### **MEMBERS**

G Hill	C Seymour
W Pattison (part)	J Watson
G Roughead (part)	

#### **OFFICERS**

M Bird	Senior Democratic Services Officer
V Cartmell	Principal Planning Officer
D Hadden	Lawyer
B Hodgson	Neighbourhood Services Area Manager (North)
P Jones	Service Director, Local Services
T Lowe	Senior Planning Officer
A Peaden	Library Service Manager
C Thompson	Principal Highways Officer
N Walsh	Head of Cultural Services

Also in attendance: press: 1, public: 9 (at 3.00pm); public: 4 (at 6.00pm)

*(Councillor Castle in the chair.)*

#### **82. CHAIR'S OPENING COMMENTS**

The Chair began the meeting by explaining that he had agreed to make changes to reduce the amount of business in the second half of the agenda beginning from 6.00pm due to the impact of the closure of a section of the A1 due to roadworks beginning at 8.00pm each evening. He wished to do this to ensure that residents, councillors and officers were able to get past the area affected before the diversions took effect. He had agreed to defer the petition report and the Northumberland Lottery

presentation as neither were time critical. He would also look to possibly amending the start times of the Local Area Council's next meeting on 19 December if the overnight A1 closures were still in place then.

### **83. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bridgett, Clark, Lawrie, Moore, Murray and Renner-Thompson. Councillor Roughead had given his apologies as he would arrive late to the meeting.

### **84. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the meeting of North Northumberland Local Area Council held on Thursday, 17 October 2019, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

### **85. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Councillor Thorne declared that he would leave the meeting whilst application 19/02085/OUT was considered; his home neighboured the application site, so he would be declaring a personal and prejudicial interest.

*(Councillor Thorne in the chair.)*

### **86. 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 and applications enclosed with official minutes as Appendix A.)

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

### **87. 18/02684/VARYCO**

**Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) in relation to planning application 17/02023/FUL**

**Asda, Main Street, Tweedmouth, Berwick-Upon-Tweed, Northumberland, TD15 2DS**

The Vice-chair (Planning) explained that the applicant had withdrawn the application. Members were further informed that noise from the current generator continued to be of concern and the owner now proposed to remove it and submit an application for a new one. Enforcement action would be taken if a satisfactory solution was not reached.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

*(Councillor Thorne then left the meeting at 3.07pm whilst application 19/02085/OUT*

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*was considered, which was chaired by Councillor Castle.)*

**88. 19/02085/OUT**

**Resubmission: Outline application for development of approximately 40 dwellings - amended 09/08/19  
Land South Of Lightpipe Farm, Longframlington, Northumberland**

Senior Planning Officer Tony Lowe introduced the application by firstly explaining the basis for the consideration of the application; it had been refused by this Local Area Council in June 2018; an inspector had dismissed a subsequent appeal from the applicant on the basis that the signed Section 106 agreement had not been submitted as part of the appeal. The applicant had now submitted a further application and had now agreed and signed a S106 agreement. However an inspector would take the final decision about this application, so this Local Area Council was being presented with a recommendation of being minded to approve it only, on the basis of what members would have agreed if the application was being presented for actual determination.

Mr Lowe then continued introducing the application with the aid of a slides presentation, concluding with confirmation that that the proposed contributions included £72,000 for education, £33,500 for health and 17% affordable housing.

Bill Read then spoke in objection to the application, of which his key points were:

- as recently as 2014 the site was classified as green field, located outside of the Longframlington settlement and not suitable for housing
- the previous application for this site had been refused
- this application proposed further development to the east of the village, in addition to the urban sprawl resulting from other recent developments to the north and west of Longframlington
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 77 required that policies and decisions should be responsive to local needs, and paragraph 59 referred to the government objective to boost housing where needed. However, Northumberland had achieved 197% of housing need target that had been required between 2015 - 2018
- there was no need for any more housing in the village as large numbers of housing developments had already been built in Longframlington recently.

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

- it would not necessarily be the same inspector as before who would now consider this application with the S106 agreement included
- the Lead Local Flood Authority had agreed that the surface water drainage concerns had been satisfactorily addressed subject to the proposed conditions included. The water run off downstream was considered acceptable; a pumping station was proposed for foul sewage and water run off, as supported by both the County Ecologist and the Lead Local Flood Authority. The pumping station could not however be installed within 15 metres of either a window or a wall
- this application was exactly as previously submitted, except for the S106 agreement submitted, but both the County Ecologist and the Lead Local Flood Authority had since looked at the proposal in further detail; the County Ecologist in particular had further assessed any impact on the water downstream impacting on any protected sites. Heritage matters had also been further considered. Northumbria Water did not object

- in connection with the Highways Authority's road safety assessment in May 2018 finding that any alterations to the junction could increase the chance of any head on collisions on the A697, members were advised that the road safety audit had been undertaken as part of the St Laurence Court development, which proposed to reduce the width of the junction so that pedestrians had a shorter distance to cross it. As a result, articulated vehicles' access was judged to become more restricted. However as the proposed site for this development was adjacent to the junction and the developer controlled the land to the east of it, they could straighten and widen the junction. This was a condition in the application
- in response to a question about other available local green field sites, members were advised that the application site was on the northern edge of Longframlington, but the surrounding area remained agricultural in character and the site was mostly contained by a belt of trees. The application was not considered to impact on the local green field land to an extent that would justify refusing the application
- clarification was provided about some other recent planning applications for Longframlington either approved or refused
- Longframlington Parish Council had objected to this application again
- the Conservation Officer considered that there would be some harm but it would be less than substantial harm. The Conservation Officer was not a statutory consultee; their view carried weight and they considered that harm would be caused but it would be less than substantial and the main impact would be to the listed wall. Embleton Hall's orientation reduced the impact on this building. This was considered to deliver less than substantial harm and be balanced out by public benefit from the scheme
- a county council procedure required this application to be put before the committee with a 'minded to' recommendation. Members could only indicate how they would have decided the application if they had been responsible for doing so; the inspector now had jurisdiction to make the final decision
- this application had been assessed by a different case officer to whom had assessed the previous one
- the only refusal reason given for the dismissal of the appeal by the inspector was the lack of the S106 agreement.

Councillor Pattison then moved that the application be refused. This motion was seconded by Councillor Hill. Following some clarification, it was confirmed that the grounds of refusal were adverse character impact, planning balance and over development.

Debate then followed of which the key points raised by members were:

- a member considered that all three refusal reasons from the last time had been addressed, so neither drainage, highways or character impact were now valid refusal reasons. He considered that the motion was not realistic and to take exactly the same decision as before was not right
- another member considered that all three refusal reasons still applied, and the application brought no community benefit
- a member commented that although the S106 agreement had now been received, the application still proposed overdeveloping the site, have an adverse character impact, and other approved planning applications had still not yet been built locally.

On being put the the vote, the motion was supported by three votes in support to one against and one abstention, so it was thus:

**RESOLVED** that the Local Area Council would be MINDED TO REFUSE the application on the basis of adverse character impact, planning balance and over development.

*(Councillor Thorne then returned to the meeting at 3.44pm and resumed the Chair.)*

**89. 19/03927/VARYCO**

**Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) on approved planning application 18/04432/LBC in order to incorporate amended plans Union Chain Bridge, Horncliffe, Northumberland**

Principal Planning Officer Vivienne Cartmell introduced the application with the aid of a slides presentation.

There were no public speakers.

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

- the revised plans included the further car parking work recently undertaken
- the Friends of Union Chain Bridge had objected to any removal of signage from the English side of the bridge, but the application was conditioned to ensure that such signage would be retained.

Councillor Watson then moved that the application be granted in accordance with officer recommendation, which was seconded by Councillor Seymour.

On being put the the vote, the motion was supported unanimously so it was thus:

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

**90. Planning Appeals**

Members received information on the progress of planning appeals. (Enclosed with the official minutes within Appendix A.)

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

*(3.48pm: the meeting then adjourned, and Councillors Pattison and Thorne exited the meeting. Councillor Castle returned to chairing the meeting from 6.00pm onwards. Councillor Roughead arrived for the second part of the meeting.)*

**OTHER LOCAL AREA COUNCIL BUSINESS**

**91. PETITIONS**

The Chair advised that the report responding to a petition requesting improvements to the bridleway from South Lane, North Sunderland to the Primary School and Nursery

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Side Gate, Seahouses was being deferred to the Local Area Council's next meeting on 19 December, as per his opening comments at the meeting.

## **92. NORTHUMBERLAND LOTTERY**

The Chair also reminded members that this presentation had also been deferred to the Local Area Council's next meeting on 19 December.

## **93. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

This item was to reply to any questions received from members of the public, which could either 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.

**Gordon Mclean, Berwick resident** asked if any information was available about the lights on the Royal Border Bridge. Out of the 28 lights, some had been on and off intermittently and were now completely off. Could anything be done to fix them, especially as these lights were a visitor attraction and this was the third consecutive Christmas that they were not working.

The local member responded that a report was awaited following an assessment organised by the Berwick Regeneration Commission, which should confirm what was needed and what the cost would be, and consideration was being given to how this would work in the long term. Back in 2011 the County Council had secured funding to install the lights but there had not been a maintenance programme put in place.

Members were then advised that some work had been undertaken to assess the possible costs of maintaining the lights, an update would be sought, but it could possibly require a significant investment. It was further agreed that the lights helped highlight an iconic part of Northumberland.

Some further discussion followed about the maintenance of the 1928 bridge and the use and cost of heritage lights in other areas, following which it was:

**RESOLVED** that a written response be organised for Mr Mclean.

**Brian Darling, Berwick resident** requested procedural clarification about the consideration at a recent Berwick Town Council planning meeting, when an application had been debated about the veterinary practice. It subsequently turned out that resurfacing work proposed had already been completed on the site. He expressed concern about why this happened and why the town council would be considering applications when it was too late to do so.

The Chair explained that this Local Area Council could not discuss any live planning applications. It was therefore instead agreed to:

**RESOLVED** that Democratic Services ask the case officer for the planning application in question to provide a response for Mr Darling.

It was further reported that a resident had asked in advance of the meeting what had the Council decided about the possible £78,000 / £83,000 funding for Steppey Lane Bridge and installing a ramp, and if so was this in the budget to go ahead during 2020/21?

Copies of the question and a response from the Technical Services department had been circulated at the meeting. The resident who also asked the question would be sent a copy of the response. The Chair explained that the proposal referred to would be considered as part of the Local Transport Plan programme for 2020/21, and that would not be decided until later in the current financial year.

**RESOLVED** that Democratic Services send a copy of the response in writing to the questioner.

## 94. LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES

Members received a verbal update about any key recent, ongoing and/or future planned Local Services work for Local Area Council members' attention, as follows:

### **Technical Services:**

Work continued on the 23 Local Transport Plan (LTP) schemes, of which some key points included:

- a wall rebuild in Berwick, which required additional consents to be granted
- improvements to the Swan Centre junction were still in the design stage
- road safety work was being undertaken as part of traffic calming requirements at Christon Bank
- work was being finalised for Felton Bridge, and the parapets would be fixed in February 2020
- stabilisation work was being undertaken to the B6343 Rothbury to Thropton road, which had been delayed due to a buried BT box and culvert belonging to Northumbria Water
- work to Beach Street in Amble would be done in mid January
- four 20mph road safety schemes would be undertaken after Christmas
- remedial work undertaken to carriageway at Bamburgh
- traffic calming measures at Powburn were due for December.

An update was also provided about winter maintenance preparedness. There were 28 routes across the county and 43,500 tonnes of salt in stock. Further arrangements were being organised for access to dry salt. 106 staff worked on a rota basis. Members were asked to report issues through the main 0345 council telephone number rather than call individual officers, as all such calls were recorded and could be tracked more easily.

Details of members' questions and officers answers that followed included:

- clarification would be provided after the meeting about what length of the wall in Berwick was due to be rebuilt
- a leaflet had been produced about the winter services route map - this would be circulated to members
- in response to a question about the criteria for streets to qualify to be included on the routes and whether any could be extended, members were advised that

all routes were available on the Council's webpages and a comprehensive heat mapping exercise had been undertaken to formalise the routes. The routes needed to be undertaken within a set time and they covered 37% of the county's overall road network. People should only ever be one miles away from treated surfaces within an urban area, and five miles away in rural areas. Mr Jones would check on the criteria.

#### **Neighbourhood Services:**

- waste services were operating well; Garden Waste collections would finish at the end of November. The number of customers had increased again this year
- income from commercial waste, garden waste and bulk collections were all on target
- grass cutting had finished, it was a challenging year due to good growing conditions. All relevant areas had received the necessary number of grass cuts
- staff were now using the Total Mobile application to record play park inspections, this will go live soon, which means that the results could be immediately sent to the respective local town/parish council
- street cleansing routes were continuing to work reasonably well, winter schedules had started and information was being gathered about any areas of concern, operatives are logging any issues
- mechanical sweeper routes were achieving all schedules.

Details of members' questions and officers answers that followed included:

- regarding concerns about potential accident hazards created by a large build ups of leaves, work took place to clear highways and areas were identified if they could be problematic if they weren't cleared, using a red/amber/green categorisation basis
- officers were thanked for their good work cleaning war memorials in time for Remembrance Day
- the water bottle refilling station installed outside of Bamburgh's toilets was welcomed; it was hoped that such a service could be installed as widely as possible at other suitable locations where viable to do
- officers were asked to address a problem reported about a build up of plastic rubbish near the north pier at Warkworth
- in response to a question it was confirmed that one incident of antisocial behaviour had been reported at a park in Berwick, but there had been no spike in incidents/complaints.

**RESOLVED** that the updates be noted and any issues identified by members be followed up after the meeting.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **95. RESPONSE TO CLIMATE EMERGENCY DECLARATION**

The Service Director - Local Services was in attendance to provide a presentation for members about the actions taken, progress made, future measures and areas of focus in the Council's response to a climate emergency declaration (copy of the presentation and information leaflet filed with the signed minutes.)

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Following a further request for information, members welcomed the proposal for the solar car port over the back County Hall car park, which would generate 50% of the electricity demand for County Hall; the structures would have very little impact on local amenity as the site was well screened already.

Members welcomed the presentation and the Chair concluded that this was a very important subject. Mr Jones was thanked for his presentation and it was:

**RESOLVED** that the presentation be received.

## **96. LIBRARY SERVICE CONSULTATION UPDATE**

The Library Services Manager gave a presentation which outlined the current library service, why the redesign was necessary and how it would be achieved. The consultation was due to commence during November and officers were seeking member support to promote participation (copy of the presentation filed with the signed minutes.)

A member stated that this proposal demonstrated an evolution of the library service, and what other funding might be available to support this work? Members were advised that priorities arising during the consultation would be looked at, and consideration could also be given to any possible community support options.

In response to a question, members were advised that staff could advise on appropriate times for people to visit libraries for quiet study, given that a wider range of activities often now took place there and other users often wished to use library space for group work/discussions. The consultation sought to find out what people felt was important for the future of the library service so such actions could be implemented where possible.

Ms Peaden and Mr Walsh were thanked for their attendance and it was:

**RESOLVED** that the presentation be received.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **97. MEMBERS' LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES 2017/19 - PROGRESS REPORT**

Members received a progress update on Members' Local Improvement Schemes during 2018/19 as at 1 November 2019 (enclosed with the signed minutes as Appendix D).

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

### **98. BERWICK REGENERATION COMMISSION**

There were no further updates to be reported.

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

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Members received the latest version of agreed items for future Local Area Council meetings. (Work programme enclosed with the signed minutes as Appendix E.)

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

**100. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on Thursday, 19 December 2019 at St. James' Church Centre, Alnwick.

**CHAIR** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE** \_\_\_\_\_