

ANSWERS TO PUBLIC QUESTIONS ASKED AT NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL AREA COUNCIL MEETING

Question:

Please provide 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. Why had this happened and why the town council would be considering applications when it was too late to do so?

Answer:

Planning Services contacted the resident by email and telephone to clarify the situation and then amended their records to state that the application was part retrospective.

Question:

What has the Council decided about the possible £78,000 / £83,000 funding for Steppey Lane Bridge and installing a ramp? If so is this in the budget to go ahead during 2020/21?

Answer:

The question relates to Steppey Lane bridge which is a footbridge over the River Aln on footpath No.7 in the Parish of Lesbury, which connects Hipsburn and Lesbury. The bridge over the river channel has steps at either side and long ramped approaches. The steps prevent access with wheelchairs and pushchairs. The alternative pedestrian route between Hipsburn and Lesbury involves walking alongside the A1068 and crossing it twice. After being raised locally, a proposal was therefore put forward through the Local Transport Plan to remove the steps and install ramps. A preliminary design has been carried out to consider if a solution with no steps could be implemented on this route. Because the existing ramps either side of the bridge already slope away from the bridge, to achieve the maximum gradients allowed by Inclusive Mobility guidance the ramps required to avoid steps would need to be relatively long and this coupled with the need to make the amended structure sympathetic with the existing structure and location, and the difficulties of construction access, have meant that the initial estimate for construction identified in the study is circa £90,000.

No decisions have yet been taken as to whether the proposal to install ramps at the bridge would be taken forward by the County Council. Potential proposals for the 2020/21 Local Transport Programme are currently being developed and a draft programme will be prepared for presentation to the Local Area Councils in February. We understand that there may also be proposals locally to raise funds in support of this project.