

**NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL**

**TYNEDALE LOCAL AREA COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the **Tynedale Local Area Council** held at Hexham House, Gilesgate, Hexham, Northumberland, NE46 3NH on Tuesday, 11 September 2018 at 6.00 p.m.

**PRESENT**

Councillor G Stewart  
(Chair, in the Chair)

**MEMBERS**

T Cessford  
A Dale  
R Gibson  
C Homer  
CW Horncastle

I Hutchinson  
N Oliver (nos 46-56)  
K Quinn  
A Sharp  
KG Stow

**OFFICERS**

G Horsman  
D Hunt

D Lally  
D Laux  
N Turnbull

Senior Planning Officer  
Neighbourhood Services Area  
Manager  
Chief Executive  
Head of Technical Services  
Democratic Services Officer

**ALSO PRESENT**

Inspector Pam Bridges, Northumbria Police  
Sergeant Anthony Pattison, Northumbria Police  
Russell McLean, Highways England  
8 members of the public  
2 members of the press

**46. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Kennedy and Riddle.

#### 47. MINUTES

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of Tynedale Local Area Council, held on 10 July 2018, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

#### 48. TREE PRESERVATION ORDER (TPO) The Northumberland County Council (Land at 1 New Houses, Chollerford) Tree Preservation Order 2018 (No.02 of 2018)

The Senior Planning Officer introduced the report with the aid of a powerpoint presentation. He requested a minor change to the 'Situation' text in the Schedule to the Order.

Councillor Hutchinson moved the recommendation to confirm provisional order 2018 (No. 02 of 2018). This was seconded by Councillor Cessford.

On being put to the vote, 10 members voted in favour with 1 abstention.

**RESOLVED** that the Northumberland County Council (Land at 1 New Houses, Chollerford) TPO 2018 (No. 02 of 2018) be confirmed subject to the minor change to the 'Situation' text within the Schedule to the Order as detailed in paragraph 2.12 of the report.

#### 49. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair reported that a number of questions had been received earlier in the day in relation to the update to be given by Highways England. He queried whether Highways England were the appropriate body to respond but suggested that the matter be discussed later in the meeting.

**Mr Woods** asked members for their comments regarding the proposed parliamentary boundary changes which if implemented would exclude Bellingham from the proposed Hexham and Cramlington constituency.

The following comments were made by members:

- Bellingham was an important part of the community and had been part of the Hexham constituency for many years. They needed to wait to see how the Houses of Parliament voted.  
The changes were proposed to ensure that the constituencies were of equal size.
- They shared residents disappointment that Bellingham would no longer be included with the rest of Tynedale.
- There was concern that this could impact on other infrastructures and that residents should write to their MPs with any concerns.

**Mr Woods** enquired what could be done for the people of Tynedale given the 20% reduction in police funding in real terms since 2010 particularly given the increases in crime and that the Northumbria Police force had suffered the largest reduction of 25% in real terms.

Points raised by members included:

- The figures were disappointing. Decisions on police funding were made by the government and the local Police Crime Commissioner, Vera Baird.
- Northumbria Police did a very good job with the resources they had.
- The Chief Constable and Superintendent had been in attendance at the County Council meeting the previous week and had reassured members and the public that Northumberland was a safe place to live, work and visit..
- Removal of £120+ million from the budget had an impact and meant that there had been an impact on speeding on A roads as the police didn't have the same level of resources to tackle speeding and the public expected the same response as previously.
- Partners needed to work more closely together to pool resources and get the best value for money for road safety measures.

**RESOLVED** that information be noted.

## **50. PETITIONS**

This item was to:

### **a) Receive any new petitions:**

There were none to consider.

### **b) Consider reports on petitions previously received:**

There were none to consider.

### **c) To consider updates on petitions previously considered:**

There were none to consider.

## **51. LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES**

The area manager from Neighbourhood Services and the Head of Technical Services were present to give an update on recent, ongoing and future planned Local Services work . The area managers had principal responsibility for highway services and environmental services, such as refuse collection, street cleansing and grounds maintenance, within the geographic boundaries of the local area council.

### **Technical Services:**

- Good progress was being made through the LTP Programme; surface dressing was now complete and the majority of individual surfacing schemes were on track for completion in December with a small number due to be completed before the end of the financial year.
- Repairs to the landslip at Eals bridge from the 2015/16 floods were underway and progressing well.
- Department of Transport Challenge Fund money had been allocated to improvements on rural roads including the C200 at Kielder and C205 at Stonehaugh including safety barriers C200 and C199 which were now substantially complete.
- 4,100 gulleys cleaned since May and captured in a new gully management system. A drainage gang were following to repair any issues identified through process.
- Actionable defects on potholes following the 'Beast from the East' had been repaired.
- 13,000m<sup>2</sup> patching carried out in the Tynedale area with a further 15,000m<sup>2</sup> proposed in the next few months.
- Winter services planning and preparation included purchase of replacement gritters, delivery of salt and a new salt barn in Allendale.

### **Neighbourhood Services:**

- Bin routes across the county were being reconfigured and the new routes would be implemented in October to allow for the additional homes built in recent years and to equalise the loads for the wagons. Funding had been provided for 2 extra vehicles and crews based at Morpeth and Stakeford. A small number of residents in the Tynedale area will receive a letter to notify them of a change of day. Other residents were reminded to place their bins out by 7am as collection times may change.
- Grass cutting programme continued.
- Targeted second weed spraying where needed and Members were invited to contact officers to identify areas where this was required.
- Working with the Highways team and adjacent landowners regarding the trimming of hedges on private property to improve sight lines.
- Preparation for a Royal Visit in Hexham the following day.

### **Members discussed:**

- The importance of road sweeping to keep gulleys clear to ensure drainage was effective and help prevent potholes. Highways Manager to check ditch clearing programme and clarify with Councillors.
- Residents were delighted with the Stonehaugh road improvements but passing places road signs were requested.
- Query re completion of work at Five Lane Ends.
- The conflicting demands of farmers and the timetable for the trimming of hedges.

**RESOLVED** that the update be noted.

## **ITEM FOR INFORMATION**

### **52. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PLACE: PAUL JOHNSTON**

#### **The Green Dog Walkers Scheme and Dog Fouling Enforcement**

The purpose of this report was to update members on the progress of the Green Dog Walker Scheme and also on dog control enforcement in 2017/18. (A copy of the report are enclosed with the minutes as Appendix B).

Members received a copy of the report considered by the Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 25 July 2018. The aim of the scheme which was to change the attitudes to dog fouling in a friendly and non-confrontational way.

Take up in the number of residents signing up to the scheme had far exceeded expectations and at the end of August totalled 1,488 green dog walkers. There had also been a 26% reduction in the number of dog fouling complaints received by the Council.

Members who wished to host an event in their ward were encouraged to speak to the Public Health Protection Manager.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

## **DISCUSSION ITEM - CORPORATE**

### **53. ANNUAL POLICING UPDATE**

Inspector Pam Bridges attended the meeting to give an overview and answer questions about policing in the East and West Tynedale command areas. Key issues included:

- The PCC authorised precept for policing in Northumberland had seen a large increase.
- Communities in the area were incredibly supportive of the emergency services and farmers and landowners had assisted stranded motorists in the bad weather and were also essential to the success of farmwatch operations and speedwatch volunteers.
- Vulnerability was the number one priority for Northumbria Police when determining response required as incidents were becoming more complex.
- They had a greater awareness of threats such as human trafficking, child exploitation and modern day slavery which were often invisible crimes with hidden victims.

- Crime statistics were available on the police website, total crime had increased by 10%; despite challenges, confidence in Northumbria Police remained high.
- Details were provided of investigations and action taken with regard to antisocial behaviour, bin fires, graffiti and criminal damage, burglaries to dwellings and business premises and youth disorder at various locations within the command area.
- Joint operations had been held with partner organisations, volunteers and neighbouring police forces to address peddlars and farmwatch.
- An overview was provided of investigations, arrests and action taken in response to drugs, social media and robbery.
- The police were currently recruiting regular officers, community speedwatch volunteers and special constables.

She thanked everyone who supported the police whether it be participating in speedwatch or farmwatch operations or by reporting an incident. She encouraged members of the public to report any suspicious incidents or concerns and the officers would determine the prioritisation required whether it be an urgent response or a telephone call at a later time.

Members of the Committee discussed a number of issues and responses were given as follows:

- The modernisation of IT systems was welcomed.
- There was great community spirit in Tynedale and willingness to work together.
- Crime figures had increased and was in part due to: increased confidence amongst victims and communities to report crime; there was a different way of recording crime, more crime was recorded which previously might have been recorded as a minor incident; capturing data meant resources could be put in the right place.
- Accessibility and co-location of front offices open to members of the public was working well at The Spetchells Centre in Prudhoe. There were also additional methods to contact the police including reporting on-line and farmwatch alerts via social media.
- Changes to the 101 service had made it easier and quicker to speak to call handlers and members of the public should have more confidence in using the service.
- There tended to be focus within local newspapers on reporting incidents of crime and it was important that other messages, reassurance and good news were communicated to give a balanced picture. The police had a good working relationship with Hexham Courant and other news media but could not influence what was printed. The contribution of partner agencies was also acknowledged including the Council's Community Safety team.
- A Councillor had met with officers and had been reassured regarding concerns in relation to drugs and alcohol in her ward. Often there was work being undertaken behind the scenes or at night which wasn't visible

to members of the public and it was important that a method was found to communicate this to members of the public.

The Chair thanked the officers for attending the meeting and wished to record the committee's gratitude for the work that Northumbria Police officers undertook in the Tynedale area to keep people safe and crime levels low.

**RESOLVED** that the update be received.

#### **54. MEMBERS' LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES**

A progress report was received which provided details on the latest position of schemes (A copy of the report is enclosed with the minutes as Appendix C).

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

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

A list of agreed items for future Local Area Council meetings was circulated. (A copy is attached to the minutes as Appendix D).

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

#### **56. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be held on 26 September 2018 at Hexham House, Gilesgate, Hexham at 4.00 p.m.

#### **57. URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chair had agreed that an urgent item of business be included at the meeting due to the timing of work proposed on the A69.

#### **HIGHWAYS ENGLAND UPDATE - A69 IMPROVEMENTS**

Russell McLean of Highways England (HE) was in attendance to give a presentation on the A69 junction improvements that were being undertaken in the Tynedale area. (A copy of the presentation is enclosed with the minutes).

The presentation included details of the proposed works at the A69/A6079 Bridge End and A69/A68 Styford roundabouts to upgrade them to grade-separated junctions which would enable vehicles to continue on the A69 without stopping at these junctions, thereby relieving congestion.

Video animations of the proposals at both locations were shown which showed how the roads would connect at these roundabouts.

He gave a brief explanation why the schemes were needed, their aims, the results of the Trans-Pennine Strategic Study, funding and timeline for the proposed works.

Reference was made to two information events held at Acomb and Newton during August 2018.

Members who spoke all expressed their dismay and frustration with the works proposed by Highways England and raised the following issues.

- There had been a lack of consultation. It was reported that the size of the schemes were under the threshold requiring a consultation exercise.
- Impact on nearby villages such as Newton with increased traffic and proposed exit down a narrow unsuitable track with adjacent stone boundary walls. Mr McLean noted HE had received suggestions from members of the public at the information events, such as one way traffic. They were investigating passing places and he made reference to a slide which showed Newton turning movements. Discussions were ongoing to find the best solution.
- Concern was expressed regarding the slip road to turn right into Acomb and the increased speed of traffic. Occasionally there was a long line of cars which extended beyond the slip road into the hatched markings and the outside lane of the A69. Highways England were considering options to ease concerns raised at the Acomb public information event. A number of mitigation measures including closure of laybys, improved signage and upgraded lighting. The process included a road safety audit of preliminary and detailed designs, after construction and at 18 and 36 months after completion of works. He stated that there was no indication that a reduced speed limit would be required in that area.
- Integration of cycling lanes within the schemes. These were being looked at. Highways England had a Designated Funds Programme for safety, cycling and innovation and the project had been referred to the Regional Officer to be put forward for consideration.
- The proposals would not speed up traffic by any great amount and there was a preference that the dual carriageway be extended beyond Haltwhistle. Plans for the A69 improvement had been in place since 1935 and the land had been acquired to enable this to happen. The A69 should be dualled before the A66 which was more likely to close in adverse weather conditions.
- The impact on the west end junction of Hexham where there had been more accidents. The increased speed on the A69 following the implementation of the proposals would make it more difficult for residents to use this junction and cross traffic to travel east. A study on the Hexham west junction would be shared with Councillors when complete.
- Feedback from the information events would be provided as soon as possible. 40-50 emails had been issued to date. Mr McLean agreed to

attend meetings of the Parish Council when the designs were finalised.

Responses would be issued to enquiries received up until mid-September.

- Road safety improvements were needed at other junctions along the A69, such as Newton and Mowden Hall.
- Signage to Prudhoe was required along the A69 as traffic travelled through Mickley and Stocksfield which impacted on residents.
- Traffic congestion within Hexham was the cause of the vehicles backing up on the A69 and it was hoped that the slip road would be long enough to accommodate vehicles at peak times. Mr McLean confirmed that he was in attendance to address issues raised in connection with the two junction improvements and that the A69 team were looking at the suggestions mentioned and to assess what measures could be implemented each year within budget.
- The projects were due to be completed in March 2020 and road users would be able to use the route during construction and would therefore not be affected by adverse weather or unforeseen circumstances.
- Residents, if they had been asked, would prefer that £30 million was not spent on these 2 roundabouts. It was believed that all of the residents of Tynedale should have been consulted as the A69 was used by everyone.
- There were normally no delays at the Styford roundabout, unlike Bridge End roundabout.
- Councillors, residents and Parish and Town Councils had campaigned with Guy Opperman MP for a number of years for safety improvements on the A69 from Haydon Bridge to Melkridge where there had been a number of fatalities and other problems.
- They queried how priorities were determined? Residents had to walk alongside the A69 around Bardon Mill and Henshaw whilst vehicles travelled at the national speed limit. They needed speed restrictions, speed cameras or safe crossings before improvements at the roundabouts. The Asset Development Team looked at safety studies along the A69 including police accident data to determine where funding should be targeted. There were different funds and the congestion fund could not be utilised for road safety schemes.
- There was concern that more problems would be engineered by the proposed schemes. The Acomb junction was currently safe as drivers didn't have time to accelerate to the national speed limit after exiting the Bridge End roundabout. Concern was expressed regarding accident blackspots including the staggered junction at Haydon Bridge and the short stretches of dual carriageway to allow overtaking between Haydon Bridge and the Cumbrian border where drivers often ran out of lane.

The Chair summarised responses from members who were not happy with the lack of consultation and requested that the plans be reconsidered as they were not what local communities wanted. He suggested that a letter be sent on behalf of Tynedale Local Area Council to the Minister, Highways England, Road Link and the local MP to voice strong objection to the proposed schemes at Bridge and Styford.

The Chair thanked Russell Mclean for attending the meeting.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted and that a letter be sent to the Minister on behalf of Tynedale Local Area Council to raise concerns regarding the lack of consultation and request that the proposals to spend money on the schemes at Bridge End and Styford be reconsidered.

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

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