

**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, 13 November 2018 at 4.00 p.m.

**PRESENT**

Councillor G Stewart

(Chair, in the Chair for agenda items 77 - 79 and 85 - 95)

(Planning Vice-Chair Councillor R Gibson in the chair for items 80 - 84)

**MEMBERS**

T Cessford

A Dale

CW Horncastle (no.s 77 - 89)

I Hutchinson

D Kennedy (no.s 84 - 86)

N Oliver (no.s 87 - 95)

KR Quinn (no.s 77 - 86)

JR Riddle

A. Sharp

KG Stow

**OFFICERS**

K Blyth

D Brookes

Dr J Brown

J Deeks

D Hunt

J Marley

N Masson

A Olive

E Sinnamon

R Strettle

N Turnbull

Principal Planning Officer

Infrastructure Records Manager

Consultant in Public Health

Locality Coordinator

Area Manager (West),

Neighbourhood Services

Team Manager, Northumbria

HealthCare

Principal Lawyer

Highways Delivery Area Manager

Interim Head of Planning Services

Principal Policy Officer

Democratic Services Officer

**ALSO PRESENT**

J Blenkinsopp, Lawyer (Observer)

D Hadden, Lawyer (Observer)

8 members of the public

2 member of the press

## **77. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Homer.

## **78. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the following meetings of Tynedale Local Area Council, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair:-

- (i) 26 September 2018
- (ii) 9 October 2018

## **79. DISCLOSURES OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Councillor Horncastle declared a personal and prejudicial interest in planning application 18/02731/VARYCO as he owned land adjoining the site and he would not participate in that item.

Councillor Kennedy declared that he had a personal not prejudicial interest in item no. 85, Review of the Definitive Map and Statement of Public Rights of Way, Alleged Public Footpaths Nos 65, Hexham as he lived within 300 metres of the route.

## **DEVELOPMENT CONTROL**

***Councillor Stewart then vacated the Chair, for Planning Vice-Chair Councillor Gibson to chair the development control section of the agenda, as was the arrangement for all Local Area Councils.***

## **80. DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The report explained how the Local Area Council was asked to decide the planning applications on the agenda using the powers delegated to it, and included details of the public speaking arrangements. (Report attached to the minutes as Appendix A.)

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

## **81. 18/02731/VARYCO**

**Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) pursuant to planning permission 17/01334/VARYCO in order to add a revised site plan Hopedene, The Dene, Allendale, Northumberland, NE47 9PX**

*(4.10 pm Councillor Horncastle left the meeting whilst the application was considered.)*

The Principal Planning Officer introduced the report with the aid of a powerpoint presentation.

Mr. Butler, representative for neighbours to the site, addressed the Committee to object to the application. His comments included the following:-

- They had not objected to the original design with a small terrace and original ground levels which had been acceptable.
- Two site plans had been submitted with a reduction in ground level between the two, but no soil had left the site.
- The accuracy of the report was questioned as simple queries regarding proposed floor levels remained unanswered.
- The original ground level was much lower than where members had stood during the site inspection.
- The terrace had increased from 2.4 metres to 12 metres which was significantly closer to the adjacent property Inglewood.
- The second site plan showed the top of the mound was 8ft above the original ground level and not 1 metre referred to in the report.
- There is standing water within the bund and no provision for disposal of surface water.
- The objections refer to field drains in the area and flooding issues. A surface water outlet to the south east has not run since the development started.
- Additional information refers to more regrading of the land and a stone soakaway which is not shown on the plans.
- There has been no consultation with:
  - The Lead Local Flood Authority or other consultees regarding a new connection to highway drains.
  - Public Protection regarding excavation and spread of material across the site which consisted of made up ground.
- There is nothing to prevent individuals from standing on the mound or raised ground levels.
- The site visit to the field to the west of the site demonstrated that there was a huge increase in ground levels and similar issues had been experienced on other applications in the area.
- Reference to Tynedale policy H32 which specified distances to stop overlooking and avoid amenity issues. Whilst the dwelling was far enough away the new levels close to the neighbours boundary would allow overlooking and adversely impact amenity.

Mr. Hale, addressed the Committee to object to the application for variation, although he and his wife had initially supported the applicants wish to build their dream home. He believed the following points would need to be addressed as to whether the application:-

- Complied with planning policies and protocols?
- Dealt adequately with amenity and privacy of the near neighbours?
- Dealt adequately with surface water run off across the field and site?

- Dealt adequately with the engineering stability of 5,000 tonnes of soil?

He queried the case officer's conclusions within the report and took exception to the comment which stated that whilst there was an adverse impact on his privacy after leaf fall, it was inferred that this was unimportant as residents in Allendale were not outside during the winter months.

The adverse impact of the landscape works on his property and the surrounding neighbourhood had been demonstrated at the site visit and he hoped that the committee agreed that the application in its current form was not acceptable.

Mrs. Gifford, the applicant, addressed the Committee in support of their application. She commented that:-

- They had wanted to stay in Allendale after living there happily for 22 years and had therefore decided to build a single storey eco house of a contemporary design and built with high quality materials. The house was energy efficient, well insulated with renewable energy sources to fit in the AONB landscape.
- No objections had been made against the original planning application which had been granted in November 2016.
- They intended to apply similarly high standards to landscaping and planting, to respect the environment and enhance biodiversity in the form of plants, wildlife and birds.
- They had maintained and improved the field drain across the top of the Hopedene field which caught water run off.
- The topsoil was stripped off and mounded on the west side of their land although over the red line. The displaced subsoil consisting of stiff clay and boulders had been mounded in front of the house.
- Due to the long wet winter and extended build time the mounds had been there longer than expected. Most of the neighbours had been understanding. Complaints regarding hours of work and vehicles had been addressed immediately but they had not been able to deal with the soil mounds until it had been safe to do so.
- The displaced subsoil had been used to create the level lawned garden area enclosed by a bund and then sloped to the boundary. This had been battered and tracked. Topsoil had been replaced and the land to the west restored to its original level and the boulders used to create steps and walls.
- A revised plan had been submitted in response to objections and to show site drainage in greater detail. This included moving the slope away from the neighbours house and to reduce the height of the slope and bund.
- The bund when planted would help integrate the house with the landscape, protect the lawned garden from the wind, give privacy to neighbouring properties to prevent them being overlooked and provide a screen from interior lights.

- Puddles from overnight rain had been seen on the lawn during the site visit. It was intended that the lawned area would be graded towards the paving around the house and would soak way under the drive.
- Planting on the slopes would improve amenity for local residents and would commence as soon as possible but would take time to mature.
- They felt they had built a house which added to the landscape of Allendale and built in accordance with the planning approval. They requested that the variation for the landscape condition be approved so they could achieve similar standards.

In response to questions from Members the following information was provided:-

- The site had previously been a field with natural drainage.
- Officers were unaware of methods used to stabilize the additional soil.
- The ecologist had been consulted and had recommended that planting with native species.
- The wording of condition 5 needed to be amended so that the work was carried out prior to occupation, this would be clarified with the agent.
- The principle of a dwelling on the site had been established and the issue related to the appropriateness of the landscaping which officers considered to be acceptable.
- When assessing planning applications, the starting point was policies within local neighbourhood plans. Other material considerations were then assessed to ascertain whether they outweighed any negative points. On balance, officers were recommending that the application be accepted as the whole scheme fit well with what had been developed.
- A hydrologist report would not normally be requested for a development on this small scale.
- Difference in opinion can exist with interpretation of design policies which were subjective, such as policy ANDP1 of the Allendale Neighbourhood Plan, hence the difference in views of the case officer and Allendale parish Council.
- There was provision within the planning system for retrospective applications which should not cloud members' views.
- Whilst the gradient of the site was unknown, site sections show the original lie of the land and the additional soil.

Councillor Hutchinson proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the application which was seconded by Councillor Dale.

Members expressed concern regarding the amount of additional soil and clay which had been deposited on a slope and particularly if this slipped in wet conditions. They also queried the impact on the neighbour's amenity given the height of the bund which was closer to the adjacent property following the enlargement of the level terrace / garden area.

The Interim Head of Planning Services provided clarification on the question of amenity which was assessed from the principal room of one property to the

principal room of an adjacent property. It was acknowledged that ownership of property would change over time. It was suggested that the bund would mostly be used for access and gardening.

In answer to questions it was confirmed that:

- Whilst there was a minimum distance required between properties, this did not apply to apply from gardens to dwellings.
- The regrading of the lawned area would resolve the standing water viewed on the lawn during the site visit.
- Additional detail of drainage had been provided which should significantly reduce surface water run off and would be required to be completed within a set period of time.

It was suggested that the application be deferred in order to obtain a hydrologist report to ascertain how surface water would drain off the site, the stability of the landform and saturation of the ground. Councillors Hutchinson and Dale agreed to withdraw the motion for the application to be approved. The Principal Planning Officer asked for clarification that these were the only outstanding issues and that all other matters were now resolved to the satisfaction of members including visual and residential amenity. Councillor Hutchinson confirmed that he considered they were the only matters still to be considered.

Councillor Hutchinson then moved that the application be deferred for a hydrologist report on surface water drainage and land stability. This was seconded by Councillor Dale and unanimously agreed.

The Principal Planning Officer sought clarification on exactly what type of report was required, and it was confirmed that additional information on drainage and land stability were required for further assessment. It was explained that this would take time to prepare and be consulted on before it was brought back to committee.

**RESOLVED** that the application be **DEFERRED** to enable a hydrologist report to be obtained to assess surface water will drain from the site, the stability of the landform and saturation of the ground.

*(4.56 pm Councillor Horncastle returned to the meeting.)*

**82. 18/03195/FUL**  
**Change of use to charity shop**  
**Hexham Tourist Information Centre, Wentworth Car Park, Alemouth**  
**Road, Hexham, Northumberland,**  
**NE46 1QE**

The application was withdrawn from the meeting.

83. **18/03196/ADE**  
**Advertisement Consent for non-illuminated fascia sign to front elevation  
Hexham Tourist Information Centre, Wentworth Car Park, Alemouth  
Road, Hexham, Northumberland, NE46 1QE**

The application was withdrawn from the meeting.

84. **PLANNING APPEALS UPDATE**

A report was received which provided an update on the progress of planning appeals received. (A copy of the report is enclosed with the minutes as Appendix B).

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

*On the conclusion of the development control business at 4.56 pm,  
Councillor Gibson vacated the Chair and Councillor Stewart returned to  
the Chair to continue the meeting.*

**RIGHTS OF WAY**

85. **REVIEW OF THE DEFINITIVE MAP AND STATEMENT OF PUBLIC RIGHTS  
OF WAY**  
**ALLEGED PUBLIC FOOTPATHS NOS 65**  
**HEXHAM TOWN**

David Brookes, Infrastructure Records Manager, introduced the report in which the local area council was asked to give consideration to all the relevant evidence gathered in support and rebuttal of a proposal to add to the Definitive Map and Statement a public right of way from the U8291 road (Hallgate) in an easterly, northerly and north-westerly direction over Bank Head to join a spur of the U8291 road south-east of Prospect House. (A copy of the report is enclosed with the minutes as Appendix C).

Clarification regarding evidence and use of land was provided.

Councillor Kennedy moved acceptance of the recommendation set out in the report which was seconded by Councillor Cessford and unanimously agreed.

**RESOLVED** that the Local Area Council agreed that:

- (i) There is sufficient evidence to justify that a public right of way has been reasonably alleged to exist over the claimed route.
- (ii) The route be included in a future Definitive Map Modification Order as a Public Footpath.

**86. REVIEW OF THE DEFINITIVE MAP AND STATEMENT OF PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY  
ALLEGED PUBLIC FOOTPATH NO 66  
HEXHAM TOWN**

David Brookes, Infrastructure Records Manager, introduced the report in which the local area council was asked to give consideration to all the relevant evidence gathered in support and rebuttal of a proposal to add to the Definitive Map and Statement a public right of way from a spur of the U8291 road south-east of Prospect House in a general north-westerly direction for a distance of 65 metres to join the U8291 road (Hallstile Bank) north of Prospect House. (A copy of the report is enclosed with the minutes as Appendix D).

He reported that that a single user evidence form regarding use of the route G - F was insufficient evidence that the route existed. He also added that whilst a cul-de-sac route was unusual, the interpretation panel and view over the Tyne Valley would have drawn people to the location.

In answer to questions, the Infrastructure records Manager confirmed that:

- They could only consider the route that had been submitted and proposals for other or part routes would need to be submitted.
- The Prospect House car park would not have been in use by cars 24 hours per day and therefore would have been able to be used as part of the route during evenings and weekends. If making the Order attracted objections, it would be looked at by the Inspector.
- It would be the responsibility of the Highway Authority to ensure that the route was safe.

Some Members queried the inclusion of part of the route from approximately the area labelled '66' to point G. The Principal Lawyer advised the Local Area Council members that their decision needed to be made on the evidence before them, and not on personal recollection or experience.

Reference was made to additional evidence contained within the previous report (Appendix C) an overlap map on page 20 and photographs of the rear of Prospect House and public information sign on pages 120 and 121.

Councillor Stow moved acceptance of the three recommendations together as set out in the report which was seconded by Councillor Cessford.

Upon being put to the vote 11 members voted in favour with 1 abstention.

**RESOLVED** that the Local Area Council agreed that:

- (i) There is insufficient evidence to justify that a public right of way has been reasonably alleged to exist over the route G - F.

- (ii) There is sufficient evidence to justify that a public right of way has been reasonably alleged to exist over the route E - G.
- (iii) The route E - G be included in a future Definitive Map Modification Order as a Public Footpath.

## **OTHER LOCAL AREA COUNCIL BUSINESS**

### **87. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions from members of the public.

### **88. PETITIONS**

This item was to:

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

##### **i) Eastwood Park Path, Prudhoe**

It was reported that an e-petition has been initiated by Ms Holly Kelleher which was due to close on 10 December 2018. A report would be considered at the meeting on 15 January 2019.

#### **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.

### **89. LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES**

Members received the following updates from the Area Managers from Neighbourhood Services and Technical Services:

#### **Neighbourhood Services:**

- The implementation of the new bin routes had gone well with only a few minor issues where bins had not been collected from properties unfamiliar to crews which had been collected following telephone calls to the helpline. Although some work had been passed back to the Morpeth depot, some properties in the Castle Morpeth area were collected by the Tynedale crews.
- The garden waste service was due to finish at the end of November and would recommence in March 2019.

- The minimum number of grass cuts had been achieved which had now stopped over the winter months. Cutting had started late due to cold weather at the beginning of the season and had halted when there had been no growth over the hot summer months.
- A new HGV sweeper had been delivered the previous week and would be working alongside the old sweeper for another 3-4 weeks during the autumn leaf fall period. Areas which had been highlighted by Councillors were included within the programme and would be prioritised.
- Focus in the last week had been on areas around war memorials prior to Remembrance weekend.

A member thanked the Area Manager and his team for the very prompt attention to an area within his ward and the leaves posed a slip hazard when wet.

### **Technical Services:**

#### **(1) General update:**

- The LTP programme work for 2018-19 was nearly complete including rectification work by contractors on the A68 and work on Elvaston Park Road in Hexham should be complete within the next week.
- A patching gang was working to improve surface dressing of roads before winter weather commenced.
- A drainage gang also continued to work in the area on gulleys, ditching and new pipework which would continue over the winter months. Focus in recent weeks had been locations on high ground and would move to Hexham, Corbridge, Haydon Bridge, Prudhoe etc. Within the next 2 weeks they would also be looking at hot spots to clean out 257 identified gulleys. Members were requested to provide details in their areas if any gulleys required attention.

#### **(2) Winter Preparedness and Resilience Report for the Local Area Council:**

- **Management/Supervisors/Drivers:** Drivers were in position and rotas had commenced. They continued to train and invest in a number of additional employees, including apprentices, to get them through their HGV and Winter Service training.
- **Fleet:** A fleet of 28 front line gritters were on station. Vehicles had been in position since 29 October when the current year's Winter Services Rota had commenced. 5 new gritters were expected to be delivered in the near future as part of the fleet replacement programme and will replace current operational gritters. Vehicles came fitted with 360 degree cameras around the vehicle which record to a hard drive and can also be remotely monitored by supervisors and managers via a live feed. They provide a high level of driver safety.

- **Salt:** The summer order of rock salt had been delivered. At the start of the season the Council had approximately 37,500 tonnes with all depots being at capacity. This included a strategic/resilience store of 4,000 tonnes.
- **Weather Monitoring:** As in the previous year, this was between the Meteogroup (forecaster) Vaisala management equipment software and forecast weather stations and monitoring stations. Three experienced, specialist winter service managers / decision makers were in place over the the winter period to monitor all forecast weather and weather stations 24/7 from October to April. They co-ordinated all winter services operations across Northumberland when on duty, usually on a three week rota over the winter period.
- **Additional Support:** Farmers and sub-contractor support had been checked and was in place should any serious snow be encountered over the coming months.
- **Cross Boundary Working:** Arrangements were in place with adjoining authorities to ensure continuity between operational boundaries. The Council was now responsible for gritting the entire length of the A69 from Newcastle to the M6 in Cumbria. Northumberland County Council also completed the weather forecasting and decision making for Newcastle City Council's winter services operation.
- **Winter Storms/ Flooding:** Further lessons had been learnt from 'The Beast from the East' earlier in 2018 and included: collaboration with neighbouring authorities and agencies throughout events; assistance and commitment by farming contractors; the contact centre being the first point of contact for all requests and emergencies, allowing officers to log and track requests throughout events. When dictated by weather, staff on rota will respond to flooding and other storm related issues to support the existing Out of Hours rota for anything above and beyond the normal response levels. Severe weather warnings were received well in advance of events from several sources including the Met Office and in several different forms. This enabled storms to be tracked and resources planned around the potential impact.
- **New Salt Barns:** The contract to construct 2 new salt barns in Allendale and Blyth had recently been awarded with 4,000 tonne capacity. Salt covers were to be implemented at the strategic store in Powburn and were also proposed for Rothbury. Area teams were replenishing salt bins and heaps and further replenishments would be completed upon request throughout the winter period.
- **Alerts/social media:** Gritting actions were posted on the NCC website, Twitter and facebook from the beginning of November to the end of March, or beyond if needed due to the weather. Members were requested to suggest that members of the public use the 0345 600 6400 telephone number for winter service requests or emergencies. This would ensure that calls were logged correctly and dealt with in the most efficient way possible.

The following issues were discussed:

- Work on gully cleaning had commenced in Haltwhistle the previous week.

- New drainage on the A68 at West Woodburn required attention as some were higher than the road surface which would damage gritting machines if caught by snow clearing blades. The road surface was much improved.
- The importance of the gulley cleaning programme to prevent pothole damage from standing water over the winter months, was discussed. Advance notification via signage before designated days or letters had been working well.
- An update was requested on the computerisation of the gulley cleaning recording system. Between 80-100 gulleys were cleaned each day in urban areas and half that number in rural areas and therefore it was beneficial to tackle gulleys in a the same vicinity.

**RESOLVED** that the updates be noted.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS - CORPORATE**

### **90. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PLACE**

#### **Northumberland Economic Strategy**

Rob Strettle, Principal Policy Officer provided an update on the current refresh of the Northumberland Economic Strategy. (A copy of the presentation is attached to the minutes of the meeting.)

The presentation included:

- The purpose of the refresh of the emerging Economic Strategy.
- The brief, to focus on delivery and how the Council could provide solutions; showcase Northumberland's world beating sectors, land for growth and world class culture; tell people about Northumberland and demonstrate its competitive advantages.
- The economic trends in Northumberland.
- Policy and funding opportunities.
- Examples of assets in the county.
- Objectives of the refreshed Economic Strategy were: growing the business base, supporting inclusive employment; and delivering productive places)
- Six priorities for delivery were identified which included:
  - Deliver industrial growth.
  - Support enterprise and investment
  - Develop a skilled workforce
  - Enable inclusion in the economy
  - Connect the county
  - Invest in our towns and communities

It was anticipated that the new Economic Strategy would be relaunched in early 2019 and the next steps were highlighted.

Councillors were encouraged to get members of the public and businesses to sign up to the 'External Funding Bulletin' and details were provided of the officer to contact and the page where further information could be found on the Council's website.

Members discussed:

- The coordinated approach being utilised across all areas of the Council business and areas of support such as tourism, connectivity in rural areas, the local plan which designates land for economic use. It was an ambitious plan to improve quality of life for residents, provide better quality jobs and raise standards of education in areas of the County. The North of Tyne Combined Authority was to be provided with significant support from Government to assist with delivery of projects.
- The need for industrial growth and good housing.
- The Future High Street Fund - guidance was due to be released before Christmas. It would be competitive and likely to be oversubscribed as with recent Government initiatives such as the Coastal Communities Fund. Successful applications would most likely require well written business cases which aimed to change the nature and productivity of the high street and including private sector investment.
- The Mary Portas analysis of Hexham which had concluded that there was an overcapacity of retail and business units and was similar in other towns. Residents needed to be encouraged to live in town centres and use local services.

The Chair thanked the Principal Policy Officer for his presentation.

**RESOLVED** that the presentation be noted and circulated to interested parties including town/parish councils.

## **91. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

### **Empowering Communities Project**

Dr Jim Brown, Consultant in Public Health, gave a presentation about the Empowering Communities Project which aims to use asset-based community-centred approaches to improve wellbeing and health. (A copy of the report and presentation are attached to the minutes as Appendix E).

The presentation explained:

- That a cultural shift was needed to improve health and wellbeing; to move away from single issue, individual lifestyle change; focus on what made people well and wellbeing, build on the positives, work more with communities.
- The national and local drivers for change.

- The concept of community centred approaches which included strengthening communities, volunteer and peer roles, collaborations and partnerships, access to community resources.
- The benefits and risks.
- An overview of the Empowering Communities project: the roles of Locality Co-ordinators, who would be embedded within the voluntary and community sector/not for profit host organisations; and the availability of grants for community-centred approaches.
- Objectives of the project.
- The role of Locality Co-ordinators during the initial 6 month period and beyond.
- The role of host organisations
- An update on the the current position of host organisations and Locality Coordinator recruitment.
- What assistance Members and the Local Area Councils could provide to identify community assets and priorities.

Jude Deeks, Locality Co-ordinator for Tynedale and Julia Marley, Team Manager, were also in attendance to introduce themselves to members.

The Chair thanked Dr Brown for his presentation and his colleagues for attending. He commented that a project of this nature had been needed for some time as prevention was better than requiring a cure.

Members looked forward to working with the Locality Co-ordinator and it was agreed that her contact details would be shared with them.

**RESOLVED** that the report and presentation be noted.

## **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

### **92. COMMUNITY CLOTHING SCHEME**

Members received information about a local community clothing scheme. (A copy of the leaflet is attached to the minutes as Appendix F).

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

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

The Local Area Council received a progress update on Members' Local Improvement Schemes as at 1 November 2018. (A copy is attached to the minutes as Appendix G.)

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

**94. 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 H.)

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

**95. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 11 December 2018 at Hexham House, Gilesgate, Hexham at 4.00 p.m.

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

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