

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, 14 January 2020 at 3.00 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillor G Stewart
(Chair, in the Chair for agenda items 105 - 107 and 116 -124)

(Planning Vice-Chair Councillor R Gibson in the chair for items 108 - 115)

MEMBERS

T Cessford
A Dale (no.s 105 - 118)
CR Homer
CW Horncastle
I Hutchinson

D Kennedy (no.s 111 - 124)
N Oliver
JR Riddle
A Sharp (no.s 105 - 118)
KG Stow

OFFICERS

K Blyth
R Campbell
D Feige

J Gerard

M Haworth
C Harvey
D Hunt

A Kingham

H Marron
N Masson
D Nugent

A Olive
H Parkin
J Roll
E Sinnamon
P Soderquest

N Snowdon

Principal Planning Officer
Planning Officer
Principal Ecologist and AONB
Officer
Acting Manager, Learning & Skills
Service
Planning Officer
Planning Officer
Area Manager (West),
Neighbourhood Services
Director Business Development,
Children's Services
Senior Planning Officer
Principal Solicitor
Healthwatch Northumberland -
Project Coordinator
Highways Delivery Area Manager
FCERM Officer
Democratic Services Manager
Senior Planning Manager
Head of Housing and Public
Protection
Principal Programme Officer
(Highways Improvement)

ALSO PRESENT

Councillor Wayne Daley - Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Children's Services

Councillor Richard Dodd - Business Chair

20 members of the public

1 member of the press

105. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor K Quinn.

106. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Tynedale Local Area Council held on 10 December 2019, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

107. DISCLOSURES OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Riddle declared an interest in planning application 19/02033/REL and would leave the meeting whilst the item was considered.

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.

108. DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The report requested the Local Area Council to decide the planning applications attached to the report using the powers delegated to it. Members were reminded of the principles which should govern their consideration of the applications, the procedure for handling representations, the requirement of conditions and the need for justifiable reasons for the granting of permission or refusal of planning applications. The procedure at Planning Committees was appended for information. (A copy of the report is enclosed with the minutes as Appendix A.)

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(3.05 pm Councillor Riddle left the meeting whilst the following item was considered.)

109. 19/02033/REM

Reserved matters application for appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) on approved planning application 16/04680/OUT (amended plans received 09.10.2019)

Land North East Of Bridgeford View, Bellingham, Northumberland

The Senior Planning Officer introduced the report with the aid of a powerpoint presentation. Updates were provided as follows:-

- Since the report had been published an objection had been received from the Parish Council which focussed on: surface water drainage, appearance of the development, ecology issues, the proposed access and utilities.
- A further 10 letters of objection had been received from local residents totalling 24 letters. It was considered that the letters raised no new relevant issues over and above those set out in the report.
- 'No objections' had been received from the Northumberland National Park and the Building Conservation Officer.
- The LLFA had requested that the following additional condition be imposed on any grant of approval regarding the maintenance of the culvert off site and to ensure this is free flowing.
"15.The development shall not be occupied until maintenance works have been undertaken within the culvert offsite to ensure that the culvert offsite (into which surface water from the development will drain) is free flowing and able to manage runoff from the development.
Reason: To ensure the effective drainage of surface water from the development, not increasing the risk of flooding elsewhere, in accordance with the aims of Policy GD5 of the Tynedale Core Strategy."
- Condition No. 1 has been updated with correct planning drawing numbers. A revised list was circulated at the meeting.

In answer to a question from a registered speaker, it was confirmed that a new basing drawing had been uploaded earlier that day which included measurements missing from a previous version. This had not been a fundamental change and did not require public consultation.

Paul Bell, spoke in objection to the application and made the following points:-

- This was poor building land due to its topography and drainage.
- He made reference to the minutes of the meeting on 12 December 2017 when the outline application had been considered and referred to reasons why the application could be refused under reserved matters.

- Condition 4 of planning application 16/04680/OUT had not been met as the requirements of the Flood Risk Assessment Strategy had not been fulfilled.
- The LLFA objection had been withdrawn without requirements being satisfied by the applicant, including the CCTV Culvert Survey. The risk of flooding elsewhere had not been ensured.
- There had been no prior engagement and no robust assessment and he suggested there had been procedural impropriety.
- The officer's report was not fair, accurate or complete and had not addressed meaningful objections or anything submitted after the 12 December. It inaccurately stated that Bellingham Parish Council had not responded and did not address the withdrawal of the LLFA objection.
- The CCTV culvert survey had failed and therefore it could not be guaranteed that there would not be an increased risk of flooding elsewhere.
- Ecological surveys were over three years old and should be redone.
- Sport England should have been consulted.
- The Conservation Officers request for stone had been denied.
- Affordable housing was not spread across the site as per recommendations.
- The Bellingham Housing Needs Survey had been carried out within the last year and indicated that both family housing and older persons housing were required. Despite 82% of respondents stating that their homes were too large, 20 of the 31 houses were 4 bedroom detached.
- There were only 4 3-bedroom affordable properties and 5 others compared to 14 at outline.
- There were no bungalows and only 2 2-bedroom properties.
- Respondents expressing a housing need could not afford £500 per month.
- No reference had been made in this report, unlike others, to consideration of characteristics protected under the Equality Act. This was another example of procedural impropriety and there was case law which resulted in planning permission being quashed.

Philp Chard, spoke on behalf of Bellingham Parish Council. He highlighted the following issues:-

- Reference was made to a letter dated 11 January 2020 from Bellingham Parish Council to the local County Councillor and the Director of Planning regarding their concerns about the planning process and the officer's recommendation. These included:
 - The report had been written significantly prior to the deadline for submission of comments and objections. The report stated that no concerns had been raised by the Parish Council which had made a lengthy submission on 2 January 2020.
 - Objections submitted by other residents over the same period did not appear to have been reviewed. The application should be deferred until these have been considered.
 - Concerns regarding the process. The LLFA have not contacted the Parish Council to identify flood risk areas, which they are required to

do. The ability of the local culvert to deal with the surface water flow from the development site was not able to be fully assessed. A decision should not be made until this is fully investigated particularly given the potential impact on properties further down the slope, including schools.

- They believed the environmental analysis to be out of date and should be redone.
- They awaited a detailed response to their aforementioned objection and queried whether due process had been followed by the case officer due to the aforementioned..
- Given the Council's involvement in the application, via its subsidiary Advance Northumberland, it was essential that the planning process was seen to be beyond reproach.
- The application be deferred until all of the relevant information had been considered, objections responded to and the proper planning process followed.
- All Lead Flood Authorities had a duty to assure sustainable drainage and flood risk. Northumberland's Lead Flood Officer could not provide these assurances regarding the watercourse culvert as the required culvert survey had been abandoned and was incomplete. This information had not been included in the report.
- The Lead Flood Officer had withdrawn their objection despite there being no survey based assurance on the culverts safety or sustainability over the lifetime of the development.
- The need for sustainable, safe drainage had been minuted when the outline application had been considered by the committee.
- The application could not be determined by Members on whether the drainage proposals were sustainable on incomplete, unreliable and unreported information.

Rob Murphy, Senior Land Manager at Ascent Homes, spoke in support of the application and made the following comments:-

- The site benefitted from outline approval which indicated that the Council considered it to be suitable for residential development. The reserved matters application for 31 units was less than the 36 units consented under the outline approval. This enabled a high quality layout incorporating a mix of 2, 3 and 4 bed house types, a SUDS pond and landscape buffering.
- They had worked to address comments raised by statutory consultees and no Council consultees objected.
- 6 affordable units were to be provided in the form of 2 and 3 bed semi-detached properties. This represented 19% of the total units to be provided on the site and was policy compliant.
- The provision of family housing was compliant with Bellingham's Housing Needs survey and the scheme would meet an identified need within the local area.
- The LLFA had confirmed the scheme was acceptable. Use of the SUDS basin was consistent with the principle established through the outline

application. The development would discharge surface water from the pond via a drainage pipe that connected to an existing water course on the site. This would allow surface water to be discharged in a controlled manner at existing greenfield runoff rates, as per the current situation on site. The proposal would not increase the rate of runoff downstream, and ensured the proposal was consistent with national policy requirements set out in the NPPF. The arrangement had been discussed with the LLFA and was considered by them to be acceptable.

- The access to the site had been agreed at the outline stage. Through the reserved matters submissions, Highways had confirmed that the internal site layout meets the relevant standards and requirements and could safely accommodate refuse vehicles.
- The scheme was consistent with the outline approval and would deliver a policy compliant development, provide family housing for the market and affordable units, for existing and future residents of Bellingham.
- Members were requested to support the scheme.

The Senior Planning Manager provided clarification in response to comments made by the public speakers. The application had been validated on 25 June 2019, the site notice displayed on 10 October 2019 and the press notice published in the Hexham Courant on 1 August 2019. Responses would normally be expected to be received within 21 days of the press notice, i.e. 21 August 2019. Due to the festive period and deadlines for publication, the report had been finalised before Christmas. The response from Bellingham Parish Council had been received on 2 January 2020 and therefore the update had been provided by the case officer at the beginning of the item as was standard practice.

Many of the concerns identified by the parish council had been addressed within the officer's report but unfortunately their response had been received after the report had been written. Whilst 21 days were normally allowed for public consultation, in this case the deadline would have been 22 August 2019, responses would be considered prior to finalisation of reports for printing and again up to the committee date where they would be verbally updated.

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

- The culvert was not located within the development site and therefore the landowner was responsible for its upkeep. However, the applicant was willing to enter into agreement with the landowner to keep the culvert free flowing and would require access.
- The landowner had a duty to ensure the culvert was kept clear, free flowing and was free from obstruction. If it became blocked they could be liable. This was a process outside of the planning application. and the LLFA would be able to take enforcement action.
- The CCTV survey had not been able to be completed as there was unknown damage / blockage in the culvert, however water had been

- observed leaving the culverts outfall which establishes its connectivity. The applicant had offered to clear the culvert on the landowners' behalf.
- The basin had been designed by an external independent drainage consultant to ensure that surface water discharged from the development at the equivalent rate as greenfield runoff rates. Surface water would collect in the basin before joining the watercourse that then enters the off site culvert.
 - A flood risk assessment had been undertaken in 2016 and drawings for the SUDS basin in 2019. It had not been clear where the watercourse went when it left the site so the developer had undertaken a CCTV survey which had identified a restriction which had not allowed the camera to pass.
 - The 2019 NPPF required that flood risk was not increased elsewhere following the construction of a development. The creation of a SUDS basin would ensure that surface water on the site would continue to be discharged at the current greenfield rate and was NPPF compliant. The role of the basin would restrict the flow.
 - The applicant was willing to carry out the necessary work to ensure the off site culvert was unblocked and free flowing. This would otherwise be the responsibility of the landowner.
 - The basin was designed for a 1:3 gradient and complied with best practice. It had been modelled using industry software to contain water which allowed for a 1 in 100 year storm event and climate change of 40%. It would have capacity to cope with a large storm which lasted up to 24 hours and still discharge surface water from tarmac on steep slopes at the greenfield rate.
 - The applicant was Advance Northumberland, an arms length organisation which was wholly owned by Northumberland County Council. Due to this reason the application had been brought to the committee for determination. Ascent Homes was a subsidiary company of Advance Northumberland.
 - A site visit had been held in December 2017 prior to determination of the outline planning application which had originally been submitted by Northumberland Estates. The conditions in relation to the outline planning application remained to be discharged and would include work for Northumbrian Water. Northumbrian Water had not objected to this application.
 - Ecology reports had been undertaken in 2017 to enable the outline planning application to be determined. There was no justification to request the applicant to update these reports for the current reserve matters application without a specific reason. The current proposal was for 31 units which was a reduction from the original assessment carried out for 36 units. The circumstances which determined whether updated ecology reports were required were set out in a government circular which specified specific criteria. The reserved matters application did not raise any new issues which justified new surveys.
 - There had been no changes to the access since the site visit in 2017.
 - The NPPF required that the development did not increase surface water run off of the position or risk of flooding down hill any greater.

- The landowner had a legal obligation to maintain the culvert however the applicant was willing to assist.
- A decision against technical advice would increase the likelihood of a successful appeal and costs awarded against the Council as Northumbrian Water and the LLFA did not consider that the development would create an additional flood risk.
- The extra condition (no. 15) had been proposed to ensure that maintenance works were undertaken to the off site culvert to ensure that it was free flowing, prior to occupation of the development. No guarantee could be given although the landowner had a legal obligation to ensure that it was clear.
- Discussions had been held with the Housing Enabling Officer regarding the type of homes required following the Bellingham Housing Needs Assessment. Family housing was required in the town.
- Whilst it was good practice to spread affordable housing units across a site, it was not a policy requirement. It was normal practice of developers to locate units at the rear of the site to enable larger units to be promoted at the front.

Councillor Dale proposed a site visit to view the landscape of the area and to increase understanding of the plans and flooding issue. The motion was not seconded.

Councillor Hutchinson moved that the application be granted. This was seconded by Councillor Stow.

Several councillors expressed concern regarding drainage on the site and the likelihood of an increased risk of flooding elsewhere, however the technical advice did not concur and the principle of development on the site had been established.

A vote was taken as follows:- **FOR: 7; AGAINST: 2; ABSTENTION:1.**

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** consent for the reasons and with the conditions as outlined in the report and subject to the amended list of plans circulated at the meeting for condition 1 and additional condition 15:

“15. The development shall not be occupied until maintenance works have been undertaken within the culvert offsite to ensure that the culvert offsite (into which surface water from the development will drain) is free flowing and able to manage runoff from the development.
Reason: To ensure the effective drainage of surface water from the development, not increasing the risk of flooding elsewhere, in accordance with the aims of Policy GD5 of the Tynedale Core Strategy.”

(4.10 pm Councillor Riddle returned to the meeting.)

110. 19/04203/FUL

2 bedroom cottage

Land East of 1 Bywell Avenue, Bywell Avenue, Hexham, Northumberland

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

David Jones, spoke to object to the application and raised the following points:-

- The site visit should have given an understanding of the proposed building's close proximity to the pedestrian footway and traffic calming narrowing.
- The time of the site visit would not have revealed the levels of parking congestion or levels of vehicle and pedestrian traffic that is experienced at specific times of the day.
- The impact of road and pedestrian traffic density on pedestrian safety during the busiest times of the day had not been fully assessed by Highways and Planning, i.e. to and from school and work.
- Bywell Avenue was very busy as it was used by schoolchildren and parents going to Hexham First School in Beaufront Avenue and Hexham Middle School and Hexham High School. It was also used by vehicles visiting the first school and residents in nearby streets.
- Traffic had to descend or climb a steep hill requiring acceleration or braking and therefore generally travelled at the maximum speed of 20 mph outside the development's driveway.
- His property was located directly opposite 1 Bywell Avenue and it was extremely difficult to leave his driveway judging speed and finding gaps in the traffic with the nearby traffic calming narrowing. Unaccompanied school children also passed his driveway and there were parked cars on either side of the road. Some residents chose to park on the road and not on their driveways for this reason. The view of drivers from the proposed development view would be obscured by the fence at no 1 which was 1.2 metres high.
- The aforementioned reasons created an unacceptable risk to pedestrians who could be harmed or fatally injured by vehicles leaving the proposed driveway.

Councillor Homer addressed the Committee as the local member and spoke on behalf of 20 residents in the immediate vicinity of the site who had raised real concerns over the application. She highlighted the following points:-

- It would have been apparent from the site visit that the plot of land was severely constrained. It was a narrow area of land in a triangular shape on a corner plot situated between the allotments and Bywell Avenue in a built up area.
- The widest part of the site was 21.5 metres with the house being 10.5 metres wide by 7 metres deep.

- Despite their being a mix of housing design in the area, the proposed design was not appropriate to the character of the area.
- Due to the constraints of the plot, there would be no more than 1 metre from the front of the building to the boundary and only 0.3 metres at the rear of the property with the remaining triangle being designated as garden to the west. This was the worst example of a property being squeezed into a restricted space. This was also demonstrated in the physical design of the property which was not in keeping with the local area. If this application were to be approved, it would lead to losing every available open space in Hexham.
- A number of serious highways considerations posed serious risks to drivers, cyclists and pedestrians. She did not agree that the principle for access and parking had already been established. The access to 1 Bywell Avenue was already difficult and adding another property would cause the situation to deteriorate further.
- The site visit had been held at 10 am and the situation would have looked very different with extra vehicular and pedestrian traffic before 9am or after 3pm as Bywell Avenue provided the access to Hexham First School and Hexham Community Centre as well as a housing estate. There would also be many more vehicles parked after 5pm and on weekends.
- Access to the parking area on the plot would be across the pavement, within metres of a give way sign and close to a traffic calming island. The boundary was curved and sight lines would be dangerously restricted from east to west. The parking spaces within the site were located one in front of the other and would result in shuffling on the highway.
- A passing wagon on the site visit demonstrated the manoeuvre past the traffic calming which was an additional risk to pedestrians and vehicular traffic.
- She objected to the application on the grounds of the site constraints, access and parking, road and pedestrian safety risks, suitability of design.

Joanne Wood, from Bradley Hall, spoke on behalf of the applicant in support of the application. She commented on the the following:-

- The applicants had sought to address concerns of residents following the withdrawal of a previous application on the site. The scale and mass of the property had been reduced and the design overhauled in line with the planning officer's advice. It was now policy compliant with no objections from statutory consultees.
- The principle of the development was acceptable being within the settlement limits of Hexham and close to schools, shops and other services. The development would be sustainable in line with the Council's current and emerging planning policies.
- There were limited opportunities to accommodate housing in Hexham as evidenced in the Council's most recent Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and no evidence to suggest this was likely to improve in the future. Hexham needed housing but was constrained by the Green Belt and therefore it was important that small sites like this were brought forward for development.

- Concerns of residents relating to the the risk of additional vehicle movements were noted. A comprehensive assessment had been undertaken to ensure that the house could be constructed without presenting a risk to pedestrians and cyclists. The comments of the Highways officers were welcomed as they had not objected and had concluded that the proposal would not endanger users of the highway.
- The proposal was for a modest 2 bedroom house, there would be little traffic generated and parking for 2 vehicles could be achieved within the site. 20mph speed restrictions were in place on surrounding roads with traffic calming measures across the estate. Council officers were satisfied that there would not be any additional risk. A condition had also been included which required details for all boundary treatments which would ensure that sight lines were not obscured.
- The report highlighted that there were different architectural styles near to the site and Bywell Avenue provided a natural break between opposing periods of architecture. The new dwelling would therefore not appear incongruous and would sit comfortably within the location.
- Reference was made to paragraph 130 of the NPPF and that design should not be used as the decision maker as a reason to object to the development. The officer had concluded that the proposal achieves all expectations of all relevant policies.
- The proposal was fully compliant with current planning policies and was aligned to the visions of Hexham's emerging Neighbourhood Plan. The principle of the development was acceptable and there were no objections from technical consultees. Approval would add to the housing mix in the town and make a positive contribution towards meeting the need for lower cost housing.
- Members were requested to support the officer recommendation that the application be approved.

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

- The site had been previously used as an allotment and also used as a garden and had been laid to lawn on the case officer's first visit. A previous application had been withdrawn.
- The requirement for 2 parking spaces for a housing development had been met within the site.
- A turning circle was not required to be provided.
- The boundary hedge at the rear of the property was located within the allotment and therefore the 0.3 metres could be ensured with regular cutting.
- Due to the constraints and shape of the site, the requirements of Policy H32(e) could not be met in terms of the provision of a rear garden with a depth of 10 metres although garden space could be provided to the east of the site which was considered adequate. It was considered to comply with Policy GD2 and not have an adverse effect on adjacent land and buildings in terms of loss of light, noise or other disturbance.
- The distances for amenity between neighbouring houses were met.

- The measurements for the building and the site had been checked on the OS system and the Council's planning system and officers were satisfied there was enough space to accommodate the proposed building and sit 1 metre back from the front boundary. Other properties in Bywell Avenue were set further back, however there was no other option within this site.
- The design of the property and the constraints of the site were finely balanced, however, officers did not think this justified refusal of planning permission.
- The issues raised at the site visit by Members and by the public speakers regarding the traffic calming measures, give way sign and driveway had been discussed with the Principal Highways Development Management Officer following the site visit. Whilst the property was located in an awkward position between the aforementioned features, this situation was replicated along Bywell Avenue. Similarly, there were other fences between properties which obscured views of the street scene whilst the 20 mph speed limit slowed approaching vehicles. He was of the opinion that the addition of a single small dwelling would not have a significant impact on the road network.

Councillor Stewart proposed that the application be refused contrary to the officer recommendation on the grounds that the design was not in keeping with the character of the area, overdevelopment of the site and unacceptable impact on highways safety.

Councillor Hutchinson stated that he would second the proposal on the grounds of design and overdevelopment of the site. He suggested that as the third reason, on highways safety grounds, was against the specialist officer's advice that this not be included.

Several Members who had been present at the site visit commented that they had been surprised at the small size of the site and agreed with the reasons for refusal. Councillor Dale requested that it be recorded that she had been unable to attend the site visit due to medical reasons.

Councillor Cessford confirmed that he would be happy to second all three reasons for refusal.

Members discussed whether a third reason, on highways safety grounds, should be included.

The Principal Solicitor gave advice regarding the inclusion of the third reason for refusal on highways safety grounds. As Highways did not object to the proposal, inclusion of this ground could incur costs at appeal. The Senior Planning Manager concurred and stated that the NPPF would only refuse an application if there was an unacceptable impact on highway safety or the impact on the road network would be severe.

Councillor Stewart confirmed that he would withdraw the third reason for refusal i.e. unacceptable impact on highways safety. The motion for refusal was seconded by Councillor Hutchinson.

Upon being put to the vote the results were as follows:- **FOR: 9; AGAINST: 0; ABSTENTIONS: 1.**

RESOLVED that the application be **REFUSED** permission on the grounds that the design was not in keeping with the character of the area and overdevelopment of the site.

111. 19/03535/VARYCO

**Variation of conditions 2 (Approved Plans), 3, 5 (highways), and remove conditions 7 (drainage) and 8 (construction method statement) pursuant to planning application 17/00093/FUL
Phoenix House, Hedley, Stocksfield, Northumberland NE43 7SW**

The Planning Officer introduced the report with the aid of a powerpoint presentation. Updates were provided as follows:-

- Error in informative No 3 details planning reference no 16/00764/FUL but should detail planning reference no. T/20110032.
- Addition of a further condition in relation to the internal pedestrian footway. "The internal pedestrian link from the car parking area to the Bed and Breakfast must be kept open at all times during operational hours of the Bed and Breakfast.
Reason: In the interests of pedestrian safety and non restrictive access, in accordance with Tynedale Local Plan GD4 and the National Planning Policy Framework."
- The applicant and their agent could not attend the meeting and requested that the following statement be read out:
"No matter what the objectors have raised, all the salient and material planning issues have been thoroughly, properly and objectively examined and analysed by the case officer, her internal consultees (in particular the Highways Unit and the Drainage Officers) and her superiors - and all deem the situation now proposed/implemented more than satisfactory. Granting this s73 permission, as they all support and recommend, and varying these conditions as suggested, will regularise this development on this site confirming the layout, surfacing and drainage are all acceptable and that the footpath by the road on the head permission plans is unnecessary and the submitted and developed arrangement is acceptable."

Jeff Douglas spoke to object to the application as he lived in Four Wynds, the nearest house on the opposite side of the road. He raised the following points:-

- He objected to the removal of conditions which focussed on the drainage issues.

- The credibility and timing of the video evidence was queried. It apparently showed a considerable flow of water from the site on to the highway. There had been an increased amount of rainfall recently and three large collections of water on the North side of the road between Phoenix House and Four Wynds where there was no constructed drainage system. Any increase in surface water would make the problem worse. After any rainfall there was always a significant amount of surface water at the entrance to Four Wynds driveway which freezes in winter creating hazardous driving conditions.
- One of the occupants of Four Wynds was an 88 year old disabled person who was seriously concerned at the possibility of more water flowing down the drive to her accommodation. Work to prevent this specified in the condition would be of reassurance.
- The Phoenix House car park was located on dense sandstone which had poor infiltration properties with a thin layer of subsoil with clay beneath. The removal of topsoil had created an impermeable surface of approximately 100 m². Information from a drainage engineer estimated that 1 to 2 year 5mm storm would equate to 5m³ and tarmacing the surface of the car park would potentially worsen this.
- The channel requested in the construction condition was wider than the area and would encroach the highway. Evidence had not been provided of where the linear channel would drain to.
- It was queried whether the request to remove the condition was for safety or financial reasons.
- The channel should have an inspection pit leading to a suitable side soak away.
- It had not been proved that flooding would not occur in accordance with the NPPF and should be enforced by the Council.
- The introduction of kerbs had damned the water flowing off adjoining fields which could rise above the kerb, not under it, compounding the problem of road safety due to flooding.
- The Committee was requested not to remove the condition regarding drainage. They did not object to a B and B or cafe, but requested road safety and consideration of neighbours regarding drainage.

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

- The condition was proposed to be removed as the building had not been constructed in accordance with the plans and Highways did not consider there to be an additional risk of flooding.
- The current application was required to regularise the development.
- It was considered that the gravel car park had better permeability than the approved proposal for a tarmac car park and therefore the condition to ensure there was not increased water run-off was considered to be satisfied.
- The site was not located in a flood risk area and therefore it had not been necessary to consult the LLFA or SUDS team..

- The Highways Section were satisfied with the information submitted by the applicant that water would not run on to the highway. Video evidence demonstrated that surface water during a heavy storm ran along the channel and not across the highway.
- Information specified in the former condition was no longer required and the Highways section were satisfied that it could be removed.
- Railway sleepers visible in the powerpoint presentation had been present on the first visit by the officer but were not in situ on the second visit.
- There had been no gravel run off from the site on to the highway following heavy rainfall.
- A construction method statement specified in condition 8 was also no longer required.

Councillor Oliver moved that the application be granted. This was seconded by Councillor Stewart.

Councillor Horncastle made reference to concerns regarding flooding in the village and that there was a perceived additional threat of flooding from the site due to the amount of landscaping. He suggested that it would be beneficial for the application to be deferred as Highways Officers were not in attendance at the meeting. Other Members were not of the same opinion that this would be beneficial and that submission of plans showing the drainage in existence would be a futile exercise.

A vote was taken as follows:- **FOR: 7; AGAINST: 4.**

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** permission for the reasons and with the conditions as outlined in the report.

112. 19/01949/FUL

**Refurbishment and extension of an existing one storey agricultural building to form a single private dwelling-house
Land North West of Leawater, Allendale, Northumberland**

The Planning Officer introduced the report with the aid of a powerpoint presentation. The application had been deferred from the last meeting for a site visit to assess the potential impact of the access track for the proposed development on the setting of the Listed Buildings, which was difficult to visualise.

Maria Ferguson, representing the agent, spoke in support of the application. She summarised the following points for the application to be accepted:-

- The building was suitable for conversion under the Council's planning policies. It was structurally sound and of traditional appearance. The design respected the appearance re-using all openings and using traditional materials. The modest extension would be a subordinate and sympathetic addition.

- The access to the site was safe with regard to vehicle speeds. The Highways department did not object and were happy that visibility splays were acceptable. Speed surveys conducted by a suitably qualified consultant to determine them were carried out in an appropriate way.
- The development would not impinge on anyone's privacy. The nearest house was about 40 metres away, in excess of the 21 metres required. Only the gable elevation of the listed buildings nearest the site face the entrance to the new track. The track is around 30 metres from these houses.
- Members concern at the previous meeting related to the access road and had been the reason for the site visit. These features were not uncommon in rural areas and would be constructed using permeable paving grids to allow the grass to grow through the track.. This with the surrounding topography would mitigate its appearance such that its impact on the countryside and the setting of listed buildings would be barely perceptible.
- The Parish Council supported the proposed development. The Neighbourhood Plan had recently been completed after significant work. Proper weight should be given to this development plan document which contained the most recently adopted and up to date planning policies. Failure to do so would undermine confidence in the planning system.
- Policy ADNP7 allows for the conversion of redundant buildings to residential use.
- The local areas were in need of housing which would contribute to the vitality of the Thornley Gate community and neighbouring villages.
- The architect had responded to officers requests to ensure the development complied with planning policies, the development plan and national planning policy guidance.
- Members were requested to support the officer's recommendation to approve planning permission.

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

- The site section slide was displayed to show the area of land that would need to be built up from the access point to the building to create the permeable road.
- The lower branches of the nearest tree would need to be cut back by the landowner.
- An area of land would be excavated to build the extension and the land terraced with drainage to create the parking and bin storage area.
- Alternative options for the access had been considered and discarded due to the proximity of the scheduled flue system associated with Allen Smelt Mills and inappropriateness of the existing track for multiple vehicles from the north. Whilst it was acknowledged that there would be some impact from the construction of the access road, the permeable structure and lack of lighting had been considered to minimise the impact so that there would be less than substantial harm on the listed buildings.
- No fencing had been proposed along the track.

- The Rights of Way section were happy that the access would be shared by the public right of way and access to the development. Informative No 5. addressed concerns regarding protection of the right of way, temporary closure or diversion during construction.

Councillor Kennedy moved acceptance of the recommendation set out in the report which was seconded by Councillor Stewart.

Whilst supporting the renovation of the building which complied with local policies, the local member expressed concern regarding the access on to the highway with a national speed limit and the potential for an accident.

Upon being put to the vote the results were as follows:- **FOR: 9; AGAINST: 1; ABSTENTIONS: 2.**

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** consent for the reasons and with the conditions as outlined in the report.

113. SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

At 4.55 pm it was agreed that standing orders be suspended to continue the meeting beyond the 3 hour limit.

RESOLVED that in accordance with the Council's Constitution, standing orders be suspended and the meeting continue over the 3 hour limit.

114. 19/04685/FUL

Erection of 2m high wooden fence to north and east elevation of the building curtilage

The Drill Hall, Swalwell Close, Prudhoe, Northumberland NE42 6EX

The Planning Officer introduced the report with the aid of a powerpoint presentation. He confirmed that no new issues had arisen since the report had been written and the close of the public consultation period on 26 December 2019.

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

- Legal action would be taken to recoup the cost of the fencing from the landowner.

Councillor Stow proposed acceptance of the officer recommendation to approve the application for the reasons set out in the officers report which was seconded by Councillor Sharp.

Upon being put to a vote the proposal was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** consent for the reasons and with the conditions as outlined in the report.

115. 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 6.04 pm, Councillor Gibson vacated the Chair and the meeting adjourned as the remainder of the agenda consisted of other Local Area Council business scheduled to begin at 6.00 pm. Councillor Stewart returned to the Chair and continued the meeting at 6.20 pm.

OTHER LOCAL AREA COUNCIL BUSINESS

116. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from members of the public.

117. PETITIONS

This item was to:

a) Receive any new petitions:

There were none to consider.

b) Consider reports on petitions previously received:

(i) Request for Reduced Speed Limit on Hexham Road, B6528 AND Holeyn Hall Road, Wylam

A petition had been received which requested that Northumberland County Council improve safety for pedestrians by reducing the speed limit from 60mph to 40mph on Hexham Road/B6528 towards Holeyn Hall Crossroads and on Holeyn Hall Road leading into Wylam.

The Chair read out the following statement from Cllr Quinn, the local member, who had been unable to attend the meeting:

“I am writing to give my full support to the Petition being discussed this evening requesting the reduction of the speed limit on the Hexham Road B6528 at Holeyn Hall Crossroads and on Holeyn Hall Road, Wylam.

As an almost daily user of this road I agree totally with the concerns of the residents in relation to road safety. I note the results of the speed survey carried out on Holeyn Hall Road, and accept that the average speeds recorded north and southbound are under 40mph, but the fact that vehicles were recorded travelling at speeds up to 61mph is a matter of great concern - I have personally seen vehicles clip the kerb and mount the pavement on many occasions and there is no doubt in my mind that pedestrians using the pavement are at risk from traffic moving at such speeds.

Whilst I agree wholeheartedly with the petitioners that the speed limit should be reduced, I am pleased to see recommendations for management of the encroaching vegetation, and that drainage concerns will be investigated, and I look forward to seeing the results of the speed survey to be undertaken at Holeyn Hall Road crossroads. I am also pleased that a review will be undertaken to consider whether the layout of the road is such that further safety measures are appropriate.

The petition has my full support.”

The Principal Programme Officer confirmed that he would be liaising with the Highways Delivery Area Manager to see what improvements could be made quickly. A speed survey would be carried out at Holleyn Hall Road crossroads to gauge the effectiveness of current safety measures and consider if further works would improve safety.

The Lead Petitioner thanked members and officers for their support and enquired about the time frame for any work.

The Principal Programme Officer confirmed that overgrown vegetation would be addressed quickly. More time would be needed to consider other safety measures which would involve the design team and discussions with the local Councillor and Parish Council.

RESOLVED that:

- a) The contents of the report be noted, and
- b) The Local Area Council support consideration of the potential inclusion of a funding allocation in the draft LTP programme for 2020/21, to allow appropriate safety measures and maintenance to be investigated.

c) To consider updates on petitions previously considered:

i) Removal of double yellow lines, Beech Grove, Prudhoe

The Local Area Council received an updated report which explored a number of options that Members had recommended be investigated following consideration of the matter on 14 May 2019.

The Principal Programme Officer explained that, whilst sympathising with residents and the situation, it was not recommended that any changes be made to the current parking restrictions as it was not a Council's responsibility to provide parking for residents.

Members noted that:

- Many residents did not have off-street parking and there were limited opportunities nearby.
- Removal of restrictions from a section on one side of the road or overnight would be of assistance to residents.
- The cost of building a retaining wall to create a nearby parking area was prohibitive.

The Lead Petitioner commented that:

- Residents did not have anywhere to park in the vicinity of their homes.
- She enquired if a speed survey had also been carried out Beaumont Terrace and Woodbine Terrace, as the road was the same width as Beech Grove, and they did not have yellow lines along that stretch.
- A parking area which had been used by residents was now locked and unable to be used.
- Many road users did not observe the speed limit and she was of the view that cars parked outside properties on Beech Grove would slow traffic down.
- She pleaded for assistance as she could not afford to move to a house with a driveway.

The Chair thanked the petitioner for attending and suggested that residents liaise with their local member, Councillor Stow, and the Principal Programme Officer.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted including the recommendation that no changes be made.

118. LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES

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

Technical Services:

- Maintenance was ongoing as a result of Highways inspections. Actionable defects were being rectified within the time specified in the policy. The hotbox was undertaking work in the area carrying out patching and more permanent repairs.
- The carriageway was breaking up in certain areas, especially on high routes, as a result from ground conditions changing from wet to frost. Inspections were taking place more regularly in known problem areas with rectification work being carried out where possible.
- Gully operations were ongoing within the area on planned routine works and also from issues logged within the system as a result of calls from members of the public and Councillors. Work in some wards would be carried out following letter drops or when traffic management was arranged.
- The drainage gang was still operational rectifying any problems as well as a JCB carrying out ditching works. Work in Warden by the railway line was now complete.
- Safety schemes were still being delivered.
- Completion of construction and LTP works were weather dependent and would be carried over into the next financial year, if necessary.

Winter Service Update

- 60 gritting runs had been carried out to date across primary and high ground routes.
- Grit bins and heaps were being replenished in response to requests from members of the public and Highways Inspectors.

Issues raised by Councillors included:

- Areas of the hard shoulder on the A68 were narrowing or disappearing and were dangerous as the road was unlit. The Highways Delivery Area Manager confirmed that this was a known issue and was being monitored.

Neighbourhood Services:

- Refuse collection staff have worked extra shifts to catch up after the Christmas bank holidays. An extra 40 tons of residual waste and 33 tons of recyclable waste had been collected. This represented an 8% and 13.5% increase on the average for this time of year.
- There had been some capacity issues at a few of the bottle bring sites. The excess had been cleared away quickly and skips emptied. They would look to increase capacity at some locations for the next Christmas period.
- Extra bulky waste slots had been made available to respond to an increase in demand in the run up to Christmas.

- Leaf clearance had been close to completion but recent high winds meant that some areas would need to be revisited. Councillors with concerns regarding particular areas were requested to contact the officer.
- Cutting back of hedges and shrubs was being carried out.
- The recruitment process for seasonal staff had commenced for summer 2020.
- Grounds and cleansing staff from the Tynemills and Low Prudhoe depots were assisting with the Highways winter services rota and gritting in town centres.

Issues raised by Councillors included:

- Waste bins on the A68 and A695 laybys needed to be emptied.
- Street sweeper required for paths in Hexham central. Locations to be emailed to the officer.
- Gulleys between Catton and Allendale were blocked.
- Gulley between Wentworth Car Park and Bristol Street Motors garage in Hexham were blocked. This would be checked as work had been carried out in the previous 12 months.

Members of the Local Area Council expressed their appreciation to Local Services staff for their work over the festive period.

RESOLVED that the updates be noted.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

119. Budget 2020-21 and Medium Term Financial Plan

The Local Area Council received a presentation as part of the State of the Area debate which outlined the Council's strategy for the 2020-21 Budget within the context of the Corporate Plan. The presentation provided details of the approach to setting the budget for the next financial year and the broad impact this would have on the delivery of services. (A copy of the presentation is enclosed with the minutes of the meeting.)

Councillor Oliver, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services and Councillor Daley, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Children's Services gave the presentation which covered:

- Core beliefs
- Delivery of manifesto pledges, completion of projects and other key achievements since 2017.
- Aims and achievements in the following areas:
 - Living - residents feel safe, valued and part of their community.
 - Enjoying - residents live in distinctive, vibrant places, which they value and in which they feel proud,

- Connecting - residents can easily get to work, to learn and to the various facilities and services they want to use.
- Learning - residents regardless of their age, have the right qualifications and skills to ensure a good job that pays well, and provides the prospect of a rewarding career.
- Thriving - businesses booming with the council doing everything in its power to create the right connections for economic growth.
- Future priorities
- The budget context:
 - Savings of £9.8 million identified for 2020/21 with work ongoing for 2021/22.
 - A transition team was driving service integration.
 - Impact on frontline services to be minimised.
- Projected spend of £677 million on the capital programme between 2019-2022 whilst being mindful of debt levels.
- Next steps - consideration by Scrutiny, Local Area Councils and on-line consultation with final version being considered by Council in February 2020.
- A 1.99% increase in Council Tax was proposed for 2020/21.

The following issues were discussed:

- Additional investment in gully machines should be considered to prevent further deterioration of road surfaces.
- Business rate discounts for high streets were to be considered on a town by town basis. There was an overcapacity of retail units in some locations and landowners should consider other uses. Examples of successful bids for government funding had been obtained in a number of areas including Heritage Action in Hexham. If discounts were provided on business rates, additional income would be required from other sources to maintain services elsewhere.
- The 'Discover Our Land' campaign had recently been refreshed to address the diverse nature of the county.
- Small businesses needed to be encouraged to relocate to town centres. Some buildings were already being used for multiple purposes such as the Queens Hall Arts Centre in Hexham and Alnwick Playhouse.
- The night time economy was to be encouraged.
- The pods at Amble were an excellent initiative and something similar should be replicated in Hexham marketplace.

RESOLVED that the presentation be received.

120. Northumberland County Council's Adult Social Care Apprenticeship

The Local Area Council received a presentation about the Social Care Leaders Apprenticeship programme and opportunities, for existing social care staff and/or new talented individuals, to enter social care as potential future

managers and leaders. (A copy of the presentation is enclosed with the minutes of the meeting.)

Janice Gerard, Careers, Acting Manager, Learning & Skills Service and Audrey Kingham, Director Business Development, Children's Services gave the presentation which covered:

- The Care for Life campaign had aimed to raise the profile of adult social care and to allow succession planning by nurturing a younger workforce in the 16 - 25 age group.
- Involvement by 'real' members of staff who were enthusiastic about their jobs, opportunities for progression and had volunteered to act as ambassadors.
- Development of a website, adverts, leaflets and other materials. A copy of A5 leaflets were circulated at the meeting.
- Analysis of the communications plan, what had worked well and would be replicated in future campaigns.
- Budget considerations: work undertaken internally and location of engagement events to minimise costs.
- Analysis of campaign statistics and review of the success of engagement events. Over 150,000 people had seen the campaign with 7,000+ visits to the website.
- Web analytics and geographical spread, which included many locations outside Northumberland and the North East area.
- Recruitment impact: 78 people provided personal data, 40 invitations issued for interviews, 31 interviews held, 19 individuals offered apprenticeships resulting in 14 new apprentices in post.
- The majority of interviews had been held with people who had fallen in the 16 - 25 age bracket and had included Looked after Children, school leavers and individuals who had experience of caring for a family member. Candidates had been chosen for their caring and compassionate nature and not dependent on previous experience or academic qualifications. Managers had been delighted with the new staff.
- Campaign to begin again in Spring 2020.
- Outcome awaited for 2 award nominations for the campaign.

The following information was provided in answer to questions:

- One individual had dropped out to date.
- This was the first time the campaign had been run and would be more targeted next time.
- Adverts had been aimed to reach the particular age group and therefore time slots had been chosen on catch up tv around programmes such as 'Love Island'.

It was agreed that the links to radio and media adverts, which were unable to be demonstrated at the meeting, would be circulated by email.

RESOLVED that the presentation be received.

121. Healthwatch Northumberland

Members received a presentation that covered current work and feedback received by Healthwatch from health and social care service users, and sought from members insights of current health and social care issues in their communities. (A copy of Healthwatch Northumberland's Quarterly Report for July – September 2019/20 is enclosed with the minutes as Appendix E.)

Derry Nugent, Healthwatch Northumberland - Project Coordinator, circulated details of engagements events that were scheduled to be held at different locations across the Tynedale area between 5 February 2020 and 26 March 2020 to promote the organisation's Annual Survey for 2020. Over 800 individuals had completed the Northumberland Healthwatch annual survey in 2019 and they hoped to increase participation in 2020 in order that user experiences were improved. She explained they used a variety of forums to raise awareness of their organisation including voluntary sector organisations, lunch clubs and over 60's groups.

In 2019 66% of respondents had described their overall satisfaction with services as good or excellent and they wanted to hear from more health service users. Their Twitter tag was #speakup2020.

A copy of the Northumberland Healthwatch feedback form was circulated at the meeting. Councillors were a valuable resource having many contacts in their communities. Further copies were available for Members surgeries or other community groups. Copies were also available in a variety of locations including libraries, GP surgeries, pharmacies, community halls.

The following information was provided in answer to questions from Members:

- An electronic copy of the feedback form or Twitter handle would be emailed to Members so they could raise awareness of the annual survey via their social media accounts.
- Some patients were finding dementia assessment and support in rural areas difficult to initiate. The Project Coordinator agreed to obtain more information from Councillor Riddle after the meeting.
- A report on Patient Placement Participation Groups was due to be published in the following month.

RESOLVED that the presentation be received.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

122. MEMBERS' LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES 2018/19

The Local Area Council received a progress update on Members' Local Improvement Schemes as at 1 December 2019. (A copy is enclosed with the minutes as Appendix F.)

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

123. LOCAL AREA COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME

A list of agreed items for future Local Area Council meetings was circulated.
(A copy is enclosed with the minutes as Appendix G.)

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted.

124. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 11 February 2020 at Hexham House, Gilesgate, Hexham at 4.00 p.m.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____