

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

TYNEDALE LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

At the meeting of the **Tynedale Local Area Council** held at Meeting Space - Block 2, Floor 2 - County Hall, Morpeth on Tuesday, 13 July 2021 at 4.00 pm.

PRESENT

T Cessford

(Chair, in the Chair for agenda items 10 – 13 and 19 - 26)

(Planning Vice-Chair Councillor A Scott in the chair for items 14 - 18)

MEMBERS

A Scott
C Horncastle
D Kennedy
N Oliver
A Sharp
H Waddell

A Dale
JI Hutchinson
N Morphet
J Riddle
G Stewart

OFFICERS

N Armstrong
M Francis
C Harvey
D Hunt
N Masson

M Patrick

E Sinnamon
N Turnbull
A Wall
K Westerby

Principal Planning Officer
Senior Planning Officer
Planning Officer
Neighbourhood Services Area Manager
Legal Services Manager (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Principal Highways Development Management Officer
Development Service Manager
Democratic Services Officer
Environmental Health Officer

3 members of the press and public were present.

10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Homer.

11 PROCEDURE AT PLANNING MEETINGS

The Chair advised members of the procedure which would be followed at the meeting.

12 MINUTES

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RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Tynedale Local Area Council held on 15 June 2021, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

13 **DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Councillor Cessford declared a personal and prejudicial interest in planning application 20/03388/FUL.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

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

14 **DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The committee was requested 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.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

15 **20/03388/FUL**

There were no questions arising from the site visit videos which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The Planning Officer introduced the application with the aid of a powerpoint presentation and reported the following:

- An update had been circulated on Friday with three additional representations that were received between the officer report being drafted and being published on the website. In summary, the additional representations raised concerns in respect of:
 - The amount of proposed car parking provision, within the context of the decision at last month's committee to refuse a wedding venue at Linnels;
 - Impact on highway safety;
 - The experience of the applicant in running a viable business has not been independently verified;
 - The economic benefits case submitted by the applicant has not been independently verified;
 - The site is located within the Green Belt and the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site Buffer Zone which were constraints for the proposed development;
 - The visual impact of the proposed development on existing buildings within the site;
 - The application indicated that wedding events would not be the only use of the proposed development; and

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- The location of off-site highways works and subsequent impact on Hadrian's Wall Vallum, located to the northeast of the application site.
- A second update had been circulated to Members the previous day with updated comments from the Highways team; along with updated condition numbers following a typo on the officer report; and updates to Paragraph 7.88 of the officer report in order to refer to Policy BE2 of the Tynedale District Local Plan in respect of Equality Duty; and updates to Paragraph 8.1 of the officer report following a typo.
- The updated Highways comments received sought to address concerns raised by members of the public in light of the decision that was made on the previous application for a wedding venue at Linnels. The updated response set out the differences between the scale of the development currently being considered at Shildon and the scale of the previously considered scheme at Linnels. Whilst it was considered that there was insufficient car parking to be provided at Linnels which would lead to an unacceptable impact on the highway network, it was considered that there was sufficient car parking to be provided as part of the currently proposed scheme at Shildon; subject to the approval of a Full Events Management Plan which it was recommended be secured by a condition. The Highways team did not object to the application, subject to conditions.

Ms. N. Allan spoke in objection to the application on behalf of the occupants at Shildon Grange and 10 other properties at Halton Shields. She highlighted the following:-

- Some work had commenced on site following pre-application discussions, purchase and submission of the planning application.
- There was no evidence of the applicant's experience.
- The application was for a commercial wedding venue which was not tourism and therefore not supported by policies CS1, INF2 or ECN16.
- A suggestion that the venue would be available for charitable use was groundless and should not be taken into account.
- The economic case demonstrated that this was intended to be a substantial business with 30 permanent jobs in the first year increasing to 50 in year 2 which would have an impact on the local environment and amenity from the scale of the business.
- It was not in a sustainable location and it was inevitable that guests would travel by car. If the Highways Development advice was applied from the recent Linnels application, 67 car parking spaces would be required in year 1 and 99 car parking spaces in year 2. This did not include extra staff such as hairdressers, beauticians, stylists, band members etc.
- The Highways Officer had not said that parking provision was sufficient, but less parking under provision to resolve.
- The site was located in the Green Belt where great weight should be afforded to preserving the Green Belt and keeping it permanently open.
- The proposed extension was full height and width at the back of the range of buildings and two bays in depth.
- The 38% increase was on the historic asset in its entirety including outbuildings. This would have a significant impact on openness which was harm by definition.
- This was not the right building or location to accommodate 200 guests.
- The movement of traffic, people and intensification of activity harmed

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openness, not just buildings, which was taken into account in the Linnels application.

- There was no limit on the frequency of events and parking for any application could be classed temporary.
- The conditions allowed a 10db increase at noise sensitive receptors which was a doubling of noise and it was queried why the same condition had not been applied as other wedding events which was 90% of background levels. It might be too late to resolve important issues obtaining noise levels after the scheme was built. Noise from people outside the venue were not taken into account (the Lombard effect) and noise from people leaving.
- Traffic would arrive within a very short window of events with an increase on local roads. A one-way system could not be enforced on a public highway and there would be problems with the dangerous junction with the Aydon Road.
- The area suffered from low water pressure.
- The application could only have policy support if it did not have an unacceptable impact on residential amenity.
- There were concerns regarding marquee use under permitted development which would be allowed for 28 days without being constrained by these conditions.

Mr. S. Glover, the applicant spoke in support of the application. He stated that:-

- They were delighted that the application had been recommended for approval.
- He wished to reassure those with concerns that they would endeavour to be excellent neighbours and bring much positivity to the area.
- Planning and licensing safeguards were in place to ensure that they operated within the rules.
- They had searched for months for a property in a secluded location. Many venues across the county functioned in harmony with neighbours in closer proximity than the nearest dwellings to Shildon.
- He and his business partner understood the importance of peace and tranquility to those who live in the countryside and did not underestimate their responsibilities.
- Benefits of the scheme included:
 - An improved road system;
 - Regeneration of land;
 - Replacing all fossil fuels with renewable energy;
 - Significant employment;
 - Financial injection into the local supply chain; and
 - A rise in footfall and spend for local businesses from increased visitor numbers.
- Work required by Highways included passing places and widening which would improve the country lane with wider public benefit.
- Implementation of an event management plan included marshalling when guests arrived and departed, so that any increase in traffic would be managed with little effect on the relative few users of the road. Eco-friendly minibuses would be used to transfer larger groups of guests in several vehicles to and from the venue to reduce any potential impact on the environment and the road that served the property.

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- A small portion of land would be regenerated enabling people to enjoy the beauty of Shildon and the nearby area. The extension to the rear would replace a rotten lean-to with a tastefully clad timber structure and bring a disused stable block back in to use with retention on many original features. The new buildings would be sympathetically designed to blend in with its surroundings with soundproofing to ensure no noise spill.
- The project would be innovative and aimed to be an environmentally aware venue, introducing renewable and sustainable energy, installing heat pumps, solar panels, rainwater harvesting tanks and charging points for electric vehicles, with demonstration of methods to educational institutions.
- The property would be used as a wedding venue for only a small proportion of the time and hoped to engage with leaders of local community schemes to use and benefit from the space.
- The team had a combined 50 years of wedding and event management related experience, multimillion-pound budgets and large teams of people. They forecast permanent employment for 50 staff within 2 years, endeavouring to fill as many positions from the local area.
- There would be a positive effect on the hospitality supply chain businesses that operate alongside the wedding industry in Tynedale and the surrounding area. Benefits from increases in tourism with guests spending in local shops, restaurants, pubs, hotels, bed and breakfast accommodation and rented properties, hopefully returning in the future.
- The new Northumberland Local Plan placed great emphasis on tourism and hospitality and they believed that ventures like theirs should be supported where possible.
- The management team were dedicated to ensuring its long-term viability and sustainability.
- Reference to a quote from a local councillor who stated that the local economy needed to be kickstarted to create conditions to encourage new investment, businesses and jobs were vital.
- They hoped that with the scheme meeting all planning requirements that members would support the application.

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

- A traffic survey had been commissioned by the applicant which calculated 20-30 vehicles used the c road daily and classed as light use. This was consistent with the 3-4 vehicles seen during a visit by the Highways officer.
- Highways Development did not have a set standard for car parking at wedding venues. An event management plan was to be put in place and larger events would trigger use of minibuses.
- The proposed conditions had been reviewed by officers to ensure they were precise and enforceable. Any complaints from neighbours regarding excessive noise would be investigated and enforcement action taken if noise levels breached, this included cessation of activity until the issue was resolved. Noise could also be investigated under the statutory nuisance process and under the legislation for sale of alcohol and conditions attached to premises licenses.
- It was estimated that there would be an average of 3 guest per car when considering single occupants, couples, larger families and occupants of minibuses, to calculate the number of car parking spaces required. Criteria within the event management plan set out measures to prevent overspill on

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the highway and ensure that parking was contained within the site. Direction of one-way traffic was not practical and therefore passing places were to be constructed to the north and south of the site.

- The development could not be brought into use until the event management plan was submitted and approved.
- Key differences between this application and the Linnels application which had been recently refused included: consideration of Green belt issues including the scale of the additions, the provision and location of parking on both sites was different, and the impact on several heritage assets differed and in general the harm to the setting differed. It was therefore considered that there were sufficient differences to warrant a different recommendation although each case was considered on its own merits.
- The starting point for assessing a planning application was the development plan and policies which supported sustainable growth and expansion of business in rural areas. Wedding venues fall within the type of business these policies support. There was a recognition that the locations for those businesses needed to be in sensitive surroundings and this needed to be assessed to ascertain that there was not an unacceptable impact on roads and that opportunities for sustainability were exploited. The policies also had to be assessed against Green Belt harm, highways impact, harm on heritage assets and generally assessed against the impact on the landscape and open countryside. Taking into account those material considerations, on balance officers came to the conclusion that this was an acceptable form of development.
- Shildon House was a non-designated heritage asset and the sundial within the grounds was Grade II listed.
- Clarification was provided regarding noise levels and comparisons made with unamplified conversations (55 dB) and a dishwasher (30-40 dB). Condition 20 required the applicant's acoustic consultant to measure background noise levels to ensure that there was no impact from the development on nearby residents.
- Condition number 11 (to be revised to number 12) which referred to submission of an events management plan and provision of a 'sustainable' shuttle bus service was used instead of 'electric' in order to future proof the condition and what was meant by sustainable as in future years. Use of the word sustainable also gave the local authority and applicant flexibility, given that it was a new business and whilst committed to sustainable credentials, but they needed a chance to grow.
- Officers assessed the percentage volume increase of extensions when compared with existing buildings. The proposal at Linnels was considered to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt whilst the proposed extension at Shildon was 38%, which was not considered to be a disproportionate addition.

Councillor Hutchinson proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the application subject to the conditions contained in the officer's report. This was seconded by Councillor Stewart and unanimously agreed.

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

Councillor Cessford returned to the meeting.

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There were no questions arising from the site visit videos which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The Principal Planning Officer introduced the application with the aid of a powerpoint presentation and reported the following:

- A further 19 representations in objection and 24 in support of the proposals had been received following the publication of the committee agenda and report.
- The comments in objection refer to the following concerns:
 - Impacts on other food outlets and the town.
 - Generation of waste and litter.
 - Increased car trips and additional traffic on Alemouth Road/Station Road.
 - Lack of suitable pedestrian and cycle links through previously approved access design.
 - Effects on health and wellbeing.
 - Adverse impacts upon Tyne Green – litter and increase in cars.
 - Out of character with the historic environment and fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.
 - Mass production of meat with effects on climate change and animal welfare.
 - Increased traffic and effects on climate and air quality.
 - Contrary to Hexham Neighbourhood Plan.
- Comments in support refer to:
 - A good addition to the town and further choice.
 - Welcome investment and new businesses to the town and will create employment and footfall.
 - Will increase victors to the town alongside Travelodge.
- Potential visual impacts of signage associated with the development are referred to within the report and this would be subject to separate assessment under the Advertisement Regulations. Proposals for a totem sign at the new entrance to the site for this unit and the other development on the larger site are currently being assessed through an application seeking advertisement consent. In addition, the Council has also recently received two applications seeking advertisement consent for signage for the proposed McDonalds development, which are now being consulted on.

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

- Details regarding access to the bunker site were going through technical appraisal and had not yet been agreed.
- Conditions regarding flood risk and drainage were similar to the conditions for the larger scheme. More details specific to this plot had been provided with an updated flood risk assessment and finished levels with regard to flood risk. The Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authority were now satisfied with the proposals. If this application was approved, conditions would be discharged in consultation with relevant consultees.

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- A significant amount of time had been spent on the original outline application for the wider scheme considering the setting of heritage assets and removal of the wall to create access into the site and this was a concern for the Conservation team. The approach into the town was very important.
- Separate consent for signage would be required under Advertisement Regulations and would be considered with colleagues from Conservation, Highways and Historic England.
- There were currently 3 applications that were relevant to this site including a large monolith sign at the entrance to the main site and 2 specific applications by McDonalds for signage on the building and a totem sign within the McDonalds plot. They would be assessed for their impact on amenity, character of the area, size, illumination, effect on the setting of heritage assets. The scale of development were likely to be applications considered by the Local area Council or depending on officer recommendation and responses considered under the delegation scheme.
- Assessment of planning applications considered the land use and proposals and did not include matters such as ethics or who the applicant was.
- Obesity figures, as required by Policy TCS6a of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan were required to avoid clusters of hot food takeaways around schools. The figure was 29.9% for years 6 pupils classified as overweight or obese for the 3 Hexham wards and 37.1% for the Hexham Central with Acomb ward. Whilst the trigger was 35.3%, the cumulative figure for the 3 wards did not meet the threshold for the policy.
- Condition 23 required a litter management plan and strategy before the site was brought into use. This would be uploaded on to the planning public access portal when received and able to be viewed by any interested individuals. If litter from McDonalds became an issue in any ward, Councillors were requested to contact Planning who would discuss other measures with the applicant.
- The Hexham Neighbourhood Plan contained details regarding shop front design in Conservation areas as the effect on heritage assets was an important issue and was taken into by account by officers when considering signage applications within the town.
- Accessibility and connectivity to other parts of the town had been considered as part of the larger scheme. The arches under Alemouth Road would not be a solution for access as the retaining wall structures required for improvements and widening of Alemouth Road prevent access. Discussions were ongoing with Network Rail, as a separate matter, regarding access from the northern part of the bunker site and would depend how it affected their operational land.
- It was confirmed that the visual from the larger outline application was an artist impression and not a technical drawing. Whilst it showed a crossing island, details regarding access to the site were currently going through the technical approval process with Highways which would contain details of crossing and ensure that they were up to the standard required. A road safety audit would be undertaken to ensure technical details and compliance with the Equality Act for pedestrian use.
- The visual demonstrated the type of arrangement that would be into the site which included a footpath adjacent to the wall which would be rebuilt.
- Additional conditions were included to address lighting as well as littering, the latter could also be addressed via separate legislation for Environmental Protection.

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Councillor Oliver proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the application, subject to the conditions contained in the officer's report. This was seconded by Councillor Stewart.

Many of the members were of the opinion that the development would be of benefit to the town but it would be important to ensure it did not harm the conservation area or views of the town.

Upon being put to the vote the results were as follows:-

FOR: 11; AGAINST: 0; ABSTENTION: 1.

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

17 **20/04380/OUT**

The Senior Planning Officer introduced the report with the aid of a powerpoint presentation and advised that there were no updates following publication of the report.

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

- Differences between the previously refused application and current application included: reduction in side extension from 2 storey to single storey, use of stone on all sides of the dwelling whereas previously it had only been proposed for the front elevation with render on the other 3 sides, previously pvc windows, guttering and drainage changed to wooden windows and doors and metal rainwater goods. It was important that traditional materials be used given the proximity of nearby listed buildings.

Councillor Kennedy proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the application, subject to the conditions contained in the officer's report. This was seconded by Councillor Stewart and unanimously agreed.

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

18 **PLANNING APPEALS UPDATE**

The report provided information on the progress of planning appeals.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

Councillor Dale left the meeting.

19 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions from members of the public.

20 **PETITIONS**

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This item was to:

a) Receive any new petitions:

No new petitions had been received.

A report was expected to be presented to the meeting in September to consider an ongoing electronic petition on a right of way path closure in Wylam.

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.

21 **LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES**

Members received the following updates and explanation of the impact of Covid-19 on front line services from the Area Managers from Neighbourhood Services and Technical Services:

Technical Services:

- Additional resources had been put in place to make repairs to the network following winter damage. Inspections and maintenance repairs were up to date and being undertaken in a timely manner.
- Ditching, road widening and replacement road signs were being carried out in the rural area and recently around Sandhoe.
- 9 of 28 Local Transport Plan schemes had been completed to date with the remainder expected to be carried out within the year.
- 14,500 m2 of permanent patching repairs had been undertaken since April.
- 187,000 km of road surface dressing at 14 sites around Tynedale had been carried out using a lock chip sealing method to prolong the life of surface dressing.
- Members Local Improvement Schemes were being programmed in.
- Microsurfacing had commenced in the South East area the previous week and would be moving to the Tynedale area in the next few months. Councillors would be notified ahead of any work.
- The Tynedale Highways team had performed exceptionally well during the pandemic and winter period.

The following issues were discussed:

- Improved communications were to be issued regarding preparatory work which could be undertaken during the winter period and final stages which were weather dependent processes.
- The cutting of grass on road verges had been done to a very good standard this year with improved sight lines and more clearance around signage and

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corners etc. The team were thanked for the excellent work.

- Verge to verge work continued and on the rural network could include hedges on highway verge. If the land was private, hedges were the responsibility of adjacent landowners. Notification letters requesting work be undertaken were issued by the Highways Team. 2 letters were issued prior to work being undertaken and the landowner recharged. It was noted that this work could only be done during a certain window due to birds nesting and it was queried whether the period could be shortened. Overgrown hedges led to safety concerns and complaints regarding broken mirrors on large vehicles which were expensive to replace.
- Implementation of 20 mph speed limits were to be rolled out as a priority during the current year.

Updates on issues raised during the meeting would be obtained for Councillors Cessford (Hencotes), Stewart (20 mph speed limit on Castlefields Drive), Hutchinson (20 mph speed limit at Herdley Bank School and flashing 20 mph signs at Whitfield School).

Neighbourhood Services:

- Collections of residual and recycling waste were going well; tonnages of garden waste fluctuated massively in periods of rapid growth with some additional return trips required the following day.
- An additional 300 customers had signed up to the garden waste service in the Tynedale area in 2021/22 compared with the previous year (7,300 customers now in total). There was one route which covered the main settlements but not all areas were serviced due to capacity. The route was reviewed every year and decisions made regarding return, tonnage, mileage etc.
- The kerbside glass collection trial continued at 1,000 properties in Hexham East which was 1 of 5 areas participating. 200 tonnes of glass had been collected to date. The scheme had received mainly positive comments from participants who had responded to a recent survey. A report containing more details of the survey and trial results would be considered in the next few months.
- Demand for the bulky waste collection service was currently very high and additional resource had been put into the service to meet it.
- Cutting of grass in amenity areas was currently at 6 or 7 cuts and on track to achieve the 10-13 cuts during the growing season.
- Weed control had started late in June due to cold weather during May. Contractors were also undertaking the work in addition to local services employees. First applications should be complete within the next few weeks. A range of alternative methods to glyphosate were being trialed across the county at certain locations with results to be analysed.
- Grass cutting of roadside verges had commenced and was expected to be complete by the end of July.
- Safety tests of memorials in church yards and cemeteries had been completed with the 5-year time frame and it was hoped that a 4-year cycle could be introduced through efficiencies.

Responses to issues raised by Councillors included:

- Weed control was being used without dye during the pandemic due to

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concerns from members of the public.

- Increasing numbers of members of the public appreciated wildflowers being allowed to grow along roadside verges and changes to the grass cutting cycle to accommodate requests was appreciated. Requests were to be made to the Area Manager in the first instance. Logistically it was not as efficient as it required return trips but were accommodated unless there was an issue for pedestrian safety or narrowing of carriageways.
- They did not have equipment which was able to remove grass arisings although this was a better technique to emulate meadow management.
- Overgrown vegetation around streetlights and signs should be noted during highways inspections with expert advice being sought from the Tree and Woodlands Officer. A new officer, Michael Armer, had been appointed to the Tynedale area although requests should also be copied into Leon Savage, Team Leader.

RESOLVED that the updates be noted.

22 **OUTSIDE BODIES**

Members considered a list of appointments to outside bodies for 2019/20.

It was reported that Hexham Community Partnership no longer required a nomination from the County Council.

RESOLVED that the following list of appointments be confirmed:

Groundwork North East - Land of Oak and Iron Project Board – **G Stewart**

Haltwhistle Partnership Limited - **Vacancy**

Haltwhistle Swimming & Leisure Centre Man. Cttee - **A Sharp**

Hexham TORCH Centre Management Committee - **T Cessford**

Prudhoe Community Partnership - **Vacancy**

Queens Hall Arts Trust - **CR Homer**

Rede Tyne & Coquet Sports Centre – **Vacancy**

Sport Tynedale – **N Oliver**

Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership Board - **Vacancy**

23 **MEMBERS LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES - PROGRESS REPORT**

The Local Area Council received a progress update on Members' Local Improvement Schemes as at 1 July 2021. (A copy of the report is enclosed with the minutes.)

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

24 **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.)

Members were invited to email any requests to the Chair and / or Democratic Services Officer between meetings.

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Items to be added to the work programme following the last meeting of the LAC Chairs Briefing included:

- Youth Service Provision
- Enhanced Services with Town and Parish Councils
- Off-street Electric Vehicle Charging Points
- Cycling and Walking Board
- Enforcement

A member requested that the Police Crime Commissioner be invited to a future meeting of the Tynedale Local Area Council. The Chair agreed to refer the matter to the LAC Chairs Briefing.

Clarification would be obtained regarding the type of enforcement.

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted.

25 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 10 August 2021 at 4.00 p.m.

26 **URGENT BUSINESS**

The Committee were informed that the Community Chest Panel would be meeting in the next few weeks and would be comprised of Councillors Cessford, Hutchinson, Sharp, Stewart and Waddell.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....

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