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Northumberland County Council

Your ref:

Our ref:

Enquiries to: Rebecca Greally

Email:

Rebecca.Greally@northumberland.gov.uk

Tel direct: 01670 622616

Date: Tuesday, 3rd May 2022

Dear Sir or Madam,

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **ASHINGTON AND BLYTH LOCAL AREA COUNCIL** to be held in **MEETING SPACE - BLOCK 1, FLOOR 2 - COUNTY HALL** on **WEDNESDAY, 11 MAY 2022** at **5.30 PM**.

Yours faithfully

Daljit Lally
Chief Executive

To Ashington and Blyth Local Area Council members as follows:-

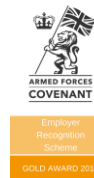
J Lang, E Cartie, B Gallacher (Vice-Chair (Planning)), L Grimshaw (Chair), K Nisbet, K Parry, M Purvis, J Reid, E Simpson, C Ball, D Carr (Vice-Chair), C Humphrey, W Ploszaj, M Richardson, A Wallace and A Watson

Any member of the press or public may view the proceedings of this virtual meeting live on our YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/NorthumberlandTV>.

Members are referred to the risk assessment, previously circulated, for meetings held in County Hall. Masks should be worn when moving round but can be removed when seated, social distancing should be maintained, hand sanitiser regularly used and members requested to self-test twice a week at home, in line with government guidelines.



Daljit Lally, Chief Executive
County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF
T: 0345 600 6400
www.northumberland.gov.uk



AGENDA

PART I

It is expected that the matters included in this part of the agenda will be dealt with in public.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. MINUTES

(Pages 1
- 10)

Minutes of the meetings of Ashington and Blyth Local Area Council held on Wednesday 16th March 2022 as circulated, to be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

3. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Unless already entered in the Council's Register of Members' interests, members are required to disclose any personal interest (which includes any disclosable pecuniary interest) they may have in any of the items included on the agenda for the meeting in accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council on 4 July 2012, and are reminded that if they have any personal interests of a prejudicial nature (as defined under paragraph 17 of the Code Conduct) they must not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must leave the room. NB Any member needing clarification must contact Legal Services by email at monitoringofficer@northumberland.gov.uk Please refer to the guidance on disclosures at the rear of this agenda letter.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

To reply to any questions received from members of the public which have been submitted in writing in advance of the meeting. Questions can be asked about issues for which the Council has a responsibility. (Public question times take place on a bimonthly basis at Local Area Council meetings: in January, March, May, July, September and November each year.)

As agreed by the County Council in February 2012, the management of local public question times is at the discretion of the chair of the committee.

Please note however that a question may possibly be rejected if it requires the disclosure of any categories of confidential or exempt information, namely information:

1. relating to any individual;
2. which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual;
3. relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person
4. relating to any labour relations matters/negotiations;
5. restricted to legal proceedings

6. about enforcement/enacting legal orders
7. relating to the prevention, investigation of prosecution of crime.

And/or:

- is defamatory, frivolous or offensive;
- it is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of this or another County Council committee in the past six months;
- the request repeats an identical or very similar question from the same person;
- the cost of providing an answer is disproportionate;
- it is being separately addressed through the Council's complaints process;
- it is not about a matter for which the Council has a responsibility or which affects the county;
- it relates to planning, licensing and/or other regulatory applications
- it is a question that town/parish councils would normally be expected to raise through other channels.

If the Chair is of the opinion that a question is one which for whatever reason, cannot properly be asked in an area meeting, he/she will disallow it and inform the resident of his/her decision.

Copies of any written answers (without individuals' personal contact details) will be provided for members after the meeting and also be publicly available.

Democratic Services will confirm the status of the progress on any previously requested written answers and follow up any related actions requested by the Local Area Council.

5. PETITIONS

(Pages
11 - 16)

This item is to:

(a) Receive any new petitions: to receive any new petitions. The lead petitioner is entitled to briefly introduce their petition by providing a statement in writing, and a response to any petitions received will then be organised for a future meeting;

(b) Consider reports on petitions previously received:

(i) Make Hirst Park Playing Fields a no dog area.

(c) Receive any updates on petitions for which a report was previously considered: any updates will be verbally reported at the meeting.

6. LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES

To receive a verbal update from the Area Managers from Technical Services and Neighbourhood Services in attendance about any key recent, ongoing and/or future planned Local Services work for the attention of members of the Local Area Council, who will also then have the opportunity to raise issues with the Area Managers.

The Area Managers have principal responsibility for highway services and environmental services, such as refuse collection, street cleansing and grounds maintenance, within the geographic boundaries of the Local Area Council.

7. OUTSIDE BODIES

(Pages
17 - 18)

To make appointments to outside body organisations within the Local Area Consideration.

8. LOCAL AREA COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME

(Pages
19 - 22)

To note the latest version of agreed items for future Local Area Council meetings (any suggestions for new agenda items will require confirmation by the Business Chair after the meeting).

9. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 15th June 2022 (planning only).

10. URGENT BUSINESS

To consider such other business, as in the opinion of the Chair, should, by reason of special circumstances, be considered as a matter of urgency.

IF YOU HAVE AN INTEREST AT THIS MEETING, PLEASE:

- Declare it and give details of its nature before the matter is discussion or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.
- Complete this sheet and pass it to the Democratic Services Officer.

Name (please print):
Meeting:
Date:
Item to which your interest relates:
Nature of Registerable Personal Interest i.e either disclosable pecuniary interest (as defined by Annex 2 to Code of Conduct or other interest (as defined by Annex 3 to Code of Conduct) (please give details):
Nature of Non-registerable Personal Interest (please give details):
Are you intending to withdraw from the meeting?

1. Registerable Personal Interests – You may have a Registerable Personal Interest if the issue being discussed in the meeting:

a) relates to any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (as defined by Annex 1 to the Code of Conduct); or

b) any other interest (as defined by Annex 2 to the Code of Conduct)

The following interests are Disclosable Pecuniary Interests if they are an interest of either you or your spouse or civil partner:

(1) Employment, Office, Companies, Profession or vocation; (2) Sponsorship; (3) Contracts with the Council; (4) Land in the County; (5) Licences in the County; (6) Corporate Tenancies with the Council; or (7) Securities - interests in Companies trading with the Council.

The following are other Registerable Personal Interests:

(1) any body of which you are a member (or in a position of general control or management) to which you are appointed or nominated by the Council; (2) any body which (i) exercises functions of a public nature or (ii) has charitable purposes or (iii) one of whose principal purpose includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member (or in a position of general control or management); or (3) any person from whom you have received within the previous three years a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of more than £50 which is attributable to your position as an elected or co-opted member of the Council.

2. Non-registerable personal interests - You may have a non-registerable personal interest when you attend a meeting of the Council or Cabinet, or one of their committees or sub-committees, and you are, or ought reasonably to be, aware that a decision in relation to an item of business which is to be transacted might reasonably be regarded as affecting your well being or financial position, or the well being or financial position of a person described below to a greater extent than most inhabitants of the area affected by the decision.

The persons referred to above are: (a) a member of your family; (b) any person with whom you have a close association; or (c) in relation to persons described in (a) and (b), their employer, any firm in which they are a partner, or company of which they are a director or shareholder.

3. Non-participation in Council Business

When you attend a meeting of the Council or Cabinet, or one of their committees or sub-committees, and you are aware that the criteria set out below are satisfied in relation to any matter to be considered, or being considered at that meeting, you must : (a) Declare that fact to the meeting; (b) Not participate (or further participate) in any discussion of the matter at the meeting; (c) Not participate in any vote (or further vote) taken on the matter at the meeting; and (d) Leave the room whilst the matter is being discussed.

The criteria for the purposes of the above paragraph are that: (a) You have a registerable or non-registerable personal interest in the matter which is such that a member of the public knowing the relevant facts would reasonably think it so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest; **and either** (b) the matter will affect the financial position of yourself or one of the persons or bodies referred to above or in any of your register entries; **or** (c) the matter concerns a request for any permission, licence, consent or registration sought by yourself or any of the persons referred to above or in any of your register entries.

This guidance is not a complete statement of the rules on declaration of interests which are contained in the Members' Code of Conduct. If in any doubt, please consult the Monitoring Officer or relevant Democratic Services Officer before the meeting.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

ASHINGTON & BLYTH LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **Ashington & Blyth Local Area Council** held on **Wednesday, 16 March 2022 at 4:00 pm** in County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2EF.

PRESENT

Councillor L Grimshaw (Chair)

MEMBERS

C Ball
B Gallacher
K Nisbet
K Parry
W Ploszaj

M Purvis
M Richardson
E Simpson
A Wallace
A Watson

OFFICERS

R Greally

Assistant Democratic Services
Officer

S Hall

Senior Animal Welfare and
Enforcement Officer

R McCartney
N Snowdon

Infrastructure Manager
Principal Programme Officer
(Highways Improvement)

R Wealleans

Neighbourhood Services Area
Manager

01 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor E. Cartie and J. Reid.

02 DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

Councillor Simpson disclosed an interest in item 4(b)(i) as she had signed the petition being presented.

Councillor Humphrey disclosed an interest in item 4(b)(ii) as he had also raised the issues in the petition and had worked with the lead petitioner.

03 PETITIONS

(a) Members were informed of a new petition titled; "Make Hirst Playing Fields a no dog area". It was opened on 21st January 2022 and closed on 21st February. It

had received 278 signatures and would therefore be brought to a future Local Area Council meeting.

(b)(i) DOGS SHOULD BE KEPT ON LEADS ON NEWBIGGIN-BY-THE-SEA PROMENADE

Members were read an extract from the lead petitioner which outlined their reasons for creating the petition. Her comments were as follows:-

With mental wellbeing at a low and with many individuals benefiting from fresh air and daily exercise, the promenade of Newbiggin by the sea is a popular place to use. Unfortunately, due to the amount of unleashed, out of control dogs this prevents this from happening and it is being avoided by some.

Having lived in Newbiggin by the sea all my life, a dog owner and someone who uses the promenade on a daily basis I have noticed an increase of out of control dogs. I have personally been verbally attacked on more than one occasion from owners whom I have asked politely to recall their dogs if they have viciously approached myself and my leashed dog. I not only feel intimidated when I am approached – the dog and said owner but nervous and uneasy of what outcome the situation may result in, i.e. an altercation, dog fight or vet bill. This can turn into a very stressful experience when in fact going for a walk on the promenade should be an enjoyable one.

I feel strongly that locals and visitors alike should feel comfortable and safe whilst using the promenade. It is the biggest attraction of the village and used all year round. Users should not feel anxious or be worried about being approached or in the vicinity of aggressive dogs.

Although I am a dog owner and appreciate they need exercise, a pedestrianised area is not the place. Dogs can and should be walked on a leash to make the area fully accessible for all users, that being other dog walkers, children, pushchairs, wheelchairs and those with poor mobility without fear of being approached by out of control dogs. These dogs are often causing nuisances, chasing balls the owners throw for them or running around in groups causing potential trip hazards. If the owners can be encouraged to do so elsewhere this would make the promenade a more user-friendly walkway. I have witnessed owners separated from their unleashed dogs, not knowing where they actually are and certainly not noticing them fouling, therefore unaware to pick their faeces up. This in itself is a very big problem. If all dogs were leashed whilst walking the promenade I feel confident this fouling problem would decrease, the average owner would surely feel compelled to pick it up rather than plead ignorance/innocent and walk on by.

I look forward to the findings from the Enforcement Officers who will be patrolling during 2022, I hope that they will be in regular attendance and attentive to the situation to provide full and frank reports.

I urge you to consider the wider community make a prudent decision to ask for dogs on leads to become mandatory to ensure a safe experience for all. This could be achieved by deploying Enforcement Officers and erecting signage and issue fines and using social media to inform users.

Chair's Initials.....

Ashington and Blyth Local Area Council, 16 March 2022

S. Hall, Senior Animal Welfare and Enforcement Officer, attended to answer questions from members. The following comments were made:-

- Members believed that enforcement should not just be notices and there should be active enforcement with fines.
- Members were assured that enforcement officers were present in the area but it was highlighted that it was difficult to catch people in the act. Officers had visited sites in plain clothing but it was still a difficult task.
- Members were assured that there was a zero-tolerance policy to dog fouling. Members of the public would be issued with a fixed penalty notice if caught.
- Members suggested that data relating to fixed penalty notices should be published in newspapers to show that enforcement was happening.
- Officers confirmed that there was a condition in areas where dogs must be kept on a lead for the length of the lead. This was 1.5 metres.

RESOLVED members supported the recommendations in the report.

(b)(ii) SPEED CALMING MEASURES ALONG SOUTH NEWSHAM ROAD (B1523)

The lead petitioner, Stuart Ferguson, addressed the committee and spoke around the reasons for starting the petition. His comments included:-

- The road is a death trap and there had been several serious accidents over the years. Concerns were originally raised back in 2011 and nothing had been implemented.
- Officers, Police and Ian Levvy MP had visited the area and were shocked at the speed and volume of traffic. After the visit there were positive ideas from Officers however nothing had been done since the visit.
- The road cannot cope with the volume of traffic at the time and further developments within the area were only going to add to the traffic problem.
- There was a playpark next to the road and there was safety concerns with Children walking to school alongside the road. There had recently been a serious incident involving a 16-year-old child which resulted in the child being hospitalised.
- It was asked when the road survey would take place, whether the police had been requested again and what proposals were there for traffic calming measures in the area.

N. Snowdon, Principal Programme Officer (Highways Improvement), introduced the report to committee and welcomed questions from members. The following response was given to member's questions:-

- Members wanted to highlight the environment of the road and how that exacerbated the situation. There was a pathway directly on the road, there were no crossings along the stretch of road. There is a small roundabout that was supposed to be a traffic calming measure however due to the size it was ineffective.

- Members asked if there were statistics from the Police visit as there had been 3 recorded incidents recently and a number of speed enforcement fines were handed out during a recent visit.
- Proposals for the road were being finalised and were expected to be ready in the near future. Possible proposals included signage, lines and temporary speed cushions.
- Officers were still waiting for details from the police regarding the recent incident. Once information was shared they would take action if it was deemed necessary.
- Officers had contacted the Neighbourhood Police but the speed camera van had not been to the area yet. Members expressed their support of working closely with the Police and felt it was imperative to Officers work.
- The speed survey had not been carried out yet as there were traffic lights along the road which would have skewed the data. Once the temporary traffic lights were removed the survey would be carried out. It was acknowledged that a lot may have changed since the last survey that was carried out 3 years ago. Officers highlighted the importance of the speed survey to help prioritise the scheme through the Local Transport Plan.
- Members hoped that the Blyth Relief Road would also alleviate the situation.
- It was suggested that maps may have been beneficial in the report.
- A date could not be confirmed on when the work would commence on the road. The Local Plan was in the final stages of completion but it was suggested that there may be work undertaken through the Urban Road Safety Allocation.
- It was confirmed that there was a speed monitoring sign in situ at the time however it was not confirmed if it had the software to download the speed data. Members confirmed that new speed surveillance equipment had been ordered for the area and a lot of new equipment had the capability to capture the speed data. It was confirmed that Parish and Town Councils do send Officers speed data from other areas.

RESOLVED members supported the recommendations in the report.

04 LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES

R. Welleans, Neighbourhood Services Area Manager, gave an overview of recent work carried out:

Ashington and Blyth Neighbourhood Services Operational Update: NEAT

Winter works continue at a rate we expect.

Since the last Local Area Council, we have experienced a mild winter period.

This has helped our teams recover some ground we lost to storm Arwen.

- Continued to work a 28-hour week during the winter period this ended on the 25th of March when all Grounds staff revert to a 43.75-hour week to take advantage of the lighter evenings from the 28th of March.

Chair's Initials.....

Ashington and Blyth Local Area Council, 16 March 2022

- Progress through scheduled work had been a challenge but successful.
- We were continuing work to complete scheduled winter works tasks.
- Please alert me at your earliest convenience if you believe any requested work had not been completed.

We have finalised preparations for the upcoming grass cutting season. All grass cutting equipment has either been serviced or is scheduled to be serviced.

- Grass cutting was started in most areas and will continue depending on ground conditions
- The Routes had been reviewed and agreed with Teams in all areas.
- Seasonal grounds maintenance positions for this year were in the process of been filled with all seasonal staff in place within Stakeford Depot and recruitment ongoing for Blyth NEAT (Neighbourhood Environment Action Teams) with 2 vacancies to fill, there was a low application rate this year and we were finding it difficult to engage seasonal workers in some positions but were going to use the Councils Staff bank to fill any vacant positions to ensure all staff were in place to start the season well.

Weed control activities will be undertaken in-house again this year.

- The blue dye would be used this year as it was well received pre-pandemic.

Street Cleansing

- Business as usual.
- We anticipated that the increase in footfall experienced last year (due to the pandemic – staycation) will reduce this year, this should ease pressure on our cleansing teams.
- **Newbiggin:** Cleansing routes ongoing within the area and in addition the Town Council have agreed to renew the partnership this year for 2 additional Seasonal operatives to carry out a variety of duties determined by the Town Council. The work on Newbiggin Beach to install a deterrent for windblown sand has been completed and we will be scheduling a clean-up of the sand within the Promenade area.
- **Cambois and Sleekburn areas:** cleansing routes were being followed; The Mechanical Sweeper was scheduled for the area week commencing the 21st of March.
- A litter-pick and cleanse will be scheduled for Brock Lane, I will speak with SUEZ about vehicles leaving without securing their sheeting systems to prevent litter coming off the wagons when leaving the transfer station.
- **Ashington:** We have agreed new Zones with ATC with all areas now cleansed on a set day, we will be monitoring progress and monitor all areas with our Total Mobile LEQ inspections.
- Maple and Chestnut bin compounds, we continue to monitor the compounds as we have issues with fly tipping daily, the Rapid Response team are there twice daily at times to keep them to an acceptable standard, the other issues around the bulk bins are contamination of the recycling bins, we are having to service these most of the time as general waste on their weekly collections.
- Enquiries had been made about installing CCTV within Maple and Chestnut to deter fly tipping and will update councillors when further information is available.
- **Blyth:** All cleansing teams are active within the area and continue to work well with BTC.
- Inspections carried out by Blyth Town Councils officers in association with NCC (Northumberland County Council) officers.

- Overnight Cleansing of the A189 spine road is scheduled to start on the 2nd of April for 5 consecutive weekends.

WASTE

Residual and recycling

- Business as usual for waste collection services. We are still seeing elevated tonnages due to covid – we put this down to many people now working from home and generating waste there, rather than at their workplace.
- Due to the rate of housing growth in recent years the waste service will see additional investment this year, we will receive 2 additional RCV's and crew.
- Work is underway to evaluate existing demands on the service and plan routes to ensure they are deployed in the most efficient way possible.

Garden waste collections have started

- Increasing housing/customer numbers have meant additional tweaking of rounds has been required to accommodate the increase with 12 collection days over the 2 weeks now taken place.
- Initial take up for the service is high, the scheme remains as popular as ever.

Additional info

Glass trial – has been extended by 12 months, presentation rates and yields remain encouraging in most areas.

A food waste collection trial is currently being planned. A special collection vehicle is required which we must hire in for the duration of the trial. Members will be provided with more information on the trial when plans are finalised.

The following comments were made in response to Member's questions:

- Members welcomed the weed programme and thanked Officers for the standard of grass cutting. Officers confirmed that a new type of blade on the grass cutters left a better finish as it mulched the grass.
- It was acknowledged that there were some issues in the Blyth area with grass cutting and tree debris from recent storms. The Tree Officer had been informed and was due to send an update soon. Members asked if the Tree Officer could also look at potential hazardous trees near school sites and give information regarding tree stumps left behind.
- Members asked if there could be a more enforcement around fly-tipping, littering and dog fouling and to be seen publicly addressing the issue.
- Officers confirmed the communal bins had made a positive change and the streets were much improved.
- Officers confirmed that information shared regarding the cleaning programme that was shared with Town Councils could also be shared with County Councillors to ensure they were aware of what was happening in their divisions.
- Officers assured Members that if there were any vehicle breakdowns (gullycleaners etc) that the Senior Team Leader would inform Members.
- Members asked if a maintenance programme for Paths and Cycleways can be stepped up as some of the cycleways were in poor condition. The Officers confirmed they would look into this.
- Members enquired whether a road sweeper could have been deployed at St John's Church to help tidy up the debris. Officers confirmed they would look into this.

Chair's Initials.....

Ashington and Blyth Local Area Council, 16 March 2022

R. McCartney, Infrastructure Manager, gave the following overview:-

All Highways Inspectors and maintenance crews continue to work Inspecting, fixing carriageway defects, making repairs and making safe category one defects across the South East area.

Gully emptier is fully deployed dealing with reported issues and cyclic maintenance. An additional gully emptier is also working in the Ashington/Blyth area on cyclic maintenance.

Larger Tarmac Patching

Larger Tarmac Patching has been carried out in the following locations:

- Links Road, Blyth
- Wensleydale Terrace, Blyth
- Garden City Villas, Ashington
- A189 Woodhorn R/A
- Woodlea, Newbiggin
- St Andrews Terrace, Ashington
- Coronation Street, Blyth
- Station Road Junc Institute Road, Ashington
- Station Road, Ashington (Bus Layby)
- Willow Crescent, Blyth
- Ford Drive, Blyth
- Tynedale Drive, Blyth

Drainage Improvements:

Drainage Improvements have been carried out in the following areas:

- Black Close Bank, Ashington
- A189 Spine Road

LTP - Carriageway Resurfacing

Footway and Carriageway LTP Resurfacing have been carried out the following areas:

- Newsham Road, Blyth (Finished Surface NCC1)
- Norham Road, Ashington (Finished Surface NCC1)

Regeneration Scheme

- Bowes Street, Blyth – Started Monday 10/01/22 (48 Weeks)
- Waterloo Road, Blyth

Winter Maintenance

Winter Services continue.

We continue to have an average winter so far in both snow and precautionary gritting.
Chair's Initials.....

A small restock of salt across the county has been completed. This will ensure we have sufficient resilience levels for the remainder of the winter period.

This includes a 5000 Tonne strategic store located in Powburn.

The following comments were made in response to Members questions:-

- Members asked for an update on a report being carried out to identify problematic Gullies.
- Members raised concerns regarding gullies in John Street. The problem had been reported numerous times, but it was thought that it may have needed more than just gully cleaners to sort the problem. Officers noted this.
- It was noted that grit bins had been topped up, as mentioned in the report, however in some cases the grit had been placed on top of old, unusable grit. Members asked that in future the grit bins are emptied before topping them up.
- Members asked if a survey could take place on the drainage opposite the White Elephant beside the Post Office as it often flooded.
- Officers noted that Members would like clarification on what determines a pothole and the criteria for when a pothole needs repairing. Members asked if the Service could be more proactive rather than reactive but also acknowledged the little funding they had been provided with.
- Officers confirmed the scheme of work regarding line painting was like most other programmes and relied on updating the areas that were most in need.

05 MEMBERS LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

RESOLVED Members noted the information.

06 LOCAL AREA COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED Members noted the plan.

07 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Wednesday 13th April 2022 at 4.00 p.m.

08 URGENT BUSINESS

With agreement from the Chair, Cllr Nisbet raised a concern regarding the Blyth Beach Huts. The following was read out:-

We recently wrote collectively to you about the Blyth Beach huts. We found your response disappointing. The Beach Huts in Blyth are being made inaccessible to local people because of the changes being made. Will you actively lobby Active Northumberland to look again at keeping these community assets accessible to local people for one off bookings? Not everyone can afford to block book the huts and while we welcome tourism into Blyth it mustn't be at the expense of local people.

Response

Active Northumberland had not made a firm decision on the availability of the Beach Huts for daily rental due to considerations regarding the national Covid-19 situation. I can now confirm that the Beach Huts will be available for daily rental, this Summer, on the same basis as pre pandemic. The Officers liaised with Active Northumberland and they have confirmed that the Beach Huts have only every been available for hire during June, July and August.

Members felt it was still a concern as it's stated that they were only used during June, July and August however it was believed that they used to be hired out daily all year round. They were hired out by different groups all year round and they had been an asset to Blyth Town Council for many years.

The huts were built for the people of Blyth but there were now only 6 allocated to a daily rental and others were allocated to yearly rentals which made it difficult for people to book them. It was felt that they should be allowed to be booked all year round. It was hoped that Officers would look into it more and respond.

Chair _____

Date _____

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ASHINGTON AND BLYTH LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

DATE: 21ST APRIL 2022

Petition requesting a dog ban on the playing fields at Hirst Park, Ashington

Report of the Director of Local Services, Paul Jones

Cabinet Member: Councillor John Riddle, Environment and Local Services

Purpose of report

To acknowledge and respond to the petition and seek the views of the Local Area Council.

Recommendations

It is recommended that members consider the report and:

a) note that a dog control Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) is already in place across the whole of Northumberland and acknowledge that enforcement action can be (and is already) taken against dog owners at Hirst Park who do not clean up after their dogs;

b) note that a proposal by the Council to ban dogs from Hirst Park would be very unlikely to meet the evidential criteria and support required to enable its implementation;

b) support the installation of additional signage at Hirst Park reminding dog owners of the penalties for not picking up and asking residents to report details of irresponsible owners to the Council's Animal Welfare Team and Environmental Enforcement Team, and;

c) support the increased promotion of positive behaviour among local dog owners by running Green Dog Walking events at Hirst Park in 2022 and 2023 and by providing information and raising awareness through the Friends of Hirst Park Facebook page.

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the "We want you to love where you live" priority included in the NCC Corporate Plan 2020-2021.

1. Key issues

- 1.1 Hirst Park is one of a number of cherished local parks owned and managed by Northumberland County Council. The park has recently undergone significant capital improvement with funding and support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Ashington Leisure Partnership and Ashington Town Council.
- 1.2 The football pitches at Hirst Park are of significant historic importance, having been home turf for local football legends Jackie Milburn and Jack and Bobby Charlton. The pitches are currently home to Ashington Town Football Club who field numerous youth teams including under 10's, juniors and girls teams.

- 1.3 Hirst Park is popular with dog owners who regularly walk and exercise their dogs in the park. The playing fields offer dog owners a more open setting than is the case in the more formal areas of the park.
- 1.4 A dog control Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) is in place across the whole of Northumberland. Enforcement Officers are already able to impose penalties on dog owners at Hirst Park who do not pick up after their animals.
- 1.5 To put in place an order banning dogs from Hirst Park is unlikely to be able to be achieved. The level of evidence required to institute a ban is unlikely to be met, and there would almost certainly be numerous and substantial objections from dog owners and dog owners' organisations
- 1.6 Banning dogs from an area of public open space would exclude from that area the majority of dog owners who act responsibly and clear up after their dogs.

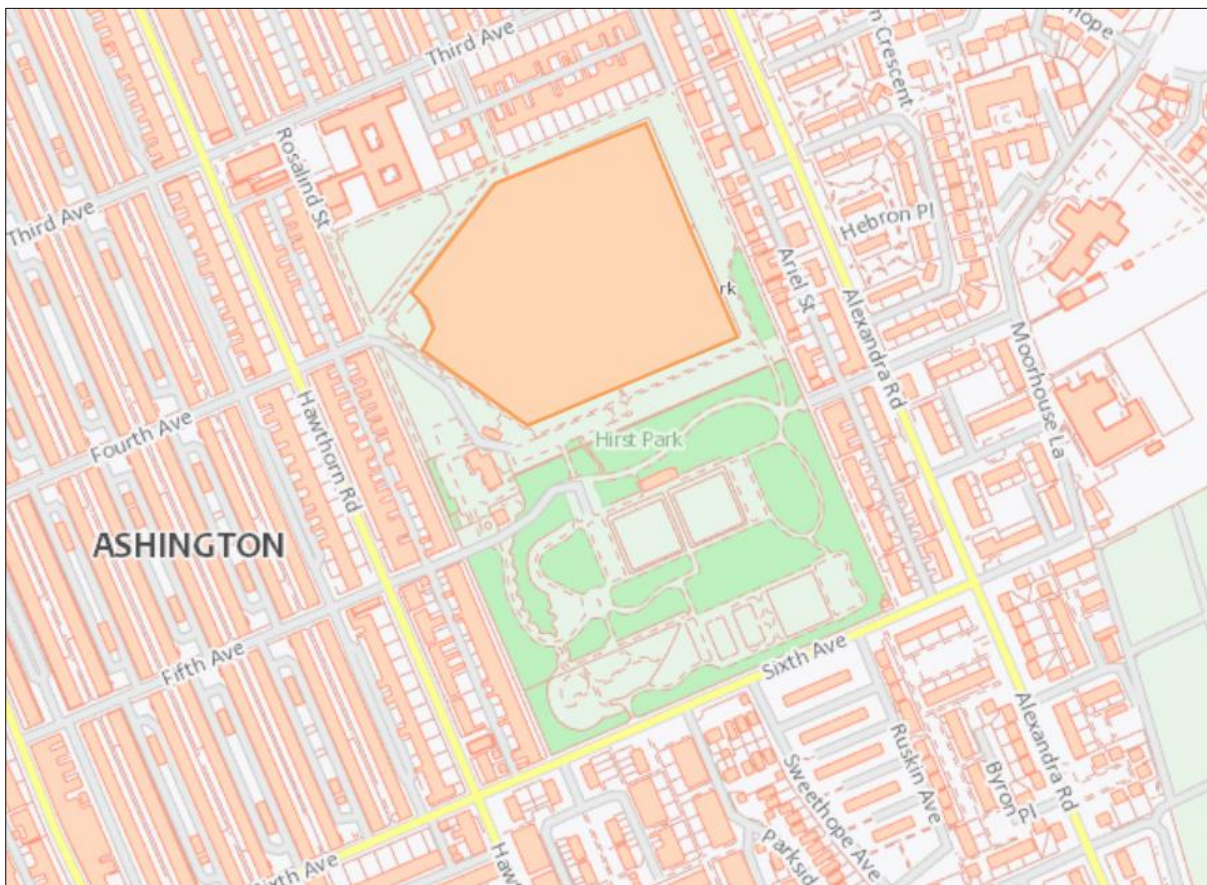


Fig 1: Hirst Park with playing field area shaded orange.

2. Background

2.1 Whilst most dog owners pick up after their dogs, some owners continue to allow their dogs to foul on and around the playing fields at Hirst Park.

2.2 The playing fields at Hirst Park are used by Ashington Town Football Club who field a number of teams, including teams of younger players. The continuing

presence of dog faeces on the playing surfaces is of considerable concern to the football club, as well as local residents.

2.3 A request for an e-petition was received by Northumberland County Council on 17th January 2022 and an e-petition entitled 'Make Hirst Park Playing fields a no dog area' was opened for signatures on the 19th of January 2022. The statement accompanying the petition was as follows:

Over 200 young people between 8 and 17 use Hirst park playing fields every week to enjoy organised grass roots football. Each week coaches pick up over 30 doggy bags full of dog mess before and during games to ensure NFA requirements are met and to keep our young people safe. The lack of respect from dog owners and unwillingness to clean up after their dogs is becoming a major concern. Please make this a no dog area and keep gates locked so the children of Ashington and surrounding areas can enjoy playing football at the heart of Ashington without this hazard.

2.4 The petition closed on 22nd February having gained 278 signatures.

2.5 Officers have reviewed the measures in place to control dog fouling at Hirst Park and propose to undertake the following actions:

- Install additional and improved signage reminding dog owners of the penalties for not clearing up after their dog and encouraging reporting of irresponsible owners to the Council's Animal Health Team and Environmental Enforcement Officers.
- Host Green Dog Walkers awareness events in 2022 and 2023. At these events dog owners are encouraged to sign up as Green Dog Walkers and provided with a supply of dog bags. Green Dog Walkers are encouraged to act as ambassadors for the scheme.
- Raise awareness of the concerns and how to report irresponsible dog owners through the Friends of Hirst Park Facebook page.

Implications

Policy	None.
Finance and value for money	The cost of installing additional signage can be met through existing budgets.
Legal	Enforcement Officers can operate using powers conferred by the existing PSPO.
Procurement	None
Human Resources	Enforcement staff already patrol the area and we will target enforcement activity using intelligence gathered from the community to help identify the routines of regular offenders.
Property	The site is owned and managed by the County Council.
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	None.
Risk Assessment	None
Crime & Disorder	None.
Customer Consideration	A ban is likely to encounter strong opposition from stakeholders and stakeholder groups. Local support and information from the community to identify the routines of offenders is invaluable in supporting effective enforcement activity.
Carbon reduction	None
Wards	Hirst

Background papers:

None

Report sign off.

	Initials
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Lynsey Denyer obo Suki Binjal
Service Director Finance & Interim S151 Officer	JW
Relevant Director	RM
Deputy Chief Executive	CMc
Portfolio Holder(s)	JR

Author and Contact Details

Neil Dawson, Countryside and Green Spaces Manager

Tel: 07774 715 708

email: neil.dawson@northumberland.gov.uk

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Ashington & Blyth Local Area Council

Blyth Valley Disabled Forum	One
Briardale Community & Training Centre Community Association	One
Community and Voluntary Action Blyth Valley	One
Northumberland Community Voluntary Action	One

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**Northumberland County Council
Ashington and Blyth Area Council
Work Programme 2022-23**

TERMS OF REFERENCE

- (a) To enhance good governance in the area and ensure that the Council's policies take account of the needs and aspirations of local communities and do not discriminate unfairly between the different Areas.
- (b) To advise the Cabinet on budget priorities and expenditure within the Area.
- (c) To consider, develop and influence policy and strategy development of the Council, its arms-length organisations, and other relevant bodies, to ensure that they meet local requirements and facilitate efficient and transparent decision making.
- (d) To receive information, consider and comment on matters associated with service delivery including those undertaken in partnership agencies, affecting the local area to ensure that they meet local requirements, including matters relating to community safety, anti-social behaviour and environmental crime.
- (e) To consider and refer to Cabinet any issues from a local community perspective with emerging Neighbourhood Plans within their area, and consider local planning applications as per the planning delegation scheme
- (f) To consider and recommend adjustments to budget priorities in relation to Local Transport Plan issues within their area, and to make decisions in relation to devolved capital highway maintenance allocations.
- (g) To engage, through the appropriate networks, with all key stakeholders from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors to facilitate the delivery of area priorities. This will include undertaking regular liaison with parish and town councils.
- (h) To inform, consult and engage local communities in accordance with Council policy and guidance, through the appropriate networks.
- (i) To, as appropriate, respond or refer with recommendations to local petitions and councillor calls for action.
- (j) To make certain appointments to outside bodies as agreed by Council.
- (k) To determine applications for grant aid from the Community Chest, either through Panels for individual Local Area Councils, or through the Panel of Local Area Council Chairs for countywide applications.
- (l) To refer and receive appropriate issues for consideration to or from other Council Committees, and as appropriate invite Portfolio Holders to attend a meeting if an item in their area of responsibility is to be discussed.
- (m) To exercise the following functions within their area:-
 - (i) the Council's functions in relation to the survey, definition, maintenance, diversion, stopping up and creation of public rights of way.
 - (ii) the Council's functions as the Commons Registration Authority for common land and town/village greens in Northumberland.
 - (iii) the Council's functions in relation to the preparation and maintenance of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.
 - (iv) the Council's functions in relation to the Northumberland National Park and County Joint Local Access Forum (Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2007.

(v) the Council's role in encouraging wider access for all to the County's network of public rights of way and other recreational routes.

ISSUES TO BE SCHEDULED/CONSIDERED

Standard items updates: Public question time (bimonthly, not at planning only meetings), petitions (bimonthly, not at planning only meetings), members' local improvement schemes (quarterly).

To be listed:

North of Tyne Mayor
Northumberland Park

Northumberland County Council
Ashington and Blyth Local Area Council
Work Programme 2022-23

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11 May 2022	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and Rights of Way • Local Services Update • Appointments to Outside Bodies
15 June 2022	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and Rights of Way
13 July 2022	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and Rights of Way

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Services Update
10 August 2022	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and Rights of Way

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Ref	Date	Report	Decision	Updates
1.				