

## NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

### CRAMLINGTON, BEDLINGTON AND SEATON VALLEY LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

At the meeting of the **Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley Local Area Council** held at Council Chamber - County Hall on Wednesday, 18 May 2022 at 4:00 pm.

#### PRESENT

M Swinburn (Chair) (in the Chair for items 1-4 and 8 – 15)  
R Wilczek (Vice Chair in the Chair for items 5 - 8)

#### MEMBERS

L Bowman  
E Chicken  
W Daley  
C Dunbar  
D Ferguson

B Flux  
S Lee  
M Robinson  
C Taylor  
R Wilczek

#### OFFICERS

H Bowers  
M Carle  
T Crowe  
T Gribbin  
R Laughton  
J Murphy  
A Wall

Democratic Services Officer  
Neighbourhood Services Area Manager  
Solicitor  
Neighbourhood Services Manager  
Planning Officer  
South East DM Area Manager  
Environmental Health Officer

#### ALSO PRESENT

S Wardle

Neighbourhood Services Divisional Manager

Around 6 members of the public were present.

#### 1 MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

**RESOLVED** that the Membership and Terms of Reference for the Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley Local Area Council agreed by Council on 04 May 2022 be noted and that Councillor Lee should be listed in the Independent Group in the membership list.

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## 2 **PROCEDURE AT PLANNING MEETINGS**

The Chair explained the procedure which would be followed at the meeting.

## 3 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies had been received from Councillor Ezhilchevlan.

## 4 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings of the Cramlington, Bedlington & Seaton Valley Local Area Council held on 22 February and 23 March 2022, as circulated, were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

**(Councillor Wilczek in the Chair).**

## 5 **DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The report requested the Committee 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.

## 6 **21/01423/FUL**

Retrospective: Siting of upcycled shipping containers, installation of 2 no. Areas with tented roof covering and installation of a fixed roof with timer clad walls to provide a mixed use of land with bar, seating, toilet facilities and a venue for entertainment including live music (sui generis) (as amended 29.22 21) (amended red line boundary 03.02.2022) (description amended 04.05.2022)  
J H Laidler Storage Yard, Double Row, Seaton Delaval, NE25 0PP

R Laughton, Planning Officer provided updates on the recommendations:-

### Update 1 – Car parking Plan

For condition number two in the report, it was recommended to include an additional plan to ensure the disabled car parking bays, cycle parking and electric points are secured. The reference number was LM-PL- 012 Rev C.

### Update 2 – Opening hours

The report did not acknowledge the opening hours of the establishment therefore it was recommended to impose an additional condition if the application was

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approved.

The premises hereby approved shall not be open for business outside the following hours:

Sunday – Thursday 12pm –11pm  
Friday and Saturday 12pm –12am

Reason: In the interests of amenity and in accordance with the NPPF.

### Update 3

After discussion with the highways team, it was also considered appropriate to impose a condition for a crowd management strategy for highway safety purposes. The condition would read as:

“Within 1 month of the date of this permission, an external areas crowd management strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The crowd management Strategy shall set out all matters pertaining to the external areas which will be used for ancillary purposes associated with the use. The approved crowd management Strategy shall then be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

In the interest of highway safety to ensure unfettered use of the public highway”

### Update 4

To ensure the compliance of the noise levels of condition 10, it was recommended to also secure a noise verification report if approval is granted, to read as:

With 3 months of the date of this permission, a noise verification report shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The report must detail the findings of an acoustic monitoring exercise which will determine the venues compliance with Condition 10 during all hours of operation. The Sound Level Meter must conform to the requirements of Section 5.1 of BS 4142: 2014+A1:2019. In the event that the report identifies a breach of the requirements of Condition 10 the report shall detail a scheme of suitable mitigation for approval within the report. Once approved the mitigation measures must be retained for the lifetime of the development unless varied in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of nearby properties.

Mr Laughton then introduced the application with the aid of a presentation..

Councillor Henderson, Seaton Valley Community Council was in attendance and her comments included the following:-

Seaton Valley Community Council objected to the proposed development as it conflicted with the recently adopted local plan particularly employment land and supporting town centres

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The officer's report referred to the existing buildings which currently accommodated a café and food outlet were permitted development and the proposed development was ancillary. No lawful development certificate had been granted for these uses.

The lawful planning use for the site was a wholesale cash and carry which fell within the B8 Planning Use Class

No evidence had been provided to demonstrate the previous reasons for refusal, with the adoption of the local plan therefore the previous reasons for refusal remained valid and strengthened

If the Committee granted the application this would undermine employment allocations within the newly adopted local plan

The proposed development would result in main town centre use being located outside the defined town centre boundary and loss of allocated employment land

Local plan policy ECN 6 was clear that the purpose of allocating employment land was to support the strategic plan for employment development to enable the south east of the county to offer a range and quality of employment

LP ECN8 supported land generated for employment use, however, that specific criteria must be met, and the officer's report explained these had not been met, as the development would provide continual access to members of the public who did not work in the employment area. If the application was approved, the policy was being ignored by the Council, setting a dangerous precedent.

Local Plan policy ECN 9 provided further criteria should also be met

It was also suggested in the officer's report that the proposed development would deliver significant community and economic benefits, the benefits outlined did not override the need to maintain an allocated employment site with the local plan that had just been adopted

The applicant had referred to the site not being viable for employment uses, yet no further details had been provided

The policies of the local plan would further be undermined contrary to policies TS4 and TS5

Seaton Valley Community Council also had concerns about highways safety and amenity, however, it was noted that the Highways and Public Protection Teams had not objections to the proposal

The Committee was asked to refuse the application in accordance with the detailed requirement of the newly adopted local plan

Daniel Miller, Applicant addressed the Committee in support of the application. His comments included the following: -

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He had purchased the site in July 2020 after the business and gone into administration and then liquidation with the loss of 24 jobs

He had purchased the freehold of the site and now the current level of employment was more than double that it had been when it was trading

The units that had been converted had been evidence to the Local Authority with regards to the shops where the public could buy goods and the café was subject to an application to change the elevation to be used as a cafe

The businesses all traded as independents and were rented and funded by himself operated by a brand-new start up with zero risk

He acknowledged that town centres were important

He had over 100 sites, food related that were government backed incubators which removed barriers to give an opportunity for those who did not have the opportunity before

The sites were very small and it was encouraged to use the site as a springboard to the high street and was a risk-free chance and opportunity to try with no bond or security

He had shops in the high street himself and his intention was to use the site to enable movement for social mobility in and around Blyth

The application site was the yard adjacent to the buildings which supported the businesses which employed new staff

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

It was clarified that an independent competent acoustician would be employed by the applicant to carry out a noise and acoustic assessment.

Since the application had been refused in April 2021, a sequential test had been carried out. The loss of employment land was still an issue but had been justified through another policy, with other circumstances to override that. In addition, temporary permission was being sought, and any concerns or issues would be monitored and addressed.

The application before members was what the applicant had proposed, and the pods would be removed for a parking area.

The yard had currently been used for cash and carry wholesalers and therefore had elements of employment use.

The Planning Officer was not aware of any forthcoming plans but there was the intention for neighbouring sites to create hubs

Fire risks were not a planning matter, and all issues would be dealt with by separate legislation by licensing.

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The rateable value of the site was not a material planning consideration.

The additional noise condition would cover any noise issues. Essentially, the noise survey which was carried out was representative of the site as it was when members visited and when the survey was carried out in 2021.

Permitted development was not an issue for this application.

The Highways Officer did not have any issues with car parking and there was more than enough parking.

With respect to the change of use, officers did not directly contact businesses, but part of the planning application was to consult those neighbours around the site.

The fire exits and buildings regs was raised at the site visit and the applicant had confirmed that fire certificates and fire safety were in place.

Policy EC9 of the new local plan offered flexibility in terms of employment areas. Employment was attached to the site, eg, taxi drivers, brewery. Permission was for a temporary, 2-year monitoring exercise. The applicant had submitted a sequential test which showed that there were no other suitable sites.

Councillor Robinson proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve temporary permission with the new additional conditions which was seconded by Councillor Ferguson.

Councillor Daley was concerned at the consistent theme of retrospective applications and was very aware of approving the application and the signal it sent out to other developers.

Councillor Chicken stated that the applicant had addressed all issues and the objections were not about planning at all. As the applicant had stated a business had been lost which had been a great loss to the community. Employment at the site was double than it had been before, which was important for the local economy. The applicant's idea was to support the high street and residents were happy to have this in the area. The application was for temporary permission which would be assessed again in two years.

Mrs Murphy provided clarification regarding the previous reason for refusal and explained that during this application the applicant had continued to provide information.

Discussion took place on the planning legislation for retrospective applications and the trend for industrial estates to be converted into leisure destinations and concerns were raised about the location of the site and parking.

Councillor Swinburn stated that the new conditions had met any concerns that he had.

Further debate took place on the location of the site and the use and operation of the premises.

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Councillor Robinson summed up and had listened to all the points raised, the business was creating jobs and small business which was a policy in the local plan. He had no concerns in planning terms and that what was he was supporting.

A vote was taken on the proposal to approve the application as follows:- FOR 8; AGAINST 3; ABSTAIN 0.

RESOLVED that the application be GRANTED temporary permission subject to the conditions/reasons in the report together with the additional conditions.

## 7 **APPEALS UPDATE**

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

A short recess was held at this point.

*(Councillor Ferguson left the meeting at 5:06 pm).*

## 8 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

(Councillor Swinburn in the Chair )

No questions had been submitted in writing.

K Dalton, Bedlington asked why no information had been divulged to the public in relation to a report from the police regarding Arch which was in the public interest.

The Chair requested more information about the report and would seek further information from the relevant person and a written answer would be sent to Mr Dalton.

Councillor Robinson believed the report referred to be a KPMG audit report. He had asked the same question at Full Council and had learned that the report was not going to be made public but had been reported to the Audit Committee. The Chair reiterated that a written answer would be forwarded to Mr Dalton.

## 9 **PETITIONS**

A petition had been received requesting an extension/amendment to the existing speed limit and extent of the road safety scheme in Seaton Sluice.

A report would be presented to the Committee at the meeting of 20 July.

RESOLVED that the report be received.

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## 10 LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES

Tony Gribbin, Local Services Area Manager provided the following updates:-

### **Waste Service**

- Residual and Recycling waste collection services continued to perform well.
- Demand for the bulky waste service remained high
- Garden waste service is up and running and is also performing well. There was now a total of 10,000 plus customers in the south east
- Domestic bin collection teams would be out on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> June to prevent any disruption to services /public.

### **Grass Cutting**

- Now on cut 3 in Cramlington / 4 in Seaton Valley and 4 Bedlington.
- The start to grass cutting season saw a few interruptions in the form of wet weather and bank holidays, this made the gap between some cuts a little longer, however the team was working to recover this and if necessary, have sanctioned overtime to cover lost days.
- Still confident of achieving the target cuts in each area

### **Weed Control**

- Weed treatments had commenced in areas in the LAC, with obstacles in Seaton Valley well underway and many in Cramlington still to do, as areas are completed, Councillors would be advised.
- A small mechanical sweeper had been deployed in Bedlington for weed treatment

### **Bereavement Services**

- Running as expected
- Service demands had reduced
- Muslim burial ground nearing completion in Bedlington Cemetery and area being prepared

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

- Mr Gribbin would investigate the early bin collection which some residents had missed in Bedlington and would report back.
- Complaints about grass cutting in Westlea cemetery – two different teams were deployed to undertake grass cutting in the cemeteries, the same team were required to prepare graves and cover staff in the crematorium. Meetings had been carried out to help speed up the process. He was aware of some of the issues in the cemeteries and was actively working with colleagues.
- Blue dye was being carried out for weed killing
- Weed killing was being carried out in the Cramlington estates but was dependent on staff resources and deployment to prioritised services. Mr Gribbin would speak to the team. A number of small domestic trimmers have been purchased which should be able to be used around lamp posts.
- Mr Gribbin noted the comments regarding grass cutting on banks and Ringwood Drive, Cramlington
- There was a limited street cleansing team in Cramlington, and a pedestrian

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cutter had to be borrowed from another area. If members identified any areas, please inform the team.

- Mr Gribbin was not aware of any green fly-tipping in Holywell Dene
- The edging programme was a winter programme, specific areas should be passed to Mr Gribbin
- The sweeper was a shared resource between Bedlington and Ashington; Cramlington borrowed the sweeper from Seaton Valley
- The number of cuts in Cramlington was every 14 days, following the removal of partnership between Cramlington Town Council and NCC. Some new staff were not up to speed with using some of the machinery. Mechanical issues and challenges getting replacement parts and new vehicles impacted on the service.
- A number of teams were deployed to carry out arterial and estate routes. New software made it easier to identify parcels of grass and it was hoped that this would address any issues.
- Councillor Dunbar conveyed praise from a resident in Eastfield Glade and asked if thanks could be passed on to the operative
- Mr Gribbin noted the comments regarding weeds around Klondyke, Mayfield Glade and Beaconhill Grange. The grass cutting mechanism was weather dependent.
- Spraying weeds did not kill them instantly, the weed rip was instant and most effective. A new machine was purchased last year with a permanent weed rip.

*(Councillor Flux left the meeting at 5:58 pm).*

*(Councillor Chicken left the meeting at 6:00 pm)*

M Carle, Lead Highways Delivery Manager provided an update to the Committee:-

- All Highways Inspectors and maintenance crews continued to work inspecting, fixing carriageway defects, making repairs, and making safe category one defects across the South East area.
- The gully emptier was fully deployed dealing with reported issues and cyclic maintenance.

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

- Carriageway and footway Work were being programmed to start in the coming weeks and all affected members would be notified in advance.

**Drainage Improvements:**

The area teams were continuously looking and programming future planned works both patching and drainage improvements.

- Prospect Avenue, Seaton Delaval (Investigation work complete)
- A189 Spine Road
- St. Michaels Avenue (Drainage investigations – Improvement work to start in coming weeks) the relevant member will be notified.

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### **LTP - Carriageway Resurfacing**

LTP Carriageway Resurfacing schemes were being programmed and all affected members would be notified in advance.

### **Micro/Surface Dressing**

- Dene View, Bedlington
- Netherton Village, Bedlington

### **Signage/Safety Schemes**

- Furnace Bank, Bedlington
- New Hartley School Signs
- A189 Spine Road (Storm Arwen Damage)

### **Winter Maintenance**

Winter Services 2021/22 was now complete. Forecast observations ended at the end of April 22.

All the gritting fleet that did not have a dual function would be prepped ready for Winter Services 22/23.

Observation of the forecasts would commence again on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022 with full winter services commencing in full across the county on the 31<sup>st</sup> of October 2022 for Winter Services 22/23 season.

Members were informed that Alan Taylor had recently retired, and Peter Davidson had taken over his role.

In response to member questions the following information was provided:-

- A notification would be forwarded to all Bedlington Councillors regarding the date for the interactive speed signs.
- The street lighting at High Pit Road would be raised with Gavin Barlow.
- An ad-hoc inspection would be carried out regarding the potholes near the Burton House pub.
- The parking issue at Alex Scott cars would be revisited and the issue regarding Brechany cars would be passed on to Integrated Transport.
- Officers would liaise with Highways regarding the road at Park View, Seaton Delaval.
- Thanks were conveyed for the repair of the roundabout at Fountain Head, but this had now sprung a leak.
- Mr Carle would contact Russell Mason regarding the tarmacking referred to by Councillor Robinson
- Officers would continue to try to contact Shenstone regarding the carpark behind Dewley shops.

Members thanked the officers for their attendance and the work of their teams in responding to the Members requests.

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11 **OUTSIDE BODIES**

Members considered a list of appointments to outside bodies for 2022/23.

**RESOLVED** that the following list of appointments be confirmed:

Astley Park Management Committee	L Bowman
Beaconhill Community Association	B Flux
Cramlington Community Association	M Swinburn
Cramlington Voluntary Youth Project	W Daley/B Flux
East Hartford (and District) Community Association	B Flux
New Hartley Community Association	D Ferguson

12 **MEMBERS' LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES**

Details of the Cramlington, Bedlington & Seaton Valley Members Local Improvement Schemes for the period 2022-23 were provided for information.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

13 **LOCAL AREA COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME**

The latest version of the agreed items for future Local Area Council meetings was circulated.

Councillor Wilczek had still not received a response to her questions submitted in relation to the Bedlington Town Centre Update. Democratic Services to follow up with relevant officer.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

14 **FUTURE MEETINGS**

The dates of the meetings for the ensuing year were noted.

**CHAIR**.....

**DATE**.....

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