

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 East Bedlington Community Centre, 16 & 17 Station Road, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 7JN on Wednesday, 20 July 2022 at 4:00 pm.

PRESENT

M Swinburn (Chair) (in the Chair)

MEMBERS

E Chicken
P Ezhilchelvan
B Flux
M Robinson

C Dunbar
D Ferguson
S Lee
R Wilczek

OFFICERS

H Bowers
M Carle
T Gribbin
R McCartney
N Snowdon

Democratic Services Officer
Neighbourhood Services Area Manager
Neighbourhood Services Manager
Highways Infrastructure Manager
Principal Programme Officer (Highways Improvement)
Fostering Team Manager
Recruitment & Engagement Officer

L Love
C Matthews

1 member of the press and 1 member of the public were present.

22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bowman, Daley and Taylor.

23 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings of the Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley Local Area Council, held on 18 May 2022 and 26 June, as circulated, were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

Councillor Robinson referred to K Dalton's question regarding the KMPG audit report to which he had received no reply.

The Chair stated that Council had agreed that the report could be made public

Ch.'s Initials.....

and at present the Executive Director (Section 151 Officer) was reviewing the report and once completed, would be made available to the public. The Chair apologised that Mr Dalton had not received a direct response and requested Councillor Robinson to convey his apologies.

A written reply would be sent to Mr Dalton.

With the agreement of the Chair of Planning, the Chair referred to the Local Area Council planning meeting of 22 June and stated that each planning decision must be based on planning regulations and be justifiable. On numerous occasions there were times when people and councillors included were not happy with applications. However, if there was no justifiable planning condition to support a decision against/objection then this could not be with upheld. The decision taken at the June meeting, was unanimous and followed the required planning regulations.

If anyone felt that the planning process, or the Council was not following the correct planning procedure, were urged to come forward with evidence in line with the process to be followed to investigate and resolve through a complaint's procedure. The process should not be carried out through social media.

Discussion took place regarding pre-determination of planning applications and a suggestion was made for training sessions to be in public to help understand the planning process.

24 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

No questions had been received.

25 **PETITIONS**

This item was to:

- a. Receive any new petitions: No new petitions had been received.
- b. Consider reports on petitions previously received: Petition requesting an extension/amendment to the existing speed limit and extent of the road safety scheme in Seaton Sluice.

Neil Snowdon, Principle Programme Officer (Highways) and Robin McCartney Infrastructure Manager, Technical Services were in attendance.

Members were informed that preliminary design work was currently being progressed by the Design Team to look at a range of potential solutions. Once the preliminary design work had been completed this would be shared with the Ward Councillor. This would also include speed surveys which had not been carried out since 2013.

As the lead petitioner Mrs Margaret Murray was unable to attend the meeting, Councillor Ferguson asked the following questions/comments on behalf of the petitioner:-

Ch.'s Initials.....

1. When would the speed survey start and end and would the conclusion be published?
2. How was a speed survey is conducted, as drivers' behaviours are different when it is obvious that a measure is being conducted and not necessarily a true reflection ?
3. Since the work at North Tyneside and the speed restrictions carried out by North Tyneside Council has made road safety worse all through Seaton Sluice.
4. Speed reductions could not be done by encouragement, speed reductions have to be implanted with consequences.
5. The splitter island you say is not a pedestrian refuge is used by a lot of people to cross the road, as at certain times of the day, it cannot be crossed.
6. Speed camera relocation – that particular camera has not worked for at least 10 years and local people know this, how many people received a speeding penalty for that camera?
7. I am shocked that the police have raised no concerns about the speed on the road.
8. Living on that stretch of the road after the camera is like living on a racing circuit.
9. If reliable evidence is required, then put down the speed straps to gather this information before someone is killed.
10. Ideally, average speed cameras should be placed from the Delaval Arms to the start of the 60 mile limit after Seafield Mews.

Mr Snowdon responded that the speed survey would be completed in a couple of months and added to the list of requests and the speed survey carried out by placing strips on the road. Since the work at North Tyneside might have made road safety worse, the splitter island was used by a lot of people. The survey would show how many people used it.

The pedestrian crossing affected the operation of the speed cameras and the police were aware that the route was regularly used by boy racers. Speed enforcement was carried out by speed camera van.

As soon as the feasibility study was ready that information would be shared.

In response to a comment regarding the use of speed humps, Mr McCartney stated that a whole range of options had been considered.

RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted including the issues raised and a new speed survey be undertaken as part of the A193 Links Road preliminary design work study and a copy of the study be provided to the local Ward Councillor on its completion.

26 **FOSTERING SERVICES**

Caroline Matthews, Recruitment & Engagement Officer, Residential & Family Placement Service and Lynne Love, Fostering Team Manager were in attendance and shared a presentation with an overview of the service. (Presentation attached with the minutes).

Ch.'s Initials.....

In response to comments/questions from members, the following information was provided:-

There were myths around foster care, people think they can't foster if they can't work, are single, or if they have not had any children themselves. Campaigns aimed to combat the myths.

There were very few barriers, a spare bedroom was required, time and love for children. There were very few things to stop people fostering. There were never enough foster carers and a nationwide shortage.

Finance could be a barrier, people had to be realistic. There were add on earning and learning opportunities to support training and finance.

There were always shortages for teenagers and sibling groups and often for children with disabilities.

A small percentage of children were taken out of the county, but it was usually for a good reason.

The Authority try to "grow their own" foster carers, by expanding their skills through training and experience.

The fostering process could be lengthy 3 to 6 months depending on availability of the applicant, from the first enquiry to home visit, Skills to Foster course and assessment which could take up to 12 weeks. The assessor would make a recommendation to the independent fostering panel who would make the decision.

The Chair thanked the officers for their presentation and the importance of making a significant difference. He had hoped that more members of the public had attended the meeting and gave an open invitation for the officers to return to a future meeting.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

27 **LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES**

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

Waste Service

- Residual, Recycling and bulky waste collection services continued to perform well.
- Garden waste service was also performing well but could be challenging on occasion.
- There were 9900 customers at present.

Grass Cutting

- Now on cut 10 in Seaton Valley, cut 7 in Bedlington and cut 7 in Cramlington.

Ch.'s Initials.....

- Grass cutting had proved to be a challenge for teams in the early part of the year.
- Several days had been lost to rain in the early part of the season followed by warm and hot weather.
- 5 bank holidays in the early part of this cutting season added to the challenge imposed by the rain.
- This typically presented two challenges, the first being to complete cutting rounds efficiently to avoid having long (and seemingly unmanaged) grass on view.
- The second was the inevitable grass arisings left following cuts of grass which could be longer than usual.
- Conditions had stabilised.

Weed Control

- Service was being delivered in house again this year.
- The second round of treatments had commenced across the areas
- Councillors would be emailed when their areas had been completed.
- Blue dye was being used again this year.
- A spare ride on mower machine had been secured which had weed ripping brushes fitted to it, a useful option for instant removal of weeds should the need arise.

Glass Trial

This was ongoing in the [Morpeth/Alnwick/Bedlington/Hexham] areas with approximately 134 tonnes in the Bedlington area.

In Bloom or Green Flag

- Green Flag inspections had been carried out in Dr Pit Park, Gallagher Park, Astley Park, Alexandra Park
- Results of the inspections were being awaited.

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

- Mr Gribbin would check if Southfield Lea had been treated for weeds
- Staff were deployed as and when for the mechanical sweeper. There had been staff off sick due to Covid.
- Mayfield Cemetery – Mr Gribbin would follow this up
- A backpack would be used by the team to spray any weeds around parked cars
- The recycling scheme was being assessed to see how successful it was
- The issues in relation to the condition of the pavement on the B1505 and the sign post at the junction of High Pit Road would be chased up
- The Countryside Teams would be contacted in relation to the issues at Gallagher Park
- Mr Gribbin to come back about Green Flag status at Plessey Woods
- Teams would WhatsApp before and after weed ripping
- The routes for blue dye were dependent on parked cars
- There had been no response regarding the Barns Park Scheme.

Mick 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:

- Main Access Road, East Hartford, Cramlington.
- Needham Place, Cramlington
- Nairn Road, Cramlington
- Chesterhill, Cramlington
- Astley Road, S/Delaval
- St. Michaels Avenue, New Hartley
- Church Lane, Bedlington
- Millfield, Bedlington

Drainage Improvements:

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

Additional Gully Tanker deployed.

- A190 Seghill – Aquajet Investigations
- St. Michaels Avenue, New Hartley
- Main Access Road, East Hartford

LTP - Carriageway Resurfacing

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

- Rowen Close, Bedlington (Prep)

Micro/Surface Dressing

- The Crescent, Seghill (Prep)

Other Work

- Northern Line – A192 Astley Road, Seaton Delaval (Temporary access agreed and complete)
- DVC's (Section 184) - Large influx in work – NCC continued to deliver.

Winter Maintenance

Depots were being restocked with road salt across all 11 depots

Ch.'s Initials.....

countywide.

Cowley Road Depot was fully restocked to 4250 tonnes.

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

- Traffic calming measures for Gallagher Park could be added as a priority into the LTP
- Neil Snowdon to look into and provide an update for the scheme at Cragside School which had previously been Councillor Hepple's MLIS scheme and would also investigate the traffic strips at Hazelmere, Bedlington
- The request for disabled bays at Astley Road should be emailed to Highways generic email box
- There was still no response from the landlord for the Dewley Road shops, Cramlington. Mr Carle would contact Paul Lowes to see if he could provide any information.
- Letters/emails had been sent out to County Councillors and Parish and Town Councils regarding the LTP
- Alternative bollards were being considered for the missing ones outside Cramlington Village club

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

RESOLVED that the information be noted and issues set out in the bullet points above be followed up.

28 **MEMBERS' LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES**

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

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

29 **LOCAL AREA COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair advised that the work programme was for information and should Members wish to ask for any items to be added to the agenda, then they contact either himself or Democratic Services.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

30 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 17 August 2022 (planning only).

Ch.'s Initials.....

CHAIR.....

DATE.....

Ch.'s Initials.....