

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

CRAMLINGTON, BEDLINGTON AND SEATON VALLEY LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

At the meeting of the **Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley Local Area Committee** held at Netherton Social Club, 1a Netherton Lane, Bedlington, NE22 6DP on Tuesday, 21 March 2023 at 4:00 pm.

PRESENT

M Swinburn (Chair) (in the Chair)

MEMBERS

L Bowman
C Dunbar
D Ferguson
M Robinson

E Chicken
P Ezhilchelvan
S Lee
C Taylor

OFFICERS

H Bowers
G Bucknall
T Gribbin
Blagburn
Mason

Democratic Services Officer
Highways Delivery Area Manager
Neighbourhood Services Manager
Programme Delivery Manager
Highways Maintenance Senior Team Leader

Around 18 members of the press and public were present.

84 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Daley, Flux, Lee, and Wilczek.

85 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Brian Robson, NE22 6AN was in attendance on behalf of residents of Hartford Bridge concerning speeding and road surface structure and raised the following:

- Residents had complained since 2010 of the inadequate substructure and asked if it would be addressed.
- Concerns were raised regarding vibrations through properties as a result of passing traffic.
- Could the Council enforce a weight limit on the road?
- There was limited visibility to the south and to the bend to the bus stops. Would the Council take action to reduce speed to the south end of Hartford Bridge and install speed cameras?
- Obstructions especially from the west of the road with electric vehicles not

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- being heard.
- He suggested chicanes to slow down traffic to give visibility from the Morpeth direction and convex mirrors on the blind bend.

Councillor Robinson agreed with the comments and stated that he had previously been involved with the Highway Delivery Manager who had agreed that surface structure of the road was unsatisfactory.

Janice Craggs of Hartford Resident's Association referred to the sheer volume of traffic and referenced a Temporary Traffic Order for proposed parking restrictions.

Matthew Bamburgh, Hartford Bridge resident referred to a recent collision with his vehicle and asked why there wasn't traffic speed bumps.

Councillor Taylor stated that the Town Council had erected speed signs which had not proved effective.

The residents requested that action be taken on their concerns and that they be kept informed of any updates in the Local Transport Plan.

The Chair stated that the residents' concerns would be fed back to the Local Services Director and Councillor Robinson copied in.

Steve Barham, NE22 5HF referred to traffic on Station Road, Bedlington Station and speeding drivers using the large field behind properties at Waverley Avenue and concerned of a potential serious injury. He had attended a previous Town Council meeting during lockdown and residents had complained to the Council, Police and Bernicia who had all said that nothing could be done. He had also contacted his local MP.

The Chair stated that obstruction was a police matter and advised Mr Barham to contact Councillor Wilczek, Ward Councillor who had asked the Chair to pass on her apologies as was unable to attend the meeting but had asked if the Chair update her on the matter and who could in turn speak to Highways to have the area surveyed. He was also advised to directly contact the Police & Crime Commissioner and the Neighbourhood Police Officer, and in addition mentioned the possibility of a Community Trigger which Councillor Wilczek could investigate further.

The Chair requested a full report to come back to Committee on the Shields Road problem.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

86 **PETITIONS**

No petitions to consider.

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NORTHUMBERLAND LINE

Neil Blagburn, Programme Delivery Director shared a presentation and gave progress update on the Northumberland Line. The key points included:

- The rail corridor – 2 underbridges had been replaced and 1 restrengthened. All successfully delivered on time with no impact to the operation of the railway 20 km of new rail track had been installed and multi-realignment of tracks. 6 under road / rail track crossings had been installed with lineside signalling equipment installations still ongoing.
- Mining remediation – due to past mining in areas, some stations had required drilling and grouting, e.g., Seaton Delaval. Recent discussions with Network Rail Mining Engineer had been positive insofar as no mining remediation required at Bedlington. Northumberland Park due to commence in March/April 2023.
- Stations and structures – piling underway at Newsham for road bridge and footbridge. Ashington station well underway. Palmersville underpass and de-vegetation also underway and Northumberland Park de-vegetation complete.
- Northern trains – mobilisation – Conductor Team Manager, Drivers and Driver Manager recruited and training underway for familiarisation of routes. Fares and ticketing systems workstream underway.
- Social value – included apprenticeships, food banks, Dales SEND School, women into construction pilot, STEM and career workshops in schools, community engagement events.
- The Secretary of State visit in March which had confirmed the delivery of the project.
- Local Projects – Bedlington Station, Bedlington Engineering Works, Seaton Delaval Station, Furnace Way Sidings and West Sleekburn junction.

(Councillor Ferguson left the meeting at 5:09 pm).

The following questions from members and responses were:

- In response to reassurance and timelines. Highways elements were in place and road disruption would be minimised. With regards to potential flooding at Seaton Delaval – the car park would have a permeable surface and drains in the field to allow to drain freely. A flood defence expert had reviewed the scheme and confirmed it would help with localised flooding. The platform and drainage at Seaton Delaval should be started within the next 3-4 weeks. The current target for first passenger trains commencing was August next year.
- With reference to the fly-over at Blyth – piles were being installed for the bridge abutments and the road would sweep up and over the railway line to the south of the existing A1061 away from the houses adjacent to the current crossing. Finance was in place for these works.
- Analysis had shown that the closure time of level crossings at peak times would generally be less than at present and the vast majority would improve. A digital signalling system would be used to control the barriers. With regards to specific concerns around Blyth Bebside it was confirmed that the barrier down instances, whilst more often, would not result in an accumulation of road traffic congestion.
- At present the terminus for the train would be platform 1 at Newcastle Central Station, however platform capacity was strained at Newcastle and this could

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change and there may also be the opportunity in the future for potential onward travel, for example to the Metro Centre.

- The estimated passenger numbers could be provided after the meeting.
- In response to economy and regeneration – developers were waiting until the stations had been completed. There were businesses at Blyth seafront and regeneration in Ashington and opportunities being looked at for a museum at Bedlington.

(Councillor Ezhilchelvan left the meeting at 5.30 pm).

- In reply to a query regarding green electricity, Mr Blagburn stated that electrification was cost prohibitive for the scheme, alternative fuels such as hydrogen were being looked at as the Northern rail fleet would need to be refreshed in the near future.

(Councillor Ezhilchelvan re-joined the meeting at 5.33 pm).

- Car park capacity had been phased and tailored to demand. A lot of objections had been initially received to the initial car park capacity.
- It was noted that Arriva had the monopoly from Bedlington to Newcastle. No proposal had been firmed up in relation to bus connectivity to the stations and officers were working with Arriva. The new Combined Authority was looking at a Joint Transport option.
- In response to comments from a member of the public regarding site managers taking Seghill and Seaton Delaval residents into account in relation to:
 - Off-loading of plant during peak hours; vehicle wheel washing and road sweeping being carried out more frequently; pedestrians being unable to cross during crossing closures with elderly and vulnerable residents being unable to access local shops for 3 days; patching/repairs to tarmac being done to a better standard at Seghill crossing and a review of the traffic plan (foot and vehicle) to be done for Seaton Delaval's new schools and the station did not seem to take each other into account. Mr Blagburn responded that the issues with the soil on footpaths and roads should be under control, if not, that would be tackled again. Potholes were repaired on a temporary basis and if not adequate would be looked at again. Pedestrian access was being reviewed by Network Rail and Siemens and closures for vehicles and pedestrians would be kept to a minimum, ensuring safe facilities to cross wherever possible.

Mr Blagburn was thanked for his informative presentation.

88 LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES

Tony Gribbin, Neighbourhood Services Area Manager gave the following updates:

NEAT

- Winter works continue at a rate expected.
- Since the last LAC (in January), a mild winter period had been experienced

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with the exception being w/c 6th March

- The Grounds staff continued to work a 28-hour week during the winter period, which ended this week, and they would revert to longer, summer hours from Monday coming.
- Progress through scheduled work had been a challenge but ultimately successful.
- Mr Gribbin to be alerted if members believed any requested work had not been completed.
- Preparations had been finalised for the upcoming grass cutting season. All grass cutting equipment had either been serviced or was scheduled to be serviced.
- Grass cutting to start within the next 2 weeks depending on ground conditions
- No fundamental route changes
- Seasonal grounds maintenance staff were being recruited for this year.
- Weed control activities will be undertaken in-house again this year.
- Blue dye WOULD be used this year.

Street Cleansing

- Business as usual
- Street sweeping was always affected by ground frost, the service had been suspended recently due to the winter weather event

Waste

Residual and recycling

- Business as usual for waste collection services.
- Round Review - Work had been completed in readiness for deployment of the two new RCV's. This is done to ensure they are deployed in the most efficient way possible.

Garden waste collections had started

- Increasing housing/customer numbers had meant additional adjusting of rounds to accommodate the increase. (£49.50 for 20 collections)
- Initial take up for the service was high, the scheme remained as popular as ever.

Bereavement Services

- No issues at the Crematorium.
- The Muslim burial area in Bedlington was now complete and ready.
- The drainage on the roundabout, in Bedlington cemetery would have a new section of drainage attached to the field drain system. This would commence from Wednesday 22 March 2023.

Members made the following comments:

- The team were thanked for their continued service
- Dirt was not being cleaned around the new Miller housing development in

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Bedlington.

- A request to clear leaves on the cycle path from Alexander Park and St Peter & Paul's
- Flooding caused by leaves and mud in Cramlington
- Was there an update on the ownership of the fence

Russell Mason, Interim Area Highways Manager introduced himself and provided the following updates:

- All Highways Inspectors and maintenance crews continued to work inspecting, fixing carriageway defects, making repairs, and making safe category one defects across the Southeast area.
- NCC were one of the top performers in a national Excellence award in Highway and street lighting Maintenance by APSE (Association for public service excellence).
- The gully emptier was fully deployed dealing with reported issues and cyclic maintenance.
- Larger capital tarmac patching had been carried out in Elsdon Avenue, Seaton Delaval and Moorland Drive, Bedlington

Drainage improvements

- Crookham Way, Cramlington, Front Street, Seghill, B1505 East Field, Cramlington, Stead Lane, Bedlington, Spring Vale, Sleekburn, Hester Gardens to The Avenue, New Hartley

LTP – Carriageway Resurfacing

The programme was completed for this year. Next year's Schemes had recently been approved in the following areas:

- East Farm Terrace, Cramlington. Complete.
- Avenue head Roundabout (remedial Work) Complete
- Beresford Road, Seaton Sluice (remedial Work)

Other Complete work

- A192 Large Signs Complete
- Red Lion R/A, Bedlington - Safety Scheme (Upgrading barriers)
- Seghill First School – Safety Scheme (Signs)
- St Ronan's Drive Seaton Sluice Traffic safety scheme.

Upcoming work

- Installation of parking bays Esmeralda Gardens, Hazlitt Place, Seghill
- Main Street Seghill – Installation of 2x pedestrian dropped kerbs (Andy Barbers)
- Signage Scheme – Stead Lane & Whitley memorial school Bedlington. (School safety scheme).
- Traffic Calming scheme Bristol Street New Hartley

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Cramlington Underpass Flooding

An upgraded pumping station had been approved and installation should commence next week. This would include a remote communications device that could report any flooding direct to the depot/officers.

Members made the following comments/requests:

- Thanks were conveyed from residents to compliment Highways for the work which had been carried out on the drains and gullies on the B1505 to resolve flooding
- An incident had occurred at Atlee Park/Plessey Woods
- Parking to be looked at on the bend opposite The Church of Bedlington Christian Fellowship “Coffin church” due to parking outside an Eyelash extension shop.
- A transporter was parked on Choppington Road, Glebe Bank blocking the pedestrian walkway, could this be investigated.
- Officers were thanked for resurfacing part of Ellison Avenue, Holywell, however, the other side of the road was now in a bad condition.
- The team was thanked for their perseverance in repairing the underpass in Cramlington.
- An update was requested on re-surfacing of the entrance to CLV.
- Complaints had been received on worn road markings on Dudley Lane near Vue cinema and a refresh was requested.
- Could the town centre roadworks at Cramlington be reviewed and monitored.

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

89 **LOCAL COUNCIL AREA WORK PROGRAMME**

RESOLVED that the Work Programme be noted.

90 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday 19 April 2023.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....

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